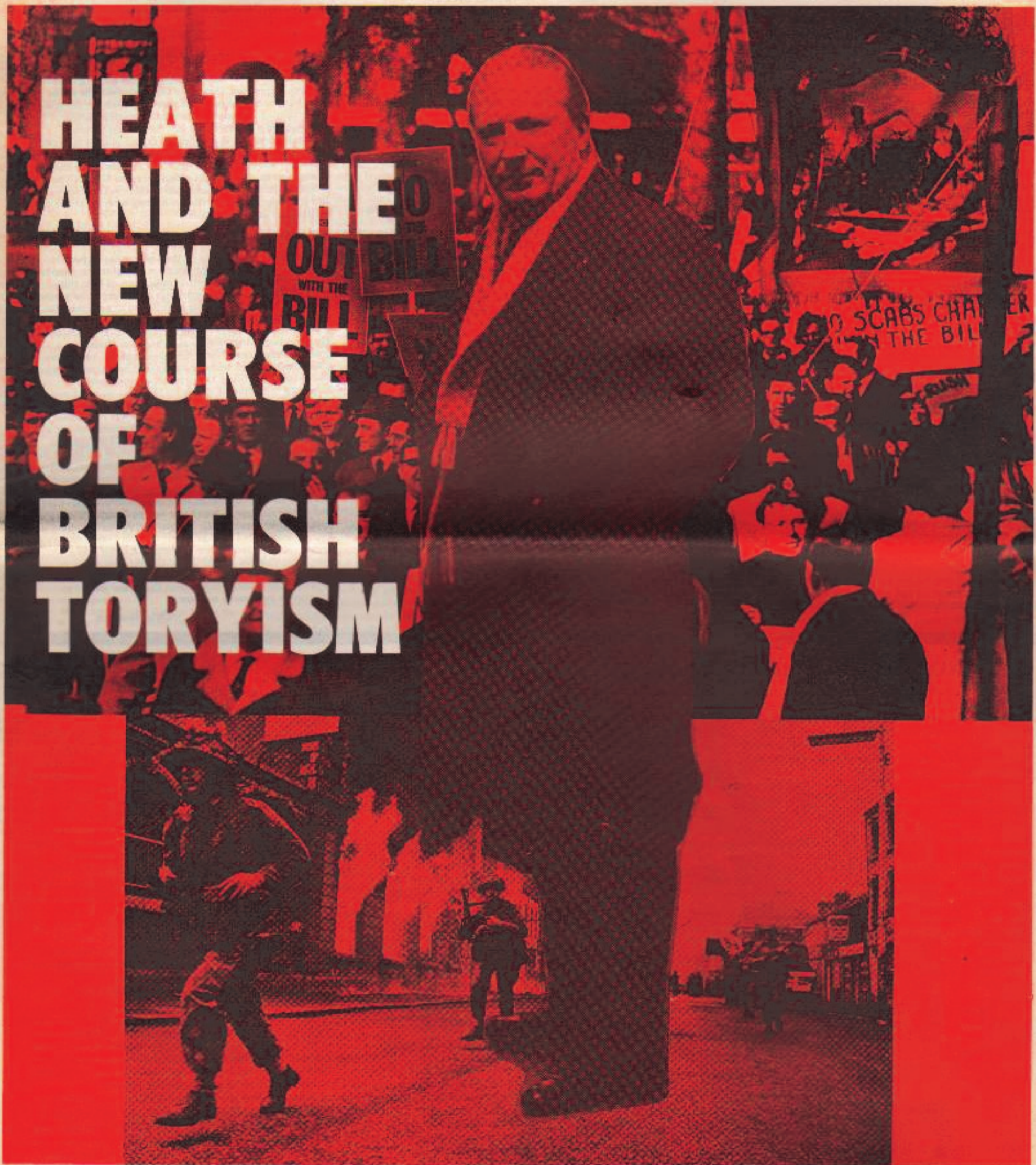


No. 29 5th October 1971 Price 7½p

The Red Mole



HEATH AND THE NEW COURSE OF BRITISH TORYISM

UCS — STOREYS — UNEMPLOYMENT — IRELAND — CEYLON — W.PAKISTAN

BRIAN PEARCE ON LUKACS

BLACK STRUGGLE AGAINST REPRESSION

STUDENTS AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

The Red Mole

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UCS and the Struggle Against Redundancies

The current negotiations at UCS where the union bureaucrats have entered the picture in the shape of Dan McGarvey of the Boilermakers Union (cf. *The Red Mole* Clydeside Broadsheet for discussion of this possibility) sounds the death-knell of the "work-in". The C.P. shop stewards, faithfully following their Party's policy, will learn, unfortunately the hard way, the simple fact that respectability and image-building exercises are of no avail. When the chips are down the capitalists ignore "public opinion". As we go to press, all the indications are that the shop stewards will in all probability accept a compromise settlement which could cut down the number of unemployed by a few hundreds by keeping another yard open till a safe period had elapsed and selling this to the workers, including the 3,500 who would still be made redundant, as a great victory. This is certainly McGarvey's idea, and if the shop stewards refuse to buy it, we could see a split developing and reaching crisis proportions and leading to demoralisation and defeat. So in either case the CP has yet again displayed its bankruptcy and its wretched addiction to constitutional procedures.

A defeat in Clydeside would have a bad impact on workers elsewhere in the country who are preparing to fight redundancies, because unemployment continues to rise. The real number of unemployed is certainly over a million and the four weeks preceding 15 September saw 25,000 men made redundant - all indications suggest a further deterioration. Despite the fact that the last two budgets have tried to increase the level of demand in the economy, the *Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin* (Sept. 1971, p. 313) noted: "... these measures cannot succeed for very long unless parallel efforts are made to reduce the growth of wages and salaries." In other words a more vigorous policy of wage restraint and planned redundancies in "lame-duck" industries is what Capital is demanding at the present moment. Its ideologues are not satisfied even with the Industrial Relations Act and Prof. James F. Meade of Cambridge University has called for further restraints on the right to strike.

WHAT STRATEGY FOR THE WORKERS?

In the face of these attacks the workers and their organisations need a combative strategy. That is why we believe that Jimmy Reid appearing on TV and pledging that he is interested in increasing productivity, "helping the economy" (i.e. increasing profits) and similar rubbish is self-defeating as Bro. Reid will soon find out to his cost, or more to the point, as the thousands of workers made redundant will

soon discover. Unless a strategy is developed to fight sackings and redundancies, the capitalists will win. Up to date there has been a notable absence of such a strategy. The trade union leaders have, in particular, been more noted for their timidity and unwillingness to fight than their ability to defend their members.

1. The first obvious step to take is an immediate embargo on all overtime. ASTMS has already called on its members to impose a *voluntary* ban on overtime. Individual branches of other unions have done the same, but this is clearly inadequate. Thus if one group of ASTMS members do ban overtime, they have no guarantee of receiving the support of their fellow members in other factories or areas. Voluntary bans will remain ineffective. What is needed is a nationally coordinated campaign which involves the entire trade union movement. Otherwise there will be a tendency on the part of some workers to "grab" all the overtime that they can, seeing this as financial insurance against the day they might be made redundant.

2. A number of TU leaders are at last beginning to insist that no Productivity Deals should be signed which do not include a written guarantee against redundancy. While on the right lines, this does not go far enough. Productivity Deals have two effects: they lead to cuts in the present labour force and a reduction in job opportunities. Even when these Deals contain a "no-redundancy" clause, the resulting shrinkage of jobs places the men in a disadvantageous position. A pool of unemployed outside the factory strengthens the management's hand if it later wishes to throw out the "no-redundancy" clause. Thus the latter should be written into all wage agreements.

3. The above two points are important first steps but they must be linked with the demand for a shorter working week with no loss of pay. The problems of British capitalism are not the responsibility of the workers, who only sell their labour power and do not control the means of production. In periods of growing unemployment, the workers must fight for themselves and the only demand that makes sense in this situation is: *Five Days Work or Five Days Pay*. This puts the onus for unemployment where it belongs - on the capitalist class - and raises the questions of who should own and control industry.

ORGANISING THE UNEMPLOYED

The only serious effort to organise the unemployed has

come from the Claimants Unions. Given the tyranny of Britain's social security bureaucracy, the CUs have played an extremely useful role. Organised and run by unemployed workers themselves, they have taken up the fight at the most basic level and provided representation for ill-informed and mystified claimants. This primitive unionisation of the unemployed plays an important role in combatting demoralisation and in creating an organisation which can begin to deal with the organised labour movement and organise combined actions. But this will obviously not be enough: to be able to fight effectively, the CUs will have to politicise themselves much more as this could prove to be an extremely important step in making workers aware of the realities of neocapitalism.

