

# The Red Mole

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## The Conjuncture in Ireland and Our Tasks in Britain

Two factors continue to dominate the present political conjuncture in Ireland: the attempt by British imperialism to saturate and suffocate the Andersonstown area of Belfast, and the struggle against repression in the South.

The signs are that, despite some success by the British Army, it has not succeeded in crushing the will to resist of the people of this area. A failure to crush Andersonstown will create major problems for imperialism, probably leading to a switch from Whitelawism to a "get-in-and-get-out" policy; that is, an all-out attempt to impose stability, followed by a withdrawal if this attempt failed.

The struggle in the South revolves around the question of the ability of the Provos and others to build a broad mass movement against repression. Events in the North are creating new crises in the South. The Lynch regime, whose continuing existence over the last few years has been in question, has survived, and from survival has launched an all-out attack against the Northern Resistance. Lynch now finds himself playing the role of the Hussein of Ireland — he attacks the Republicans in an attempt to achieve an accommodation with imperialism but his very success would make him redundant to the needs of imperialism.

But the analogy is not complete. In Jordan Hussein is the only viable puppet of imperialism. In southern Ireland, there is an alternative to Lynch for imperialism. The Fine Gael/Conor Cruise O'Brien fake Labourite coalition would be a more malleable instrument for imperialism, with a more dependable base.

The logic of this position forces Lynch to go even further onto the attack than previously. In 1957-1962, Fianna Fail stabbed the IRA in the rear, while maintaining the stance and the aura of Fianna Fail "Republicanism" in both State and Party.

There is no such possibility for Lynch. The very trajectory of his present actions forces him to launch a "Kulturkampf", designed to challenge and dissolve away the traditions of State and Party, in the educational, cultural and political spheres. The momentum of this Kulturkampf will force the regime to widen the net of the repression, and thus to create the objective possibility for wider resistance to repression.

To be effective, this resistance must challenge the very foundations of Fianna Fail. To build such a movement is the acid test for socialists and Republicans in the South today.

To build a mass solidarity movement, comprehensive enough to combine solidarity with this struggle with an on-going campaign of solidarity with those fighting against the forces of British imperialism in Ireland, remains the acid test for the British left.

The only existing organisation capable of acting as a central basis for such a solidarity movement is the Anti-Internment League. It is from this that we draw the importance of the demonstration in Scotland on the 25th and that in London on 28th January.

### BLOODY SUNDAY COMMEMORATION

GLASGOW: Thursday, 25 January, 7.30 p.m. in the Shettleston Hall, East Glasgow. Speakers: James Wray (father of one of those murdered), Dick Jones (AUEW-TASS), Gery Lawless, Brian Trench and speakers from both wings of the Republican movement.

LONDON: Sunday, 28 January—demonstration starts St Paul's 2.30 p.m., marching via Fleet Street and Gray's Inn Road to Camden Town Hall, Euston Road for rally. Speakers: James Wray, Mike Cooley (AUEW-TASS), Gery Lawless, Paul Foot and speakers from both wings of the Republican movement.

Generalise every struggle to

# BREAK PHASE 2

By PAUL SMITH

On Wednesday 17 January, at 3.30 in the afternoon, the Prime Minister spoke to the nation on TV. His speech was the opening shot in the battle over 'Phase 2' of what the Government calls its "anti-inflation measures".

The whole future of the Tory Government is bound up with its success in getting the working class to swallow 'phase 2'. Without successfully holding down real wages in the next 9 months, British capitalists will have acute problems in standing up to competition from capitalists abroad. And at the same time a victory over 'Phase 2' is indispensable in the ruling class's struggle to decisively weaken the whole working class movement.

The Government is under no illusion that it can persuade militant trade unionists to accept a cut in their living standards in order to bail out the capitalist class. Their aim instead is to confuse more backward layers of the population with empty talk about help for the lower paid, and at the same time try to ensure that opposition to their package remains fragmented. If Heath can achieve these two objectives then the road is clear for a showdown with the militant core of the labour movement.

### LABOUR LEADERS' RESPONSE

Caught between the devil and the deep blue

sea, the union leadership cannot accept the deal. They face loss of control over their membership if they do. On the other hand they offer no way forward. Phoney booms and imaginative growth rates do not fit the facts of capitalism's present crisis. They sit and wait for a Labour government, and a deal that will be more acceptable to their membership. Meanwhile, they hope the lack of any central leadership will cause the rank and file opposition against Phase Two to peter out.

Heffer of the Tribune group, calls for an emergency recall of Parliament. The 'lefts' want a platform to shout their opposition from. Any platform will do except the working-class. As a so-called representative of the working class, Heffer and Co's test is not in Parliament but on the terrain of the actual struggle of the working class.

The Communist Party revealed its strategy on the front page of the *Morning Star*. All its efforts are directed to recall the T.U.C. to organise "massive action" to defeat the Freeze. But a recall of the T.U.C. was not required to defeat the jailings of the Pentonville 5. What was required was the organisation of independent action by the rank and file. When the C.P. has the organisation which could build such independent action, the Liaison Committee for the Defence of the Trade Unions, and yet simply concentrates on lining up the

bureaucrats in token opposition, reliance on the C.P. is a dead end.

### SMASHING PHASE TWO

It is undoubtedly the case that the Phase Two will not prevent one group or other from attacking the Incomes Policy. But we must be clear on the basis for victory against the Freeze, and the Tory government. When the 7½% pay norm was challenged by the Power Workers, the fact that they were isolated from the rest of the working class led directly to their defeat. The miners on the other hand drew support from all the working class, and won. The lessons are clear, the struggle against Phase Two will only be successful if the struggle is seen as being in the interests of the entire working class. The demands of the Car Workers, and the Miners must not be limited to a wage increase. They should call for all out support to smash Phase Two. To do this it will be necessary to organise many sections of the working class around them.

Equally, today the Hospital Workers stand in danger of complete isolation. A victory against the 'new norm' by this low paid group of workers would be decisive in smashing the ideological icing around the Phase Two cake. Again we must organise the support of all groups of workers in the heart of the labour movement for this struggle. A victory by the low paid against the norm is worth a great deal to all sections of the working class.

### REVOLUTIONARIES

As the policy of the Union leaders and CP can lead to the defeat of the working class, the role of revolutionaries is extremely important. Demanding bigger increases or more muscle is not enough. The demands and organisations we fight for must link into the entire needs of the working class, including tenants, housewives etc.

All militants must campaign in and outside the labour movement, for recognition that Phase Two is in the interests of nobody except the ruling class. And that involves supporting national and regional conferences of the rank and file to map out a policy against Phase Two. We must also demand support for all workers in struggle now, through support committees and solidarity action. Lastly we should demand that the C.P. calls for an emergency L.C.D.T.U to take up the issues of Phase Two and organise

## SOLIDARITY TILL FINAL VICTORY!

Indochina Rally — Saturday 20th Jan.

Assemble 2pm — Charing X Embankment

Organised by Indochina Solidarity Conference. Followed by joint march with British Council for Peace in Vietnam to U.S. Embassy in Grosvenor Square.



Devastation in the North. Page 3—For 'peace' or solidarity? Page 7—Fourth International

# GOVERNMENT MANOEUVRES OVER GAS WORKERS

By PAUL HUNTER

At a Special Delegate Conference of the GMWU on Monday January 8, Gas Workers voted overwhelmingly for national industrial action against the Government's ban on pay negotiations — a decision endorsed by the Executive Committee the following day.

What this meant in effect was that the Government was given an ultimatum: Unfreeze the Gas Negotiations or face a national overtime ban and policy of non-cooperation from midnight, Wednesday January 17.

It was clearly as a result of this that the Government decided to end the freeze on negotiations (which was becoming a bit of a farce anyway) from Wednesday January 17.

## TIMING OF THE CLAIM

Trade union bureaucrats are notorious for avoiding leading struggles — because it imposes extra work on themselves and breaks their routine. G&MWU officials are no exception — which is why they timed the Gas pay claim to follow on immediately after agreement was reached on the Power Workers' pay claim.

A joint, or even simultaneous, struggle — which could have ensured a much better settlement for both sections — was avoided. Instead, the G&MWU bureaucrats put their faith in the "leap-frog" system of claims, which relies heavily on the employers' alleged "sense of fair play": if the Power Workers got £x, then we want at least £y, and so on.

Unfortunately for the G&MWU, the Government timed their Pay Freeze to follow immediately after the Power Workers' settlement too!

So the Gas Workers' claim was submitted on November 15, with the employers due to reply one month later on December 15. And it was duly "frozen".

## CALLS FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION

On November 30, delegates to a G&MWU National Industrial Conference called to discuss the Gas pay claim were urging the union to take national industrial action to break out of the deadlock imposed by the Government. And they were pointing out that the membership in almost all areas were prepared to take such industrial action.

At this conference, however, no firm decision was taken except to wait and see what the Gas Council had to say on December 15.

## ADDING INSULT TO INJURY

In the event, the Gas Council announced that on the previous day they had received a directive from the Government freezing all negotiations about pay as well. This had a twofold effect.

First it impelled the G&MWU to recall its National Delegate Conference (the meeting on January 8) to discuss the new situation. But secondly, it served to divert attention away from the Pay Freeze itself.

From then on, the G&MWU leadership concentrated its fire merely on getting a retraction of the "insult" rather than a redress of the "injury" itself.

## SIDESTEPPIING THE POLITICAL FIGHT

This was, in fact, the essential weakness of the ultimatum. For all Mr. Bassett and his executive was demanding in return for calling-off the overtime ban was what he called "reasonable negotiations" — a "concession" which Heath could give away without conceding anything essential at all.

Like the AUEW executive committee's emphasis on protesting about the fines rather than on a fight against the Act from



Gas workers' delegates after the January 8th conference of the GMWU

which they result, the G&MWU leaders were side-stepping the political fight against the Pay Freeze itself — and therefore leaving the Government room for manoeuvre.

## THE POTENTIAL FOR STRUGGLE

It remains to be seen how successful rank and file militants will be in resisting any attempt to call-off the struggle now that the ban on negotiations has been lifted. Gas workers in East Greenwich and Croydon have been banning overtime for some weeks now, and gas workers in the Nottingham and Birmingham areas joined them last Monday.

In addition, the Confederation of Ship Building and Engineering Unions has issued a directive to all its members in the Gas industry (who are mainly in Maintenance sections) to support any action taken by the Process workers, and white collar workers have also decided to black all work normally done by manual workers who are taking industrial action.

