

The **Red Mole**

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SHOW
THE WORKERS
YOUR NICE
SHARP TEETH
TEDDY

**IRELAND.. The smouldering crisis.
Lessons of the 1926 General Strike**

Miners' Strike/Scotland/Workers' Control Conference

Italy/Holland/Hong Kong/India

THE TORY PROPOSALS FOR THE TRADE UNIONS

The Tory trade union proposals come as no surprise. It was obvious before the election that an incoming government, whether Tory or Labour, would attack the trade unions. The British capitalists and their international creditors were demanding an assault on the trade unions in order to boost their declining profits. The "democratic" luxuries which the bourgeoisie could allow the British working class in the early part of this century can no longer be financed from British imperialist profits. Therefore they must go. Any capitalist government is trapped by that inexorable logic.

The Meaning of the Proposals

The Tory measures are not, of course, really about strikes. They are aimed at the pay, working conditions and living standards of the working class. They are only concerned with trade unions because these are the main tool of the working class for maintaining its standard of living. If any government were really worried about the amount of production lost through men missing work, they would act against industrial accidents, unemployment or sickness. Five times as much production is lost through industrial accidents as through strikes, 30 times as much production is lost through employment, and 80 times as much through sickness. All these losses are the direct product of capitalism and of the governments it produces. For instance since 1966 deliberate action by the Labour government raised the number of unemployed from approximately three and a half hundred thousand to over six hundred thousand. This policy was dictated by their aim of propping up capitalism; the increase alone in unemployment represents an annual loss in production of over twelve times that of the production lost through strikes. As for accidents, these accidents in turn are largely due to capitalism's greed for

profit. For example, the 1969 figures show that four times as many men were killed in accidents caused by management negligence as were killed in accidents due to workers' negligence. If a government really wished to increase production, let it act against unemployment, improve the health service and impose thorough codes relating to the prevention of accidents. The problem is that any capitalist government, be it Tory or Labour, is incapable of doing these things. Capitalism exists for profit, not for people. The whole fraud of the "lost production" argument was exploded by, of all things, the *Financial Times*, when it pointed out that "...if one-eighth of the working population has been forced to take two days off as a result of the Mao 'flu epidemic this Christmas, then the little germs will have done more damage, in terms of working days lost, than all the strikes of 1969."

As for the Tory argument about prices, this is an even bigger fraud. In fact the Tory government is encouraging firms to put up prices. This was revealed by Peter Jay in the *Times Business News* in the second week in September. If the Tories want to keep prices down, they need look no further than cutting the huge profits made by British capitalists. Last year the ten biggest British firms alone made over £1,383,240,000 profit. Every penny of that was created by the effort of the working class. For example, Fords made £22 per week per man profit and British American Tobacco made £24 per week per man. For a start off they could do something about them and about Holco Trading which makes an astronomical 89.2% profit and IBM United Kingdom Holdings which makes 56.8%. But of course to hold down prices is inconceivable for a capitalist government, be it Tory or Labour. Capitalist governments exist to increase and protect profits—not to keep up the real purchas-

ing power of a wage packet. In fact the entire set of Tory proposals have nothing to do with lost production or with rising prices. The sole aim of the proposals is to increase profits by attacking the living standards of the working class.

But these are not the only points we have to make to the Tories. We shouldn't just sit back defensively and try to prevent laws against the trade unions. Instead we must ask the question, "For whose benefit is this country to be run—for the handful of capitalists or for the working class—the vast majority?" Let Ted Heath and Harold Wilson answer the following questions:

—Merely to keep the number of slums from increasing, let alone improve the housing situation, we need to build 500,000 houses a year. Last year 360,000 were built. What are you going to do about that, Mr. Heath?

—Prices have been going up at 6-8% a year, but in at least 90 industries wages have only been going up at 4% a year. What has Mr. Heath got to say about the tailors who have only got an average rise of 1½% a year since 1966? And what about the canteen workers who have received an average increase of under 2% since 1965? And when, Mr. Heath, will the average seamen no longer have to work an average of 26 hours overtime a week in order to get a living wage?

—In France and Germany, a family of three gets over £23.0.0. a month in family allowances. In Britain they get £6.18.0. Is your move to get us into the Common Market so you can quadruple our family allowances, Mr. Heath? And while you're at it, French and German metal workers get 10 days more paid holiday a year than us. How about that for another import?

—Turning to one of his favourite subjects, taxes,

perhaps he would like to explain why taxes on the highest incomes fell from 46% in 1949 to 28% in 1963, while for the 60% majority in the middle it went up from an average of 10% to an average of almost 20%?

—As you also like to insist that income be earned, perhaps you would also like to explain what you're going to do about the fact that in

the last six years of Tory government, income from wages went up by only 29%, while income from rents, dividends and interest went up by 72%?

—Finally, perhaps you'd like to explain why we should expect anything other than a complete capitalist fraud from a Cabinet who between them have held directorships in six Banks, own a total of nearly 70,000 acres of land, and hold 39 directorships in other firms? In particular, why should we expect anything other than pure profit making ideas when, for example, the man responsible for laying down safety regulations for trawlers has been the Chairman of the huge Associated Fisheries company? And as for education, what exactly are we to expect as a view of state education from a Cabinet all but three of whose members went to public school, and where the Minister of Education has such faith in the state schools she is supposed to run that she sends all her children to private schools?

Somehow, we think the answers to these questions are rather more important than the 0.1% a year of production lost through strikes!!

N.B. Facts and figures in this article were taken from the *TUC Programme for Action*, the Brookings analysis of the British economy, *Financial Times* 6.1.70, Report of "Income Data Ltd." on 126 Industrial Groups, and the *Lloyds Bank Review*, January 1967.

THE WORKERS' CONTROL CONFERENCE

It is now clear that the Tories are planning a confrontation with the unions. It could be a long and if the miners' strike bites home—cold winter. The strike figures rise, unemployment figures move up and, most worrying to the bourgeois economists, wage-inflation rushes forward with increasing momentum. Perhaps the most dangerous weapon in the Tories' arsenal is not a straight confrontation with the unions or even a resurrection of Barbara's Income Policy, but rather productivity bargaining and Measured Day Work.

PRODUCTIVITY BARGAINING

Productivity bargaining has already allowed the capitalists to win big victories. The first and most famous was the Fawley Refinery agreement. The unions and stewards were persuaded to sell their rights for a flat increase in wages. The result was that Fawley, in a matter of years, fell from the top of the wages league in the Southampton district to nearly the bottom. What makes the strategy of Fawley and Devlin, etc. so deadly is that the response from the Labour movement has been so pathetic. Scanlon, Daly, Jones, etc. have been totally preoccupied with spelling out how the bosses will be responsible for the coming confrontation and mouthing phrases about "free collective bargaining." The former is a dubious defensive exercise (the employers are causing the nasty strikes), and the latter is a reactionary nostalgia for the wage-drift of the '50s. Even the Left, which at least recognises the dangers of productivity bargaining, has failed to produce an adequate response. Some have even argued that one must fight productivity packets but, even if it goes through, not to worry, since the lads will eventually see through the scheme and then fight back. Extrapolate this approach and you end up with the lunacy of "the worse the better", i.e.—if only the Tories would build concentration camps for trade unionists on Hampstead Heath then many more workers would see through liberal democracy than do at present. A defeat is a defeat. It is not the job of socialists to observe defeats but to attempt to organise victories.

NEEDED: AN AGGRESSIVE COUNTER-STRATEGY

The employers' onslaught has to be met not with defensive formulations but with

an aggressive counter-strategy. A key component of such a strategy would be a series of workers' control demands: demands which would fight to democratise the trade unions—the only real response to the initiatives to integrate the unions into the state machine—and would strengthen the power of the workers on the shop-floor to encroach upon the "rights of management to manage". At this stage, the movement for workers' control, and the coming conference in Birmingham, assume prime importance.

THE CONFERENCES...

The Workers' Control Conferences have been with us since the early '60s. They were originally sponsored by the journals *The Week* and *Voice of the Unions*. Since 1968 the Institute for Workers' Control has taken over this function. The numbers attending these conferences have grown but the structure and effectiveness, unfortunately, have scarcely altered. In essence, they are a cross between classical propaganda exercises and revival meetings. Speeches, inspiring or otherwise, are addressed to the plenary sessions; smaller seminars are held, and then finally the assembled gathering is exhorted forward and onward and asked to come back next year. It could be said that the conferences owe more to Bullshitism than Bolshevism. Of course, the Conference does more than provide a week-end away from the family for trade union militants. Important reports and proposals have come forward dealing with the docks and steel, etc. But the Conference has never grown into a movement. It has never assumed an on-going character. It has never managed to translate its flow-diagrams and tabulated statistics into actual struggle. Even at the level of pure theory, it has never had sufficient structure to clarify political arguments. Proponents of workers' control and of workers' participation (even people like John Cousins whose horizon of socialist vision even fails to include participation demands) incongruously rub shoulders, apparently unaware of the vital differences involved. All this is not a plea for a new Red Christ to drive the revisionists from the Socialist Temple. The Conferences must be non-exclusive, but they must also be able to resolve the debates they engender. Workers' control struggles, within the context of a worked-out anti-capitalist strategy, can be a powerful

weapon for the Labour Movement. Participation demands can find their place in a pro-capitalist strategy to integrate the Labour Movement. It is not pedantry or an excess of nicety to determine if the dose is coming from a bottle labelled "Tonic" or one inscribed "Poison". It is precisely this avoiding of political confrontation that explains the gap in time between the last conference in Sheffield and the present one in Birmingham. It was decided that it would be impracticable to hold the Conference before the Election. The risk of a sharp debate between the Labourites and others was too great!

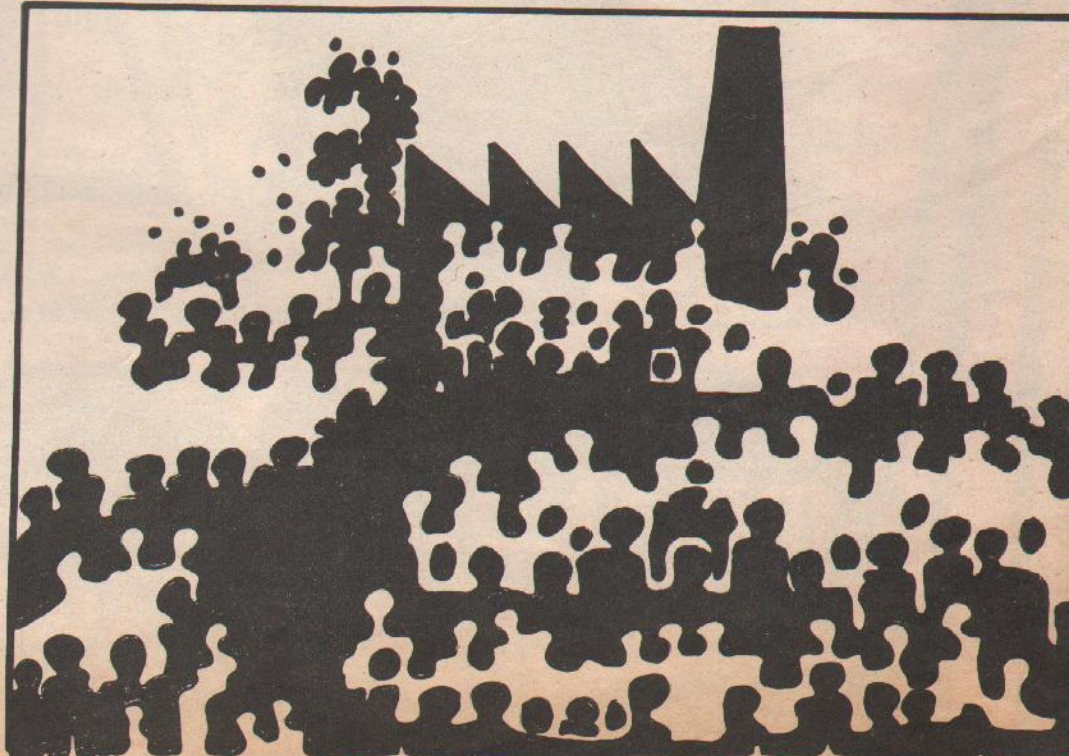
... AND THE INSTITUTE

If the Conferences do not add up to a workers' control movement, what about the Institute for Workers' Control? The IWC has an excessively high subscription fee and a correspondingly low membership. R. Davies, in his article in the September issue of *International*, notes that only 26 people attended the 1970 AGM of the IWC. At times the IWC resembles a radical Atheneum in which a select elite mutter about blackballing the revolutionary cads. It seems neither to have the will nor the ability to launch a mass workers' control movement. It rather sees itself as the trusted adviser and confidant of important people. The

possibly subliminal effect of whispering in the ears of Jones and Scanlon will move them, like sleepwalkers with no control of their actions, decisively to the Left. There is another side to the IWC, and that is in the publication of a series of extremely important pamphlets. But even here, the same political incoherence that afflicts the conferences is found. The pamphlet *Participation or Control* by Coates and Topham still remains the most exact and rigorous dissection of the political traps that are being laid under the disguise of "workers' participation". And then they print a rare offering by Scanlon that muddies the waters and blurs all the carefully-drawn distinctions. Such a cavalier attitude to theory can only exist if theory is exactly and rigorously divided from practice.

PRAXIS

One of the major tasks of the Birmingham Conference will be to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The stage has come when there has to be a transition from a talking-shop to a body which is action-oriented. There have to be precise political debates and prescriptions. The structural forms have to be assembled that will enable decisions taken to be translated into action. We still have the job of creating a Workers' Control Movement: it is now an urgent task.
Julian Atkinson



"SAVAK" AGENTS IN LONDON

"YOUR HOUSE WILL BE BURNT ... YOU WILL DIE HERE ..."

On September 10th and 11th, a leading militant of the Confederation of Iranian Students (National Union), Ahmed Ghotbi, received four anonymous threatening letters at his Notting Hill address. Ghotbi, who has been translating into English a book on SAVAK, the Persian Gestapo, was somewhat disturbed. One of the letters warned him against going to the bourgeois press or *The Red Mole*. The other was even more explicit:

"Dear Mr. Ghotbi: Do not publish your book about SAVAK. If you make such an attempt, you will be killed and your house will be burnt. Before you reach Iran. You will die here."

A few days after these letters were received, the senders kept one of their promises. Ghotbi had just left his room to post letters to constituency Labour Parties asking them to protest against the barbarities being inflicted on students and intellectuals by the Shah's regime. When he returned he found that his room had been burnt, and if the landlady had not seen the blaze and with her son had tried to put out the fire after informing the Fire Brigade, the whole house might have been burnt completely. Detectives from the local police station and specialists from Scotland Yard investigated the matter and told Ghotbi that the fire had been deliberate and that paraffin had been used.

The Hand of "Savak" Is Clearly Involved

The British police have not been able to apprehend the "arsonist" and would-be killer. This is hardly surprising as he is almost undoubtedly a member of SAVAK assigned to kill, kidnap or maim, left-wing Persian students abroad.