DECREPIT LABOURISM IS NOT THE ANSWER

The complete bankruptcy of the Labour Party, both in office and out of it, on the question of fighting unemployment provides us with another indication of how this Party is integrated in the workings of the capitalist system. Its complete and implacable hostility to any meaningful industrial action and its recent period in office has convinced a large layer of workers of its total uselessness. Thus outdated slogans such as "Labour to Power on a Socialist Programme" or other more "subtle" variations ("Labour to Power without Illusions") do not serve any useful function. Given the present situation, only an escalating industrial offensive by the workers (occupations backed by solidarity strikes, rate and rent strikes, etc.) openly defying the Industrial Relations Act can defeat the Tory offensive. The demands we have discussed above will not be achieved without industrial action. The fight for these demands means organising the workers via their trade unions, trades councils, shop stewards committees, and where this is not possible, through local action committees. To wage a successful fight against the Tories, the workers will have to take control of their organisations. This fight is part of the struggle to break the workers from the stranglehold of reformism, i.e. the Labour Party. That is why *The Red Mole* and the IMG have, over the last year, developed an orientation based on the demand for a *Workers Government Based on the Trade Unions*. The strategy adopted by the Tory government (discussed extensively by Robin Blackburn elsewhere in this issue) makes this orientation even more necessary.

-Chris Hampton

IRELAND: The Tripartite Talks

As we go to press, the Anglo-Irish tripartite talks have recently been concluded. The talks represented an attempt to achieve a new settlement to govern the relationship between British imperialism and Ireland, to replace the settlement contained in the Treaty of Surrender between British imperialism and the bourgeois leadership of the Irish Republican struggle of 1922.

The settlement of '22 no longer reflects the balance of forces in Ireland. Its visible collapse in the North now threatens, in Heath's words, to produce a "civil war which would spread across the border to involve the whole of Ireland." Southern Ireland is now the third largest market for British goods. The North's potential as a profitable area for British investment now bears no comparison with that of the South.

As Heath enters into the negotiations, he will be aware of the fears felt by the Confederation of British Industry regarding the safety of current British investment in the South, and the increasing proportion of foreign investment in that area which is falling to its competitors. He will know from British Intelligence reports that the regime of Union Jack Lynch, the best Prime Minister Britain ever had in Ireland, is under intense pressure on a number of fronts.

The loyalty of the Free State Army is straining to breaking point. (One of the army officers in custody in the South was arrested while recovering from wounds received in action against British forces in Northern Ireland.)

More than a thousand people attended the founding rally of Kevin Boland's new breakaway "war" party. To understand what this means in British terms, one would have to visualise a breakaway from one of the major parties having just under 20,000 people attending its founding rally. Connecting these two areas of pressure was the presence at the meeting of both Colonel Michael Heffernan, former Director of Army Intelligence and Captain James Kelly, former Deputy Director of Army Intelligence.

A substantial proportion of the leadership of the mighty Irish Transport and General Workers Union (embracing almost half of the trade union membership in the Republic) has made clear its opposition to Lynch's collaborationist policy, carrying with them, in this, some of the parliamentary Labour Party.

The above merely reflects the pressure within the system

in the South.

Since the introduction of internment, almost every trade union branch or factory committee which has met has expressed bitter opposition to internment. Some trade unions in the Dublin area and the Organisation of National Ex-Servicemen have both called for the reorganisation of the Defence Forces so as to create a mass "Citizens' Army". While support for the divided Republican movement, especially at this period for the Provisional wing, grows day by day, to this can be added the militant line adopted by tenants' associations and other organs of popular opinion.

This pressure mounts alongside a new wave of industrial militancy in the South, which shows signs of reaching the intensity of the early and middle 1960s. A connection between these two elements will lead to an explosion which will bring down Lynch and threaten the whole imperialist system in Ireland.

In the North itself, the British are faced with an uprising of almost 40% of its population, who have demonstrated time and time again their willingness to support almost any measures to smash the Orange Statelet. Amongst the Protestants there is increasing support for a militant Orange backlash, tempered only by a knowledge that Orange power must win every time it faces battle. For them, as for the Zionists in Palestine, one defeat means the end. But unlike the Zionists in Palestine, the technology, both military and otherwise, of the surrounding areas is roughly equal to that in Northern Ireland itself.

In Britain itself, a recent opinion poll showed that, despite the mass hysteria of the British press, despite the treachery of Social Democracy, despite the virtual desertion of the Irish struggle by a large section of the British Left, 58% of the British population support the recall of the British troops from Ireland. This percentage will grow as more and more British troops return home to the graveyards and mental homes of Britain.

As against all this, Heath is aware that the Achilles Heel of the Irish struggle is the almost total absence of *conscious* revolutionary leadership. Despite some last-minute conversions, "revolutionary socialist" leaders in the North, by their capitulation to the false consciousness of the Protestant working class on the national question, reflected in their economic line in agitation and their denial of the need for armed defence, and indeed in some

cases of the existence of British imperialism in Ireland, have lost the leading role played in the early stages of the struggle.

This has resulted in the actual leadership of the current struggle passing in many cases passing into the hands of non- (as opposed to anti-) socialist elements. This in turn has created the situation where populist *bourgeois* elements in the South are able to influence in part the tempo, and in some cases the *direction* of the struggle in the North. Although standing to the left of Lynch on the national question and on some social issues, these elements have been incapable to date of bringing down Lynch. Essentially Bonapartist, they have stopped short of all measures which would successfully end the collaborationist regime of Lynch, thus confirming the prediction of Trotsky that the national bourgeoisie would be unable to lead a successful struggle for national liberation.

No section of the Green Tories, left, right or centre, can lead the Irish revolution to success. The most effective weapon in the hands of British imperialism in relation to Ireland today is the knowledge that the Irish bourgeoisie is as threatened by any mass upheaval as it is.

This creates the objective base for another betrayal of the Irish struggle.

However, 1971 is different from 1922. British imperialism in '22 was at the peak of its imperial power. The last additions to the red markings on the map of the world had just been made. The revolutionary upsurge initiated by the October Revolution was ebbing. The revolutionary socialist movement in Ireland was almost non-existent.

Today the best elements among the young socialists in Ireland have learned from the mistakes of the socialists of '68. An embryonic Marxist tendency which does not recoil in horror from Republicanism is already in existence.

In Britain those tendencies which provided ideological and moral support for the retreat from Republicanism are today totally discredited on the Irish issue.

If the Irish struggle is to succeed, the British left must fulfil its revolutionary duty. This means a struggle to co-construct a mass movement in Britain, essentially of British militants, in *meaningful* solidarity with the Irish struggle.

In the test of the last three years, only the International Marxist Group and *The Red Mole* have put forward a programme which corresponds with this. All other tendencies have, alas, been found wanting.

THE UPW & "POLITICAL INTERFERENCE"

Trade union bureaucrats are always worried after they have led a strike to defeat, particularly after a strike which has had the *active* support of the union's rank-and-file. The postal workers strike early this year was one such strike and it is, therefore, not surprising to see the union bureaucrats worried that their members might be attracted to revolutionary socialist ideas. A recent issue of the UPW's *Branch Officials Bulletin* (Vol. 9, No. 21, to be exact) makes interesting reading. Under an item headed "Political Interference" the UPW bureaucrats complain:

"Since the end of our strike earlier this year, evidence has reached Union headquarters which shows that a number of fringe political organisations are attempting to operate on our membership, in an endeavour to bring their political influence to bear upon our members' industrial problems.

"Most of these organisations are small, and outside of the Trade Union Movement their political influence is negligible. It is no doubt for this reason that they now seek to operate within our industrial area in an attempt to use the name of the Union of Post Office Workers to give credibility and respectability to their activities."

The article goes on to mention the I.S., SLL and the IMG as examples of groups trying to subvert the UPW by publishing material on the strike. The IMG's pamphlet (*Weal: The Post Office Workers v. The State*, IMG Publications, 1971, 8p, available from Red Books, 182 Pentonville Road, N.1) is denounced as "a farrago of half-truths and nonsense". Needless to add, not a single instance of these half-truths is provided. But the fear of the UPW bureaucrats knows no bounds or else they would not have attacked the C.P. as well, particularly since the *Morning Star* projected Tom Jackson as a new folk hero and encouraged support for the union bureaucracy. But union bureaucrats are ungrateful sods, especially when the pressure is off!

In an attempt to explain the reasons for the growing interest of revolutionaries in the UPW, the bureaucrats write:

"It is obvious that our strike earlier this year has created considerable excitement amongst these fringe political organisations who now clearly see our Union and its membership as a means of increasing and extending what they consider to be their political influence.

"What these groups overlook, of course, is that our strike was not political in the sense that they interpret this, and that the members of the Union of Post Office Workers have never allowed themselves or their policies to be directed or influenced by any outside political organisation. The place where our policies are decided are at our properly constituted Trade Union meetings and conferences, and not in the committee rooms of any political party—least of all, such fringe organisations as these which seek to use our members for their own political ends and purposes.

"However, as it is now obvious that our Union has been selected as the political battlefield for these various fringe groups which openly exist to influence our policy decisions, the Executive Council feels bound to draw the attention of all Branch Officers and Committees to the dangers which exist for our organisation if these activities continue unchecked. The Executive Council feels it is only necessary to draw attention to the activities of these groups for the good sense of our Branches and members to prevail, and that having done this, none of our District or Branch Officials will allow their names or the name of our Union to be used to further the activities of these fringe groups. For the business of our Union is the business of its members and not the concern of any outside political group. If our members decide that political action is necessary, then we have the means of pursuing that through our affiliation to the Labour Party. But we ourselves initiate such action, and in that sense it is we who direct the politicians and not the politicians who direct us.