Finally, at the Delegate Conference, the vote

was really not between taking action against the ban on negotiations and not taking action, but between limiting action to the question of the ban on negotiations and a struggle against the Freeze as such.

## BUT MILITANCY IS NOT ENOUGH

But two things are clear. First, the trade union leaders are instinctively shying away from any positive struggle against the Industrial Relations Act or the Pay Freeze (though, of course they are quite prepared to "ignore" the NIRC!) — precisely because they know that you cannot fight an Act of Parliament without fighting the Government which introduced it (and maybe also the State apparatus which upholds it as "the Law").

But secondly, such a political struggle against the Government is vitally necessary to defend even the sectional interests of the working class (as expressed in the trade unions) — a fact demonstrated nowhere so clearly as in the effects of the Pay Freeze itself.

## £10,000 FUND DRIVE FOR WEEKLY PAPER

# The Red Mole



With six weeks to go, we still need just under another £4,000 if we are to reach the target. So keep the money flowing in; we have had two individual donations of £100 so far this week, but we need more to make the £10,000. The total now (17 January) stands at:

**£6,007**

Further signatories from the labour movement to the appeal "to help make the newspaper into a weekly and contribute to the £10,000 Fund Drive" are (in a personal capacity):

Ken Wallace (Secretary, No. 6 Divisional Council, AUEW-TASS)

David Oldham—gas fitter (GMWU shop steward)  
If you would like to contribute, please fill in the form below.

Fill in this form and send to: FUND DRIVE, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1. (Cheques should be made out to The Red Mole).

I am enclosing £.....p..... for the Fund Drive.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

I know the following who may also wish to contribute:

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

# Building Employers Begin All-Out Offensive

In Birmingham and London, building employers have begun an all-out offensive to regain the losses taken during the building strike. In Birmingham, Pete Carter, a leading UCATT militant, has been kicked off Bryant's Chamberlain Gardens site. On Monday 15th, all workers on the site took strike action against the sacking. Meanwhile, at the W.C. French city centre and office 'lump' site in Birmingham, a successful stewards picket stopped lorries coming on site. In London, at the hotel site of Imperial London Contractors, Bedford Way, workers forced a non-union member home. Birmingham Council have been requested to remove their "no lump" clause on building contracts. No firm will tender for the massive Council House programme until such a guarantee. And Pete Carter's ex company, Bryants', is rumoured to be "splitting up" into smaller units, to ease "labour problems".

## CHARTER AND THE LUMP

All this adds up to a big push by the employers to reintroduce the lump on a grand scale in the industry, hitting first at the centres of militancy. Again, the whole problem of the disorganisation of the trade crops up. Clearly, there is a case here for a rank and file organisation, but up to now 'Charter' has not fitted the bill. At the weekend conference of 'Charter' Editorial Board, it was resolved to continue the struggle against the 'lump' in the lead up to the March 10th Conference. But no assessment (bar one short editorial) has dealt with Charter's role so far, and the losses Charter has chalked up.

The Communist Party set up a rank-and-file organisation in the building trade to win control of the rank and file, and union leadership. The temporary nature of building work, combined with the workers splitting up into small numbers means that the C.P.'s base in the trade has been small. The size of the trade and the number of employees gives a picture of its importance in British industry. At the last count nearly 100,000 workers were employed in construction. Clearly, the C.P. (and Charter) had the greatest grip in the large cities and biggest sites. However, in the country as a whole, there were large numbers of militants outside

the C.P.'s control. Charter was set up to use this layer to catapult the C.P. into the leadership.

For this independent layer, the decisive test came in the strike. The last national strike was in 1963. That was the last time that a national leadership of the trade had the chance to be tried and tested. As far as the new leadership, in Bristol, South Wales, Yorkshire and Lancashire were concerned, the test of Charter was how far did it help with the problem of

By PAUL SMITH

conducting the national strike. Charter not only failed to take any initiative independent of the trade-union bureaucrats, it never appeared. It speaks volumes for the political priorities of its leadership.

## NEW LEADERSHIP, OLD PROBLEMS

The result of all this has been a dramatic slump in the support of Charter. Even in the big cities Charter meetings have been cut by half. Paper sales have dropped. Many new militants, in stewards committees or action committees, are suspicious of the paper and its usefulness. On the other hand they are beset with precisely the old problems of the industry: the employers playing cat and mouse through the disorganisation of the trade. At a time when Charter is unpopular, there has never been a greater need to link up the rank and file on the correct demands. We cannot rely on the officials, even given their current left turn. (This is explained by the fact that George Smith, general secretary of UCATT, has told his officials either you win the support of the members or you're out, we're a top-heavy union already.) These people will bend and twist whichever way the wind blows. At the same time as the regional official in Birmingham supports the actions of the stewards in picketing a lump site, UCATT is busily (although quietly) fighting a N.I.R.C. case on union membership! The officials will use anything but the strength of the rank and file to solve their problems!

## WHAT NEXT?

One of the best features of the building strike was the way the rank and file got organised in

many new areas. This organisation could form the bones of a united struggle against the 'lump'. Charter must now issue the call for all shop-stewards committees and action committees to plan local actions against the lump. The Birmingham example is a good one here. Stewards from the various sites are maintaining a picket on a rota basis, of a leading lump in the area. Solidarity and financial support is needed for this struggle. In other areas without an active stewards committee, we must call for action committees to be set up to discuss the best way of struggling against the lump.

## CHARTER: THE WAY FORWARD

The Charter conference is planned for March 10th. The leadership of Charter is making a big push to win back the influence it lost in the strike. The message building workers take to that conference must be clear. We cannot win on Charter's present strategy. To build a movement with the aim of pressuring the bureaucrats is simply not enough. (The non-appearance of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions when it was never more needed demonstrates this.) The real test of a rank and file organisation is whether it fights for independent action regardless of who sits in the General Secretary's chair. But there is another important point. The present offensive by the ruling class against the working class is designed to split away sections of workers from a class struggle policy. Charter has to keep the movement united by pushing demands and actions in the interests of all building workers. And that means not just the lump, but tackling the whole struggle for a permanent labour force for the industry.

## OTHER SECTIONS

One aspect of the failure of Charter in the strike was that building workers had no way of presenting their case to the rest of the working class. Winning the support of entire working-class is decisive now, as the miners strike showed. Now Charter has to take up the problem of support for other sections of workers engaged in the struggle against the freeze and the Act. We must start now to make sure that all building workers are behind the struggle of the rest of the working class.

# INDOCHINA

## For 'peace' or solidarity?

By JULIET SUMNER

In the early days of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (VSC), a debate developed between the revolutionary left and the Communist Party. We argued that the best way of building the movement was by making it clear that we were for the victory of the National Liberation Front and for the defeat of U.S. imperialism. The Communist Party argued that this was an "ultra-left" position and would put off many "people in the middle". In the years 1967-68 the VSC demonstrated in practice how it was possible to mobilise tens of thousands of people in militant street demonstrations on correct and principled slogans. Moreover the VSC finally succeeded in forcing the "people in the middle" to take sides in this war. Even the CP was finally obliged under the pressure to participate in the last two demonstrations organised by the VSC on the political basis of Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution, Victory to the NLF.

### REASONS FOR THE DECLINE

The decline in the solidarity movement was related to the rise of working class struggles, false hopes that the war was about to end, and an adaptation by most of the revolutionary groups to the "immediate situation" confronting them in Britain. We have to be very clear on this last point. It does not imply that we would have continued to mobilise tens of thousands of militants if we had continued to agitate on the question of the war. What it does mean is that we would have thoroughly educated the vanguard so that in cases of sharp changes in the international situation we could have had a solid basis on which a solidarity movement could have been rapidly re-constructed.

The creation of the Indochina Solidarity Conference in December and the fact that the International Socialism group is marching on this demonstration are positive steps in rebuilding the solidarity movement. The I.S. should institutionalise this shift by joining

the Indochina Solidarity Conference and strengthening it through consistent activity and work on this question.

### DIFFERENCES

One important factor in rebuilding the solidarity movement is to understand that the old differences between the CP and ourselves have not evaporated. They have merely taken new forms. That is why the British Campaign for Peace in Vietnam (BCPV), essentially the C.P.'s front for intervention in this field of work and staffed by old faithfuls and fellow-travellers (who for some strange reason continue to pretend that they have nothing to do with the C.P.) has refused to have a common rally with the Indochina Solidarity Conference. Despite the latter's efforts to have a single united rally and demonstration, the BCPV refused to share their platform with the ISC. That is why the ISC was forced to hold a separate rally at Charing Cross Embankment; but despite this it decided to march to Trafalgar Square for a united and joint demonstration.

The CP's respectable, parliamentarianist orientation forces it to gravitate towards 'left' MP's such as John Mendelson, and pacifist demagogues such as Lord Soper, who has consistently attacked "both sides" in the war. It is this general orientation which determines the C.P.'s tactics on the issue of Vietnam and which is not dissimilar to that of sections of the Labour Party.

### THE "SIGN NOW" DEBATE

However there is another disagreement within the solidarity movement as a whole, and this is related to what attitude we should adopt towards the position of "Sign Now". This question can best be understood in two parts:

(i) Those like the C.P., and its adjunct, the BCPV, who say that "Sign Now" should be the principle orientation for the solidarity movement. This in our view totally disarms the solidarity movement because it implies that the key factor in the war is the signing of a piece of paper, and that after this is done

all will be over. In our view this is totally incorrect. It also fits in beautifully with the C.P.'s generalised approach of "pressure-politics". Thus the CP argues that if we pressurise Nixon (via Heath) to "Sign Now" and he does so it can be presented as a big victory for those of us who are exercising this pressure and who adopted this approach. That is how the CP views the situation. Our view is that even if the peace plan is signed the war will not be over. Even after the U.S. withdraws the bulk of its troops the puppet regime and its military and political infrastructure will still have to be swept out of the way. That is why "Solidarity Till Final Victory" expresses both the long-term interests of the Indochinese comrades and the real tasks of the solidarity movement in Europe and America.

(ii) Then there are those on the left who regard the 9-point plan as a "sell-out", "betrayal" etc. This is absolute nonsense. In the first place, we have to be absolutely clear that we are not opposed to negotiations on principle. All negotiations are determined by the national and international relationship of forces. Secondly, we have to concretely analyse every negotiated settlement. In the case of the 9-point peace plan we made it clear at the time that both sides had made concessions. The United States had pledged itself to stopping the bombing and pulling out its troops and the Vietnamese had agreed to participate in a government with Thieu.