The existence and role of SAVAK was highlighted when the Shah paid a state visit to West Germany in 1967. Owing to the brilliant propaganda and agitational work of the Iranian Students Confederation, there were demonstrations by the German SDS (then at its zenith) in every city which the despot visited. In West Berlin a German student was shot dead by the police. The Shah was so shattered that at a semi-public meeting he screamed hysterically at the SAVAK General who had been sent to Germany

in advance to prepare the trip: "Son of a bitch: you knew this was going to happen. Why didn't you tell me to cancel this trip?"

Several weeks later a SAVAK agent in Germany visited Dr. Bahman Nirumand, a leading Persian intellectual and author of *Iran: The New Imperialism in Action* (Monthly Review Press). The SAVAK agent had with him a knife with a large black handle (the trademark of these killers), but could not bring himself to murder Nirumand because of some internal faction fight inside SAVAK. Instead he confessed the details of the plot. Nirumand reported the matter to the press and the authorities. The West German police took no action.

The Role of "Savak"

After the overthrow of Massadek by the CIA in August 1953, the suppression and terrorism of the regime knew no bounds. As a result hundreds of students and left-wing intellectuals left the country and sought asylum in Western Europe, Turkey and the United States. By 1960-61 they began to organise themselves outside Iran in solidarity with the new wave of struggle inside Iran itself. The first Congress was held in London in January 1961. The effective propaganda waged by the Persian students necessitated that SAVAK extend its operations abroad. These were based on a four-point plan of action:

1. Putting pressure on students (stopping foreign exchange, cutting scholarships, refusing to renew passports, putting pressure on their relatives back in Iran...)
2. By creating yellow societies and reactionary groups, who were encouraged to use physical violence against the leftists.
3. Recruitment to SAVAK by paying large amounts of money.
4. Collaborating and cooperation with the police of other countries.

This was only the beginning and this activity was carried out by SAVAK agents attached to Persian Embassies. Later when this proved ineffective, two SAVAK leaders were sent to establish residence in Europe: the well-known torturer, Colonel Ziba'ey, and Major-General Hassan Alavikeya. Upon them fell the responsi-

bility of creating SAVAK branches abroad under their direct control. These agents have operated in Italy, West Germany and Austria. They are also operating in Britain.

Why Does Scotland Yard Remain Silent?

We can deduce that the only reason Scotland Yard remains silent is because it is aware of SAVAK's presence and has been instructed to collaborate with it by the Foreign Office. Ahmed Ghotbi has been threatened with murder and SAVAK has shown that they mean to implement these threats. If he is murdered the responsibility will lie with Scotland Yard for not apprehending these killers. We have heard that one of the SAVAK coordinators in Britain is Mr. A. M. Shapurian, Press Attache (i.e. chief apologist for the Shah) to the Iranian Embassy. It is essential that the British Government warn this man and his bosses that they will not tolerate political murders: if they do not, we can assure them that any further attacks on Ahmed Ghotbi will be answered by militant action. The bourgeois state can imprison Cambridge students for demonstrating against a fascist dictatorship in Greece, but when a similar dictatorship attempts to murder via its secret police, nothing is done.

The Regime in Iran

The Persian Government is a government of torturers and one of the most servile of American puppets. Following massive demonstrations of over 200,000 people in Teheran against the war in Indo-China, the regime arrested over 1,000 militants, who were later brutally tortured.

Iran has not only recognised the Zionist state of Israel, but supplied oil to it and continued to do so during the June war. It provides facilities for Israeli pilots to be trained on Iranian territory. It supports the American war in Indo-China.

When this regime sends handpicked thugs to terrorise Persian students abroad, we must raise our voice in protest and defend these students. All British socialists must support the Iranian students in their activities against the regime of the Shah.

A Red Mole Reporter



AHMED GHOTBI

THE SPARTACUS LEAGUE

HANDS OFF BLACK PEOPLE

The Spartacus League considers that it is urgently necessary for all radical young people to turn their energies to the fight against racism and to action in solidarity with the black victims of racist attacks. Over the last two months there has been an orgy of arrests and savage charges against black people in London; following a march by 100 black youths to the police station at Caledonian Road to enquire about four of their brothers and sisters who were in jail, thirteen people were arrested on wild charges; on a demonstration from the Mangrove Restaurant in Notting Hill to three police stations protesting against police repression of black people in the area, 20 people were arrested. On the August Bank Holiday weekend, the police raided social functions organised by black people in Harlesden, Kennington, Forest Gate and the East End, setting dogs on people and making arrests. The state is bringing charges of grievous bodily harm and riotous assembly, which can result in prison sentences of several years for those found guilty.

The important thing is not to throw up our hands in horror, but to understand why this is happening, in order that we can combat it.

Of course, part of the explanation is the existence of a sadistic and virulently racist current within the police in parts of London. But this doesn't account for the timing, scope and targets of their activity. Nor does it explain the orchestrated hysteria against "Black Power

extremists" in the press, especially the London evening papers. The truth is that the state is frightened by signs that important sections of the million black-people in this country are turning to the militant black organisations as the only instruments they can use to solve their problems.

The scare stories in the press, the trumpeted study of Special Branch "dossiers" by Home Secretary Maudling, coupled with the large-scale intimidation and arrests of militants—all this represents an attempt to isolate the black political organisations before they transform the growing sympathy for their ideas within the black community into an organised political force. The Government also hopes that the arrests, jailings and huge court expenses will cripple these organisations.

It is imperative to combat this state of affairs. The Spartacus League organised a picket of Camberwell Magistrates Court on Friday October 9th where some black brothers and sisters were being tried. We have also organised a tour round the country for the Black Panther movement to explain the real situation that people are facing in this racist society. The Panthers have already visited the North-East of England and Scotland. In addition the following meetings will take place:

Wednesday	October	21st:	Stafford
Thursday	"	22nd:	Keele, lunchtime.
"	"	"	Manchester, evening.

Friday	"	23rd:	Manchester Students Union, lunchtime.
Tuesday	"	27th:	Birmingham & Aston Univ.s
Wednesday	"	28th:	Coventry (2 mtgs)
Thursday	"	29th:	Nottingham (2 mtgs)
Friday	"	30th:	Leicester
Tuesday	November	3rd:	Norwich

If you would like to organise a meeting for the Panthers for November, then please write immediately to the Spartacus League, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

A "Black Defence Committee" has been set up to defend the black people arrested in London over the summer and waiting trial. The Spartacus League is participating in this committee, which

has set itself the following urgent tasks: 1) The raising of £300 over the next six weeks to help cover the defence costs of those arrested; 2) Organising a picket of the Marylebone Magistrates Court on October 28th (10 a.m.) where those arrested on the Mangrove demonstration will be appearing; 3) Organising a demonstration through Notting Hill on Saturday October 31st protesting against repression against black people in the area. The demonstration is planned to start outside Ladbroke Grove tube at 11 a.m.

Contact Black Defence Committee, c/o 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1 for further information, leaflets and posters on this campaign. Also send donations to the defence fund to the same address—please give generously. Cheques should be made out to Unity Books, and sent to the Defence Committee.

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

NAME

ADDRESS

OCCUPATION

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

CADE'S COLUMN

WHO ARE THE SCROUNGERS?

Mr. Anthony Barber, Minister of Social Security, at the recent Tory Conference made a scathing attack on what he called "a minority of scroungers sponging on the Welfare State". He did this to create a smoke-screen to obscure the Government's proposed massive cuts in social spending.

Mr. Barber carefully omitted to give figures to prove his case. An observer must assume he means the six million Old Age Pensioners, who have worked all their lives producing wealth to be consumed by the real ponces, the capitalist class, which Mr. Barber so ably represents.

He might even mean the 600,000 unemployed through no fault of their own, albeit to strengthen the sagging British capitalist economy! Their argument for unemployment, not mine.

The man euphemistically called "Minister for Social Security" certainly knows the identity and whereabouts of the real scroungers. They are in the directors' seats of the major shipping companies, in the boardrooms of ICI, in plush hotels digesting lunches which cost more than any striking worker is asking in increased pay.

They are occupying luxurious yachts, they are hunting foxes; above all they hold important office among the elite of parasites, the Tory Cabinet.

THE ANNUAL MASS MURDER

A *Sunday Express* report, 4/10/70, shows great concern that should the miners' national strike take place, there might be an increase in the 60,000 elderly people who die due to the cold each year. That newspaper, like all of the "Bosses' Press", only seems to notice people's suffering whenever a strike is pending. Should the strike not take place, will this prevent the 60,000 aged workers dying due to cold?

The miners have not engaged in a major strike for over 40 years, yet last year 60,000 neglected aged workers were murdered by society's maldistribution of wealth. It has been said by philosophers and sociologists that the level of civilisation in a given society can be measured by its treatment of the aged and the young.

Our present property-orientated system murders its old, and through the so-called education process, perverts and distorts all sense of social values in the young.

SLAVE LABOUR

The "Flog 'em and Hang 'em Brigade" has also forwarded some progressive ideas for prison reform. One sadistic Tory imbecile proposes to relieve overcrowding in prisons, capital punishment should be restored! Another enlightened true-blue proposes minor offenders should be employed on public service in hospitals, and be afforded the professional status of "slave labour".

It is almost impossible to improve wages and conditions of hospital workers at present; the seriously suggested introduction of a plentiful flow of free labour would jeopardise the municipal workers' struggle!

For let us make no mistake, the Tories will make every effort in the cause of antediluvian progress. No trade union should engage in any provision of this kind. Prisoners employed in any public service must be entitled to wages and conditions enjoyed by any other worker in this category.

THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY

Members of the Government, the press and television have been describing the wage demands of the striking municipal workers as "outrageous", "exorbitant", "too costly".

Many public service workers after tax and insurance

deductions take home the fabulous sum of £11.18.0. a week. The highest-paid among them are seldom able to reach the dizzy heights of £24.0.0. a week. Are these wages exorbitant? The average worker in addition to unimportant luxuries like eating and drinking has to pay between £5 and £7 a week rent, at least 60% of which goes in interest to private money-lenders who reap the misbegotten harvest of the housing shortage.

Local council politicians, Tory and Labour alike, are quite prepared to condone pollution of the country's water supplies—rather than grant their workers a decent basic wage of £18 a week.

These parochial Napoleons in their present role of guardians of the public conveniences are appearing to most people as ludicrous latter-day Dickensian Bumbles.

Whenever have they been concerned about wasteful cost? No municipal authorities have been on record in opposing the vast profits private contractors achieve at the rate-payers' expense.

Nor have they been over-zealous in pursuing the problems of the public who are homeless.

If public authorities are sincere about public cost, let them end the practice of employing private contractors on public works. This would cut their cost by 60% at the expense of the profit margins, not of the workers who do an obnoxious job well.

LETTERS

ON RALPH SCHOENMAN

Dear Comrades,

May I heartily endorse all that Tariq Ali had to say about Ralph Schoenman? Tariq and I were at the Helsinki Peace Congress in 1965 when Ralph's characteristic forthrightness and courage completely transformed what would otherwise have been a smug, Russian-manipulated talking-shop, devoted to self-congratulation and sedation, passing flaccid resolutions in favour of virtue and against vice (so worded that almost anybody could sign without qualms). Ralph insisted on drawing the attention of the delegates to America's war of genocide in Vietnam, even to the point of physically seizing the microphone while some delegate was reading out an hour-long "fraternal greeting" (identical in wording to the last half-dozen) to a half-empty chamber of sleeping delegates. He proposed the setting up of a War Crimes Tribunal to try the American murderers—to the horror of the Russians and the pro-Russian delegations. Was he not right? Was he not 100% vindicated by the success of the Tribunal? How many of his sly critics have done as much for the Vietnamese people, for the revolution against imperialism, for the exposure of the nature of American monopoly capitalism? Let not those come sneaking forward now pointing the finger of criticism at Ralph unless they are absolutely confident that their record stands comparison with his.

Fraternally, Malcolm Caldwell,
Journal of Contemporary Asia, London.

Dear Red Mole,

We have been asked by a comrade in Hong Kong to pass on to British comrades some details of recent repressive measures taken by the Government of Hong Kong.

Five foreign students and teachers (a Swede, three Americans and a German) have been refused extensions of their visas and are forced to leave Hong Kong in the middle of their studies or teaching contracts. The Immigration Department gave no reason for its decision, but all five have been involved in recent demonstrations against American aggression in Vietnam, and three of them were arrested after fifteen people handed in a coffin into the office of Pan Am airways in protest against its complicity in the war. One American, Mitchell Meisner, organised four peaceful demonstrations against the Vietnam war. *The German, Klaus Schleusener, was told by the acting German Consul General that the Colonial Secretary said he must leave because of his part in the March demonstration.* This ferocious over-reaction on the part of the colonial government coincides with an increase in American economic interest in Hong Kong and the arrival of a Nixon appointee as U.S. Consul General.

These protests, small in themselves, are indicative of growing militancy in Hong Kong, particularly among students: Klaus Schleusener was probably considered dangerous because of his solidarity with the radical students in the Chinese University where he taught. A big campaign is beginning to make Chinese the official language and attack British cultural domination. In the last few months there have been protests against demolition of squatter huts; protests by hawkers who are persecuted by the police and a whole series of strikes and labour disputes. It becomes increasingly difficult for the Hong Kong Government to present these protests as a

communist-inspired conspiracy, and in self defence it has clamped down on one vulnerable section of the students.

In April the students of the Chinese University organised a protest boycott of classes—the Government ordered Hong Kong radio not to broadcast any news about the boycott. A teacher, Paul Williams, expressed his sympathies with the students, lost his job at the Chinese University in June of this year and has been unable to get another job there, although he was the best qualified candidate—he was told unofficially that his political views are unacceptable. In August another teacher, an American, was convicted and fined on a drug offence. Before his trial he was asked to identify people in photographs of anti-Vietnam war demonstrations—he refused. After his trial he was deported at 15 minutes' notice, although he was scheduled to return to the States two weeks later in any case.

Much of the repression in Hong Kong is secret although well-known and of long standing. Extensive police files are kept, telephones are tapped, the Special Branch has agents in schools and universities, plain clothes policemen take photographs at demonstrations—a police state in the typical "unobtrusive" British style, but with less need for silence since most of Hong Kong's citizens are (only) Chinese.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE STRUGGLES OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG! AGAINST BRITISH COLONIALISM!

Yours fraternally,
Caroline Freeman, Norman Freeman.

ADS

Small ad. rates: 6d per word; minimum 4 issues, 5d per word; min. 8 issues, 4d per word.

Displayed (boxed): 8-point: 1/6 per word.
10-point: 2/- per word.

Full page: £100 1/4-page: £25
1/2-page: £50 1/8-page: £12 10s.

Write RED MOLE Ads, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1. or phone 01-837 9987.

Che Guevara's Bolivian Diaries. 5/- post free from The Red Mole, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

Rank-and-File: militant teachers' journal. Available quarterly from 58 Allerton Road, London N.16. Single copy 1/5d, 11/4 for ten.

Rouge, French Revolutionary Weekly of the Ligue Communiste. Write Rouge, BP201, Paris 19e, France, or write to The Red Mole, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1, enclosing 2/- for an individual copy.

INTERNATIONAL: bi-monthly theoretical journal of the I.M.G. (British section of the Fourth International). Second issue in new format includes: Workers' Control; Mandel replies to Harman on state capitalism; Trotsky on the Fourth International; British Steel Industry: book reviews etc. 3/- each, £1 per year. Write International, c/o Red Books, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

A SOCIALIST WOMAN GROUP has been set up in London. For details of next meeting, ring Leonora Lloyd, 574 7407.