"Meanwhile, the Executive Council hopes that this statement will serve to alert Branch Officials to the dangers of allowing themselves and our Union's name to be used for the political purposes of the fringe groups we have named.

"Branches receiving any such material as instanced in this statement should send it forthwith to the General Secretary for report to the Executive Council in accordance with our Rules."

This artificial division between politics and economics (though of course Labour Party politics are excluded!) is typical of trade union bureaucrats in Britain. They prefer to ignore the fact that the Tories decided that it was important *politically* to inflict a defeat on the postal workers and proceeded to do so, while Messrs Jackson, Stagg & Co. restrained themselves to delivering pious homilies about keeping politics out of the struggle. Whether they like it or not *all* the revolutionary groups will continue to try and win influence in the UPW and all other trade unions, because we firmly believe that only politicised, revolutionary trade unionism can succeed in effectively combating and siding in the destruction of capitalism. There will be more white hairs in the big moustache before long...

—Clarissa Howard

STOREYS STRIKE ENDS

The strike of 170 engineering workers over the sacking of their convenor at Storey's in Lancaster ended on Monday 20th September after 11 weeks. The Management sent letters to all strikers on Friday 17th and Sunday 19th September by private delivery. In these they appealed for a return to work on Monday, offering legal and police protection to those who returned, and naming a time at which senior members of management would be at the gate to ensure a "safe return". The letter also contained an implicit threat that non-Union labour might be employed. A large number of men turned up at the specified time, and after 30 men had crossed the picket, the remainder reluctantly decided to return to work.

The following extract from Storey's Workers Bulletin indicates how the strikers assess the situation now:

"Monday Sept. 20th will go down on record in some men's memories as the day when approximately 30 men put money before their union principles. They returned to work in defiance of a majority vote on the 17th Sept. to wait for the National Officers of the Union to meet Storey Management in order to press for the Standing Proposal of 'full reinstatement for the sacked Convenor' to be upheld.

"The 11-week-old battle is over but the fight has not been lost. We have gained plenty of experience and many friends up & down the country. We also feel that a few more days would have brought all our efforts to a successful conclusion. We know it & so do the Storey management as was proved by the fact they rushed out by car on Sunday night. This was the kind of letter no responsible management would have written unless they were facing a humiliating defeat—they must by now realise that they did not win anything! and that the vote taken to return to work was not because of their letters of appeal; the men voted to come back because 30 of their members had gone through the gates, and that temporarily our solidarity had been broken, but now we are back at work solidarity will soon be achieved again. We will never let Mike Lewthwaite be forgotten nor will his effort of achieving solidarity within eight unions be forgotten. We may not have Mike with us at future negotiations but we have all gained invaluable experience by knowing and working with him."

ATTICA : S.L. hold meeting

The newly-formed Spartacus League in Notting Hill Gate held a public meeting in All Saints Church Hall on September 23rd to discuss the Attica massacres in the United States. Nearly a hundred people, including black militants from various organisations, were present. Speaking for the Spartacus League, Tariq Ali spelt out the consequences of Attica and related them to the current crisis which had gripped American capitalism. He painted a vivid picture of a society which could not prevent its own disintegration and pointed out that the real tragedy lay not only in the brutal killings of George Jackson and the Attica prisoners, but also in the fact that there had been no generalised response from the black communities inside the ghettos in reply to the murders. This reflected a certain demoralisation which had set in with the break-up of the Black Panther Party and the inability of other revolutionary organisations to gain an implantation in the ghettos.

Other speakers followed: first a black militant from the Angela Davis Defence Committee appealed to the Spartacus League to set up a branch in Notting Hill Gate (this was accepted!) and then a defendant in the Mangrove Trial, who had the meeting rollicking with laughter at his brilliant descriptions of the crude and blatant racism of the Notting Hill police: "Fourteen pigs charge in, beat you up and then arrest you and charge you with assault." After other contributions from the floor, Piers Corbyn explained what the Notting Hill S.L. was engaged in doing and invited all militants interested in further activities to attend Red Circle discussion meetings organised by the S.L. regularly. The meeting ended with watching a TV film on the state of American prisons.

For those interested in further activities in Notting Hill Gate, the Red Circle meets regularly on Monday evenings at the Ladbroke Pub, near Ladbroke Grove.

—Jim Noble

On Saturday 24th September, the River Don Shop Stewards Committee called for a demo in support of steelworkers fighting against the threatened living off of profitable sections of BSC to Firth Brown, saw 2,500 workers march against unemployment. 4,500 jobs are directly threatened, but the possibility of the eventual closure of the entire factory involving 7,500 workers, remains a real threat. The demo was seen as part of a campaign which will link up with the TUC's campaign against unemployment. A more detailed analysis of the situation in the steel industry will appear in the next issue of the paper.

WHEN THE BODIES OF ARMED MEN IN THE SERVICE OF CAPITAL ARE IN DISARRAY ...

Just at a time when the French bosses and government have to face a whole series of very hard strikes (the railwaymen in Nantes, the workers of a spa factory in Evian, the teachers, etc. ...) the police crack up!

Already on February 23rd some hundred men refused to resume duty and disrupted the work of their entire company; on February 24th, another case of refusal led to the intervention of Marcellin, Minister of the Interior; on March 4th, the police went onto the streets with smiles and leaflets in an attempt to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of the public. In September, they strike!

This crisis among the policemen has raised a few questions, no doubt, for Marcellin—but also for the revolutionaries. The debate has also opened in England as to whether revolutionaries should carry out a systematic propaganda amongst the British soldiers fighting in Northern Ireland.

The crisis among the policemen in France is partly due to some policemen revolting not so much against the conditions of their work as against the undignified tasks of a profession which they thought had an aura of worthy purpose: the maintenance of order and the protection of the citizen and Nation. The revolt is also an awareness of the fact that they are manipulated: either congratulated or blamed after their task according to the relationship of forces, according to whether the revolutionary forces had been able to successfully react or not. Lastly, the factor of demoralisation for being regarded by society as shameful figures has largely played its role. The story goes around, that a policeman cannot go and ask his neighbour for help any longer, nor go and fetch his kid at school, without being spat on! (It is also quite interesting to note the role some publications might have played in this process of demoralisation. We know of at least three films and five books recently published, denouncing various aspects of the police.)

Faced with these manifestations of disarray, the French Communist Party (but it could be any non-Marxist current, such as are widely spread in Britain) is delighted to be able to say "you see, we told you the police is not one, it reflects among itself all the contradictions of the system, it is not impossible to reform it.

For that, it is only necessary to separate the sheep from the goats and only necessary that instead of being at the service of Marcellin-Pompidou, it is at that of Mitterand-Marchais."

For, of course, in the latter case, the police could find again its original function—that of traffic controller or midnight hoodigan searchers.

Well, all this is a lovely display of naivety (or shameful revision of Marxism?)

Yes, of course, the degree of ferocity of the various armed bodies can vary according to the degree of bourgeois democracy granted at a given moment. It is true that a mass upsurge can enforce a "democratisation" of the armed forces. The disbanding of the B-Specials in Northern Ireland (1969) is an example of it. But from there, to deduce that the function of the police (or army) can be got rid of through democratisation, to think that the bourgeoisie can be deprived of its organs of repression through reforms is sheer utopia. The bourgeoisie has a thousand ways of ever reconstructing such organs—isn't unemployment a gold-mine for the continuous hiring of mercenaries, whether they be called police, army or fascist groups?)

Even if the policeman swaps his costume of repression for a sheepskin coat (isn't the British "Bobby" nicer than the French "flic", don't we often hear?) his function basically remains the same: to maintain the relationship of forces between the bourgeoisie and the working class in favour of the former.

Now, this does not mean that the revolutionaries should not be delighted when the police is demoralised: this is precisely what they should seek to achieve. And this is exactly what our French comrades did: isolate them through systematic propaganda among the population and demoralise them through relentless organised reaction to each blow they strive to inflict.

Only then is it worthwhile trying to win over some of them. Only then is it meaningful to point out to them that they are repressing their brothers, that they are being manipulated to keep an order which is irrelevant to them etc. No one can be against this type of propaganda on principle. What we say is that until the forces of repression have been physically or morally undermined, this propaganda is more likely to amount to sheer waste of energy and we say that at a time of sharp struggle, similar to the present struggle in Northern Ireland, to give as a main axis of one's activities this type of propaganda is sheer reformism.



Frank "Burch" Royle, the Irish militant imprisoned in connection with the House of Commons CS Gas incident, was released on the 30th September 1971. He made the following statement to a Red Mole reporter who greeted him outside the prison:

"After 14 months of depending on press reports, I want to get up to date on what has really been happening. I want to be of whatever use I can to the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland. This Saturday (2nd October) I will be speaking at street meetings in

the Anti-Internment League's mass rally at Hyde Park.

"The British Army and the Stormont government wield every weapon available to smash opposition to Unionism. The Hainsworth Committee has obliged by producing a whitewashing report on CS Gas. Try telling that to the men, women and children that I have seen suffering in Ballymurphy that it does no harm.