Now obviously we cannot be for or against the 9-points as such. We are obviously in favour of the imperialists being compelled to withdraw. At the same time we cannot say that we are in favour of a coalition government between Thieu and the PRG. Clearly the latter view it as a tactical move necessitated by the balance of forces, but it is obvious that it is a utopian hope. Two hostile armies, representing two hostile social forces (workers, peasants, sections of the petty bourgeoisie vs. imperialism and its local satraps), cannot simply merge or disappear into thin air. A state of dual power exists in South Vietnam. The question of power has to be resolved one way or the other. Therefore it would be absurd for us in the solidarity movement to base our actions on tactical turns made by the Vietnamese comrades; if we did so we would completely confuse



Part of solidarity demonstration last year

and politically disorient the solidarity movement. That is the only reason why the IMG has not supported the inclusion of "Sign Now" as part of the ISC's demands.

### SOLIDARITY

We have made clear on many occasions in the past that we support the Provisional Revolutionary Government and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. We repeat that it is not incumbent on us to support all tactical moves by these comrades which they themselves might renounce in a few months time. Our slogan therefore remains: "All Power to the PRG!"

The IMG has made it clear that it regards building solidarity actions with the Indochinese revolutionaries as a key task in the present period. That is why our entire organisation has been mobilised in this direction for the January 20th demonstration. We shall continue to participate in similar actions till final victory. Given the attitudes of Peking and Moscow, for any organisation claiming to be revolutionary to do any less would amount to open treachery.

**SOLIDARITY TILL FINAL VICTORY!**

**ALL POWER TO THE P.R.G.!**

**FOR THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL IMPERIALIST TROOPS FROM S.E. ASIA!**

**FOR A UNITED AND SOCIALIST VIETNAM!**

The month of February will be the fifth month of occupation for the workers at the C.A.V. factory in Fazakerley, Liverpool. The long months of bitter struggle, especially over the so-called "festive season", have naturally taken their toll and the ranks of the occupiers now number about one-third of the original workforce of 1200. But, as the occupiers correctly point out, this is quite an impressive record: especially when seen in the light of the length and difficulty of the struggle and the large redundancy bribes handed out by the company to try and wear down the resistance of the workers. Many of those who left after the first weeks did so because of particularly difficult personal situations, and of ten retain a real sympathy for those who are sticking it out to carry on the struggle.

The occupation is now manned by almost 400 men and women who have come through the past four months with valuable experience, great courage and increased dedication to the fight: qualities which make them a formidable enemy, even for a monster like the Joseph Lucas combine. They are all convinced of the need for renewed effort and new offensives to bring their struggle to a victorious conclusion.

### EXTEND THE STRUGGLE

There are two major ways in which the struggle must be extended and support built. First of all, the struggle must be broadened by making workers on a national scale aware of what is happening at CAV and the importance of this fight to their own situation. The following are concrete measures that can be used to do this:

1. Motions of support for the CAV struggle (if at all possible accompanied by financial aid) should be put forward at meetings of trade union branches, trades councils, shop stewards committees, local trade union or tenants action committees, student unions etc.;

2. All such actions of support should be communicated to the local and national press, television etc, and continual pressure put on them to publicise these actions;

3. Bodies which do agree to support should

## CAV OCCUPATION The Fight Goes On

By PETE CRESSWELL and BRIAN SLOCOCK



Rally in support of CAV workers

organise the distribution of information among their membership about the CAV struggle;

4. Meetings should be set up at which representatives of the CAV Occupation Committee can address as large an audience as possible—especially of trade union militants—on their struggle and the need for support.

Secondly, the struggle must be deepened by starting serious industrial action against the Lucas combine. This has been one of the most serious weaknesses of the struggle so far: the lack of any really powerful industrial sanctions against the combine. While other workers in the combine and many transport drivers have agreed not to scab on the struggle, and are refusing to handle work normally done at the Fazakerley site, the only major offensives against the combine have been those taken by the CAV workers themselves: the occupation of CAV, the closure

of the Lucas Industrial Equipment plant on their site, the picketing of Merseyside car factories, and the recently established 24-hour pickets on the Lucas Victor Works factory in Liverpool.

### WARRINGTON SHOWS WAY

R recently a series of meetings between the CAV Occupation Committee and the Warrington Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions produced an important initiative: it was agreed that the militants from the Warrington group would raise support for the CAV struggle throughout their trade unions, including the all-out blacking of Lucas Products. One of the most important results of this has been a motion, put forward by local NUR militants through their branch, to the Manchester District Council of the NUR to agree in principle with the blacking of all Lucas products on the railways. If this motion is accepted it could be a big blow to the Lucas management. This shows in practice the kind of action

trade union militants should be taking across the country:

1. Move motions endorsing in principle the blacking of all Lucas products by the trade union movement, and pledging full support to any group of workers who carry out such blacking (this is very important: the Liverpool dockers have expressed a readiness to black, but first—not unreasonably—they want assurances of trade union support if they are attacked by the NIRC for doing this);

2. Discuss what workers in your particular workplace could do to hit the Lucas combine (do you use or transport any Lucas products, do you provide any services to the operations of the Lucas empire);

3. Attempt to raise this question with other groups of workers, both through local trades councils and action groups, and regional and national trade union bodies.

### AID THOSE IN STRUGGLE

We must face up to the facts—the workers at CAV cannot hold out indefinitely by themselves. They are now committed to a strong push to extend the struggle with the beginning of the New Year. But unless their efforts are met by cooperation and active assistance from trade union militants and the organisations of the revolutionary left across the country, the working class faces a serious defeat, of national importance, in Fazakerley. The announcements of the closures in the steel industry shows that *The Red Mole* was correct when it argued that the problems of the CAV workers would soon face other workers across the country. It is not enough just to express indignation and wave the flag of protest, we must fight the plans of the capitalist class. That means giving concrete aid and assistance to all those groups of workers who try to fight back. The workers at CAV have been among the longest on the front lines of this battle: it is high time they received some reinforcements.

All messages of support, donations, requests for information to: CAV Occupation Committee, 46/48 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool 3.

# ENGINEERS AT THE CROSSROADS

Alf Jennings and Bob Williams explain why the politics of Scanlon and the Communist Party leadership are leading engineers to a serious campaign to get rid of the I.R. Act and the Tory Government..." (Morning Star 2.1.73)

On the 7 December, the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW) was fined £50,000 by the National Industrial Relations Court for refusing to obey previous NIRC orders. A Mr. James Goad, a quality-inspector at CAV's, Sudbury, had successfully managed to get the NIRC to declare him a member of the AUEW, against the wishes of the local branch and had ordered the branch to admit him to its meetings. The fine has sparked off massive strikes by AUEW members all over the country. These actions are continuing, the latest being planned for Merseyside on 19 January.

This struggle is extremely important. It is a struggle to defend the AUEW, but it is also the second great upsurge of workers against the Act, and a test of the Scanlon leadership's policy for fighting the Act.

At the very moment when the strike wave successfully freed the five, the House of Lords changed the law in order to prevent such a confrontation being repeated. Their decision that the union, rather than the individual steward, was liable in law, was an attempt to get back to the original aim of forcing the trade union leaders to discipline their own members. The Government placed its hopes on a prediction of how the trade union leaders would behave when faced with the choice between leading a struggle to bring down a piece of legislation passed by Parliament (and therefore most likely the Government too), and turning their guns on their own members. Jack Jones proved the Government right, reluctantly paying the fines while making every effort to get the dockers to call off the struggle. Following that, the TUC has allowed unions to attend the Court to defend themselves, thus capitulating in practice to the authority of the Act.

Scanlon and the AUEW leadership, however, have stuck to the old line of the TUC: 'no recognition'. Of course they have been right not to attend the Court, but this only has meaning if they are prepared to mobilise against the Act.

## SOLID

The Goad case boiled up in October. The first fine made on the AUEW was on 8 November: £5,000 for not appearing in Court to defend itself. The Court ruled that Goad was a member of the union and that the Sudbury branch could not refuse him admission to its meetings. When he was excluded on December 1st, the NIRC then imposed a £50,000 fine for contempt of its ruling.

From December 7 onwards, district organisations of the AUEW all over the country took the initiative in calling local strikes. These strikes were very solid. On Monday 18 December for example, thousands of engineers in London, Oxford and Sheffield struck, and on the Wednesday, engineers in Hull, Merseyside and Manchester came out. In London and Liverpool, dockers and other workers struck in solidarity. At the same time, resolutions were passed in many areas calling strikes for various days in January. On the 1st January, 13,000 men came out in Leeds, on the 5th 13,000 in Swansea, on the 8th 20,000 in North Wales and 10,000 on Tyneside. Merseyside is planning to take a further step by calling an area general strike on the 19th.

## FRAGMENTED

This impressive series of strikes was marred however by its fragmentation. This flowed from the lack of any commonly understood policy among those taking action. This became painfully clear in the case of one of the most militant centres of working class struggle: Glasgow. Here, the district leadership had called a strike for the 18th, but then reversed its decision because it felt that local stoppages were not going to give results, and called on the Executive to organise a national stoppage instead. Several areas passed similar resolutions. Most surprising of all is the case of the Sudbury men themselves. They struck on the 11th, thus taking the initiative nationally. But just as other areas were responding and getting their one-day stoppages organised, Sudbury voted to return to work on the 15th.

This reflects not so much the work of the organised right wing in the union, but a lack of a clear line from the leadership and therefore confusion and uncertainty. Of course, the right wing were organising. In



Workers at Sudbury vote to strike; but neither Scanlon (inset left) nor CP leader Gollan (inset right) offered any way forward.

Coventry, many workers voted against strikes and for a change of union policy. Nevertheless, it is only since the first wave of strikes that the right wing in the union have felt able to step up their offensive and change the course of events, catching hold of criticisms of the leadership and partial demoralisation and turning them against the struggle.