Socialist Woman—now out in new printed format—is produced by a group of socialist women of the Nottingham Socialist Women's Committee. A subscription costs only 5/- for 6 issues (bi-monthly). Send to 16 Ella Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham.

TARGET—The Busman's Newsletter. A monthly magazine produced by a group of rank-and-file busmen to help organise the struggle for better pay and conditions and against any productivity deals, to fight the deterioration in public transport as a service, and struggle for workers' control.

If you are interested—or want a sample copy—write to A. B. Roberts, 16 Prentis Road, London S.W.16.

SURKH SAVERA (RED DAWN): New Urdu journal of the Pakistani Marxist Group which presents the ideas of the Fourth International and has regular coverage of Pakistani politics. Price 1/6. Available from Red Books, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

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SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION DISRUPTS MIDLANDS COP SHOP

From Our Legal Correspondent Nottingham

A marathon trial is commencing in Nottingham and is expected to last nearly two months. The defence have hired six barristers in an attempt to defend over half of the City's Drug Squad which has finally been rumbled after years of arresting immigrants on drug charges.

It has been commonplace for young whites and black people to complain before the magistrates that in addition to having been beaten in police cells, they have also been planted and framed on cannabis charges. Usually they have been told to shut up and accused of malevolence and then convicted by these worthy turds. But the truth is now out. There is consternation in the pig sty, brought about by its own gross excesses. It is now struggling to free itself from an array of serious charges by hiring, at vast public expense, an army of legal minds.

The Assizes are held in the same building as the Police Station where many of the offences are said to have been committed. This shows the clear distinction in British law between the executive and the judiciary. In court are high-ranking police officers showing solidarity with the accused policemen. At the doors to the Public Gallery, observers are submitted to the indignity of a search and a close identity check. The Gallery, however, has been filled with West Indians who have come to see the bacon sizzling.

A Two Year Period

The charges against the police cover a period of nearly two years, though many find it difficult to believe this is the entire span, as the infamy of the Nottingham police has long been a byword. After the shit hit the fan last August, the policemen concerned have been on twelve months' holiday with two-thirds pay. This is a rare example of a police enquiry actually resulting in the police being prosecuted. In this

ERNEST MANDEL: WHAT IS TROTSKYISM? Text of speech from Mandel-Johnstone debate, now published as a pamphlet by Coventry branch of Spartacus League. 3d each, bundles post free. Write Spartacus League, 27 Paynes Lane, Coventry, CV1 4BH.

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case the stench had become so great that the only course open to the police was to go to court and try for an acquittal.

During the next two months, many Nottingham West Indians will appear in court to give evidence for the prosecution. There is a lengthy indictment, so long indeed that the charges are presented in an omnibus fashion and the actual details only appear in the evidence. Among the accusations are the following types of offences claimed by the prosecuting QC:

- * Making unlawful "gifts" of cannabis to divers persons.
- * Bullying and using coercive methods to force people to become informers.
- * Threatening arrest on framed charges if people refused to inform.
- * Permitting informers to manage shebeens in exchange for information on other black people and shebeen customers.
- * Threatening to close shebeens if owners did not cooperate with the police.
- * Permitting the whores of black ponces to trade freely in exchange for information.
- * Framing false charges against cannabis users.
- * Blackmailing people to give false testimony in the witness box in order to secure convictions;
- * Forcing people to plant cannabis on their friends prior to a pre-arranged police raid.
- * Supplying cannabis to informers as payment and in order to keep them sweet.
- * Claiming to organise light sentences from the Magistrates for those who agreed to cooperate later.

Before You Could Even Say "Robinson..."

A trap was laid for the police when a West Indian called Robinson submitted himself to an independent search before entering the City Police Headquarters one day by appointment. One of the police on trial said he wanted help in getting a man called Spence on a charge of selling "illegal" liquor. He asked Robinson to plant shit on Spence and gave him some there and then. Moments later outside the police station Robinson was again searched and was able to produce the cannabis.

The police had earlier got Robinson into their employ by threatening to organise a three-year sentence for him if he did not help. In the

event he had been fined £50 after having been planted. After this case the police had asked him how he was going to pay the fine, given him £100 and asked for £30 change from the proceeds of the sale of the cannabis they had already planted. They later forced Robinson to act as a planter and to give false evidence. In one case a man named McLean got a 12-month sentence as a result of the neck-hold that the pigs had got on Robinson. They had threatened to plant Robinson again if he did not do this.

Tip of the Iceberg

All this is, of course, just the tip of the iceberg. The police are particularly anxious to do the near impossible and gain an acquittal as otherwise the courts will be swamped for the next year with people seeking to have their convictions quashed and demanding compensation for wrongful arrest and imprisonment. Needless to say, despite the reinforcement of the local bench with Uncle Toms, the stock of police and courts in Nottingham is now at an all-time low. So far, only the West Indian community has managed to expose the police. After this there may be many others who will seek to beat the system. But we do not know whether these practices have yet ceased. For months the Drug Squad was inactive but recently it reorganised and started again to use the repressive drugs legislation.

Many Black people will know that there is nothing unusual about the Nottingham situation except that the cesspit has overflowed. The political repression of black groups is reinforced by the general harassment of the community. Indeed this works in two specific ways: by inhibiting Black people from engaging in political activity for fear the police will frame them, and by creating a state of affairs where the pigs find it easy to use people who are in their control to infiltrate and inform on Black groups.

It is perhaps stretching any residual belief in British "justice" too far to expect these officers to go on a "Trip" at the end of the trial. But perhaps in other areas heart can be taken and a strategy evolved of cleaning out one's own pig sty.

Footnote: Shebeen—an Irish word for an illegal drinking club.

MINERS

NOTTS. MINERS PREPARE STRIKE PLANS

The Notts. coalfield is not normally renowned for industrial militancy. There was black-legging during the general strike and until quite recently an apathetic attitude prevailed. The reason for this lies partly in the fact that geological considerations and Coal Board investment policy have given Notts. miners relatively high earnings as compared with other coalfields. This has meant that other regions have often been struggling to achieve an earnings level not very different from that already prevailing in this "richer" coalfield. Following from this, has been a lack of interest in the hitherto modest claims made by the union and the even more niggardly pittance the NUM leadership has been happy to agree. Notts. miners have usually taken a disparaging and cynical view of NUM "struggles" and have taken little interest in industrial action for these reasons.

But with the National Power Loading agreement a change of attitude has begun. The introduction of day rates in substitution for piece rates has often had the effect of reducing earnings whilst productivity has soared. If piece-rates had been retained earnings would have increased during this last period. The Notts. area voted against the new "productivity" agreements and ironically it is those areas who voted for these changes—in the expectation of increased earnings—that have suffered most as a result of pit closures due to failure to reach a sufficient level of productivity, hindered by NCB investment policy and the nature of the seams.

It is thought that there will be a majority for the strike in the Notts. area, though many miners are doubtful whether this will reach the two-thirds necessary as a national figure for an immediate official stoppage. But the Notts. miners will strike in line with national policy, reflecting the changing mood in this coalfield. A work-to-rule and overtime ban has already started at Cotgrave and has now been recommended by the Notts. area Executive to the rest of the coalfield. Some militants, however, see this as a bad move, believing that this may represent a manoeuvre by those opposed to the strike who may yet seek to restrict industrial action to a work-to-rule and overtime ban as opposed to a complete stoppage. Many miners are preferring to work overtime at the moment in order to build up savings and thus prolong the strike if necessary.

Joe Whelan, Area Agent of the Notts. NUM, and Bernard Savage, member of the Notts. Executive, agreed to answer some of our questions on the forthcoming strike.

—What are your feelings about Robens' arbitration moves?

Whelan: The whole thing is just pure Bullshit. It's like another Royal Commission from which nothing of benefit to the workers has ever come. Arbitration is just another gimmick to delay militant action. We're expecting a lot of such gimmicks in the next weeks. Robens has already sent a letter to every miner's home and he will

probably send one to their wives as well.

—How strong do you consider the NUM to be?

Savage: We are in a stronger position than the miners were. Do you know, there are ten power stations in the Trent Valley serving the Midlands and they only hold an average of three days' stock. And when power stations close down, you don't just put a match to them to start them up again. It can take up to three weeks to get them back into commission. Furnaces may need relining and it is a major job to get them restarted. The blokes think they are going to be at home watching telly in the afternoon,

but I tell them there will be no bloody telly after a few days if the strike is solid. This chaos is to be added to the fact that there would be a coal crisis this winter anyway without a strike. The NUR have said they will not allow coal trains to move and the same goes for the TGWU and coal lorries, so what small pithead stocks there are will be useless. Of course this general shortage plus the strike is made worse as a consequence of natural gas and nuclear power having been ballsed up.

Whelan: We are in the strongest bargaining position we will ever be in. There is a shortage of



coal. There is a shortage of coke. There is a shortage of men. And in spite of all the attacks on the industry we still supply 51% of the country's energy needs. At the moment there is an oil shortage and oil prices are rising as a result of the action taken in Libya.

—The National Coal Board argue there is no money available to meet the demand. What is the position?

Whelan: The facts reveal the mining industry is profit-making. £554½ millions have been paid in interest since nationalisation. Even now money is being borrowed by the Coal Board at 8% in order to repay money that they borrowed at 4% to pay earlier interest to money lenders. In 1969 a profit of £29 million was made but after paying out interest of £38 million we finished up with a "loss" of £8 million.

—Vic Feather has been taking the tin round the other unions. What will the position be as regards strike pay?

Whelan: Our members pay only 2/6 per week, and as you know there has been no official strike since 1926 and so strike pay has stuck at 10/- per week. Of course the executive are going to have to do something about that. But really all that is not important. The old miners didn't have funds.

—Can we turn to a local situation? Rightly or wrongly the Notts. miners have a reputation for a lack of militancy. What is the position now?

Savage: In the past, Notts. miners have often had high earnings compared with other areas. But now they are very pissed off because they have lost out on the national agreements to the extent of actually suffering cuts in earnings. Under the old piecework system, when productivity went up, the workers gained. On the new day rate system this is no longer the case. Take Hucknall pit, for instance, where production has gone up by nearly 10,000 tons a month to something like double what it was only a year ago. During this period earnings have gone down by as much as £6 per week! And elsewhere there are men who are earning the same figure that they were getting in 1955. Whilst there may not be as much militancy as in some areas, there will certainly be a majority for a strike and there will be no blacklegging.

—What will be the effect of the overtime ban and work-to-rule that has started at Cotgrave and which the Executive has now recommended to other Notts. pits?

Savage: It will completely knacker the pits immediately. It means there will be maintenance done and the machinery will break down.

—Finally, how is the ballot being organised?

Savage: This will not be a normal ballot. The branch officials will be telling the men how they think they should vote. We shall have canteen meetings for each shift immediately before the vote.

SCOTLAND: A TASTE OF TORY "FREEDOM"

Tory "Freedom" and Scotland

Already the vicious class nature of Tory "freedom" has revealed itself in Scotland. It is clear that the Tories, like their social-democratic predecessors, are prepared to use unemployment as a weapon of economic policy in a desperate attempt to minimise the effects of the now continuous crisis situation of present-day British capitalism. Scotland, like other "depressed" areas, is the first to feel the economic strain and the last to return to what the bourgeoisie regard as "normal". The country also suffers as a result of the high proportion of U.S.-owned industry—thus Scotland becomes the victim of the fluctuations of both the U.S. and the U.K. economies. Stagnation in both these economies simultaneously has the present disastrous results.

The August unemployment figures of 96,784 in the country was, as for most other parts of the U.K., the higher ever recorded in post-war years. This blanket figure masks the very high rate of be found concentrated in certain areas: Greenock and Port Glasgow, 7.8%; in Glasgow itself, 5.3%; in North Lanarkshire, 5.8%. Not included in these statistics, however, is the whole new spate of lay-offs recently announced, again mostly affecting the West of Scotland. The Scottish TUC have forecast 110,000 unemployed by the end of the year.

Unemployment in Scotland

Unemployment in Scotland has, of course, always been proportionately higher than many other parts of the U.K. and, combined with low

investment and growth, has led to the country being designated as a "development area". But even the high unemployment rates only tell half of the story since they have been kept at an artificially low level by the massive emigration from the country. The high natural growth of the population has been more than cancelled out by this exodus to Canada, America and South Africa. In the period 1960-68 the increase of 303,000 in the population was offset by loss due to emigration of 306,000 of the young and skilled—such an outflow tends to be selective both in terms of age and the skills and knowledge which the emigrants take with them. As even a bourgeois economist recognises, "Seen in this light unemployment only represents a residual fraction of the labour supply." Thus the labour force in Scotland (one indicator of economic health) in the same eight-year period grew by only 0.3% as against 4.2% for the U.K. as a whole.

Changing Patterns of Employment

Recent years have also seen a great change in the employment pattern. The four major industries on which the economy was based, shipbuilding, textiles, mining and agriculture, have changed dramatically in the 1960s—almost 33% of the people employed in these industries in 1960 were no longer so in 1968. Industries like electrical and engineering goods, on the other hand, have shown the fastest growth rate in the last few years. U.S. industry has been especially active in this field and it was in this influx of

corporate capital that the salvation of the country was seen. 105 American firms have established themselves, employing 10% of all the industrial workforce. In electronics—IBM, Burroughs, Honeywell and NCR all have branches in Scotland—one-third of the workers are employed by U.S. firms. In terms of capital the U.S. involvement is also considerable, the last survey showing an investment of £231.6m. at the beginning of 1969, a rise of 118% in four years. However, as is now being seen, these "growth" industries are no more immune from economic crisis than the older business concerns.

Burroughs (business machines) plan to lay off nearly a quarter of their labour force, about 400 in all; Singers (sewing machines) will pay off an estimated 800; UCS of Clydebank announced recently that a total of 1,100 men will go within the next two months with a further 100 boiler-makers expected to follow later. By such desperate manoeuvres UCS hope to save £5m. a year and stay in business; since 1969 3,000 men have been laid off at their yards. Daily come reports of new redundancies affecting hundreds of workers—the latest is the announcement that Vickers are to close their Glasgow factory with the loss of 300 jobs. No one doubts, least of all the Scottish TUC, that there will be more lay-offs.

The Unfree Press

The reaction of the establishment has been predictable. The unfree press made the usual sounds—the *Express* said there was nothing

much to worry about anyway, *The Scotsman* piously called for "more ingenuity and determination" to remove regional inequalities, while the *Daily Record* proclaimed "The Tories took on the job—let's see them go to work." The Scottish Council (Development and Industry) expressed similar dismay at the possibility (a certainty!) that the government would cut expenditure on industrial development, and pointed out the "crippling effect" this would have on the establishment of new enterprises in Scotland. The lackeys of the Scots bourgeois, the social democratic trade unionists and Labour M.P.s, have responded as the workers have come to expect—they express "concern", they call for "immediate action", they demand a meeting with the Secretary of State for Scotland—but they do nothing. After all the years of going along with the capitalist game they find themselves at a loss when confronted with such problems, to which their only answer is to go cap-in-hand to Gordon Campbell and beg for a factory here or an investment grant there. They reveal themselves as the bankrupt inheritors of a bankrupt and discredited tradition.