"The British government has declared war on the

IRELAND: A letter from I.S.

Dear Comrades,

It is the view of IS that "the interests of the struggle in Ireland" referred to by your correspondent John Marston in your issue of 15th September, require the maximum of cooperation between all those in Britain who oppose the Orange-Tory regime in the six counties. Therefore we took the initiative in calling the first London demonstration against internment on Sunday 15th August. We gave full support to the picketing of recruiting offices on 4th and 5th September. We are making every effort to bring out large numbers of workers for the Anti-Internment League's demonstration of October 31st.

We fully support the activities of the Anti-Internment League, those of the Labour Committee Against Internment, and indeed those of any other body that is willing to campaign against internment and repression in the six counties.

We are not at all worried about giving "a left cover" to Labour MPs, trade union leaders, Irish Republicans and so on. The view that the credibility of, say, left Labour MPs depends on our association or lack of association with them strikes us as rather naive.

In any case a *united front* activity means the joint action of people who disagree fundamentally about many things but can be brought together to fight for some specific demands. When, for example, Trotsky called for united front between the German Socialist and Communist Parties to resist Hitler he was calling for a united front, on one issue, with those who had strangled the German revolution in 1918-19 and who had been consistent supporters of capitalism ever since. The CP leaders denounced this proposal to give "a left cover" to the "social-democratic traitors". Actually, as most marxists now recognise, Trotsky was right and his "radical" critics victims of what Lenin called "the infantile sickness of ultra-leftism".

Now as to the particular demand of the Labour Committee which has distressed your correspondent - "Release or right of trial for all internees" - this can be *tactically* right or wrong. It depends on one's assessment of the situation at the time. What has to be said is that it is neither more nor less "reformist" than "End internment" or "British troops out of Ireland", both demands, incidentally, prominently displayed by Socialist Worker. Why "British troops out of Ireland"? Why no "Abolition of the standing army and its replacement by a workers' militia"? Hasn't this been the programme of marxists for over a century? Of course it has and of course we support it. Why merely "End internment"? Why not "For the overthrow of Stormont and the establishment of a workers' republic"?

To put the questions is to answer them. There is a difference between *propaganda* ("many ideas addressed to few people") and *agitation* ("few ideas addressed to many people"). Agitation starts from the consciousness of workers as well as from the needs of the situation. It seeks to mobilise *massive* support for, normally, a *limited* demand. The fact that we are for "abolition of the wages system" (propaganda) does not stop us supporting wage claims (agitation).

There are all sorts of differences between organisations currently supporting the campaign against internment, and repression in the six counties. IS has its position which can be seen in the pages of Socialist Worker and International Socialism. The fact that we have differences with other groups ought not, in our opinion, to be any obstacle to a common fight in support of our Irish comrades. We trust that your readers will share this view.

Yours Fraternally,
Duncan Hallas,
National Secretary.

JOHN MARSTON WRITES:

Comrade Hallas's letter is more interesting for its omissions than for anything else, although even on the points he does try to make he shows a total theoretical confusion.

The most surprising feature of his letter is that he nowhere even *attempts* to justify the separate existence of the Labour Committee Against Internment, but contents himself with a general declaration of full support for all anti-internment activities. What he omits to mention, of course, is that it is *not* simply a matter of I.S. supporting all these activities. On the contrary, and Hallas does not question my original assertion, I.S. and I.S. alone took the decision to set up the Labour Committee, after the Anti-Internment League was already in existence. Indeed, so identified were I.S. and the Labour Committee that the latter's first public meeting was advertised in some places as a Labour Committee meeting and in others as an I.S. meeting. As I write, the latest copy of *Socialist Worker* (25 September) lies before me with a report that "John Palmer said that while I.S. supported the L.C.A.I., its demands did not go far enough". One might fail to realise from this that I.S. *actually wrote those demands!* Is Palmer trying to change the line now that I.S. is coming under pressure?

The concomitant to their support for the Labour Committee is of course their *lack* of support for the activities of the Anti-Internment League (numerous meetings and pickets came to mind where I.S. were distinguished only by their absence, notably the pickets against the visits of Hillery and Lynch and the meetings at Archway and Highgate on 11 September). I.S. have a member on the committee, but their commitment goes little further than this. In fact it is

role by other Irish and socialist organisations at Anti-Internment League meetings. It is emphatically not a question of full support for all; in practice it is full support for the L.C.A.I. and minimal support for the Anti-Internment League.

The only reason for all this is, as we said in the last issue, a sectarian attempt to cash in on the upsurge by putting their own organisational interests before the interests of the struggle in Ireland (e.g. I.S. get all the names and addresses of those taken in by the Labour Committee, an old tactic). Such opportunism is even more astounding when one looks at their past record on Ireland. Where were I.S. between October 1970 and August 1971, when there was an urgent need to build a solidarity campaign? Is it not even true that a member of I.S. wrote an article in the *Irish Times* attacking the idea that there was a need for a solidarity campaign in this country? But as soon as the struggle heats up, then of course I.S. are the first to jump on the bandwagon.

The *reformism* of I.S.'s demands (for which see further below) reflects of course not only a capitulation to the most backward and chauvinist tendencies of the British working class, but also to the level of their own membership! Hence the complaints by local I.S. members that the "Join the Professional Terrorists" cover of *Socialist Worker* was too "emotive" and "radical". But what else can I.S. expect if they lay all their emphasis on the numbers (rather than cadres) in the organisation and recruit anyone who shows the slightest interest in joining, no matter what their political level.

In passing, one must also take up the claim that I.S. "gave full support to the picketing of recruiting offices". In fact, I.S. *called* this picket, well before internment; in fact, our comrades report that in a number of areas I.S.'s participation in the picket was of a brief and token nature only. It is not for nothing that they are known as the "Invisible Socialists" among sections of the Republican movement.

To move on, however, to comrade Hallas's "theoretical" contributions. The reference to united front activity can only be relevant if we take him to mean that the Labour Committee is in his opinion a united front. But his reference to Trotsky conveniently overlooks two aspects which are of key importance to the whole concept of a united front. Firstly, Hallas refers to "some specific demands" without specifying their content; Trotsky, on the other hand, was quite clear that such demands should take up "the real problems of the class struggle" (which, as I pointed out in my first article, the Labour Committee's demands conveniently avoid). Secondly, the united front which Trotsky called for in Germany was a united front of two mass organisations of the working class - and he was quite explicit that one of the reasons for doing so was to win over the workers from the reformist organisations. Do I.S., then, have plans to win over the Labour M.P.s (because no mass base is involved) to a revolutionary perspective? - because that, comrade, would be really naive!

On the question of demands, comrade Hallas's demands are even more bizarre. His initial point about the difference between propaganda (many ideas addressed to few people) and agitation (few ideas addressed to many people) is correct. It is not the *ideas themselves* which are different; the difference comes in their complexity and presentation. But comrade Hallas then seems to take the opposite view, and indeed to equate propaganda with a "maximum programme" and agitation with a "minimum programme". This is certainly a new idea in the Marxist movement. Leninists have always regarded the difference between propaganda work and agitation work as marking essentially (allowing for uneven development) two different phases in the growth of a revolutionary organisation. An organisation which is still in the process of organising the *vanguard* of the working class is confined mainly to propaganda work; it is only when that task is completed and the organisation can do mass work that agitation comes to the fore.

But of course there have always been those who want to run before they can walk. Trotsky summarised this perfectly in his article on "What is a Mass Paper": "But quite often revolutionary impatience (which transforms itself easily into opportunist impatience) leads to this conclusion: the masses do not come because our ideas are too complicated and our slogans too advanced. It is therefore necessary to simplify our programme, lighten our slogans - in short, to throw out ballast. Basically this means: Our slogans must correspond not to the objective situation, not to the relation of classes, analysed by the Marxist method, but must correspond to subjective appreciations (extremely superficial and inadequate) of what the 'masses' can or cannot accept. But what masses? The mass is not homogenous. It develops. It feels the pressure of events. It will accept tomorrow what it will not accept today. Our cadres will blaze the trail with increasing success for our ideas and slogans which prove themselves correct, because they are confirmed by the march of events and not by subjective and personal appreciations."

I.S. have now quite clearly joined the band of those whose "revolutionary impatience" has led to "opportunist impatience". "Never mind the quality, look at the numbers" seems to be more and more I.S.'s approach to politics. And that, needless to say, is an approach which has nothing at all to do with the building of a revolutionary party.

POSTSCRIPT: On closer perusal of Part 4 of *Socialist Worker's* series, "Ireland's History of Repression", I note that the only comment on the 1913 strike which relates to British workers is that statement that "substantial aid was obtained from British unions". This contrasts rather strangely with all other accounts of the strike, e.g. I say: "What was decisive was the refusal of British trade unionists to help their Irish comrades positively by blacking Dublin goods." Are I.S. now rewriting history to provide a cover for their own capitulation to British chauvinism?