## A PARALYSED LEADERSHIP

The cause of the confusion and disorganisation was the paralysis of the AUEW leadership. What has just taken place is a tragic example of the useless line of non-recognition. The leadership was faced with a choice between leading a struggle against the Act and the Government or being fined. The response up until the imposition of the fine on 7 December was to hope that the Court could be prevented from collecting the money from the Bank. But the Court had overruled the distinction between 'protected' and 'unprotected' funds. When Hill Samuel, the union's bankers, paid up, the AUEW sacked them. But this was really little more than a demagogic move. They hoped Goad would be discouraged from trying to attend the branch meeting at Sudbury on December 1st. Unfortunately he tried to attend, hence the £50,000 fine. Throughout this period, the leadership refused to attend the Court or to pay the fine. But it did absolutely nothing to prepare the AUEW membership or the rest of the working class for a struggle against the Act. It refused to recall its NC to change its policy, but it made no plans for action. The first fine went by without any hint of preparation for a battle.

After the second fine, Scanlon felt forced to take a public position. He was busy with metaphysics at this time. No, he wasn't disobeying the law of the land. He was defending the constitution of the union. Then on 10 December, Scanlon called on the membership to 'defend the policy of the union'.

But what was the policy of the union? This was never made clear and led to the fragmentation. Was the policy to initiate a struggle to bring down the Act? Or was it to make some localised gestures of protest against the fines and nothing more? Or was it to bring pressure to bear on the government via expensive strikes hitting a crucial sector of the economy? Nothing was made clear. The membership was left in the dark.

## SCANLON

Throughout this entire experience, Scanlon has acted as a trade union bureaucrat. Rather than give a strategic line for the working class, he tried simply to defend the narrow corporate interests of his own union. His own position was indistinguishable from most other EC members. He therefore took the position that he was neither for nor

against the strikes. Neither forward or back. But once the money had been taken by the Court, what other issue was there left but the Act itself?

Even before the Goad case blew up, Scanlon was only 'left' in the sense that he had not shuffled to the right like the rest. He had not moved away from a position which was useless anyway: non-recognition. But part of the confusion among the rank and file was caused by their looking to him especially for a lead. After all, he had called one day strikes against the Industrial Relations Bill before it became law. The Communist Party also gives Scanlon much support, refusing to criticise him even when he behaves in the same way as other bureaucrats, as he did during the Ford strike of 1971 for example. The revolutionary left has been warning against an uncritical attitude to Scanlon for a long time. His rhetoric about 'shop floor power' and leaving everything up to the democratic initiatives of the rank and file sounds very nice. But this was all very well in the Sixties when the tactic of local bargaining made sense because unemployment was low and the national attacks on the unions were only just starting under Labour. But in the engineering dispute of last year, leaving everything to local initiatives was just a get-out for the leadership, and it led to disaster. The Goad dispute is the same. When national leadership is needed, it is left to the localities to take uncoordinated and sporadic action with no clearly defined policy.

## THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party refuses to point out these simple truths. For example, once it became clear that the leadership had no plan of action whatever, the CP tried to cover up this inactivity. The editorial of the *Morning Star*, following the EC meeting of the 19 December at which resolutions for national action were not even discussed, said that the workers were "making it clear that the Industrial Relations Act will cost the employers far more in lost profits than opposition to it will cost the unions in fines". This is a very dangerous rationalisation. The engineering employers are not going to put pressure on the Government to "retreat". The CP line implicitly reduces the struggle to the issue of the fines against which only protest is possible rather than the Act. It is not, for the ruling class, a matter of short-term cost, but a question of how to achieve the long-term aim of defeating the opposition of the unions to the Act. The CP were throwing their weight behind localised initiatives which inevitably lead to demoralisation if no national focus is created.

Instead of proposing extending the existing struggle through a rank and file lead, they urged "the EC to bring pressure to bear on the TUC General Council to call for a one-day

stoppage as a signal to a serious campaign to get rid of the I.R. Act and the Tory Government..." (Morning Star 2.1.73)

In other words the AUEW EC was right not to call any action and should call on the TUC. Vic Feather should then call a one-day stoppage which would be the signal for a "serious campaign". In the meantime, continue the protest strikes indefinitely and hope that the TUC can be won back to a 'left' position at some time in the future.

This attitude on the part of the CP urgently raises for militants the question of what its basic strategy is.

## COMMUNIST PARTY POLICY

The basic strategy of the Communist Party in the fight against the Act has been twofold. It has said that it is necessary to struggle now against the Act using the industrial strength of the working class. Secondly it has argued that there must be a simultaneous fight inside the Labour movement to get 'left' policies adopted, and to replace the right wing in the TUC General Council and the Labour Party leadership with 'left' leaders like Scanlon. But the Goad case (and many other incidents in the past) has brought to light a problem: this 'twofold' policy turns out to be two alternative policies: one - that of the militants, who put first the urgent needs of the workers to smash the industrial relations Act; those who vacillate on that must be replaced by leaders who will stand firm, even if the ditherers happen to be the official union leadership and if they happen to have a reputation as 'lefts' on the General Council. And the other possible policy - that of the CP leadership - is to give first place to unity with Scanlon and the official leadership, even when it means allowing militants to be caught off their guard by the bureaucracy's total lack of preparation for a struggle.

## UNITY

The CP leadership tries to argue that those who want to publicly criticise Scanlon are splitters, people who want to break the unity of the working class. In fact, the very opposite is the case. If it was proposed to exclude bureaucrats from the struggle on the basis of their past mistakes or failings, that would indeed be a splitting policy.

But what has been at stake is not an attempt to exclude Scanlon and the official leadership from participation in the struggle against the fines and the Act. The real issue for militants has been whether the development of that struggle should take second place to the CP leadership's desire to unite with the official leadership. For the consequences of that unity with the official leadership has been to allow the leadership to fragment the unity in struggle of the engineering workers. For the fact cannot be hidden that the response of the engineering workers

# ROADS

## ering militants into a dead end

so far has been disunited, without a clear lead of any kind.

Of course, the CP leadership does not clearly and unambiguously endorse every move that Scanlon makes. Instead it operates a similar tactic towards the trade union bureaucracy to the tactic that the trade union bureaucracy takes towards the Act. Scanlon tries to avoid the issue of a fight with the NIRC and the Act. The CP leadership tries to avoid the issue of a fight against the Scanlon leadership for an alternative leadership. But in both cases, in the end, avoidance means acceptance. Because the CP has avoided the task of spelling out the crippling weaknesses of the Scanlon leadership in the past, the militants were forced by the CP to accept the fragmentation which the executive's policy produced. The CP refused to build an alternative centre that could guide the engineering workers' upsurge and broaden the struggle throughout the working class.

At first sight it is difficult to grasp why the CP refuses to present a clear cut alternative to the politics of the trade union bureaucracy. It would be tempting to say that Gollan has simply made a tactical mistake, that he has misjudged Scanlon and will put things right next time. But in fact such 'tactical mistakes' have taken place time and again over the last years in such a way that they quite clearly form a consistent pattern — a strategy. And when we look at the basic strategy and programme of the Communist Party we can see that the leadership's refusal to break with the Scanlons of the labour movement is based on a fundamental political agreement on aims and methods in the class struggle.

Both the trade union 'lefts' and the CP leaders want to fight for socialism. But they believe that the struggle for socialism can be victorious under the leadership of the Labour Party provided only that control of the Labour Party falls into the hands of its left-wing which in turn allies itself with the CP. The meaning of such a strategy is that it is possible to use the Parliamentary system to introduce socialism: in other words, there is no need to aim for the smashing of the institutions of capitalist rule: all that needs to be done is to change the personnel and put pressure on these institutions in order for the working class to achieve its aims. The mass movement is necessary, but only in order to exert pressure along a path of gradual change towards socialism. There is no place within such a strategy for the idea that the working class must organise its struggle on the basis of complete independence, on the basis of a complete refusal to trust in forces tied in any way to the preservation of capitalism. The CP leadership denies a truth shown repeatedly in the class struggle: that the working class can and must use forces like the trade union bureaucracy, Parliament etc., but for its own purposes, and it must never depend on them in order to achieve its goals. Instead the militants must continually bear in mind that one day, in order to carry the mass struggle even one inch further forward, such forces which are dependant in one way or another on the maintenance of the capitalist order must be pushed aside and defeated.

In the struggle of the engineering workers against the Industrial Relations Act it is urgently necessary to free the membership from reliance on the old policies and leadership in order to unite the movement and carry it further forward. The policy of the Executive of telling members to 'do their own thing' in each locality must be replaced by national strike action. Pressure must be stepped up on the executive to adopt such a policy. But at the same time every effort must be made to establish national links at a rank and file level so that the fate of the struggle against the Act does not depend entirely on a change of line by the executive. Pressure must be stepped up for solidarity from other unions in the common fight against the Act, but at the same time every effort must be made to establish such unity at a rank and file level. The protest strikes must be supported but a battle must be started to change the aims of the movement from that of protesting the fine to forcing an end to the Act, though that means taking on the government in a showdown and the other instruments of class rule. Only such a fighting policy will guarantee a victorious struggle against the Act. And such a policy involves breaking from the tactics and strategy of the Communist Party leadership.

# GAY LIBERATION AND THE LEFT

By ROSALIND DAVIS

At its 1972 Conference, the IMG unanimously passed a resolution supporting the Gay Liberation Movement (GLM) while reserving the right to criticise its politics. Very rarely on the left does any analysis of the meaning of being gay in capitalist society appear, and most gay people have looked to the libertarian "underground" press for support. But links between the revolutionary left, the labour movement and the GLM are beneficial to all three.

## WHAT BEING GAY IS ABOUT

We are using the term gay people to mean those who want to relate sexually to members of their own sex (lesbians, homosexuals), and those who identify with the other sex, either by changing sex by means of surgery, etc. (transsexuals), or by dressing in the clothes of the other sex (transvestists).

Homosexuality and transsexualism are almost universally defined in "respectable" society and in the medical profession as a "problem". Once such a definition is accepted, then the way is open for endless pseudo-scientific studies explaining its "origins" in terms of biology, chromosomes, early socialisation and so on. The gay person is labelled as a "case" and investigated if possible with a view to "curing" her/him. Such labelling in fact represents an attempt to isolate gay people as far as possible, and creates deep feelings of guilt in many. Even many so called revolutionaries accept this definition, only transferring the problems to capitalist society, which "distorts" people's sexual orientations, so that some become fixated on members of the same sex. For such people, the socialist revolution will eliminate homosexuality along with prostitution.