James Jack, General Secretary of the Scottish TUC, was quoted as saying, "Our priorities are literally being determined hour by hour." It is clear that these priorities are not defined by the needs and demands of those that he and his cronies purport to represent, but are fixed by the needs of capitalism—a capitalism that will put 110,000 Scots on the "burro" this winter. *D.A.P. (Edinburgh Mole)*

IRELAND : THE CRISIS IN THE SIX

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHICHESTER CLARK

During the past two months the campaign against Chichester Clark's leadership of the Unionist Party has been growing. Pressure has been brought to bear on M.P.s considered to be too "moderate" and, in one or two cases, motions of no confidence passed. In Carrick constituency a pro-Clark M.P., Mrs. Dickson, was asked to resign on a motion carried by the casting vote. Powerful area meetings of Unionists have expressed a lack of confidence in the present leadership, among them the West Ulster Unionist Council. Over the weekend of September 18th-20th the Executive Committee of the Party itself rejected the policies of Chichester Clark. During this period Craig, erstwhile Home Secretary and now with the Unionist Party whip removed from him, has more and more openly challenged Chichester Clark's leadership. The most confused and reactionary of the Protestant masses can find an echo of their situation in his speeches. He categorises the reform programme as attempting to right wrongs

that never existed. Craig has said that, although Ulster would stick with Britain, if Britain decided to abandon the Province they would be better off going it alone than throwing their lot in with the Republic. He has castigated the official Unionists for believing that Ulster could have a police force like that of an English county where no national problem exists. For him, the police force must be armed and take over much of the role at present played by the British Army. The quarrel hinges round the question of whether Ulster can continue to be ruled in the same way as it has been since 1920 or not, and indeed, whether it's desirable for

it to be ruled in this way. The right-wing dissidents from the Party stand for the old method of "Croppies Lie Down" at its crudest. They do not believe (or want) the Catholic Middle Class in the North can be brought into the fold with reforms. Indeed, for them the introduction of reforms represents a fatal undermining of the basis of Ulster society. Large sections of the Protestant working class, alarmed by its worsening economic situation, and now confused by the apparent desire of its erstwhile leaders to withdraw its historical privileges over the Catholics, are unfortunately attracted by these ideas. In a way of course the perspective of the Six-Country petit bourgeois and worker is correct: they have little to gain from the manoeuvres of British imperialism for a rapprochement with the Southern bourgeoisie.

FACTIONS IN THE UNIONIST PARTY

The difference between the politics of Craig and those of Paisley (see recent copies of *United Irishman*) is largely a tactical one. What Paisley hopes to gain by organising outside the Unionist Party, Craig is attempting to achieve from within. It is Craig and his followers who have been extremely active in the campaign against Chichester Clark in the last couple of months. The fourth faction of the Unionist Party (the third being Chichester Clark and his followers) is the so-called Alliance Party. Formally still inside the Party, this group may well split off if Chichester Clark proves incapable of continuing implementing the reform programme. They could well form one of the important bases of a Westminster-imposed political solution.

Craig's attempts to infiltrate the Unionist Party from within appear to have been highly successful. In this his assessment of the basic nature of the Unionist Party seems to have been much more realistic than that of the British Government. The credibility of using the

Unionist Party as a tool in the search for a *modus vivendi* with the South must now seem very strained indeed.

If Craig is successful in overthrowing Chichester Clark and replacing him by himself or by his proteges, it will place the British Government in an extremely difficult situation. Sharples, a British Minister of State on a recent visit to the North, has stressed that Chichester Clark must stay and the reform programme be implemented. The threat if Chichester Clark is overthrown is that Stormont will go with him and direct rule be instituted from Westminster. The policy of a Craig Government would be one of much more severe repression against the Catholics and nationalist and revolutionary political organisations.

If Craig decides to make an outright bid for power, it could well be that he will attempt to co-opt some of the present Unionist leadership to his support. Faulkner, traditionally regarded as a hardliner but of late criticised by Craig for being a Chichester Clark man, is a case in point. Faulkner could be used to form a transitional stage or a front man in the overthrow of Chichester Clark in an attempt to shield Craig from the wrath of the British Government. British imperialism would undoubtedly not like such a situation, and they do have a standing army on Irish soil to enforce what they decide to do. Also, since the disbandment of the B-men, the Ulster state machine has to some extent been destructured; and we should not forget that the Six County economy is very heavily dependent on British subsidy. Nonetheless, the presence of semi-illegal (or at least tolerated) Unionist para-military organisations and the Unionist Party and Orange Lodges does indicate that a Six County state machine with some degree of autonomy can be brought into play. The British Government could conceivably dismiss Stormont and impose direct rule, possibly with an eventual idea of setting

up some advisory council of Alliance Party plus middle-class Catholics who could be depended on to toe their political line. This course, however, might well involve a physical showdown between the British Army and the Ulster Protestant masses. During the street-fighting in Shankill Road recently the British Army has shown that it is not averse to putting the boot in against the Protestants. However, in view of the ever present threat from the left, the other possibility is that British imperialism will capitulate in the face of the threat of force by the right. (One vital unknown is the ability of the British ruling class and the imperialist Army itself to act as a united force on this issue.)

THE REFORM PROGRAMME

Meanwhile the vaunted reform programme has not shown much sign of life. The Central Housing Authority purported to remove the power of bigoted Councils over the allocation of housing has not seen the light of day. Development Minister Faulkner equivocates, stressing that Stormont has not necessarily accepted all the reforms but not satisfying the Craig followers who regard him as having sold out to the moderates. The implementation of the one man-one vote principle has been delayed until a new register is formed. In Fermanagh where the Nationalists have been gaining ground, a spot of the old gerrymander has been brought into play again. A new amalgamated Fermanagh County Council has been set up and parts of Tyrone have come into its jurisdiction precisely to counteract the growing influence of the Nationalists who threatened to upset the original situation despite the initial gerrymandering that had already taken place. Fermanagh County Council has continued in the tradition of its predecessors pursuing a ruthless policy of bigotry with regard to the employment of Catholics. In Derry the elected Council which was Unionist-controlled has been replaced by a non-elective Commission, still of course

LETTER FROM A PD MILITANT /

Greetings Comrades,

Your recent interviews with notables from the "Official" Sinn Fein movement leads me to make a few comments about the concept of the struggle in Ireland, and the forces engaged in it.

Firstly I feel Bob Purdie, in Aug. *Red Mole*, was too kind to the "Red Republicans" who, he claims, have declared for a Workers Republic. In fact they have proposed the formation of a National Liberation Front with the Communist Party of Ireland, a Stalinist organisation which accepted the "British Road to Socialism". Included in this Front were to be the progressive Chambers of Commerce. In such a front how could the interests of exploiter and exploited be reconciled?

The "Official Republicans" in January 1970 opposed a People's Democracy-sponsored motion on Civil Rights in the South at the annual conference of the CRA by supporting a "reference back" motion. Seemingly the Fianna Fail leadership of the South should not yet be opposed.

The Officials have also pleaded for the retention of Stormont, the puppet Parliament of our Imperialist masters. They feel we need more democracy, not less, and that Stormont anyway is an Irish institution! More democracy in the Six Counties means simply more bourgeois democracy, more participation for the Catholic middle class in the institutions of the Government. That's why the "Officials" support NICRA's Bill of Rights campaign. That is why the abstentionist Republicans (the officials still support abstentionism) now demand the retention of a Parliament they don't recognise!! It is not the duty of Socialists and Revolutionaries to defend the instruments of Imperialist Oppression.

In pursuance of the concept of a NLF type struggle the "Officials" have tended to place class issues to the background. In the important cement strike militant support from Republicans was non-existent. Verbal support was not enough for the People's Democracy. We took militant action on a class issue resulting in 17 of our members going to Court. The people's army i.e. the IRA, stood on the side-lines.

The campaign by Republicans on Fishing Rights is basically a petit-bourgeois tactic. This campaign doesn't really affect people's jobs, but their activity is in their spare time. On the other hand, P.D., seeing the deprivation caused to the Lough Neagh Fishermen and the threat to 300 jobs, took militant action. Now 14 of our members face gaol for defending the rights of the Fishermen. This is obviously a class issue, but the right of anglers to fish is not a class issue.

The differences between the People's Democracy and the Official Republicans stem from different approaches to the Irish situation. We in the P.D. believe the struggle must be a Socialist struggle. That a National Revolution to establish an independent capitalist Ireland, we hold to be impossible. Only the working class can lead the Irish Revolution. Only the raising of the class issues and the struggle for the Workers' Republic can smash sectarianism and show the way forward for the Irish people.

Finally may I say that we in the P.D. feel that support from English revolutionaries should not be for the struggle in Ireland, but for the Socialist struggle in Ireland. I personally find it hard to believe that English Trotskyists would support Stalinists (like Mairin De Burca who is quoted as saying she believed there is equality of opportunity in the USSR) in

preference to supporting a group like the P.D. who do in fact reject Stalinism and are struggling for Permanent Revolution. Yours fraternally,
Gerry Ruddy, 75 University Avenue,
Belfast 7.

We on *The Red Mole* are gratified to find that Irish revolutionaries such as comrade Ruddy think our coverage of Ireland important enough to criticise, and we welcome the opportunity to extend the discussion between British and Irish revolutionaries.

Our central disagreement with comrade Ruddy's letter is not on his assessment of the Irish Republican movement, although we will comment on this below, but on the attitude which he thinks British revolutionaries should take towards the various movements in Ireland, and to the general struggle there. This discussion is particularly important just now because it coincides with disagreements amongst revolutionaries in Britain about the role of the Irish Solidarity Campaign as a movement in Britain to support the Irish struggle.

Gerry says, "We in the P.D. feel that support from English revolutionaries should not be for the struggle in Ireland, but for the Socialist struggle in Ireland."

This leads us to ask, what other struggle is there? However, he clarifies the point a few lines further on, when he questions our support for Mairin De Burca (of Sinn Fein), "in preference to supporting a group like P.D."

We will deal later with the whole question of our attitude to both movements, but we want to take up the suggestion that we ought to support P.D. specifically. We support People's Democracy (P.D.) in all its actions against British imperialism and Irish capitalism, but we recognise the simple fact that P.D. does not have hegemony, there are a number of other organisations and individuals involved in that struggle (including the Republicans). We are anxious to learn about the activities of all of these tendencies, to critically examine them, and to try to make an assessment of which of them will struggle most effectively. At present

we do not think that this question can be answered, therefore we cannot support any one organisation.

What Is Our Central Responsibility?

But we think that our central responsibility towards Irish revolutionaries is to attempt to build a movement here to combat their most powerful enemy, British imperialism. We believe that all of Ireland's problems, historical or contemporary, are directly attributable to that imperialism. We think that we, who live in the belly of the monster, should do everything possible to fight its domination of Ireland; that means to build a broad movement in support of the right of the Irish people to self-determination, not to tell them what they should do about their problems, but to try and gain them the right to solve these problems for themselves. We do have opinions on how they can go forward, but we will not make their acceptance of those opinions a condition for our support; that means even if the main forces fighting British imperialism did not accept a socialist perspective, we would still support them. It is on this basis that we want to build the Irish Solidarity Campaign.

But the fact is that everyone who is genuinely fighting British imperialism in Ireland does recognise, in however confused and inconsistent a way, the need to combat its agent, Irish capitalism. There is no genuine contradiction between supporting the struggle "in general" and supporting the socialist organisations; the only contradiction would be in supporting particular organisations before the issue of who will lead the main struggle has been clarified.

Our attitude to the P.D. and the Republicans is based on the concept outlined above, namely that the leadership of the Irish revolution is yet to be decided. We support the many positive actions of both organisations, are critical of many things which we consider wrong with both organisations, are uncommitted about other aspects.

P.D., the Republic Movement and Ourselves

One criticism we would have of P.D. is the sectarian attitude it seems to have taken towards the developments in the Republican movement.

COUNTIES

Unionist-controlled, so there can be little fear of what the effects of one man-one vote will bring there. The official purpose for this procedure of course was to develop the Province's notoriously neglected second city. Any Catholic participation in this body will of course be on the terms of the rulers of the Six Counties and any threat that this might come about through an electoral victory of the people over the Unionist bloc has been removed.

REPRESSION AGAINST THE LEFT
Repression continues fiercely against the Left. A new and particularly vicious piece of legislation is the Criminal Justice (Temporary Provisions) Act, which gives automatic imprisonment for various offences. Under this piece of legislation added to the armoury of repressive paraphernalia already in the Unionists' hands the jails of the Six Counties are overflowing. Already by the end of August more than 300 people had been charged with offences carrying an automatic six-month penalty. People's Democracy have suffered badly at the hands of this piece of legislation. While Catholics have received prison terms as the order of the day, Protestants arrested in street fighting have continued to receive small fines. In the recent street fighting, largely initiated by Protestant crowds returning from football matches and passing the Catholic Unity Flats, Chichester Clark has made noises about no section of society being above the law and the image of Ulster being damaged. However, having played the Orange card, the Catholics will always be the more easy to repress—action against the Protestants presents far greater problems.

CHICHESTER CLARK'S ROLE
Chichester Clark has had to perform a difficult balancing act. While playing the role of faithful puppet of British imperialism, he is at the same time constricted to very cautious steps in carrying out its

dictates. To totally alienate the Orange masses would be to introduce a factor into the situation quite out of the control of Britain. Chichester Clark represented an attempt to keep the support of these masses already rejecting O'Neill out of hand. The pattern of rejection seems to be repeating itself, although this time the threat of direct rule is more strongly enunciated and little alternative to Chichester Clark exists, except possibly Faulkner, and he is already a discredited figure in the eyes of Craig and his supporters.

In the North the *Belfast Telegraph* has been quite explicit in its support for Chichester Clark and has even cast dark hints about the long-term future of the Unionist Party if its future remained tied to sectarian institutions such as the Orange lodges. Although the few indigenous capitalists in the North may be fully integrated into the English capitalist class and therefore amenable to control by Westminster, the bulk of the Unionist Party presents a much more difficult problem. On the resignation of Porter, the Minister responsible for Home Affairs, and a man known as not being among the most hard-line in the Party, he was replaced by Clark himself. Taylor, a known hard-liner, moved up to Cabinet rank. The British-appointed Police Commissioner has been replaced by an Ulsterman, and the Army Chief, General Freeland, unpopular with the Craig faction for his alleged "softness", has also been replaced. However, these changes almost certainly represent attempts to manoeuvre on the part of Chichester Clark and the British in the face of pressure from Unionist dissidents rather than a shaking-out of the machine for a drastic change of policy. If the Unionist dissidents gain power, however, these changes cannot but strengthen their hand.