LUKACS, STALIN & TROTSKY

A COMMENT BY BRIAN PEARCE

In the "Preface to the new edition (1967)" of his book *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukacs writes concerning Comintern policy in the 1920s (English edition, page xxviii):

"Tactically it swung back and forth between right and left. Stalin himself intervened in the midst of this uncertainty with disastrous consequences when, around 1928, he described the Social Democrats as 'twin brothers' of the Fascists."

Stalin's notorious remark that Social Democracy and Fascism "are not antipodes, they are twins" was made, in fact, not in, or even "around", 1928, but in September 1924 (see his *Works*, Vol. 6, English edition, page 294).

This misdating is certainly convenient in relation to Lukacs's account of himself as having sided with a reasonable, realistic Stalin against ultra-left opponents, until "around 1928" Stalin himself became an ultra-left. It conceals the important initial phase in the conflict between Stalin and Trotsky on international questions, during which it was the latter who was accused of being the right-wing deviationist! Following the collapse of the attempted revolution in Germany in 1923, Trotsky drew conclusions regarding a new phase in Europe in which, for the time being, Fascism would take a back seat and Social Democracy would come to the fore, and he stressed the need for the Communist movement to adapt its tactics to this changed situation. His ideas were set out in a speech on 21 June 1924 entitled "Through what stage are we passing?" and in a speech entitled "Prospects of world development: the preconditions for the proletarian revolution", on 28 July 1924. (The former is available in English as a separate pamphlet, the latter, along with another speech, in the pamphlet *Europe and America*.)

It was against Trotsky's realistic view of the consequences of the defeat in Germany that Stalin was speaking in his article "Concerning the international situation" in which the formulation "not antipodes but twins" occurs. At that time, Stalin was still working closely with Zinoviev and supporting his leftist line in international affairs. After some spectacular disasters (in Estonia at the end of 1924 and in Bulgaria in the spring of 1925), the Comintern at last abandoned this line. Whether it then rushed to fall into the ditch on the *other* side of the road, with its new policy embodied most strikingly in the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee of 1925-1927, is another question. But when the next zigzag occurred, "around 1928", this was, it should not be forgotten, to some extent a revival of the attitudes of 1924 against which Trotsky had spoken in conflict with Stalin.

The connection between Stalin's article "Concerning the international situation" and Trotsky's speeches of June and July 1924 may not be obvious to the reader today, because Stalin nowhere names his adversary, who appears only as "some people". "Some people," he says, "think that the bourgeoisie adopted 'pacifism' and 'democracy' not because it was compelled to do so, but voluntarily, of its own free choice, so to speak." The contrast made by "some people" between rule by Social Democrats and rule by Fascists is repudiated: Social Democracy is merely the "moderate wing" of Fascism, now "pushed into the forefront". The whole notion that some sort of important change in the political situation in Europe has occurred following the events in Germany in 1923 is false, says Stalin: "It is not true that the decisive battles have already been fought ... There have been no decisive battles as yet ... The decisive battles still lie ahead." Insofar as there has been any tactical shift on the part of the bourgeoisie, this reflects not any defeat or weakness of the proletariat but its *strength*. Revolution is still around the corner, or at least no less so than in 1923.

All this falls into place if we read Trotsky's speeches referred to above. He had warned against the loose use of the concept "Fascism" that had already become fashionable: "On the most casual grounds it is sometimes said that Fascism is developing or that Fascism is advancing. If some strikers are arrested somewhere, this fact is interpreted quite often as the establishment of a Fascist regime, though the bourgeoisie arrested strikers before Fascism existed. We have to think this out, comrades: what is Fascism? How does it differ from a 'normal' regime of bourgeois violence? Expectations that Fascism, becoming steadily more and more intensified, will lead to the uprising of the proletariat, have not been justified, and by no means all of us shared these expectations. We may refer to the fact that already in 1922 we said that, if the German revolution did not bring the proletariat directly to victory, then we should have, in the immediately following years, a Labour Government in Britain and a triumph of the Left Bloc in France ... And that's not all. We said that in Britain a Labour Government came in, and in France the Left Bloc, then, provided that the German revolution had not proved victorious by that time, in those

temporary strengthening of Social Democracy in Germany ... In other words, things would work out in such a way that if the revolution did not triumph in Germany in the immediate future, then a regime of temporary conciliation would prevail in European politics ... Has this forecast been confirmed? Absolutely ..."

The proletariat having been compelled to "withdraw from advanced positions", the bourgeoisie, "seeking both economic and political stability", proceeds to "summon not the Fascist but the Menshevik". Reminding his listeners of the trough in the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia between the defeat in 1905 and the upsurge following the Lena shootings in 1912, Trotsky pointed to the "very big defeat" suffered by the German workers in 1923: "It will need ... time in order to digest this defeat, to master its lessons and to recover from it, once more to gather its strength ... At the present moment what we observe are phenomena of ebb-tide and not of flood-tide, and our tactics should, of course, conform to this situation."

There was nothing to be gained, Trotsky insisted, by refusing to appreciate that "bourgeois society has held its ground and regained a certain measure of self-confidence." And the attempt to explain the new political developments in Britain and France by knowing allusions to the Kerensky episode on the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia was "an abuse of accepted terminology" that reflected "a lack of understanding of the situation". Kerenskyism implies a situation in which the revolutionary movement is rising and a counter-revolutionary movement ("Kornilov") is advancing to meet it: a "Kerensky" government tries to manoeuvre between these forces. Regrettably but certainly, that was *not* the situation, nor anything like it, in the Britain of Ramsay MacDonald or the France of Edouard Herriot.

-Brian Pearce

Angela Davis Defence Committee meeting, Central Hall, Westminster, Wednesday 13th October, 7.30 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Sally Davis (Angela's mother), Mrs. Sonia Jordan (Angela's sister). Price of tickets: 25p, 50p and £1.

What are British troops doing in Northern Ireland? - Public meeting organised by Women's Liberation Workshop with women from the oppressed Catholic areas of Northern Ireland to talk about their experiences. October 12th, 8 p.m., Finsbury Town Hall, 149 Rosebery Ave., EC1, & October 13th, 8 p.m., Battersea Town Hall, Lavender Hill, SW11 (lower hall, rear building).

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BOB PURDIE SPEAKS AT OPEN-AIR I.S.C. MEETING IN GLASGOW



INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WITH THE IRISH STRUGGLE

The October 31st demo in London called by the Anti-Internment League (a united front of most British and Irish left organisations) will mark the climax of a modest but effective campaign which has been carried out on Ireland by the Irish Solidarity Campaign. The ISC's regular meetings in many cities in Britain (see pic. above) have reflected the seriousness of IMG and the Spartacus League militants active in it and the latter have carried on regular and sustained work on Ireland even before the latest crisis. But these activities have not been restricted to Britain: in many other parts of the world the sections of the Fourth International have demonstrated outside British embassies in solidarity with the IRA, against British imperialism. In Japan, F.I. comrades clashed with 200 riot police in Tokyo outside the British embassy; in Copenhagen, F.I. militants distributed leaflets and picketed the British embassy, an action which received considerable publicity in the Danish press; in Switzerland only recently our Swiss comrades took the initiative to organise a large demonstration outside a hall in Zurich where Edward Heath was commemorating some wretched Cold War anniversary. The Swiss authorities refused to allow the comrades to picket the hall and several were arrested, but the few who got into the hall managed to heckle Heath and chant "Free Ireland". But these have all been preparatory actions; for October 31st the United Secretariat of the Fourth International

is issuing an appeal for solidarity demonstrations all over the world. In Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, France, Germany, Belgium, the British embassies will face revolutionary militants stressing their internationalism by supporting the Irish struggle. In Japan and Australia as well more demonstrations are being planned, as they are in North America.

All militants interested in helping with preparations for the London demonstration should phone 01-278 2616 for more details.



Danish comrades of the Fourth International mount a 24-hour picket outside the British Embassy in Copenhagen.

TROUBLED YEAR AHEAD FOR OXFORD UNIVERSITY

Just after the end of last term, Edward Heath came down to Oxford to receive an honorary degree from Oxford University. Not only did the liberal academics (who talk so much about academic "freedom" and "independence") choose this occasion to show their support for Heath, they even went so far as to specify in the address to him the policies which had so endeared him to them—the Industrial Relations Bill and British entry to the Common Market. Seldom has the reactionary nature of these men been so clearly shown.

But not content with this demonstration of where their real class interests lie, they then took matters even further. A demonstration had been arranged by students in Balliol College, where Heath was dining on the night before the degree ceremony. In the course of this, one student, Rod Edmund, was seized and brutally beaten up by Special Branch men (abetted of course by these oh-so-independent academics who prevented other students from coming to his rescue) and then arrested and charged with ... assaulting a policeman and causing grievous bodily harm.

Four other comrades were arrested during demonstrations against Heath next day, and all but one were found guilty and fined various amounts. Rod Edmund's case, however, took on completely different proportions.

At first it seemed that he might get off; he had numerous witnesses to testify to his seizure by the police, and one don was so sickened by the affair that he volunteered to give evidence for Edmund. Then, however, the college authorities moved in. The don had second thoughts; members of the college staff (known as "servants" to avoid any doubts about their real social position) were produced as witnesses; other dons who had been responsible for the original invitation to Heath came forward to give evidence against Edmund.