For a revolutionary marxist gay people do not present a problem in themselves. The problem lies in explaining why they are treated as they are and how they can change that situation. Since we do not accept that sex was instituted by the Divine (or Society) in order that children might be produced, or that women are only in their natural state when in a subordinate relationship to men or vice versa, there is absolutely no reason why people shouldn't relate sexually to people of the same sex if they want to, any more than why they should not relate to people of the other sex. Such a position demystifies endless prejudices and "learned" tomes, and it is one of the positive gains of the GLM to have forcefully presented this analysis. Far from "withering away", homosexuality will become much more common in a socialist society, as the mystifications and prejudices surrounding sexual relationships are removed. Indeed this was the case in the early years of the Soviet Union when penal legislation against homosexuals was abolished. Only as the Stalinist bureaucracy tightened its hold over the whole of social life did repression of homosexuals become once more the norm. (See the short account in W. Reich, *The Sexual Revolution*, Vision 1972. Reich's general attitudes towards gay relationships were rather backward).

## THE OPPRESSION OF GAY PEOPLE

If homosexuality in itself is not a "problem" why then are homosexuals universally oppressed in bourgeois society (the degree of oppression varies from time to time and country to country, of course)? Why do many people, among them militant workers who are otherwise anti-capitalist, feel an unease and confusion in regard to gay people (Pakistanis, women, and "queers" are the stocks in trade of comedians of working mens clubs)?

No ruling group exists for long by means of naked force alone. The continued existence of class rule depends on mystifying the population as to the true central source of their oppression—the system of productive relations which extracts the wealth from those who produce and transfers it to those who own. On the one hand it is necessary to have institutions and symbols which are regarded as right and good by the oppressed so they may think the whole worth while. On the other, it is necessary to have groups of people who are identifiable in some way as different so that people's frustrations can if necessary be turned against them. The family is one such important institution, gay people one such group.

Whether or not they see themselves as revolutionaries or even reformers, as by no means all do, gay people who actually practise their homosexuality threaten the ideology of the family. Through the family, new



Recent GLF demo in Brighton

generations of workers are produced, ruling class ideas are passed on, women are subordinated, isolated and divided from productive workers. So control over the family is very important for the ruling class and its state. By necessity gay people must make a clear divorce between sexuality and reproduction. By bourgeois legality they are forced to divide sexuality and marriage. By their very oppression their relationships tend to be fragile and transient, challenging the mythology of permanence sanctified in the marriage ceremony. Gay people around the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) have also consciously come to challenge and reject something of the dominance/subordination, activity/passivity, male/female ideas about behaviour appropriate to each sex, ideas which help greatly to maintain the subordination of women in capitalist society. In all these ways the uncontented public activity of gay people is a threat.

Gay people are also useful symbols of "moral decadence" in capitalism. All ills we feel can be attributed to permissiveness, moral laxity, Jews, Blacks, Gays etc and the persecution of the minority and in some cases their actual extermination (as in fascist Germany) can be a means of deflecting social tensions from their real source—the exploitative nature of the system itself.

The oppression of gay people is therefore both necessary and useful within the existing system, and for that reason it becomes clear that there is only one way for gay people to remove their oppression, and that is by linking up with all other oppressed groups, and centrally the working class, whose exploitation underlines every other, in order to overthrow the system itself. Of all homosexuals, only those around the GLF have begun to realise this basic fact. Other homosexuals have reacted either by retreat, or attempts to reform.

## THE RESPONSE TO OPPRESSION

A. Retreat. Because they themselves often feel guilty, and accept the ideological definitions propagated about them, many gay people go to the medical profession seeking to be "cured". At the hands of the psychiatrists, etc, they will undergo many interrogations and/or physical tortures, which may undermine their whole personalities or turn them into sexual zombies. A small number, or fear of discovery, commit suicide or mutilate themselves. But most enter the "Gay Ghetto". The Gay Ghetto is that very restricted area of social life which at the present time is allowed to gay people by the police. Certain clubs, certain pubs, certain public lavatories ("cottages"), certain open spaces, are available to gay people. Even here they are not free from harassment, which is undertaken sporadically and indiscriminately with the purpose of keeping gay people insecure, restricted and out of the public eye.

B. Reform. Since feelings of attraction to people of the same sex are to be found among those groups who in their general life situation benefit from existing society, numbers of people have hoped to gain a place for respectable homosexuals in respectable society. The Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE) is one such grouping. As with any other interest group, at certain periods some reforms can be won from capitalism. These reforms are never secure, never give the group an equal status, and never go far enough. The reform of the law in England in regard to homosexuals is a good example of the results of such actions (it does not apply in Scotland at all). While consenting males over 21 may at the moment engage in homosexual relations in private, the Act is so hedged around with restrictions as to make the situation for gay people only marginally better, and indeed there have been more prosecutions since than before.

C. Revolt. Both the retreatist and the reformist

response of gay people involve the general acceptance of the ideology of capitalist society. The GLF and its counterparts in other countries (FHAR in France for instance), like the women's liberation movement, stem from and in turn contribute to the challenge to that ideology which has been developing in numerous ways among sections of youth, a challenge stimulated in the early 60s partly by the Civil Rights and Anti-Vietnam War movements, and in this country by the CND. GLF is a recent development. It only became significant in 1970-71, as young gay people, usually already radicalised in other ways, began to challenge the basic definition of themselves presented by all "respectable" sources in our society, and thus came into open conflict with them. Gay people began to "come out"—be publicly identified as gay—with slogans "Proud to be Gay", "Gay is Good" etc. They refused to accept the restrictions demanded by the authorities and made ridiculous court proceedings taken against them. The Gay Liberation Manifesto published in late 1971, explicitly rejects the capitalist system and the institution of the family. Group from the GLF have shown their solidarity with the working class by taking part in the trade union demos against the IRB and anti-imperialist demos, as well as attacking some symbols of sexism such as the Miss World Contest, and contesting the reactionary forces around the Festival of Light.

## TACTICS

While a fairly explicit rejection of capitalism is part of the understanding of almost every GLF member, the diffuse practice of the movement is very diffuse, and subject to immense diversionary pressures. Because "coming out" itself represents such a big emotional step for most people, a part of the movement has given support to those doing this an almost total priority, turning away from public activity. Others have felt the prime task is to link with reformist gay people in CHE. This gay "nationalism" can frequently turn to hostility against all out groups, and in reality represents a road back to the ghetto or reformism. For instance, *Gay News* has recently carried features about gay marriages in the United States without noticeable critical comment. Still others have become so involved with trying to create a new life style in communes and in personal relationships that it has become an end in itself, and thus utopian, for there are no solutions to problems of personal relationships in a capitalist system. Sometimes this can become a tyrannous new moral code as pressure is put on people to be bisexual, to have multiple relationships, or when "radical feminist" men attack gay women for refusing to wear skirts, make up etc.

As with other specially oppressed groups, the distrust of authority among some members has spilled over into a refusal to organise meetings in any effective way, and some groups have become paralysed and so inactive. In London but not elsewhere in Britain, gay women and transvestists/transsexuals have felt it necessary to organise separately from gay men

## GAY LIBERATION AND THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT

Thus it cannot be said that Gay Liberation represents a coherent political movement anymore than the Women's Liberation movement does. But this in no way makes its existence as an autonomous movement less significant. Firstly, the left has consistently underemphasised and neglected the analysis of revolutionary positions in relation to family and sexual relationships. GLF is forcing us to make good this lack and providing some of the ideas to do it. Secondly the GLF is exposing the reactionary nature of the psychiatric profession and the repressive legal system, sometimes in quite dramatic ways. Thirdly the more politicised members are moving out to challenge bourgeois ideology with in sections of the working class. But above all, if the gay movement does not continue to go forward, the reactionary tendencies symbolised by the Festival of Light will move onto the offensive against gay people, and possibly begin to link up with the fascist/racist movements into a really dangerous diversionary threat. Thus we need the GLM. Gay people also need the political support of the revolutionary left and the wider labour movement, for an introverted gay movement cannot resist revolutionary attacks by the state. It is the job of revolutionaries, especially gay revolutionaries, to intervene in GLF for a broader revolutionary perspective, away from introversion and gay nationalism, reformism and utopianism to an interventionist policy.

# Will Capitalism Automatically Collapse?

**Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital**, by Rosa Luxemburg and Nikolai Bukharin (Allen Lane The Penguin Press, £4.00)

The revolutionary left in this country is only just emerging from many decades of political and theoretical under-development. One of the first conditions for a revitalisation of Marxist thought is an awareness of the traditions and debates in the history of the workers' movement. So we should welcome the publication of two important articles, one by Rosa Luxemburg and the other by Bukharin on the subject of *Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital*.

Rosa Luxemburg's whole life was devoted to a struggle against capitalism and the reformist ideas of a corrupted socialist movement. She recognised that the struggle to smash the power of the bourgeoisie required a continual fight against bourgeois theories within the working class.

## FINAL BREAKDOWN?

The reformists in the Second International had put forward the theory that capitalism was gradually, of its own accord, developing in the direction of socialism: capitalist crises would become less and less severe, production would become more and more rationally planned. The task of the socialist movement was to achieve piecemeal reforms, not to change the economic basis of capitalist society by revolutionary upheaval. Luxemburg attacked these ideas in *Social Reform or Revolution?* and *The Accumulation of Capital*. In the latter work she developed the theory that capitalism cannot expand indefinitely, that it comes to a point where no economic recovery is possible. In short she put forward the idea of the final breakdown of capitalism.

After severe criticism she published a concise reply and re-exposition of her theories, and this essay is found in the volume which is the subject of this review. Because of its lively and cogent style this essay is probably the best introduction to her theory.

Luxemburg examined Marx's schemes on how capital is reproduced in an expanded form and found what she thought was a serious problem. If these reproduction schemes are conceived in terms of values (i.e. amounts of embodied labour time) then the expansion of value is explained by the enlargement of the supply of available labour. But if they are viewed in price terms then where does the additional money capital come from? In vain she searches for an answer. Do the capitalists borrow the additional money capital to finance economic growth from the national bank? That, according to Luxemburg, would be to suggest that additional value can be created out of mere paper. She concludes that capitalism must eventually break down because of these difficulties in the sphere of circulation.

But, she argued, before the collapse, capitalism manages to finance expanded reproduction by the imperialist plunder of the colonies. At the same

time imperialism ensures that capitalist relations of production are established on a world-wide scale, and once this comes about there are no more non-capitalist markets to sustain expanded reproduction. Hence imperialism only delays the final collapse and does not prevent the breakdown of the capitalist mode of production.