BRITISH IMPERIALISM & THE SIX COUNTIES

Despite the repression against the Catholics and the reaction of the Protestants, the situation today is profoundly different from the '20s. Then it should be remembered the British did not have the political initiative at all in the struggle. They were fighting a rearguard action, attempting to salvage as much as they could out of the national struggle conducted by the Irish and to halt the revolution before it could develop into a thorough-going socialist revolution. In this situation they welcomed the opportunity of keeping a direct political control over the Six Counties. Today, however, it has been Britain that originally took the initiative (though it has lost it since) to bring about a rapprochement with the Southern Irish bourgeoisie because of the growing importance to it of the South relative to the North. To achieve this end, some move had to be made toward restructuring the political system of the North and integrating the Catholic Northern middle class. However, such a brittle structure as the Northern Unionist State could not be tampered with at will, and the situation went well beyond their control. The results are well known: the tremendous upsurge in militancy of the Northern Catholic masses (not like the 1920s when they were the most politically backward section of the Catholic working class) and the fissures in the Unionist bloc. The resistance of the Catholics posed the threat that the people of the North might take history into its own hands and embark on the road of solving their own problems. Accordingly, it has been a major task of British imperialism to attempt at first to limit this power with a view to later smashing it. (Cf. the attack on the Falls, the confiscation of arms, and latterly the driving of vigilantes off the streets). However, British imperialism has embarked on crushing this power not with a view to returning the situation to that of 1920, but to be able to impose its own historical solution. However, British imperialism

has become enmeshed in a mesh of contradictions of its own making. The structure that it set up to control Ulster, the Orange card that it played, cannot be easily altered: the danger exists too readily of bringing the whole house down on its head.

It can neither go back to the pre-reform situation, but on the other hand every road forward is fraught with difficulties. For the working class the problem is clear: it is one of acting independently as a class and not being used as a token in the manoeuvres of other groups in society. The opportunities for the Left in such a situation are immense but cannot be seized without the needs and tasks of the class being clearly enunciated at every step and that will only occur in the course of construction of the Irish revolutionary vanguard party, able to synthesise the collective experience of the class. The absence of such an organisation has been the tragedy of the Irish in the 1920s.

However, although it is generally true to say that these are the needs of the class at this time, they are, of course, fundamentally problems for the Irish Left, they cannot be solved by pious wishes here in Britain.

The task in Britain is to build an effective solidarity movement. To this end revolutionary militants must fight for the adoption of principled positions towards the Irish struggle by the British Left, which has a lamentable record on this score. The Irish Solidarity Campaign must be an important step towards this end and every revolutionary organisation should offer its active support.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE IRISH REVOLUTION!

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR IRELAND!

WITHDRAW ALL BRITISH TROOPS NOW!

FREE ALL IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS!

Dave Kendall

REPLY

It seems to us that despite many weaknesses and inconsistencies, the present position is an important step forward for the Irish revolution. For Gerry to deny that they have declared clearly for a Workers' Republic is to ignore the facts. Let us quote some statements from leaders of the Movement:

"Out of this conference there came a number of recommendations. The first was that we should openly declare for a Socialist Republic. That was now the objective of the Republican Movement: to establish a Socialist Republic 'as envisaged by Connolly, and in keeping with the sentiments of the Proclamation of 1916.'" Cathal Goulding, IRA Chief of Staff, speaking about a conference of Republican leaders in August 1967, quoted in an interview in *This Week*, Dublin, July 30th 1970.

"It is Socialist. It opposes the power of elite aristocracies of either wealth or privilege and advocates democratic ownership and control by the people of both political and economic life of the Nation." Tomas Mac Giolla, Uachtarán, (President) Sinn Féin, writing about the three fundamental principles of Republicanism in the *United Irishman*, July 1970.

"To do this we must create a revolution in the whole of Ireland. To finalise in the objective of an Irish Socialist Republic." Malachy McBurney, speaking at the grave of Wolfe Tone, Bodinstown, June 21st 1970, quoted in the *United Irishman*, July 1970.

"DOES THAT MEAN THAT YOU CONSIDER THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT A SOCIALIST MOVEMENT?"

"Yes, very much so..."

In the last four years it has come to a very radical standpoint. We realise that what is needed in Ireland is not just a military campaign in the Six Counties but a revolution in the whole of Ireland." Malachy McGurran interviewed in *The Red Mole*, 14th May 1970.

Of course, actions speak louder than words, and the test of the Republican Movement will be the

way in which it matches its strategy and tactics to its Socialist declarations. It is here that Gerry can probably make legitimate criticisms, and the proposals for an NLF, or "Freedom Movement" as they have called it, reflect some basic misconceptions, in particular an over-estimation of the progressive potential of Irish small businessmen, which is in line with the reformist illusions of the C.P.s. However, it is not true to state that the proposals advocate the inclusion in the Freedom Movement of "progressive Chambers of Commerce"; the elements were stated to be:

1. The militant disciplined tradition of the Republic movement.
2. The trade-union experience and the Socialist consciousness of the traditional Labour and Socialist groups.
3. The energy and enthusiasm of the young students, workers, farmers, gaeilgeoiri who are at present groping towards local and specialised radical organisational forms." *United Irishman*, February 1970.

The reference to Chambers of Commerce comes in a series of reforms which are put forward to be demanded by various sections of the Irish Nation. The whole programme is imbued with the Stalinist "stages" concept, which very seriously negates the value of the Movement's understanding that the final goal is a Socialist Republic. Nevertheless the fact that they have realised the need for a Socialist outcome for the struggle is a step forward, and should not be ignored or belittled. Instead Irish revolutionaries should try to work with the many fine militants in the Republican Movement and explain to them why their programme does not match their aspirations. You cannot do that if you deny that these aspirations exist.

Democratic Campaigns: Transport and the Fish-Ins

But P.D. comrades should be careful about the mote in the Republican Movement's eye; they have a few beams in their own. They have carried out many courageous battles, such as their defence of the Cement Strike, which we salute, but they have not always been free of reformist conceptions themselves; for instance it is only very recently that the P.D. has come

out for the withdrawal of British troops. Even where they could have adopted a clear revolutionary strategy, they have not always done so. We will examine only one instance, the recent campaign on Belfast Corporation Transport. P.D. produced a pamphlet entitled *A Transport Policy Related to the Needs of the People*. The comrades carried out a campaign around this, with picketing, petitions, leafleting, etc.

The policy advocated was fairly unobjectionable. It included the demand for a free bus service, banning of cars from certain areas of the city, a licensing system for essential transport, a levy on firms which benefit most from public transport, and other demands of this nature. There is nothing wrong with such demands, but revolutionaries must realise that as the proposals stand they are solely democratic demands, they propose nothing which cannot be granted under even such a crisis-ridden capitalism as that in Northern Ireland, and teaches no one who supports it a single thing about the real nature of capitalism. The pity of it is, that such a campaign could have been used to foster a basically anti-capitalist concept, *workers' control*. By trying to show how the transport service is used in the interests of big business against the interests of the workers who run and use the service, P.D. could have gained support for the idea that these workers should take control of the transport system out of the hands of the corporation of the monopolies; such a campaign could have tried to get direct action by the workers on the buses in defiance of the corporation, it could have deepened the anti-capitalist consciousness of large numbers of Belfast workers. As it was, the proposals did not even demand a wage rise on the buses. This campaign was even less revolutionary than the Republicans' fish-in campaign (also a basically democratic issue) since it did not even include direct action against the State authorities, as do the fish-ins.

Permanent Revolution

Comrade Ruddy says that the basic difference between P.D. and the Republicans are those between the advocacy of a Socialist struggle and a national struggle for independent Irish capitalism. We think that it is not true to say that the

Republicans are out for a capitalist Ireland, but does P.D.'s strategy amount to Permanent Revolution? We do not think so, we think that there is a basic disagreement on this question which requires theoretical clarification. It seems to us that many Irish comrades, and not P.D. alone, have misunderstood the theory, and have presented it in such a way as to reject any national content in the Irish struggle, and indeed to present national demands as sectarian demands which must be taken up elsewhere, but we would regard the present stage of the Irish struggle as bringing into the foreground the important national demand of genuine independence from British imperialism, and with the most important sector of that struggle being for national unity, the abolition of the border. Of course, Permanent Revolution means that only the working class can achieve this, through the Workers' Republic, but this means that a correct strategy would combine the national with the working class demands. It would not negate the national demands as some comrades seem to suggest.

We would accept one criticism from Gerry; we think that our editorial policy on Ireland is open to misunderstanding. Because we regard the Republican Movement as important, and there is a lack of knowledge about them in Britain, we have perhaps not been balanced enough in our coverage. We should have covered P.D.'s Lough Neagh campaign, and the victimisation of P.D. militants by the RUC during the Cement Strike. This could easily be rectified if P.D. comrades sent us reports of their activities, and we would urge our readers to get P.D.'s paper *Free Citizen*, available from Red Books, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

Bob Purdie

ITALY : A right-wing summer

The key-note of Italy's summer were intensified fascist street actions from one end of the peninsula to the other, these provocations in turn supported by massive police repressions of left-wing groups and a clear neo-fascist swing within the Italian Government itself by one of the coalition members.

Reggio Calabria

In mid-July the Christian Democrat Mayor of Reggio Calabria issued the call for a general strike in the city to protest against nearby Catanzaro's having been selected as the regional capital. According to the Mayor, the decision to bypass Reggio Calabria as the local government seat deprived thousands of city residents of administrative and office jobs that would ease the city's poverty. His call was immediately answered by massive street demonstrations that in short order turned into a general revolt. Spurring on the population were decades of exploitation by local mafia and land-owning forces that have made Reggio Calabria the fourth lowest area in annual incomes in Italy. The only recourse for the men of the region has been to migrate to the industrial cities of Milan and Turin, where the exploitation of field-workers turns into the exploitation of factory workers and the continued depression of Southern Italy becomes an indispensable source of cheap manpower.

There were several rubs to the Mayor's appeal, however. The first of these was that the Action Committee directing the revolt was totally made up of local fascist elements, supported by the Christian Democrats and the local landowners themselves. The second rub was that, apart from the designation of Catanzaro as the regional capital, this regional government also requires representation by parties to the left of the DC, thus undercutting the monopoly of the Christian Democrats on administrative offices. In short, what the Mayor and his mafia and fascist cronies were up to was to protect their own hold on Reggio Calabria and neighbouring areas through the tactic of sending their own exploited victims into the streets, where massive police reinforcements were ready with clubs and tear gas. For nine days in July, the battle raged on the strength of years of local discontent, with the Action Committee making sure that this anger went no further politically than the bloody clashes. All the time, the Mayor sat in his office, as in fact the national govern-

ment (led by the Christian Democrats) did in Rome.

After nine days, the police had their way and things quieted down. But this was only the eye of the fascist hurricane. A few days later, dynamite attacks were made against the railroad and public offices. When a couple of bombs were also ticketed for some local politicians, the lid blew off again and the people went back to the streets. This time, the cops went in with guns, leading to the killing of two persons. By the time the second truce had been called, most of the city lay in ruins, the Rome Government expressed its "concern" over the situation (as well as its "solidarity" with the Mayor) and the Mayor expressed his "impotence before this regrettable but understandable anger of my people". What remained to be seen was whether the Mayor and his henchmen would ever close their Pandora's box again, now that the workers of Reggio Calabria have contributed their blood as well as their sweat to the foot-tapping of the *padroni*.

Ignis

At the end of July, a goon squad of fascists fell on a workers' meeting at the Ignis plant near

Trento. In an obvious attempt to break up a strike the workers had been on for several days, the fascists came in with knives and chains and dropped four workers before they were routed. Two of the assailants were not so lucky, however, and they were grabbed by the workers and immediately put on a workers' trial, where they admitted the purpose of their attack in a nearby square to local residents. By way of a reply, the local cops moved in to arrest three workers and a student for "illegal public demonstrations."

Porto Marghera

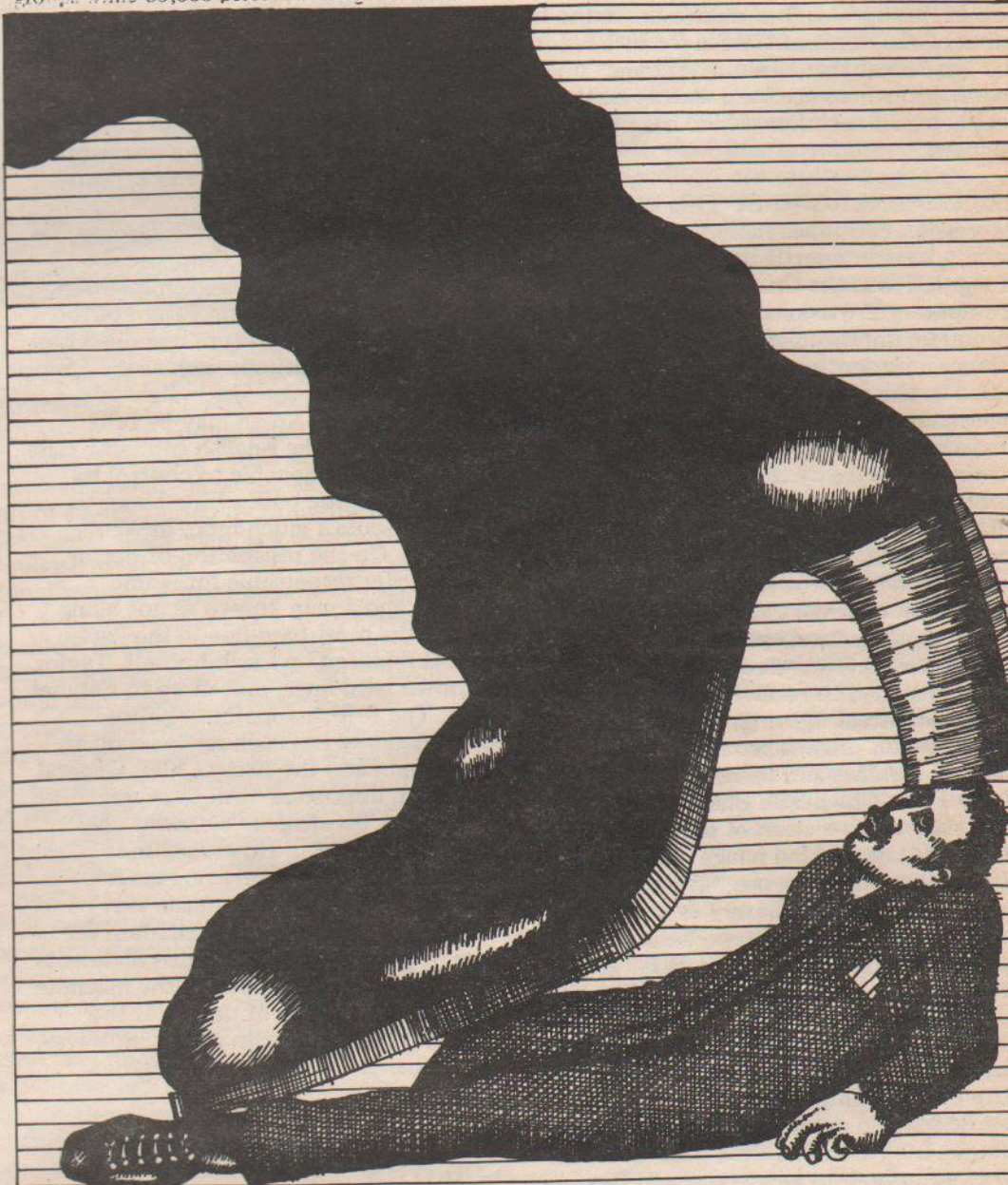
The Porto Marghera industrial complex near Venice was the latest scene of police murder over the summer when the pigs shot down two workers attending a strike meeting. Dozens of other workers were seriously injured during the attack, caused by the alarm of the *padroni* at worker demands for salary increases and for an internal restructuring of the various plants in the zone.