Needless to say, the court much preferred the evidence of the police and the "independent" academics to that of the students who gave evidence; and Edmund was given a fine and a six months suspended sentence. As if this wasn't enough, a report of the whole affair in *INK* elicited a letter from two "extremely concerned" dons in Balliol who claimed to "have gone to some trouble to find out what really happened". They dismissed charges of police brutality and stated categorically that "no such beating up occurred". However, if they had really taken the trouble to find out what had happened they would have discovered, firstly, that

film was taken of Rod Edmund as he left college after the incident which shows quite clearly that he was in considerable pain and unable to walk without support, and secondly, that he had a long weal down his back afterwards. One of these dons, Steven Lukes, has for long had a reputation as a Left-wing socialist; we trust that this incident will cast doubt on the credentials of many more such who proclaim socialism from the comfort of the common-

room. The Rod Edmund case has had a considerable effect on Oxford students. Many have had their illusions in bourgeois justice totally shattered. But the fight has only just begun. Edmund is appealing, and the case is expected to be heard early next term. Whatever the outcome, student opposition to the university and college authorities can only be strengthened by this case. Oxford University is in for a troubled year, and Spartacus League comrades will continue to be in the forefront of the struggle as they were both in the demonstration and in the defence of Edmund.

READING STUDENTS CONFRONT AUTHORITIES, BOYCOTT FEES

The new university term at Reading is opening with a direct clash between students in halls of residence (and Reading has one of the highest proportions of students in halls of all universities, and a chronic "housing problem" in the town so flats, etc. are very scarce) and the University Administration. Students are faced with a £40 (20%) increase in hall fees, and the virtual certainty of further increases over the next three years. This coincides with a rise in university student grants of £85 over the next three years, this year's increase being £50.

In reality, however, this apparently generous first instalment is merely a shrewd attempt to ward off discontent among students over their rapidly declining living standards. The £50 increase only just covers the hall fees increase, and with a current rate of inflation of some 10% per annum, the student grant will be as good as worthless by 1974, when it is next due to be revised.

Negotiations with the Administration have consistently failed to produce any results, not even a "promise" that there will be no further fees increase before 1974. The Students' Union is therefore going ahead with a campaign of direct action to boycott all hall fees until the Admin. concedes to our demands, concerning hall of residence policy as a whole.

The boycott campaign has the largely useless "full backing" of the National Union of Students, but more importantly, other Students Unions, like those at Aberystwyth and East Anglia have successfully used the boycott weapon. With effective use of our strength of numbers, there is therefore no reason why we should not win.

The Spartacus League student militants in Reading are giving unconditional and active support to this campaign—indeed we were among the initiators of it last year—but we are in addition advancing our own propaganda on the question, relating the so-called grants increase to the whole series of cuts in the social services and higher education.

MARXIST EDUCATION VS. BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY

During the last several months there has been an increased interest in Marxist education on the student left. This development partially reflects a hardening of the left, a realisation of the need for more long-term prospects than seemed necessary in the heady days of 1968. It also follows developments in Western Europe and particularly in Western Germany. In the latter country the generally higher level of Marxist culture, and theoretical dexterity (the absence of the poison of the British empiricist tradition), together with the much broader and more continuous movements in the education system, led naturally to the development of sophisticated course critiques, study circles, etc. One of the latest phenomena is the enormous interest evinced by young workers in theory: at a recent meeting in London, Mandel described the large numbers of workers' factory circles which regularly studied *Capital*.

In Britain serious course critiques have only seen small beginnings. They can, however, be a very valuable ideological weapon in the hands of revolutionaries on the campus. But it should be realised that a large amount of resources, time and theoretical ability are required to embark successfully on such a task ... in other words they are of most use where the Left is strong enough to dominate ideologically a large and continuing student movement. Even though it is unlikely that Britain will experience such critiques on a large scale, we should not forget the importance of ideological counter-critiques in the struggle for the independence of the working class. Marx and Lenin were very quick to deal with any important theoretical ideas of the bourgeoisie, since they understood very well the corrupting influence of bourgeois ideology, which if it is not tackled and dealt with on its own level—and not crudely denounced—will be unconsciously absorbed.

WHAT IS MARXIST THEORY?

The reading list at the end of the article attempts a much simpler task, i.e. to embrace a much more immediate programme of study. It necessarily leaves aside wide fields and does not even pretend to be comprehensive. What we try and do is to concentrate on fields of study which have an immediate bearing on the political practice of revolutionaries. Before doing that, however, two misconceptions relative to Marxist

error which study circles not located within an organisation with a coherent political practice are prone to. This error gives Marxism a passive twist. It is the error of the left intelligentsia which has "come over" to the side of the working class but whose social practice impedes it from attempting to make the revolution. It is the theoretical reflection of the divorce between politics and economics engendered by social democracy. "Marxism" exists in a limbo separated from class politics.

BRITISH EMPIRICISM

It is the opposite error, however, which is perhaps the bigger danger in Britain in the present period. This error reduces theory to an adjunct of current practice—a combination of ideological justification for a particular practice and an essentially technical study on how to improve that practice. It is a serious danger for several reasons. First, our forces are small in relation to the enormous tasks which confront us and this means a constant pressure to get swept away by day-to-day routine activity, especially in periods of intense struggles. Secondly the empiricist tradition in Britain wields a tremendous influence even in the ranks of the revolutionary movement. The British state appears so flexible and intangible (needless to say, we still do not possess an adequate theory of the British state) that we often lose sight of the central problem: how to smash the bourgeois state. That is why we must study Lenin and the history of the Bolshevik Party, for this history is precisely that of the theoretical independence of the working class. The Bolsheviks achieved the leadership of the Revolution, precisely because of their ability to correctly analyse the day-to-day developments in Czarist Russia.

We must also, of course, study Marx's *Capital*. Very few militants bother to do this because of a mistaken idea that *Capital* is a difficult book to read. While its beginning on Commodities is difficult, that can be left till after, following the advice of Althusser. To understand Marx's method it is essential to read *Capital* itself as well as studies of it. In any case the following list is recommended for militants interested in the class struggle. All these books are available in

London N.I. Back copies of NLR from New Left Review, 7 Carlisle Street, London W.1.

ECONOMICS

Engels: On Marx's *Capital*; Mandel: Marxist Economic Theory (2 vols); Sweezy: Theory of Capitalist Development.

IMPERIALISM

Lenin: Imperialism; Kemp: Imperialism [Useful as a summary of Lenin and Luxemburg, though much weaker on the postwar period]; Mandel/Nicolaus: Debate in NLR (Nos. 54, 59); Gunder Frank: Latin America—Underdevelopment or Revolution; Magdoff: The Age of Imperialism.

COMMON MARKET

Mandel: Europe v. America; Warren: Reply to Robin Murray (NLR 68).

THE STATE

Lenin: State and Revolution; Miliband: The State in Capitalist Society; Poulantzas: Capitalism and the State (NLR 58).

THE PARTY

Lenin: What is to be done; Mandel: The Leninist Theory of Organisation.

BRITAIN

On the Labour Party:— Blackburn, Jordan and Jones: back nos. of *The Red Mole*; Miliband: Parliamentary Socialism; Anderson: Origins of the Present Crisis (NLR 23); Components of the National Culture (NLR 50); Nairn: Fateful Meridian (NLR 60).

On British capitalism: See *INK* (Nos. 25, 26).

Marshall: British Capitalism—Results and Prospects (*International 6*).

On the C.P.:— Warren: The British Road to Socialism (NLR).

On Workers Control:— Davis: Theories of Workers Control (IMG Publications); Coates: Can the Workers Run Industry?

STALINISM

Trotsky: The Revolution Betrayed; Morrow: Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain; Mandel (Ed): Fifty Years of World Revolution; Trotsky: Permanent Revolution; Mandel/Krasso: Debate in NLR 44, etc.

IRELAND

de Paor: Divided Ulster; Lysaght: The Republic of Ireland; Gibbon: Ulster: Religion and Class (NLR 55); Jones: Ireland—Background to 1916 (*International 5*); Connolly: Socialism and Nationalism/Labour in Irish History; Lenin: The Right of Nations to Self-Determination.

RACISM

Trotsky: Theses on Black Nationalism; Cox: Class, Caste and Race.

FASCISM

Trotsky: Germany 1931/32./Fascism—What it is and how to fight it.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Engels: Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State; Coulson: Women's Liberation—Context and Potentialities (*International 4*); Magas: Theories of Women's Liberation (NLR 26).

HEATH: The New

ROBIN BLACKBURN

A serious assessment of the Heath government and what it represents in terms of the development of British ruling class politics is now overdue. For too many on the Left it is enough to repeat periodically that the Tories are trying to solve the problems of British capitalism at the expense of the working class. This statement is absolutely true, but it would seem to be equivalently true of every bourgeois government and tells us nothing about the special situation of the British ruling class, nor about what differentiates one bourgeois government from another, in particular what differentiates the present Conservative regime from its predecessors both Labour and Conservative.