The leading theoreticians of the Second International such as Kautsky and Otto Bauer, all missed the point in their criticisms. Bauer, for instance, gave a useful analysis of the way the growth of accumulated values adjusts to the supply of labour time. Luxemburg pours unjust scorn on Bauer's theory, the result being that neither Bauer nor Luxemburg identifies the crux of the problem.

## FUNDAMENTAL ERROR

Bukharin alone provided an effective refutation of Luxemburg's theory. He attacks Luxemburg for confusing the accumulation of capital with the accumulation of money. This is her most fundamental error. Bukharin points out that the accumulation of capital involves the accumulation of money values, of values and the reproduction of capitalist social relations on an expanded scale. Moreover, "It is true that the amount of circulating money usually grows. It is incorrect that the accumulation of capital necessarily pre-supposes an increase of money." (page 199).

This is Bukharin's first major achievement — he clearly separates money values from values, i.e. embodied labour time. Rosa Luxemburg's misconception is to confuse price with value, and that is why she shrinks from any suggestion that expanded reproduction can finance itself by credit or an injection of newly minted money by the State Bank.

Reproduction schemes were conceived by Marx in terms of values. Prices are indeed determined by values, but they are not proportional to values, even in the long-run average sense. It is the interaction of price and value which is one of the crucial dynamic features of the capitalist system. For example, the rate of profit, which appears to the capitalist in terms of prices, determines investment behaviour which causes a change in the magnitude of values.

It follows that the quantitative dynamics of the capitalist system cannot be examined in value terms alone. Luxemburg attempts to analyse the system in terms of one unit of account: it is not surprising that she finds apparent inconsistencies in the process.

## PERIODIC

Bukharin's second important achievement is to successfully attack any notion of the permanent breakdown of capitalism. The debate within the Second International was falsely polarised between opponents and advocates of capitalist breakdown. Luxemburg was unable to escape from the false terms of this debate.

Only Lenin, Bukharin and the Bolsheviks saw crises as periodic rather than permanent. Lenin's statement that "there are no crises from which capitalism cannot recover" is a counter-part to

Marx's own assertion that "permanent crises do not exist." Lenin and Bukharin attacked the vulgar breakdown theory and thereby paved the way for an effective demonstration of a theory of revolutionary action in October 1917.

The theoretical heritage of the Third International, of which Bukharin was a leading member, is only partially accessible to the contemporary Marxist left. If we are to understand the epoch in which we live, this heritage must be rediscovered. Bukharin's brilliant polemic is a welcome addition to the works now available in English.

Geoff Hodgson.



For once we have received for review a publication which requires no comment: The London Property Letter. Its new issue speaks for itself:

"For the first time since the early sixties it's possible to make real money out of property. Both for the expert developer and for the small man who wants to get in now and produce a useful private income for himself.

Since the Tories returned to power:

1. House prices have boomed as never before, giving dealers a rising market to profit from. What's more, loans for once are readily forthcoming.
2. Office development restrictions have been shot away. Birmingham has become a capital place to operate in. (Rents have gone up from £1 to £1.25 per s.f. in a year). And Leeds and Bristol are following fast.
3. Landlords have started to cash in on the new bedsitter boom.
4. Converting properties of every type to flats for sale has become a big business. The Government is exceedingly generous with improvement grants, which makes this operation very profitable.
5. Many other factors are benefitting property, not least inflation, which is making bricks-and-mortar a safer hedge than ever for the investor. And the biggest bonanza of all may well be our entry into Europe. Already British developers are active in Brussels and Paris, and there will be equal scope in catering for Continental firms needing office and industrial accommodation in the U.K.

Someone is going to make a killing out of all this, and it might as well be you. Thousands of investors did so in the last property boom—most of them were armed with the shrewd inside information provided by the London Property Letter."

## Occupied West Belfast

This article is reprinted from *Unfree Citizen*, paper of the *People's Democracy*.

If you've ever opened your door at 4.30 in the morning after thunderous knocking only to find a British soldier shoving his gun into your belly, then you know what it's like to live in Andersonstown.

Andersonstown is a huge sprawling area of overspill housing on the fringes of Belfast. It is the city's new ghetto where Catholics from the decaying 19th century slums of the Lower Falls are rehoused and where Catholic families intimidated out of other parts of the city have fled. Andersonstown proper and a number of other areas such as Ballymurphy, Turf Lodge and Beechmount have been combined into a single greater Andersonstown electoral division for local government purposes. The whole division contains 34,800 electors or about 100,000 people.

Socially, the area is extremely deprived. It is mainly working class and unemployment is very high. In Ballymurphy it is between 40% and 50% for men. The area has a very high proportion of children yet it has only one public park, one set of public playing fields and one swimming pool (outdoors and unheated). There is no publicly provided community centre and very few halls or social clubs. For years the people of Andersonstown have been fighting for social amenities, against local authority indifference and neglect. Now they have a greater enemy to fight.

The greater Andersonstown area is bearing the brunt of British military occupation and repression in Belfast. The area contains one fifth of the population of Belfast yet the best part of five battalions of British troops—or half their total force in Belfast—are stationed in the area. And to accommodate themselves they have established 17 different fortified posts, including 3 huge wild west style corrugated iron forts. In the process they have commandeered—and still occupy—2 schools, the grounds of a College of Education, 2 football stadiums (one of them Casement Park, the headquarters of the Gaelic Athletic Association in the North), 2 of the very few public halls in the area, and a number of private houses and flats. For one of their biggest forts they seized Glassmullan green, in the middle of a densely populated estate and built their fort within 15 yards of a row of houses and when operation Motorman began they seized and occupied 2 other schools in the area which public protest has forced them to abandon.

Besides depriving the people of Andersonstown of their open spaces and recreation facilities the British Army subjects them to a constant campaign of harassment and intimidation. The area is constantly patrolled with helicopters, armoured cars, saracen armoured personnel carriers, pigs and small tanks armed with 108m.m. cannon as well as patrols in jeeps and foot patrols and the notorious plain clothes army units. The troops are armed with rubber bullet guns, S.L.R.'s and general purpose machine guns. The army have tried to carry out a house to house census in the area demanding details of everyone in the house, including their religion and persecuting those who refuse to co-operate. They constantly raid every pub in the area taking out all the customers and forcing them to stand in front of saracens while hidden informers identify them.

Every night some 30 or 40 men are arrested and taken to army posts for "screening"—a process which may involve savage beatings and always includes intensive questioning about personal details and political views.

About half the male population of Andersonstown have been arrested, questioned or had their house raided by the British Army in the past 3 years and there is hardly a family which hasn't been affected. Over one third of the men interned in Long Kesh are from the Greater Andersonstown area. In 1972 alone, at least 5 unarmed men have been murdered by British troops in the area.

When people in Andersonstown talk about the British Army of Occupation it is no idle slogan, it is the literal truth. Andersonstown today is as brutally and effectively occupied as Warsaw was during the 2nd World War. But the people have not been cowed. Andersonstown has staged some of the biggest protest demonstrations against British imperialism that have been seen in N. Ireland. During one meeting young people turned on an armoured saracen at the very gates of Casement Park Army post. Andersonstown today still provides the hard core of resistance to British rule. We will keep it up until we've built a Socialist Republic.

# ECONOMICS AND IDEOLOGY

A new regular series which aims to combat wrong or confused ideas about the nature of capitalism.

## 2. Economic Determinism

By PAUL MOREL

The favourite definition of Marxism among school teachers and professors is that Marx was an 'economic determinist'. They claim that he explained everything in the world by saying that it is caused by one thing—the economy. In fact, Marx's theories had nothing to do with such a notion. But the distortion of Marx's views by bourgeois writers retains credibility because many people who call themselves Marxists do put forward 'economic determinist' theories.

Such pseudo-marxist theories have two main features: firstly, the economy is regarded as a self-regulating, automatic machine, operating completely independently from social and political life; secondly, history—the unfolding of the class struggle—is seen as a fatalistic process in which the consciousness and activity of different groups changes only at the prompting of changes in the workings of the economic 'machine'.

This mechanical distortion of Marxism was the hallmark of the Second International and of its leading theorist, Karl Kautsky

against whom Lenin polemicised. But we can still find plenty of examples of 'economic determinism' on the British left today. In his widely known book, *Russia—a Marxist analysis*, Tony Cliff views the Stalinist reaction in the 1920s as inevitable, due to the backwardness and isolation of the Soviet economy. If this was the case the programme of the Left Opposition led by Trotsky, for economic development without the famines, the ruthless suppression of workers' democracy, and the purges, would have been an unobtainable Utopia. Again, in his book, *Mao's China* (written in the late 1950s) Cliff declares that the reaction in that country would be much more brutal than the purges in Russia, because China was incomparably more backward. In fact, of course, Cliff's prediction, based on an 'economic determinist' explanation, has been shown to be wrong.

## NON-MARXIST

Underlying this approach is a vulgar and non-marxist notion of 'the economy'. For Marx production under capitalism could be understood only by grasping that it involved social relationships between classes. Production means not just the turning out of goods but the production of ideas and the reproduction of the social relationships

between the classes.

To forget this and try to rigidly separate economics, sociology and politics is a distinctive feature of bourgeois social science.

Marx's *Capital* is not a work of 'pure economics'. It is an attempt to see social life under capitalism as a whole, and in its most essential features, in order to understand how it develops and changes. Marx never studied the 'economy' as a distinct entity; *Capital* unites politics, sociology, economics and philosophy as an inseparable whole.

Only in this way is it possible to understand how the political ideas of the working class influence the action of workers in their struggles in the factory. In rejecting 'economic determinism' we reject the notion that revolutionary consciousness develops spontaneously or automatically in response to changes in economic conditions: we are not robots controlled by some economic machine. Ideas, conceptions of the world and what needs to be changed are part of society and part of the 'economy'. To be a Marxist is not to forget that ideas play a determining role in history.

# The Vietnamese Revolution, Ceasefire Perspectives, and the Tasks of the International Revolutionary Movement

The following resolution was passed by the December plenum of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International.

1. The opening of negotiations between the United States and the Vietnamese, and their subsequent evolution, can be correctly understood only in the complex framework of the existing balance of forces between the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces, both on a world scale and in Indochina itself.