Architecture

The Architecture Faculty at the University of Rome was the scene of summer clashes between students and cops supported by right-wing teachers. The action was sparked off by a

student decision to boycott examinations as being an integral part of the class nature of Italian education. More particularly, the students pointed out, the field of architecture itself was one of the most sensitive areas for capitalist exploitation, as witness the constant building in Rome of high-rise houses for upper-income groups while 60,000 persons continued living in

cardboard and rock structures on the edge of the city. This stand provoked the call to the cops, who were ordered to supervise the exams. When the students and some professors refused this, the clashes erupted and the examinations were put off until an undefined date. *Colletivo CR-Rome*



DUTCH IMPERIALISM

Dutch comrades have got together with comrades from Surinam and formed an organisation to fight exploitation of Surinam by the imperialist monopolies.

Surinam (Dutch Guinea) is a Dutch South American colony. (Dutch tourist guides give under "Helpful hints": "Never refer to Surinam as a colony; it is a separate self-governing part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.") Its formal status, however, is that of one of the parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (the others being Holland and the Dutch Antilles); the local autonomy is purely theoretical since foreign affairs and defence are handled by the central government, there is a governor appointed by the Queen and all real power remains in the hands of Dutchmen.

The economy is entirely in the hands of foreign companies, mainly Dutch and American. The distortion is most striking in the case of bauxite, the ore of aluminium, production of which is split between Billiton, a Dutch mining company recently taken over by the oil and chemicals monopoly Shell, and Suralco, a subsidiary of the American Alcoa. The profit made by these companies out of Surinam bauxite (in the imperialist motherland, of course) is equal to 13% of the value of the gross national product of Surinam. Development "aid" from all sources to Surinam amounts to 6% of the GNP. Only 3% of all the ore is refined in the country; the refiner Suralco then sells the aluminium to its parent company at 75% of the world market price. It has been calculated that if this particular trick to switch profits back to the western exploiting countries was applied to the whole of the bauxite, the amount lost would equal more than Surinam's GNP. About half of the profits of Billiton are attributable to the Surinam bauxite operation, yet well over 90% of the company's wages bill is for staff in Holland and other imperialist countries. The price of bauxite is some thousandths of the price of aluminium, yet still bauxite is some three-quarters of Surinam's GNP. The picture in the rest of the economy is similar; the United Fruit Co. is in there, like the Dutch Wageningen, which handles most of the rice; KLM and KNSM dominate external transport by air and sea, and so on. The benefits for the Surinam people produced by all this trade are ruination

and driving off the land of small farmers, back-breaking work for a pittance for workers on the big plantations, an unemployment rate of more than 20% in the towns and correspondingly miserable wages for those who can find work.

Repression—Dutch-Style

Dutch colonialism has got away with it so successfully for so long by isolating the country and using divide-and-rule techniques. The country is a Dutch enclave in a Spanish-speaking area; the pidginised Spanish spoken by some of the people is actively suppressed, as it is in the Antilles where it is the majority language. This cuts off the people from progressive ideas circulating in Latin America, and the Dutch channel of communication is so tenuous that it can very easily be controlled by the authorities. United organisation of the people is prevented by allowing the formation of separate political organisations by the ethnic groups, the Negroes and the Hindustanis descended from the cheap Indian and Indonesian labour the more progressive sections of the bourgeoisie imported in the nineteenth century after it forced the plantation owners to stop the slave trade. These organisations then become boot-licking cliques competing for their own share of crumbs from the imperialists, and their only connection with the masses of their respective races is demagogic propaganda, especially around election time. National-bourgeois liberation has even less chance in Surinam than most places; there is no C.P.

In this situation some Dutch leftists and Surinam students in Holland (they have to have them to keep up the mystification about Surinam being an integral part of the Netherlands) heard around the end of last year that the French aluminium company Pechiney was to be granted permission to build an aluminium factory in Zeeland, a province in south Holland.

They realised this was an excellent point to hang agitation on and set up the national Aluminium Committee, supported by the Surinam Students Union, the Union of Scientific Workers (Dutch socialist scientists), the Socialist Youth and various Third World and other organisations to fight for a nationalised aluminium industry in Surinam, and against the establishment of yet another factory in an already rich

country to extract more superprofits from cheap Surinam bauxite. They set up a Zeeland committee to make propaganda there about the ill-effects of the proposed new factory (uses good land; pollution; unsightliness; aluminium production is capital-intensive so very few more jobs, etc.). The national committee handled propaganda in Holland generally and especially among students from Surinam, distributing statements to the press including the above incriminating statistics, publishing an information bulletin, etc. A national congress was organised for May 30; more than 300 delegates attended. Resolutions were adopted against the phoney constitution and the Charter (Statuut) embodying it, against the exploiting companies Suralco, Billiton and Reynolds, an American company now trying to get its share of the pickings, against the idea of a joint venture in which imperialist capital would share with Surinam state or private capital the exploitation of a factory to refine the bauxite to alumina,

an intermediate product which is not particularly profitable to produce and would have to be sold to factories in the imperialist countries for further refining to aluminium, and for the establishment of an aluminium industry nationalised under democratic control by the people, so that the profits from Surinam bauxite would go to benefit the Surinam people, instead of being used to bribe workers in the imperialist countries or to stimulate the growth of a native capitalism as in the joint venture idea. The demonstration after the congress was joined in solidarity by Cambodia demonstrators who had just been at the U.S. embassy, and was therefore large and militant, ending in a slight brush with the police when some of the demonstrators tried to invade the hotel where the Surinam "government" representative was staying.

A Single Issue Campaign

The whole development has been a very good use of the single-issue campaign. The main benefit is the organisation of Surinamers, in the form of students who have been attracted to the campaign, but there is considerable spin-off in Holland too; instead of liberal, white man's burden stuff about "us" having to "aid" our less fortunate brethren, the finger is clearly put on exactly which part of "us" is responsible for keeping the brethren less fortunate, namely

the capitalists with the shares in the monopolies and their hired managers who actually do the thinking out of the schemes. It's easy enough to say "underdevelopment is exploitation", but here it has been clearly explained in full damning detail what that means and how it works: the inexorable logic of profitability forces big business to go on concentrating more and more capital in the imperialist countries, so that capitalism is incapable of solving the problems of developing the Third World; all it knows how to do is exploit it. So the campaign puts a few more Dutch intellectuals up against the wall: there is no easy middle way to keep one's own hands clean, either you fight the system or capitulate to it. So though it does nothing to organise the workers who can eventually smash the system, it provides a few more of the people who can do the organising.

The perspectives for Surinam as seen by the Surinamers leading the campaign are long-term ones. The country's bauxite is an object of inter-imperialist rivalry, aluminium being a strategic metal; the Common Market imperialists want their share through the older-fashioned Dutch colonial system, while the United States imperialists would prefer more standard neo-colonial methods to get theirs, hence their encouragement of the joint-venture idea with its possibility of creating a tame "independent" native bourgeois class. In spring 1969 a "government" was toppled because it was leaning a bit too much to one side; it is not impossible that the Americans could push through an "independence" movement eventually to shut out their

European rivals. But they still have a lot of spade-work to do before that. Whether or not, the alternative, socialist perspective cannot be envisaged within the framework of purely national liberation, but only as part of the whole Latin American movement. The Surinam socialists' task now is to break down their isolation from that movement and start to organise the people along national rather than race lines to end exploitation colonialist or neo-colonialist and fight for a free, socialist Surinam.

Ian Fraser

INDIA: THE PEASANT LEAGUES IN BENGAL

INTERVIEW WITH JAGDISH JHA

This interview took place in Krishanpur, a small West Bengal village, the Headquarters of the PSKS (Agricultural Workers and Peasants League). Jagdish Jha is the leader of the movement; he is a member of the Socialist Workers Party (Indian section of the Fourth International).

—Comrade Jha, can you describe for us the birth and process of development of the movement that you are organising?

The movement started in September 1969. The existing left parties had never taken the slightest initiative in demands for higher wages for the agricultural workers. Our party was the first to put this slogan forward, and in doing so we created a particular situation in the political field. For 22 years the Congress Party and the two C.P.s have been fighting one another, but in this situation they allied themselves in opposition to this slogan. One must point out that the leaders of these parties in the region are rich landowners (including the C.P. leaders).

Despite such violent opposition we had the support of agricultural workers from 55 villages, belonging to five districts. Small peasants joined us too, and we built the PSKS under the recognised leadership of the SWP. *It was the first time the agricultural workers had been organised on the basis of their own slogans, on a class base, in their own organisation.*

It was decided to stop work from the 26th November onwards if at that date the salaries had not been raised. But enthusiasm was so great in some towns that some people began the strike before the announced date. Demonstrations of around 2,000 peasants were held. I repeat, it was the first time that anything similar

had happened.

In the end, after a two-week strike, the salaries were increased almost 75%.

—Did mobilisation disintegrate once the aim had been achieved?

No, but we took up the struggle again with a different rhythm.

There is a law in India forbidding jotedars (rich landowners) to possess more than 12.5 hectares (1 hectare = 2.4 acres). But in fact they put all the rest in the name of their wives, their children, or even their dogs... We began seizing land that was illegally held by the jotedars, as well as the land they had obtained by expropriating poor peasants by dishonest means.

We took these lands by force, our peasants were armed with axes, bill-hooks and other tools. And except for a few places where there was a confrontation, the jotedars retreated outnumbered.

Last June, 1,000 armed agricultural workers occupied 150 hectares. The land was given to a committee which represented ten villages, who decided to work and sow the land immediately. 1,000 people did this so well that by the time the police got there, the work was done: the jotedars were forced to give up recuperating their fields.

This action provoked so much enthusiasm that seizures of land in the region have increased. We have now seized 500 hectares.

In addition, our campaign against the fact that the jotedars expelled poor peasants from land they rent to them at higher rates, which is a very important phenomenon in Bengal, has gained us the militant support of many poor peasants in the region.

—How do you organise the peasants?

Because we lack the material means necessary for propaganda and moving around, and also because we lack cadres, we have not been able



to exploit the success of the first strike to the fullest by building a strong peasants' league. Nevertheless, we have had 40-50 meetings in the villages.

After this, the seizures of land have had a big impact on the population of this region. The CPI and the CPI(M) are satisfied with giving the land they seize to their electoral followers and members (to which the agricultural workers do not belong).

Our movement now has a strong influence in three districts, which amounts to an agricultural population of 200,000 to 250,000 people. The PSKS itself is in control of 40 villages, and there are 500 others which are definite sympathisers. We have 2,000 active militants. *These militants organise "village committees", which are kinds of peasant soviets where all decisions are made collectively.*

Of course, all the seized lands are collectively cultivated under the leadership of village committees.

In addition, we have begun to organise a young peasants' militia.

—In relation to the militia, what is the degree of repression you are faced with?

To begin with, the jotedars wanted to enter the PSKS to try and corrupt it. We did not accept them; after that they began their repression.

Eighty-three of our militants are under arrest, including myself. I have even received death menaces, from the Congress Party as well as the CPI and even from the Naxalites. The police have already come to arrest us, but the villagers prevented them doing so. Now they are too frightened to come after us.

All in all, our militia is armed with bows and poisoned arrows which they know how to use quickly and effectively.

—What are the movement's perspectives?

Our aim is to build a revolutionary mass organisation of agricultural workers and poor peasants on a class basis, with the ultimate goal of socialist revolution. I remind you that the 2 C.P.s and even the Naxalites, in the purest Stalinist tradition, call for a bloc of four classes, for the "democratic revolution" and not the socialist one.

Also we try to link ourselves with the struggles of the urban proletariat, by our slogans (e.g. "Land for those who work it, factories for workers") and through the political education we give our militants. We choose the best of these to bring them into the SWP.

However, in all this, we are extremely hampered by the lack of material resources, which essentially means that we cannot have permanent organisers who can continue to develop our movement as the objective situation in Bengal today would allow us to.



Interviewer: L. Rafael



THE MINORITY MOVEMENT

2

Lessons of the 1926 General Strike

In the last issue of the Mole we saw the social and political conditions that caused the birth and early rise of the Minority Movement. In addition we described the type of union leadership which the Movement had to fight against. The union leaders soon showed that they were prepared to use any means against the growth of the Movement.

The Attack on the Minority Movement

The first major clash between the Minority Movement and the union leaders came in the AEU. Here, in complete breach of the Union's constitution, the Executive tried to prevent branches using funds they had collected in order to affiliate to the Movement. When this action was declared unconstitutional by the final court of appeal, the Executive then tried to change the union rules to legalise its actions retrospectively. This was too much for the Rules Revision Conference to stomach, however, and the Executive was defeated.

This incident in itself was enough, but it was only a foretaste of the type of methods which could be used in less democratic unions. A good example of the type of manoeuvre carried on is the case of the Boot and Shoe Workers Union.

In this Union the Minority Movement gained its first support in the London Metro branch. Here it published a duplicated paper, *London Boot and Shoe Worker*. This called for a minimum wage of £3 10. 0., a 44-hour week, the establishment of factory shop committees, the abolition of arbitration, the adjustment of the wage for union officials to that of average shoe workers' pay, and the ultimate acquisition of the shoe industry by the workers. Within a year of the London group of the Movement being set up, groups were active in Leicester, Northampton, Kettering, Stafford, and Kilmarnock, and a Minority Movement slate was put forward for the National Executive. Seeing the growth of this threat to their entrenched position, the Union leaders, headed by Union President E. L. Poulton, decided to repress the Movement. Poulton instructed the President of the London Metro branch to charge the Movement's leader in the branch, G. W. Chandler, with acting contrary to the provisions of the Union. When Chandler's support in London proved too great for this to be done, Poulton asked the Annual Conference for powers to act over the heads of union branches. The Executive then fined Chandler and expelled him from the Union on his refusal to pay. The Executive then sent out a circular prohibiting members of the Communist Party or the Minority Movement from holding Union office. By these "moderate", "democratic" measures, the Executive succeeded in destroying the power of the Movement in the Union.

The Struggle in the Trades Councils

In the 1920s, just as now, one of the main problems facing industrial militants was their isolation from each other. For this reason Trades Councils, which allowed at least militants in the same area to meet regularly, were of great importance in the labour movement. The TUC, realising that the Councils could become a focus for rank-and-file discontent, tried to reduce them to nothing more than talking-shops. Instead of being local centres for coordinating trade union work, the TUC insisted that the Councils should merely "...act through their secretaries as labour correspondents for the TUC General Council, and forward to the same regular reports of their local proceedings, together with such general information regarding movements among the organised workers as may be of use to the Council." Confined merely to this talking role, the Trades Councils were of little use. Therefore the Minority Movement's attempt to turn them into real "Councils of the working class" met with a ready response among militant workers. By March 1926, 50 Trades Councils, including London, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Coventry and Sheffield, sent delegates to the Movement conference.