To begin with, there are differing degrees of potential success with which a bourgeois government can seek to place the burden of readjustment on the workers. Secondly, in addition to attempting to exploit its own proletariat more intensively, capitalist governments are engaged in a permanent struggle against the ruling classes of every other imperialist power and frequently seek to solve their problems at the expense of their rivals. Thirdly, the bourgeoisie of each capitalist country is not homogeneous—very often they are quite prepared to see the weaker members of their own class go to the wall if it strengthens the position of the class as a whole. There is good reason to suppose that the Heath government has been exploring these variants more systematically and ruthlessly than any British government for decades. In this article I wish to argue that this amounts to the emergence of a new course for British capitalism, which, if successfully maintained, could decisively change the coordinates of class struggle. This means that it is thoroughly mistaken to treat the Conservative administration as just a capitalist government like any other whose only special feature is to be found in the personal idiosyncrasies of Edward Heath.

HEATH—A SERIOUS BOURGEOIS LEADER

There are good grounds for thoroughly despising Heath and the class he represents, but they are not those which arouse the wrath of the editors of *Private Eye*. Unfortunately one can scan the pages of the Left press in vain for any analysis of the Heath government which goes beyond stereotyped phrases. On the one hand we can find pedestrian demonstrations that the Conservative administration is after all a capitalist government and that its members actually have links with big business. On the other we can find displays of fine indignation at particular "Tory" measures, like the abolition of free school milk, worthy of a Labour front-bench spokesman. But as for scientific evaluation of the variations of ruling class politics in this country, there is a complete blank. Over a year ago an article by Fred Halliday entitled "Heath: the Backward Leader" (*Black Dwarf*, June 12, 1970) did attempt to analyse Heath as a political phenomenon but its conclusions can no longer be accepted. He was there described as a feeble petty bourgeois: "an ideal Tory steward, a legman of the aristocracy", incapable of any independent role. "He has risen by subservience and docility, he has never outgrown the behaviour that marked him as a marvellous prefect". Understandable though this judgment may have been at the time, it is now quite clear that it greatly underestimated Heath's resourcefulness and toughness as an exponent of ruling class politics. Equally misleading were those who erred in the opposite direction from Fred Halliday and predicted that a Conservative victory would mean a fundamental mutation in the mode of bourgeois domination rather than in the basic political formula. The most extreme expression of this school of thought was the idea a Heath government would be Bonapartist in character!

Now, more than a year after the General Election, there is a generalised feeling that something has happened whose only expression on the Left is to be found in traditional Labourist rhetoric about "Tory counter-revolution" or hackneyed denunciation of a drift towards the corporate state. What is argued in this article is that the innovation involved is at the level of fundamental policy orientations, not at that of the political form of government. With Heath the Conservative Party has produced a leader who promises to defend effectively and coherently the interests of a major sector of British capitalism and to develop a new political formula in the process. Far from abandoning the framework of British bourgeois democracy, Heath intends to use its resources in carving out a new course for British capitalism. Heath intends to jettison the political backwardness of British bourgeois politics—its sentimentalism about old friends and old customs—and to exploit the political backwardness of the British working class—its parliamentarism and political caution. This conclusion is suggested by the government's reorientation in all fields of policy and its handling of such major issues as the bankruptcy of Rolls Royce, the EEC negotiations and the policy for sterling in the financial crisis. Before discussing this it will first be necessary to sketch in the nature of the political formula which Heath is in the process of modifying.

THE OLD POLITICAL FORMULA

From the early '40s up to the General Election of 1970, the political basis of British capitalism was, externally an alliance with US imperialism as junior partner, internally the integration of the working class via the Labour Party and the trade unions. Indeed the Labour Party played as important a role as the Conservatives in devising the whole arrangement and was rewarded by periodic spells in office for its efforts. The Anglo-American alliance and the introduction of more ambitious social policies were, of course, already introduced by the Churchill coalition Government. The extension of these policies into the post-war world was, however, wholly the responsibility of the Attlee government and represented a political option of great importance even though it was predictable in its general outline. Essentially it meant that the waning force of British imperialism could be partly preserved, at least in the short-run, by a comprehensive deal with US imperialism. The Labour government took the initiative in founding NATO which gave expression to the ascendancy of the United States within the imperialist camp. Within this framework the first experiments in turning a colonial empire into a neo-colonial empire could be successfully

effect (against Mossadeq, against the Korean revolution, etc.). At home Britain's relative industrial superiority vis-à-vis war-devastated Europe could temporarily be used to finance the renewed export of capital abroad and to provide at home more comprehensive social services. Between 1945 and 1964 British capitalists devoted no less than £2,000 million to direct overseas investments—more than the capital export of all the continental European capitalist countries combined. Moreover, political decolonisation did not mean that the real economic sinews of Empire were in any way abandoned: gold in South Africa, rubber and tin in Malaya, oil in the Middle East, were all preserved intact. But for British imperialism to bring off this strategy, the support of the dominant imperialist power was absolutely essential, thus the Anglo-American "special relationship" became the cornerstone of British foreign policy. The Labour Party did not just share in the development of this Atlantic/imperialist orientation but helped to pioneer it and remained even more faithful to it than the Conservatives. The only serious departure from the Atlantic policy was the invasion of Egypt by the Eden government—the disastrous results of this adventure reminded all bourgeois politicians that subservience to the US was the only viable policy for British imperialism.

Despite its apparent success in the short term, the Atlantic policy was to exact a heavy toll on the resources of British capital. The attempt to maintain a global role in economic and military terms weakened the home base of British capitalism. Both Britain and the United States assumed the overhead costs of the world-wide imperialist system from which their capitalist rivals also benefited. Moreover, for at least a decade after the war, the working class in Britain and the United States was economically stronger and more united than it was in those countries which had experienced fascism. These two factors threatening the position of Anglo-American imperialism were bound to affect Britain much more rapidly and adversely since it was by far the weaker partner. Indeed it was very much in the interests of the United States to encourage the over-extension of their British allies. Britain would bear some of the cost of maintaining international law and order without the danger of developing into a genuine rival. And by the '60s the commitment to maintain Sterling acted as a valuable first line of defence for the dollar. The price for this was paid when successive British governments were forced to deflate the economy and cut social services to protect the pound and to maintain overseas expenditure.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FAILURE OF THE WILSON GOVERNMENT

Appropriately enough, it was left to a Labour government to pursue this miserable logic to its abject conclusion. When the Wilson regime assumed office, the rationality in the Atlantic/imperialist formula for British capitalism had certainly seeped away. But instead of attempting to come up with a new political formula, Wilson sought to solve the problem at the purely technical level; new ministries were created to foster technology and to plan the economy, complex new tax schemes were introduced—there was no political complement to the technical nostrums, only endless public relations, moral exhortation and rhetoric. The entire Labour leadership, despite their desperation to assume a technocratic image, were at bottom deeply and sentimentally attached not just to British bourgeois society with all its eccentricities, but also to the obsolete Atlantic formula which they had helped to devise. Hence the fixation on "the Commonwealth" and the United Nations, Labour role words for respectively British and American imperialism. Hence the long and costly attempt to forestall devaluation and to maintain a global military role. Hence the graven support for US genocide in Vietnam. As we know, the attempt to repeat the social imperialist pact was a fiasco domestically just as it was in international affairs. Not a single major economic reform could be offered to Labour's social base—the best it could do was come up with a few half-hearted liberal reforms for the middle class on such questions as divorce—all of which had the enormous advantage of not costing anything. So far as the organised working class was concerned, the trade unions had become an infinitely more effective instrument for economic leverage than the Labour Party. So far as the ruling class was concerned, the Labour Party was ceasing to be an effective instrument for integrating the working class and tying it to the bourgeois state, hence the need to link the unions themselves to the state more directly by legislation. In 1969 the defeat of Wilson by the unions revealed that the Labour government was unable to carry through the necessary legal changes. Labour's "surprising" electoral defeat in 1970 merely registered the bankruptcy of the political formula it represented—a bankruptcy of which the masses were continually reminded by rising unemployment and rampant inflation as well as by the blankness of Labourist ideology. Everyone had known for a very long time that Labour had no strategy for socialism—by 1970 it had become almost as clear that they had no strategy for capitalism either.