The basic weakness of the Indochinese revolution lies in its relative international isolation. The main cause of this isolation is the conservative policy of peaceful co-existence followed by the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies and by the Communist parties they control on a world scale. This policy has enabled American imperialism to carry out a systematic escalation of its murderous attacks on the revolutionary forces in South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam without an adequate response in the least way from the bureaucracies in power in Moscow and Peking. What aid they have given the Vietnamese fighters has been doled out drop by drop and has at the same time increasingly been used as a means of putting political pressure on these fighters to "moderate" their struggle.

The relative isolation of the Vietnamese revolution, which was partially ameliorated only by the growth of the world-wide mass movement of struggle against the war of imperialist aggression, worsened after the announcement of Nixon's trips to Peking and Moscow. Nixon succeeded in demobilizing a significant part of the antiwar movement in the United States, enabling him to launch a new military escalation in Indochina. Under these conditions the Vietnamese revolution cannot win victory over imperialism on a purely military level. Hence the attempt to reach a negotiated solution in order to end imperialism's military intervention in Indochina.

The basic power of the Indochinese revolution lies in the unprecedented breadth and vigour of the revolutionary process initiated and developed in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Because of this, the imperialist intervention has experienced a series of strategic setbacks. First there was the failure of "special war," then of "local war," and today the props of the "Vietnamization" policy have been undermined.

The victories scored by the revolutionary forces in Cambodia (after Lon Nol's coup d'etat) and in Laos (after the battle of Bass Loo in February 1971) prevented the crushing of resistance in South Vietnam. The offensive unleashed in South Vietnam eight months ago destroyed the "pacification" program in the countryside and generally altered the relationship of forces in favour of the popular revolutionary forces. The agrarian revolution and the formation of organs of revolutionary power have moved forward in vast rural areas of South Vietnam. The air attacks on the North and on the liberated zones of the three countries of Indochina did not succeed in breaking popular resistance or in preventing the revolutionary armed forces from continuing their offensive.

In this context, the Vietnamese Communist party's attempt to win through negotiations a withdrawal of imperialist troops from Vietnam does not necessarily imply a step backward for the Vietnamese revolution. The immediate prospects for the Vietnamese revolution can be laid out and the tasks of revolutionary Marxists in relation to it can be defined only through a correct analysis of the military, political, social economic, and psychological effects that the possible cease-fire accords may have on the various South Vietnamese social classes and their major political expressions.

2. In any event, withdrawal of the U.S. armed forces from Vietnam and cessation of the bombing of both the North and South would constitute a shift in the relationship of forces in favour of the Vietnamese revolution. This would reflect imperialism's inability to break the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese masses as well as its retreat before the strength of antiwar sentiment in the United States itself.

But in itself such a retreat does not guarantee the victory of the permanent revolution in South Vietnam. It only means that the revolutionary process will be able to develop with a reduced, but not eliminated, foreign interference. U.S. aid to the counterrevolutionary forces in South Vietnam will continue. The American fleet will remain in Indochinese

waters, threatening the masses of these countries with a resumption of bombing should the revolution make fresh advances. The retention of U.S. bases in Thailand entails an analogous threat. Moscow and Peking's pressure on the Vietnamese CP will scarcely cease. The continuous rearming of the puppet army, the transformation of U.S. troops into "civilian advisers", the continuing financial and economic aid to the Thieu regime, the increase in Saigon's police terror, the sending of forces from an international control commission, which, inasmuch as it is composed of bourgeois armies will intervene in favour of the counterrevolutionary forces — all these factors show that U.S. imperialism will seize every opportunity offered it by the continuation of dual power after the possible signing of accords of the type proposed in October 1972.



Market area in North Vietnam completely devastated by U.S. bombing

Under these conditions, everything will depend on the development of revolutionary mass struggles both in the cities and in the countryside, on the policy followed by the Vietnamese CP, and on the interrelation of these two factors and their impact on whatever counterrevolutionary military apparatuses Thieu's puppets will command.

3. The current situation in South Vietnam is one of dual power from top to bottom. On a countrywide level and on a provincial level, in countless villages and in various cities the workers and peasants' governmental structures and armed forces stand opposed to the governmental structures and armed forces of the counterrevolution, the big landlords and the comprador bourgeoisie, the puppets of imperialism. Some important regions have been completely liberated and are administered by revolutionary organs of power. But this dual power has yet to be extended to the country's principal cities. The success or failure of the revolutionary struggle of the masses in extending the formation of organs of revolutionary power and in destroying the bourgeois state apparatus — a struggle to be waged after the possible signing of a cease-fire agreement — will determine the outcome of the revolutionary process in Indochina.

It is in this context that the question of a "national coalition" government or structure must be approached. We must clearly explain that there is no possibility, in Vietnam or elsewhere, of "national concord" between the exploiting and exploited classes. The Fourth International remains opposed to coalition governments with the bourgeoisie, whatever the specific composition of these governments. Even when the bourgeois ministers are hostages of an already proletarian state power, their presence does not facilitate the consolidation of the revolutionary seizure of power and can only disorient the proletariat's class consciousness.

But this principled opposition to any coalition government with the bourgeoisie does not entitle us automatically to define all cases of such governments as popular-front regimes stabilizing and defending the economic rule and the state of the possessing classes. History offers us the example of France and Spain in 1936, France, Italy, Greece, Indonesia, and elsewhere at the end of the second world war, where this was the case. But it was not the case in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and China, where the presence of bourgeois ministers in

the central government did not prevent the socialist transformation of the revolutionary process from occurring. The decisive thing is the nature of the state, that is, the class character of those who control the armed forces. If the bourgeoisie is in reality disarmed, then the bourgeois ministers are hostages of the proletarian state (whether bureaucratically deformed or not). If the proletariat and poor peasantry are in reality disarmed, then the revolution has suffered defeat. If both the proletariat and the bourgeoisie retain their arms, then the "government" or structure of "national coalition" can only be an expression of dual power; that is, it represents but a momentary hiatus in an ongoing civil war that can be ended only by the victory of one or the other existing camp of class antagonists.

4. The revolutionary offensive of the South

Vietnamese labouring masses will develop along already discernible lines that make any interruption in the political struggle less than likely:

(a) In the countryside, the deepening of the agrarian revolution — which in many areas has already reached the stage of forming cooperatives — and its extension to other regions, that is, its generalization throughout South Vietnam; elimination of the landed proprietors, usurers, big traders, and the gangster-watchdogs of the Thieu regime, and implacable opposition to their returning to villages from which they have already been driven.

(b) In the cities, the struggle against the high cost of living, speculation, gambling, hoarding of vital goods and basic necessities, exploitation of the masses by the industrial, financial, and big commercial bourgeoisie.

(c) In the cities and the countryside, immediate struggle for the release of the 200,000 political prisoners, for political rights, and for complete freedom of action for all organisations illegalized by the Thieu regime.

(d) In both the cities and the countryside, dissolution of the puppet military and administrative apparatuses through the combined effects of the processes just described.

All indications are that the cadres of the NLF and the Vietnamese CP are systematically preparing the South Vietnamese population for this mass political struggle. The U.S. withdrawal, like the perspective of reunification with the North and the acceptance of the principle of free elections with the participation of all political parties today consigned to clandestinity, will inevitably stimulate mass struggles and will further tilt the balance of forces in favour of the revolution.

5. The Vietnamese Communist party and the NLF leadership enjoy such prestige and authority among the South Vietnamese labouring masses that their orientation will significantly affect the pace and breadth of the mass mobilizations. To evaluate all the actions of this leadership it would be necessary to know in detail the situation in South Vietnam, which for us is impossible at present. We can only make some general observations.

First of all, a capitulation of the CP leadership, which would entail the dissolution of the revolution's independent armed forces, seems very unlikely in light of what happened both to the cadres and to the South Vietnamese masses after the Geneva accords. Further, if the

Stalinist training of the Vietnamese CP leaders implies the possibility of opportunist manoeuvres — which are reflected in the written public program of the NLF — the balance of the last fifteen years clearly demonstrates this party's tenacious commitment to the overthrow of the bourgeois state in South Vietnam. Finally, the relationship between the CP and the South Vietnamese mass movement is not simply a function of the CP's political authority, but also of the unusual pressure of the revolutionary masses on a party which in its practical orientation has broken with Stalinism's classical Menshevik line in the colonial and semi-colonial countries and which is independent of the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies.

6. All opportunities for independent intervention in this process by revolutionary Marxists must be utilized to the fullest extent possible, with the principle aim of deepening the permanent revolution in South Vietnam and of helping it attain final victory. On the scene, this will involve action to strengthen the independent proletarian organizations in Saigon, in which our movement has a real tradition.

It is especially important to stress the role that devolves on us on an international scale, not only today, when imperialism's barbaric war is in full swing, but tomorrow as well, in the event a cease-fire agreement is signed. The revolution will go on after the signing. International solidarity with this revolution will remain more than ever a vital necessity, the more so as the Communist parties around the world sink further into immobility, if not into open abandonment of the defense of the Vietnamese masses' fight to complete their revolution. Our responsibility in developing mass actions to support the Indochinese revolution will thus increase, and we will have to fight against any attempt to demobilize active international solidarity.

The main lines of our activity are clear: extension of the support actions now being waged by our sections, especially against any imperialist intervention continuing after the signing of the possible cease-fire accords (for the complete withdrawal of the U.S. fleet and of U.S. "civilian advisers," for the elimination of the air-naval bases in Thailand, against the sending of "international control forces" composed of bourgeois armies); the development of increased propaganda against the "peaceful coexistence" policies of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies, which substantially contributed to the deterioration of the international relationship of forces in which the Indochinese revolution is unfolding.

In case a cease-fire agreement is signed, our movement must explain that there must be no letup in support for the Indochinese revolution. It is around the line of complete support for the Indochinese revolution until total victory — a line carried out through concrete slogans in each country in accordance with the concrete situation of the mass movement — that we must mobilize militants and continue our mass work of support to the Indochinese revolution.

Today an international campaign must be prepared demanding the immediate release of South Vietnamese political prisoners and against the terror unleashed by the Thieu regime — terror for which U.S. imperialism bears full responsibility. From now on, the American government's responsibility for any massacre of these prisoners must be sharply stressed. This campaign must be carried out in the most united fashion possible.

The development of the situation in Laos and Cambodia must be closely followed. It will also most probably necessitate many solidarity actions.

7. The importance of the questions raised by the future of the Indochinese revolution necessitate a continuing discussion in the framework of preparation for the tenth world congress (fourth since reunification) of the Fourth International.