The importance of the Trades Councils to the TUC was considerable, for if the Minority Movement had succeeded in gaining a real hold in them, then the Councils could provide a real power base from which it would be possible to challenge the TUC leaders. What might have happened was seen on a small scale during the General Strike. Then Minority Movement-

controlled Councils formed themselves into "Councils of Action" in order to organise mass picketing, protection against police attacks, etc. Seeing a danger to its entrenched power, the TUC acted against the Minority Movement in the Trades Councils almost as soon as it began to gain support there. Its first action was the fairly mild one of sending out a circular against the Movement, which, since the Minority Movement's policy in the Trades Councils met a real need, had little effect. The TUC therefore decided to act against the Movement with dictatorial methods.

The first move by the TUC in this new campaign was to refuse to recognise Trades Councils which were in any way associated with the Minority Movement. They did this by obliging all Councils to sign a form declaring "...that this Trades Council is not affiliated to the Minority Movement, nor does it receive affiliations from any branch of that organisation, and that, as a body, it is not associated in any way with the Minority Movement." In order to ensure that there was no sidestepping the circular, every kind of local manoeuvre was carried on. For example, in London a card vote was introduced with delegates selected at district level, so as to ensure that delegates reflected the policy of the union leaders and not that of the local branches. This having been achieved, Communist Party members were then barred from standing for office and local Trades Councils which continued to elect Communist delegates were expelled. This manoeuvring by TUC turned the London Trades Council, for example, from a militant organisation performing a real function in linking up working class struggles, into an extremely reactionary organisation which even refused to take part in the Committee welcoming the South Wales Hunger Marchers. Compared to this type of activity by the TUC, the C.P.'s ballot-rigging in the ETU seems a positive model of democracy! The closest to this method of manipulation we have seen in recent years was "Carron's law" in the AEU, and any engineering militant knows just how "moderate" Carron was.

The Communist Party

The main target of attack by the union leaders was the Communist Party. This was the core and provided the leadership of the Movement. Despite the violent attacks of the official union leaders, the Party succeeded in maintaining the Minority Movement even after the great defeat of the working class during the General Strike. However, despite this apparent success by 1926, the C.P. was no longer the same type of organisation as it had been in the early 1920s.

When the British C.P. was founded in 1920, the working class movement was dominated by reactions to the Russian Revolution. For the ruling class, the prospect of a revolution in Britain was the ultimate horror. For the militant workers, on the other hand, the Russian Revolution was the greatest inspiration possible and led to the kind of uncritical allegiance described later by Harry Pollitt when he said that, "When the news of the Russian Revolution on November 7th 1917 came through ... all I knew was that the workers had conquered, were the top dogs somewhere in the world. That was enough for me. These were the lads and lassies I must support through thick and thin. And don't drop dead with fright when I also say that for me these same people could never do, nor ever can do, any wrong against the working class." Although perhaps understandable, nevertheless this type of uncritical emotional support led ultimately to the collapse of the C.P. into supporting the reactionary policies of Stalin. However, these dangers did not appear at once and at first the interest in, and willingness to learn from, the Russian Revolution had an enormously good effect on the young Communist Party.

When the C.P. was founded, the communist movement was dominated by Lenin and Trotsky. Lenin had built up the Bolshevik Party which had made the Russian Revolution possible, while Trotsky had planned and actually carried out the Revolution. The policy of these men was summed up in a famous statement of Trotsky's that "The working class has nothing but itself and its Party". What this policy meant in practice was that the Communist Party had

to rely on itself and must in no way trust the actions and pretended good wishes of the ruling class. It also meant that there was no substitute for the slow work of building a revolutionary organisation. In Russia, it had taken twenty years to create such a revolutionary party. Lenin and Trotsky hoped that by learning from the mistakes and successes of the Russian Communist Party the new Parties, such as the British one, could complete the process in a far shorter period of time. Initially events seemed to be proving them correct. For example, the British Communists had at first been dominated by sectarian ideas such as a refusal to work in the trade unions, a failure to work around factories, a failure to work with Labour Party members, and so on. Lenin's famous book, *Left Wing Communism—An Infantile Disorder*, was largely devoted to attacking such stupidities, which only had the effect of cutting the Communists off from the working class. This pamphlet led to a great improvement in the work and policy of the early Communists.

The reaction of the right-wing union leaders to the growth of the C.P. was even more hysterical than its reaction to the formation of the Minority Movement. Miners' leader Frank Hodges, for example, claimed that C.P. members were "...the intellectual slaves of Moscow, unthinking, unheeding, accepting decrees and decisions without criticism or comment, taking orders from the Asiatic mind, taking the judgement of middle-class Russia—the residue of the old regime—not even the judgements of the plain Russian people but the dictates and decrees of the same type of intellectuals despised in this country."

This was aimed against people like Tom Mann who had a 40-year record of work in the labour movement!! This fear of the C.P. reflected the fact that the union leaders were more concerned to keep their own members "in order" than they were in defeating the employers and government. This aim is clearly expressed in J. H. Thomas's speech on the day after the General Strike was called off. He said:

"What I feared most about this strike more than anything else was this—if by any chance it should have got out of the hands of those who would be able to exercise some control, every sane man knows what would have happened. I thank God it never did."

The General Strike

As Thomas was making this speech in the comfort of the House of Commons, millions of British workers were suffering disillusionment and humiliation. Nine days earlier the TUC had called out over a million men in a General Strike in support of the miners. The British working class had responded to the call with a solidarity that had amazed even its most radical leaders. On the railways not a train moved. In the docks not a ship was unloaded, and in the mines not a shovelful of coal was touched. In mines throughout the country everything from milk and food supplies to babysitting for men on picket duty was arranged by local union organisations. In effect, there were two powers in the country—the government, which was based on the physical power of the police and the army, and the power of the working class, which rested on the millions of trade unionists who had demonstrated their loyalty to the ideal of working class solidarity. The aim of the government was simple—to humiliate the miners by reducing their wages, increasing their working hours and worsening their conditions. The aim of the strikers was also clear—to protect the miners and to prevent the government breaking the effective power of the trade union movement. In this struggle the *physical* power was on the side of the working class. No government, even the most brutal, can defeat a united working class numbered in millions. Yet despite its enormous strength, by the time J. H. Thomas made his speech, the working class had been defeated. Why?

Reasons for the Defeat of the General Strike

The defeat was certainly not due to any lack of solidarity on the part of the working class. The strength of the strike was amazing and the militancy far from the "Police v. strikers football matches" we are taught about at school. In fact

there were riots in Canning Town, Poplar, Old Kent Road, Preston, Hull, Middlesborough, Doncaster and Edinburgh, among other places. In Glasgow buses were overturned, troops were sent into Hull, and warships were anchored in the Thames, Humber and Tyne. In all, over 3,100 people were arrested for incitement to sedition and violence. Neither was it the case that none of the strikers saw the strike as a political act. One Trades Council reported that the strike "was regarded as a straight fight between the TUC and the government" and was "a fine political weapon for Labour". Ellen Wilkinson related that a meeting cheered for many minutes when a miner said: "If the British Constitution makes a man work underground for less than £2 a week, it is about time that that Constitution was challenged." Another writer quotes an ILP man from the North as saying to him: "Man, John, there's never been anything like it. If the blighters o' leaders dinna let us down we'll hae the Capitalists crawlin' on their bellies in a week. Oh, boy, it's the revolution at last!" This last view was echoed by many foreign journalists who poured into the country so as to have a ringside seat for the coming "British Revolution".

In fact the reason for the failure of the General Strike was that the union leaders were terrified of their own power. It was 1919 all over again.

Even before the strike had begun, the trade union leaders had shown their half-hearted attitude by refusing to organise supplies for pickets, defence squads against the police, etc. While the government made arrangements for printing its own newspaper, brought in troops to run buses and trains, and recruited thousands of students as scabs, the TUC leaders sat in Memorial Hall and sang the Red Flag. While Churchill called on the government to "act hard and fast", the TUC General Council solemnly declared that it did not challenge the constitution. Right from the beginning of the strike the TUC tried to call it off. Foremost among those trying to get the strike stopped was our old friend J. H. Thomas. He made contact with, of all things, the *Liberal* Party on the second day of the strike, and finished up by accepting the government's demand for "unconditional surrender", and he called on the Prime Minister to prevent "guerrilla warfare".

The Result of the Defeat of the General Strike

The immediate outcome of the ending of the strike was a tremendous destruction of the fighting spirit of the working class and the creation of a bitterness which lasted for at least twenty years. For the nine days of the strike, towns had been ruled by Strike Committees, red flags had flown, and the working class had tasted its own power. After the strike, millions of trade unionists found that they had to return to work on humiliating conditions. For example: over 200,000 railwaymen were shut out of work; in Brighton, busmen, tramwaymen and printers were forced to leave their unions, while the miners were left to fight on for six months. During this time they suffered appalling hardships and were forced to go back on worse terms than the mineowners had originally offered.

As for the government and the industrialists, they fully realised the extent of their victory. The government's newspaper, *The British Gazette*, summed up their feeling in its headline, "Surrender Received by Premier", and *The Daily Mail* trumpeted, "Surrender of the Revolutionaries ... Revolution Routed." The capitalist class celebrated its victory by breaking off diplomatic contact with the workers' state in Russia and by passing the notorious 1927 Trades Disputes and Trade Union Act. This savagely restricted rights of picketing, forbade civil servants to join trade unions affiliated to the TUC, abolished the contracting-out levy to the Labour Party and made sympathy strikes illegal. And what did our "moderate" trade union leaders have to say? As usual, Thomas put it most clearly when he said, "I have never disguised that in a challenge to the Constitution, God help us unless the Government won."

The Minority Movement and the General Strike

In 1919 and 1926 we can see the same pattern repeated—a great upsurge of the working class leading to a situation where it is clear that the movement can only go in one of two directions. Either to bringing down the government and establishing a government based on working class power, or backward to a tremendous defeat for the working class. There was no other purely trade union choice. What is also common to these situations is that in both the trade union leaders backed down and as a result the working class was defeated.

It is fairly easy to see why this occurred in both situations; it is because for years beforehand these union leaders had been telling the working class that socialism could be achieved through Parliament and you cannot simply turn round and suddenly say, "We have said for twenty years that socialism could be achieved peacefully, but now we see we're wrong and the working class must achieve power by revolution." On the contrary, if you do this, people won't act but will just be confused. To convince the working class that something as drastic as a revolution is necessary, at least two things must occur: firstly the working class must see with its own eyes that the government and employers are prepared to use force to protect their property and privileges, and secondly the working class must for years beforehand have heard the arguments in favour of revolution. The union leaders were committed to reformism; they could not tell millions of trade unionists on strike that they must carry out a revolution, even if they had desired it—which of course they didn't. If they had been committed to revolution, they would have had to argue and prepare the working class for it for years beforehand. (The position was exactly like that of Germany a few years later, when politicians who had said for years that violence was unnecessary to achieve socialism could not turn round and tell the working class it was necessary to resist Hitler by force.)

The Communist Party on the other hand was supposedly a revolutionary organisation, so we must ask, "What was its policy during the strike?"

The Limits of the Minority Movement

As we have seen, during its early history the Communist Party had been guided by Lenin and Trotsky's idea that the working class could only rely on itself and its party. If this policy had been applied in 1926, the difference in the outcome of the General Strike could have been enormous. In this type of great upheaval, a Party with a correct policy and a firm base in the trade unions can have an influence out of all

proportion to its size. The Communist Party by 1926 had a firm base in the unions, in the shape of the Minority Movement, but its policies were no longer those of a revolutionary Party. They were the policies thrust on the foreign Communist Parties by Stalin, and by 1926 Stalin was trying to do a deal with the left wing of the TUC. This meant that the Communist Party had to adopt an attitude of not criticising "left wing" leaders. To see the difference that this meant to the policy of the C.P., consider the following comment on the subject of a General Strike in the *Workers Weekly* of July 24th 1924.

"Immediately a section of workers comes out on strike, mass demonstrations must be organised by the Councils of Action in conjunction with the strike committees of particular unions. If the miners come out there must be mass demonstrations to the docks and railway centres, where the workers should be told to form section and job committees and prepare for action if official action is not taken."

Here we have a policy of militant action with a warning that the official leaders cannot be relied upon. However, by late 1925 Stalin was negotiating, in the shape of the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee, with trade union leaders such as Cook and Purcell, and as far as he was concerned, this meant that the British Communist Party must be careful not to

offend these men. Instead of pointing out that the TUC could not be relied upon, the *Workers Weekly* began to speak of "good proletarian leaders like Swales, Hicks, Cook and Purcell." And "this proletarian leadership and the proletarian solidarity it was capable of organising and demonstrating was the really big thing that came out of the struggle." (The "good proletarians" referred to all agreed to the government's terms of unconditional surrender at the end of the General Strike!) By spreading this type of confusion as to the nature of the TUC leaders, the C.P. helped to open the way for the calling off of the strike. Of course even if the C.P. had continued to organise and agitate in the way it had originally, there is no guarantee that it would have been successful, but its actual course of creating false illusions in the "left" trade union leaders was foredoomed to failure.

The second reason for the failure of the General Strike was that a loose organisation such as the Minority Movement is not sufficient to carry out a revolution. Revolution demands tremendous discipline and organisation and this can only come in a revolutionary party in which people are agreed on politics and not in a simple grouping of trade unionists, no matter how militant. Until the working class see the need to join a revolutionary party, they will inevitably be defeated in any situation such as the General

Strike.

Problems in the Trade Unions Today

The problems we face in the trade unions today are almost exactly the same as those faced by the members of the Minority Movement; J. H. Thomas's NUR was no worse than Cannon's ETU, and the attack by the GMWU on the tremendous strike of the Pilkington glass workers only repeats on a small scale Thomas's refusal to help the miners in 1921. The thing that appears really different from the 1920s is that politics and trade unionism seem more separated now than they were then—we do not have a mutinous army or strikes of a million miners or troops on the streets.

In the 1920s the real struggle was concerned with whether or not the unions were to be allowed to defend their members. In a period of economic depression such as the 1920s, the industrialists could only maintain their profits by preventing the trade unions from protecting the pay and conditions of their members. This was the real reason behind the government's determination to crush the General Strike, behind the employers' attack on the miners, and behind the 1927 Trades Disputes Act. However, by the 1970s many of the old symptoms have begun to appear again; for example, unemployment is now at its highest rate for twenty years and, most important, profits have begun to slip again. For example, the average rate of profit in industry fell from 13% to 10% between 1964 and 1966. In some key industries the fall is even greater: for example in the car industry profits fell from 35% in 1954 to 2% in 1967, while last year at least two of the big car companies—Rootes and British Leyland—made losses in their most important sections. In this situation, the employers and the government are being forced to attack the unions again, just as they did in the 1920s. This process has already started with the incomes policy, the *In Place of Strife* White Paper, and the new Tory proposals. Just as in the 1920s, the working class is resisting the government, with actions such as the Feb. 27th and May 1st strikes of 1969. We can also see the beginnings of a new Minority Movement on the Committees for the Defence of Trade Unions and the ad hoc committees formed for the May 1st strike. It is the job of all revolutionaries to help create and spread these committees, and at the same time to avoid the fateful political mistakes the C.P. made in 1926.

A. Jones



FOOD CONVOY DURING THE GENERAL STRIKE—NOTE THE ARMOURD CAR

books

The Years of the Great Test, 1926-39: edited by Frank MacManus. The Mercier Press 1967.