December 6, 1972

**PUBLIC MEETING: 'Class Struggle and the Common Market'.** Speaker: Sam Mauer. Discussion. Thursday 25 January. 7.45 pm, St Pancras Library, 100 Euston Road, NW1. Organised by London Group of the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). **DHOFAR:** Meeting Wednesday 24 January, 6.30 pm in University of London Union, Room 3E. Colour film of liberated areas of Dhofar (45 minutes) + talk + launching of medical aid programme for victims of RAF terror bombing. Organised by the Gulf Committee, c/o 6 Endsleigh Street, London W.C.1.



## INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP

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

I would like more information about the IMG.

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# COVENTRY A.I.L. CONFERENCE DISCUSSES CRUCIAL QUESTIONS

Red Mole Reporter

On Saturday, 13 January, Coventry Anti-Internment League held a conference of organisations and individuals interested in the problems of building an Irish solidarity movement in the area. The conference was attended by over 50 people, including delegates from the Trades Council, UCATT, TASS branches and other trade unions; representatives from the International Marxist Group, International Socialists, Workers Fight, Labour Party Young Socialists and the Northern Relief Committee; comrades active on the Irish question in Leicester, Nottingham, Birmingham; and students from Warwick University, Lanchester Polytechnic and Canley College of Education.

## Torture Against Israeli Left

The Israeli Left is today undergoing the biggest attack ever mounted against it by the Israeli authorities. About 60 militants, both Arabs and Jews, were arrested and charged with either involvement in, or knowledge of, a so-called 'Syrian spy-ring'.

A hysterical slander campaign by the Israeli press aimed against the Zionist Left has raged on for weeks. From the very start the press declared the accused guilty, some journalists even calling for the outlawing of the non-Zionist and anti-Zionist Left.

The fact that brutal methods of torture were used against the detainees was first publicised by Abraham Levenbraun, a member of the Israeli Parliament (called the Knesset) who is a member of the Israeli Communist Party (RAKAH) and whose son is among the detainees.

The detainees were beaten up, stripped naked, showered with ice-cold water, trampled upon and subjected to electric shocks in all parts of the body, including the testicles. Some of the detainees were forced to be present during the torture of their comrades. If one adds to this campaign the recent attempts by the Israeli authorities to take over the militant League for Human Rights in Israel it is evident that the Government is attempting to put an end to any Left militancy which involves joint Jewish-Arab activity.

The Israeli Left requires every bit of international solidarity and support. Previous experience shows that such support is very effective and has in the past secured immediate results.

Contributions for legal aid and support for the families of the detainees are urgently required and should be sent to the address below.

The ad-hoc committee for the Defense of Civil Liberties in Israel is calling for a demonstration against the Israeli Minister of Police (n.b. there is a special ministry of Police in Israel) currently visiting Britain, on Saturday, January the 20th. (assemble Dollis Hill tube at 7.15p.m.)

Letters of support can be sent directly to Israel c/o Dr. I. Shahak, 2, Bartnura st. Jerusalem.

The Ad-Hoc committee for the Defense of Civil Liberties in Israel, Israel Palestine Socialist Action Group, The Israeli Revolutionary Action Committee Abroad, cheques payable to Sylvia Klingberg, 36, Summerfield Av. NW6. London.

### INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP RED FORUM

A series of introductory discussions for comrades in London on the politics of the Fourth International. Every Tuesday, 8.00 p.m.

General Picton pub, Caledonian Road (five minutes walk from Kings Cross tube)

The first session on the present situation in Ireland was introduced by George Johnstone (Coventry AIL and IS). He outlined the events leading up to direct rule, and showed that these reflected the desire of British imperialism to change its relation with the two parts of Ireland. Secondly, he traced the organisation at present called the UDA back to its origins in the UVF, as far back as 1913. It was allegiance to the Protestant ascendancy which provided support for both organisations. He thus made it clear that the UDA was not a result of the Provisional bombing campaign, but a result of the sectarianism built into the Six County state.

The discussion covered the developing situation in the 26 counties, and the possibilities of unity between the Protestant and Catholic working class. One delegate took the rather short-sighted view that the present possibilities of sectarian civil war were the result of the bombing campaign, and that the main priority at the present time was to concentrate on issues

like housing which could lead to a united working class. Most delegates disagreed with this assessment; and argued that the way forward involved developing the political struggle in the South, and continuing the national struggle in the North, against the British army, and extreme Protestant organisations which threaten the nationalist areas.

### TASKS AND ACTIVITIES

The second session on tasks and activities in this country was introduced by Bob Purdie (IMG and Organiser of the AIL). He outlined the work done over the past few years in building a solidarity movement from the Irish Civil Rights Solidarity Campaign to the present AIL. The main lesson he drew from this experience was that at certain times (e.g. after internment) it was possible and absolutely necessary to try to build a movement involving the largest possible number of people around simple demands (e.g. "End Internment"). Nevertheless, it was also necessary at times, to fight within that movement for more

developed political demands (such as explicit support for the military struggle of the IRA). Unless this was done, experience has shown that the movement will crumble with a change in the situation in Ireland (as the introduction of direct rule showed). The central basis of such demands must be the right of the Irish to self-determination.

He also pointed out the possibilities in the near future for building a movement on the basis of "Troops Out of Ireland", and said that the AIL must be ready to take all opportunities for constructing such a movement. Among the points covered in discussion were the need to achieve a greater impact for the AIL's politics within the trade unions. Great importance was laid on the present educational discussion meetings organised by Coventry AIL as a means of building a solid organisation which would not be dis-oriented by changing events. Overall the conference marked a step forward for Coventry AIL in widening its influence and in drawing in new members.

## French Workers in Brest Win Big Victory

By JOHN WATTS

*Any important experiences in struggle of any section of the international working class must become the property of the whole movement. In this way, the most advanced methods, the most daring and imaginative tactics can become generalised across frontiers; in this way, the working class will rediscover its international character.*

An unusual reception awaited gas and electricity workers in the French town of Brest when they returned to work recently after a successful strike. Instead of brickbats, they were treated to extra-large tips—and this after the town had been without electricity for nearly three weeks.

The problem which had led to the strike was that there were too few gas and electricity workers. Redundancies had produced massive speed-up and very dangerous working. The traditional 24-hour stoppages solved nothing and were regarded as simply 'leave without pay' by the workers. Negotiations resulted in the inevitable 'we will see what we can do'. 'we will study the question'.

### STRIKE COMMITTEE

After six months spent discussing and preparing the ground, the delegates from the two main union federations, the CGT and the CFDT, called a mass meeting to discuss the issue. It should be pointed out that the CGT delegate was not, as is usual, a Communist Party member but a long time member of the French section of the Fourth International, the Ligue Communiste. The mass meeting elected a strike committee—but a strike committee with a difference. This committee involved all the workers, unionised or not; it met every day in open and public session (sometimes 300 workers attended); it set up a commission to establish links with other factories, and a second one to explain the workers' actions to the public.

The mass meeting decided that the best way to discover accurately how many more workers should be taken on was to return to the local plants, elect local committees, and discuss the whole work process thoroughly. Each plant would then discover how many more workers were needed. This done, the management was approached with a figure of 75 extra workers. They replied that they would only negotiate with the CFDT and CGT; the workers explained that things were different now that they had a strike committee representing all of them. There would be no negotiations except through that committee and in public.



Brest workers faced general problem: photo shows striking gas and electricity workers in Paris, January 1972.

The electricity supply board was thrown into a spin by all this; telegrams and state bureaucrats sped backwards and forwards between Paris and Brest. Meanwhile a solidarity committee had been set up in the town. The strike committee produced and distributed 25,000 leaflets to working class homes explaining why the electricity and gas supplies were cut off and also telling other workers how they were organising their struggle. Every now and again they were approached with requests for electricity to an individual household or institution. Each case was reviewed by the strike committee. If they approved it, someone would be sent to switch the juice on. If not, the reasons were given.

The remark of one worker needs no further elaboration: "From the moment the conduct of the strike became everybody's affair and not simply that of a few leading trade unionists, it was obvious that the strike became ten times more solid."

Despite a compromise attempted by a leading CGT official from Paris, it was the gas and electricity boards which caved in. It was agreed to take on 55 of the 75 extra workers that had been demanded.

### NOT THE END

But that was not the end of it all. The workers didn't want to go back to business as usual, nor did they want to go back to the separated unions as before. They wanted to keep the strike com-

mittee which had organised their unity in action. But what role was it to play? Some workers thought it should actually run the plants. But it was pointed out that this would inevitably end up in collaboration with the management. Instead they called it the Co-ordination Committee, its job being to meet weekly and check that management was carrying out what they had agreed to do. As the CGT delegate said, "it's a sort of permanent workers' control over the management of personnel". And another worker pointed out that, "if another demand comes up, say a wage claim, now that we are on the prowl we can set up the Strike Committee again".

The Brest electricity and gas workers were not the first workers in France to elect a strike committee. But it is the first time such a thing has happened in so isolated a centre. Workers who know how hard it is to fight redundancies can appreciate what a victory it is actually to increase the work force. Such a struggle has already had important repercussions at a national level in France. Together with other recent strikes, it has shown that the bosses can be beaten even on questions which before were not taken up seriously by the unions. Brest also shows the French Communist Party and the Socialist Party that the working class are not sitting with their arms folded waiting for the General Election in March to solve their problems for them. By their actions now they are consolidating the changed relationship of forces with the ruling class.

## National Union of Students and the Indochina Demonstration

Red Mole Reporter

The NUS at its November conference, agreed to sponsor the Indochina Solidarity Campaign and affiliate to its founding conference. Six weeks later however, at the NUS Universities specialist conference, the NUS leadership refused to support the first actions taken by the ISC.

The position put jointly by the International Socialists and the International Marxist Group was that the NUS, as a supporter of ISC, should tell students to attend the 'solidarity' rally organised by the ISC and not the 'peace' rally organised by the British Council for Peace in Vietnam before the joint ISC-BCPV demonstration on January 20th.

The leadership covered up its tracks by distorting the positions put forward by the ISC. A circular put out by the NUS central office for example, warns students that "the Executive has been advised that some organisations affiliated to ISC may organise an alternative demonstration also on the 20th January. The Executive would advise all students not to support this splittist move but to participate in the main demonstration". This, of course, is just not true.

We look forward to their explaining this refusal to implement conference decisions at the next NUS conference when the NUS especially when the CP-sponsored 'left', Mike Terry, puts himself forward for election.



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