Originally delivered in 1962 as part of a series of radio talks, this book contains a number of essays on the political, social, economic and cultural development of Ireland between the years 1926 and 1939. These years are chosen as representing significant landmarks in the history of the Free State. 1926 was the year Fianna Fail was founded. Unsuccessful in his attempts to persuade Sinn Fein to depart from its policy of boycotting the Free State Dail, De Valera founded a new Party. He was to enter the Dail a year later and form a government (succeeding Cosgrave's Cumann na n'Gaedheal) in 1932. 1939 saw the successful exclusion of the Free State from the war. Southern Ireland's neutrality was made possible by the withdrawal of Britain's naval bases from Free State territory the year before.

Academic Free Staters

The book is written mainly by academics. Predictably—as a series of talks for the national radio—the picture it draws is one favourable to the Free State, or at least to the legitimacy of that state, as the inheritor of the republican tradition. Collins' claim that the Treaty gave not Freedom but the means to achieve Freedom seems to be vindicated if one were to take this book for one's gospel. 1926-39 saw the transformation of the Free State from holding an uncertain ambiguous status in relation to the British Crown, to an independent entity with the Crown virtually removed from the Constitution, the groundwork prepared for the declaration of the Republic after the war, and a state able to conduct its own foreign policy. The contributors set out to weigh up the achievements of the Free State pragmatically, affording a bogus air of academic impartiality.

Anti-Marxist Approach

The approach is of course far from Marxist and what the book does not deal with are the real problems facing the working class in this period, the actual balance sheet of these years for the class. The end result of course is that a regretful eye is cast in passing at continuing emigration, unemployment and the repressive measures used first by Cumann na n'Gaedheal after the Civil War and later by De Valera after a little equivocation against his ex-compatriots of Sinn Fein



EAMON DE VALERA

book can then conclude with the words, "Yet in ordinary daily life the people then were much better off than we tend to think. In the practical business of surviving, in developing new communities abroad, in assisting the sick and the poor, also in avoiding extreme disparities in social relationships, that generation did not do too badly. It was certainly a good deal less spoilt than the present one." The survival of the

educational system than in anything else... The older versions of history were (as they still are) essentially political. It is not so much the fact of continuing partition that explained (and still explains) the republican irreconcilables, as the type of history taught about partition and its long-term historical origins." Vive the idealist method of history! There is little in those sentences that an ardent Fianna Fail Common Marketeer could dissent from

Limited Information Value

However, having said all this, we should realise that the value of the book in Britain is rather different from its political function in Ireland. In the oppressor country a conspiracy of silence exists about the history and politics of the oppressed nation. Hence, although many undoubtedly better books (some out of print) exist about this period, books like *The Years of the Great Test* have a limited information value in Britain and are worth reading by the British Left for this reason. Comrades would do well to read D. R. O'Connor Lysaght's *The Republic of Ireland* (Mercier Press) as well, which is a much better book. British socialists knowing what they know about the relationship between the Southern Irish Government and all progressive movements will not subscribe lightly to the blithely complacent tone of this book. However, the major events of the period are adequately documented if the political analysis is awry. Particularly interesting is the situation when De Valera came to power. He did so against a background of a reactionary victory in the Civil War which was not long concluded. Cumann na n'Gaedheal represented the natural victors of this reactionary outcome and against this background De Valera's victory, whatever his future record, looked like a swing to the Left. The Army Comrades Association was formed to protect Cumann meetings. This Association was to develop into the Blueshirts, an embryonic Irish fascist organisation. De Valera, however, was able to lean on his erstwhile political allies, the IRA, and the newly formed Broy Harriers, to defeat the threat of the Blueshirts.

The book also contains some interesting pieces by de Vere White on the fate of the old social hierarchy after the Free State—the Protestant Hierarchy and on the Literature of the Period by MacManus. A piece is included on the development or perhaps one should say non-development of the Irish Labour Party, by Donal Nevin, Research Officer for the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. The Irish Labour Party by its timid activity implicitly accepted the treaty. Its candidates at the 1922 election were left free to state their own position. Its failure to make headway in this period (and largely since) shows that in this period there was no way round the historical problems of the working class, no way round the national question inherited from the bourgeoisie. In this situation it was not possible to introduce social democratic politics of the West European type. The consciousness of the masses was a lot better than its reflection in the minds of would-be labour bureaucrats.

Dave Kendall

MOLEHILLS

The Bulgarian Government has denounced a Greek militant to the Greek dictatorship. At the beginning of July a Greek revolutionary worker, G. Psaradellis, was condemned to 15 years of penal servitude by the military tribunal in Athens. He was charged with having stolen plastic. During the public session of the trial, extracts published in the Athens press as well as the emigre press reported the following dialogue:

Psaradellis: "I consider myself as the representative of all workers. I carry out a struggle for the exploited and oppressed people of the world. I am a member of the Fourth International."

The President: "Why then did they expel you from Bulgaria?"

Psaradellis: "This is not your business. This is a question which will be settled between the Bulgarian bureaucracy, the Bulgarian workers and myself."

Psaradellis would have been arrested in '69 but he managed to escape. He went by boat to Turkey and from there to Bulgaria. The Stalinist bureaucracy in power in Bulgaria refused to give him political asylum and expelled him from the country. When he tried to get back to Turkey, he was arrested by the Bulgarian police who handed him over to the Greek authorities.

Thus, the bureaucrats in Sofia bear direct responsibility for the arrest and condemnation of this revolutionary militant by the Greek dictatorship. All the international revolutionary and worker vanguard must vigorously protest against the loathsome customs of the Bulgarian bureaucrats. We will be organising a picket of the Bulgarian Embassy in the near future. For information ring: 01-837 6954.

British Army after being on leave in Derry in August last year. After he had been involved in incidents when the troops were called in, he decided to leave the Army. He returned to Dublin and has there been working under the discipline of Sinn Fein. When he was arrested he made a statement saying that he protested strongly at the British occupation forces in Northern Ireland and would go to prison with pride and dignity if he had to. "I consider it a small price when some of my comrades have lost their lives for Irish freedom." Messages of solidarity can be sent to Carey's home at 9 Levere Terrace, Harold's Cross, Dublin.

TORIES TO PROSECUTE LORD PILKINGTON?

So confused (and designed to pull the wool over the unions' eyes) are the Tory proposals on industrial legislation that it seems Lord Pilkington could be brought to court. But we are confident the Government will manage to find a suitable qualification to avoid this dangerous situation before the law reaches the statute book.

According to *The Times*, "Employers could be taken to court if they infringed a worker's right to join a trade union, or to stay out of a union, or refused to employ a person because of his union membership, or non-membership."

Pilkingtons offered to re-employ the Glass and General Workers' Union members whom they had sacked only on condition that they rejoined the G&M.

DEBATE

Ernest Mandel v. Tony Cliff
(United Secretariat, Fourth International) (International Socialism)

FRIDAY 30th OCTOBER—7.15 p.m.

Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, (opposite Euston Station), London.

EVENTS

OCTOBER 16th: "Revolutionary Strategy in Ceylon" Abasingh Bandara speaks on the real nature of the "United Front" government and the fake "Trotskyism" of the LSSP. An IMG Public Forum. 7.30 p.m., The Belvedere pub, 96-98 Pentonville Road, London N.1 (Angel tube).

OCTOBER 19th: London Women Unite: meeting to set up London Women's Coordinating Committee for winter and spring activities, 8 p.m., Camden Studios, Camden Street, N.W.1 (Mornington Crescent tube). Ring 574 7407.

OCTOBER 21st: Tariq Ali speaks on Red Europe at York University; lunchtime-afternoon meeting. Evening meeting, Hull University Students Union. Ring Spartacus League, 01-837 6954, for details.

OCTOBER 21st: Black Panther speaking tour: meeting in Stafford, Dog & Partridge pub, South Walls, 8 p.m. Ring Spartacus League, 01-837 6954, for details.

OCTOBER 22nd: VSC Public Meeting: "Demonstrations & the Left—Effective Protest?" Speaker: Pat Jordan, National Chairman VSC. 7.30 p.m., Friends Meeting House, Euston Road (opp. Euston Station).

OCTOBER 22nd: Tariq Ali on Red Europe at Sheffield University Union Building, 7.00 p.m. (see 21st).

OCTOBER 22nd: Black Panther meeting, University of Keele Students Union, 1.15 p.m. (see 21st).

OCTOBER 22nd: "Revolt of the Lower-Paid Worker", Val Clarke (I.S.) & Mary Hobbs (TGWU), 8.30 p.m., The Laurel Tree, Bayham Street, Camden Town, N.W.1 Camden I.S.

OCTOBER 23rd: Tariq Ali on Red Europe at Leeds. (See 21st).

OCTOBER 23rd: Black Panther meeting, Manchester University Students Union, lunch-time (see 21st).

OCTOBER 24th-25th: Workers Control Conference, Birmingham. Contact Institute for Workers Control, 45 Gamble Street, Forest Road West, Nottingham, NG7 4ET, phone 0602-74504.

OCTOBER 24th: Terence MacSwiney Commemoration Social in aid of Frank Keane Defence Fund: music—singing—dancing—artists. "King's Head", Fulham Broadway, S.W.6. (Fulham Broadway tube). 8 p.m.—12 p.m. (special extension). Taille Isteach 5/-.

OCTOBER 27th: Black Panther meeting, University of Birmingham Students Union, lunchtime; University of Aston Students Union, evening. (See 21st).

Meetings of the West London Anti-Racist Campaign are being held on the first and third Monday of every month at 8 p.m. at The Anchor pub, Uxbridge Road, West Ealing. All those who are interested in a united front to fight racism should attend.

OCTOBER 27th: Red Forum: Gery Lawless: The Fight for Irish Self-Determination & the Tasks of the British Left. Earl Russell pub, Pancras Road (Kings X), 8 p.m. (North London Red Circle). Ring 01-837 9987.

OCTOBER 28th: Black Panther meeting, Warwick University Students Union building, lunchtime; Lancaster Polytechnic, Warwick, 6.00 p.m. (see 21st).

OCTOBER 28th: Picket outside court for Mangrove arrests. Ring Black Defence Committee, 01-278 2616.

OCTOBER 29th: Black Panther meeting, Nottingham University Students Union, lunchtime. (See 21st).

OCTOBER 30th: Black Panther meeting, Leicester, 3 p.m. (see 21st).

OCTOBER 30th: Ernest Mandel/Tony Cliff debate, 7.15 p.m., Friends Meeting House, Euston Road (opp. Euston Station).

OCTOBER 31st—NOVEMBER 1st: Conference in Cambridge for all hospital workers, medical students, nurses, etc. Discussions include the role of the medical worker in Western society, industrial psychiatry, the experience in Cuba; + reports from groups in London, Manchester, Cambridge &c. For details contact: Socialists in Medicine, 3 Round Church Street, Cambridge.

OCTOBER 31st: Demonstration against Repression of Black People & Racism, 11 a.m. from Ladbroke Grove tube. Ring Black Defence Committee, 01-278 2616.

NOVEMBER 2nd: Tariq Ali on Red Europe, Manchester University Students Union, lunch-time; evening meeting in Lancaster (see 21st).

NOVEMBER 3rd: Tariq Ali on Red Europe, Glasgow (see 21st).

NOVEMBER 3rd: Black Panther meeting, Norwich (see 21st).

NOVEMBER 3rd: London Socialist Woman group, 8 p.m., 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1 (King's X). What Is Male Chauvinism? (Open to men and women).

NOVEMBER 4th: Tariq Ali on Red Europe, Edinburgh, lunchtime meeting. Evening meeting at Stirling University (see 21st).

NOVEMBER 7th: Women's National Coordinating Committee meeting, South London (details in next issue).

EVERY MONDAY: Birmingham Red Circle meeting, 7.30 p.m., The Black Swan, Bromsgrove Street, Digbeth.

WEDNESDAYS: Stafford Red Circle, 8 p.m., Dog & Partridge, South Walls.

THURSDAYS: Glasgow Red Circle, Christian Institute, Bothwell Street, 7.30 p.m.

ISC CONFERENCE

Over the weekend of October 9th and 10th nearly 100 delegates and observers gathered in Birmingham for the founding conference of the Irish Solidarity Campaign. There were delegates from groups in Stafford, Birmingham, Bristol, Coventry, Manchester, Oxford, London and Glasgow, and from various political organisations: the International Marxist Group, International Socialists, Clann na h-Eireann (the Irish Republican organisation in Britain), the Spartacus League and the Independent Labour Party, among others; and fraternal delegates from the Civil Rights Association, People's Democracy, the Republican Movement and the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. Previously the London organisations had operated under the name of the ICRSC (Irish Civil Rights Solidarity Campaign) but the Irish Solidarity Campaign will be the name of affiliated local groups from now on; the changed name reflecting among other things the changed content of the struggle in Ireland.

The Conference served the purpose of uniting these diverse organisations into a national ISC. It was an important step towards hammering out a coherent national policy for the Irish Solidarity Campaign so that efforts do

not remain fragmented and localised. It was pointed out that a national campaign would be able to contribute a great deal to stimulating local activity in areas where none had previously existed, so that the building of the national campaign and local branches, far from being contradictory, was in fact a mutually reinforcing process.

On the first day James Anthony (Butch) Roche (the man who gassed the House of Commons) and Bernadette Devlin were elected Joint Presidents of the Campaign. Reports were delivered on the activities and prospects in the various areas. A Programme for the national organisation was agreed upon, which included the following demands:

—Support of the Irish people's right to self-determination.

—Release of all Irish political prisoners in British and Irish jails.

—An end to British intervention in Ireland and the immediate withdrawal of British armed forces.

—Opposition to those fostering religious sectarianism in Ireland and preventing working class unity.

—Support of the right of Irish workers to arm and organise in self-defence of their homes from attack by sectarian gangs, the military and the police.

—Support for popular movements, North and South, fighting political and economic domination by British imperialism.

Two addendums which were added to the last demand stimulated the most debate on the Programme. The Spartacus League proposed an addendum, stressing that support for the struggle in Ireland must be for the movement as a whole and not for one or the other tendency of the movement, since this had caused trouble in the past and would do so in the future unless it were clarified.

A solidarity movement, it was argued, was different from a revolutionary group with a full programme, or indeed a group in Ireland. It should be a principle of solidarity movements that they attempt to win the widest possible base around not the full programme, but around the principled and single question of opposition to the role of British imperialism in Ireland and support for the struggle of the Irish against it.

An I.S. addendum added that the Campaign

recognised that only those fighting for a Workers' Republic could lead the struggle against imperialism consistently.

Both motions were passed after some discussion, with many delegates abstaining; they did not consider the addendum as having a clear political meaning, since some delegates had, in supporting it, expressed doubts about the demand for self-determination, while other supporters of the same addendum expressed agreement with the principle.

The following day the Constitution was discussed and a National Committee elected. The Conference ended with a successful rally addressed by Vincent MacDowell, Bob Purdie, Seamus Collins, Padraig Yeats, Des O'Hagan (Republican Movement), Kevin McCorry (Civil Rights Association), and Gerry Ruddy (People's Democracy). Over £100 was collected.

It is important that comrades build the Solidarity Campaign and give it whatever financial and political support they can. For information on the campaign and how to become a member or how to affiliate, write to: Padraig Yeats, 67 Birchwood Road, Birmingham 12.

R. Mossgeil