HEATH'S NEW COURSE

It was probably more or less inevitable that the Conservative government would seek to discover a new course for British capitalism. But Heath certainly set about the task with considerable efficiency and a complete absence of that sentimentality which had displaced national bourgeois politics under the Wilson administration. The decision to allow Rolls Royce to go bankrupt, nationalising the remnants, simultaneously broke with the traditions of respect for the hallowed institutions of Britain's past and with the gentleman's agreement with US capitalism. The technical device of the bankruptcy and nationalisation forced Lockheed to share the cost of a mistake for which a British (Labour) government had been mainly responsible. In itself this could have been an isolated decision. The handling of the EEC negotiations showed that it was not. At long last a British Prime Minister seems to have understood that the

stand that the only possible basis for such a deal would have to be a revision of the Atlantic posture. One of the things that make Wilson's memoirs so monumentally trivial is his total inability to grasp the larger political outline of the events he was caught up in. One of the defects of a very successful bourgeois ideology—like that which the British ruling class has developed—is that in the long run it blinds the bourgeoisie itself to its own interests. Atlantic ideology has taken deep roots in Britain. Large sections of the British bourgeoisie feel genuinely grateful to the United States for having helped to shore up British capitalism and its Empire and defend it from the Communist menace. Social democrats tend to feel this gratitude especially keenly. Its virulent anti-communism strongly appeals to them since it undercuts their rivals in the Labour movement. At the same time the United States was seen as a more dynamic and national capitalist democracy with much to teach Britain—they failed to see that US imperialism had an interest in conserving some of the antiquated features of their British predecessors on whom they could offload some of the imperialist burden. Men like Michael Stewart extended to the US ruling class that deeply felt admiration and respect that used to be reserved exclusively for the institutions of the British bourgeoisie. Wilson's small-mindedness and desire to conciliate and compromise made him incapable of the clear thinking and resolution needed to break with the "leaders of the Free World" and forge a new orientation for British capitalism. Heath, on the other hand, can draw on the greater self-confidence of Britain's major bourgeois Party that retains some dim memory of the time when Britain did have a foreign policy of its own. While the rise of the Labour Party was in the epoch of the decline of British imperialism, the emergence of the modern Conservative Party was in the epoch of ascendancy of that imperialism. It is thus not so surprising to find Heath quoting Palmerston to the following effect in an article he wrote for *Foreign Affairs* in 1969:

"We have no eternal allies and no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual and those interests it is our duty to follow."

Of course, such a formulation should be merely the ABC of imperialist foreign policy, but in mid-twentieth century Britain an over-normation of national fetishes and traditions, of ideologies and myths, have come to make it sound extraordinarily hardened and realistic.

THE TURN IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS...

The policy of the Heath government during the international financial crisis rounds out the picture of a basic shift in British foreign policy options. To the dismay of the *Times* leader writer, the government placed the narrow national interests of British capitalism above loyalty to the United States. Instead of revaluing the Pound, steps were taken to keep it at around the old parity; the lowering of bank rate discouraged it from floating upwards. Insofar as policy was coordinated with other capitalist powers it was with the Europeans, not the Americans.

As a recent report in *The Times Business News* put it: "There is a strong suspicion in American minds that, as the price of British entry into the Common Market, Mr. Heath promised M. Pompidou British support for French anti-American monetary policies and that pressure from Downing Street and the Foreign Office is preventing the British Treasury from playing its usual constructive role in the Group of Ten." (*The Times*, Sept. 27 1971). The extent of American suspicions may be judged from the official "leak" reported in the following laconic terms in *The Wall Street Journal* for Sept. 24th: "A corridor bombshell whispered reports that Britain triggered the August crisis by asking that \$3 billion of its dollar reserves be shielded against devaluation by a huge British purchase of US gold." If there is even a shred of truth in this report, for which circumstantial evidence is mounting, then its implications are truly staggering. It will be remembered that President Nixon went out of his way in his speech of August 15th to state that "in recent weeks the speculators have been waging an all-out war on the dollar".

It is not necessary to argue that in forging its new orientation the Heath government was possessed of any very ambitious vision or Grand Design. Heath simply applied ordinary capitalist criteria to British foreign policy, a sort of cost-benefit analysis of the Atlantic orientation, and discovered that it was hopelessly irrational and untenable in these terms. Of course the American administration did not make very strenuous efforts to solicit the support of Heath but it is not difficult to imagine Wilson flying to Washington in Nixon's hour of need with a "dramatic" offer of support. Equally Heath's European orientation was obvious enough as an alternative to the Atlantic formula. His achievement, which was to see that it could only be carried through by means of a proper political deal, was only novel in the dimly mediocre context of British bourgeois politics.

An examination of British policy in the Middle East and Africa also shows an abrupt increase in its effectiveness and realism, though in this area without the necessity for any conflict with the United States. At long last the inability of the British ruling class to understand that bourgeois Arab nationalism could be used in the defence of imperialist interests has been overcome. The wiping out of the Palestinian guerrilla movement in Jordan, the rightward shift in Syria and the brutal suppression of the Left in the Sudan have all received the appropriate British encouragement. In each case the growing diplomatic understanding with the Egyptians and the Libyans played a role—the hijacking of the plane carrying the Sudanese leaders (assisted by British intelligence) was only the most spectacular instance of this collusion. Elsewhere in Africa, Heath has estimated that given the nature of the existing black regimes, nothing is to be lost by closer ties with South Africa and ideal with Smith.

Whereas De Gaulle sought to outflank US imperialism on the "left" we should expect Heath to do so on the "right". The French were reacting against the inflexibility of US imperialist leadership in the '50s—the British against the faltering and bungling of US imperialism during the '60s. The British ruling class evidently think that the US administration is over-anxious to make deals with the

Course of British Toryism

lack of nerve. Needless to say, Britain's large armaments industry is unlikely to complain at this aspect of the new course in foreign policy. Heath's major speech at the United Nations where he warned that domestic civil conflict was the main danger of our epoch is the most eloquent general statement of British foreign policy and was an explicit attempt to firm up the US ruling class.

... AND AT HOME

So far I have concentrated on the main areas of foreign policy in assessing the nature of the Heath regime. Certainly it has been able to transform the orientation of policy in this area more simply and immediately than has yet been possible on the home front. The most intractable problems of all being, of course, Northern Ireland where the institutional structure of the Conservative Party tied as it is to the Northern Irish ruling class, reduces its room for manoeuvre drastically. But although the Provisional IRA clearly has the ability to embarrass the British government and place it under strong pressure, this is not the same as having a strategy for winning. Heath is not easily going to be persuaded to abandon his kith and kin at Stormont. So long as the British government can count on the majority of the population in the North, including the Protestant working class, and so long as they can work with the Church and the miserably reactionary regime in Dublin, there is no chance of British imperialism being dislodged from Ireland. However, the fact that Heath has been forced to endorse the vicious internment round-up shows that it faces a political as well as a military threat.

In the major fields of domestic policy the government faces the same syndrome of backwardness which has defeated its predecessors. The main feature of the government's economic policy is unparading resort to the most savage weapons in the arsenal of capitalist rationality: unemployment, bankruptcies, the elimination of "lame ducks", etc. But just as important as the use of capitalist market forces to prune away dead-wood in British industry is the complementary encouragement of the giant commercial banks to expand the scope of their operations. As *The Economist* (Sept. 17 1971) puts it: "What Britain is now doing is to set up a competitive mummion-will-reward-the-former-most-banking-system-without any of America's anti-trust controls. The admirable new rule of jungle law opens at a time when there are a lot of hungry beasts stalking around... There could conceivably be much blood and many wounded squeals, much roasting on tooth and claw, as the hunt now starts from altitudes for both new depositors and new methods of lending." The changes which the government has introduced in the code covering the conduct of commercial banks will free much of their enormous resources (more than £12 billion in current and deposit accounts) for more exciting employment than the purchase of government bonds and bills. The effect will be to create fierce competition for the traditional merchant banks and to start bank financing of British industry climbing towards German and Japanese levels. The essence of government policy is thus to simultaneously expose British capitalism to strong competitive forces (especially via the entry into the EEC) and to foster the potentially strongest sectors of British monopoly capital. This could well turn to advantage one of the strong points of British capital as it tries to find its way in an era of intense inter-imperialist rivalry—namely the relatively large size of the major British companies. Though the Heath government's economic policies will certainly not produce some magical reversal of the decline of British imperialism, they are more likely to eliminate the grosser irrationalities than were the incoherent compound of subsidies, bureaucratic mergers and exhortation employed by all previous Labour and Conservative governments.

THE ASSAULT ON THE WORKING CLASS

The fate of Heath's economic package is very much dependent on its general success in waging the domestic class struggle. As Andrew Glynn and Bob Sutcliffe have persuasively argued in their recent article in the *New Left Review*, "The Critical Condition of British Capital" (NLR 56) there has been a perilous collapse in the rate of profit in British industry over the last decade. Even if the causes of this collapse are not to be attributed as overwhelmingly to successful wage struggles as Glynn and Sutcliffe suggest, but are rather to be explained by the persistently depressed condition of industrial production, it is still the case that an assault on the workers must be part of any ruling class strategy for breaking out of the present impasse. It seems that the core of Heath's policy in this area is to use the political strength of the British bourgeoisie to help liquidate its economic weakness. There is a precedent for this in the '20s and '30s when an aggressive bourgeois prosecution of the class war—best represented by Churchill's actions during the 1926 General Strike—helped to arrest the decline of British capitalism, which consequently strengthened its position throughout the Great Depression. Heath shows none of his predecessor's inclination to overestimate the strength of the trade unions. His approach to the electricity and postal strikes showed that he knows how to gauge accurately the strength of solidarity between the trade union bureaucrats when it comes to a real struggle with capital. The rapid passage of the Industrial Relations Bill suggests that he is not over-frightened by Jones and Scanlon and that the feeble threat of a re-run of 1926 holds no terrors for him—indeed the defeat and demoralisation that would inevitably attend any General Strike dominated by the TUC would be the worst that any bourgeois government could hope for.

Of course a real General Strike with factory occupations, workers' committees in every locality, mass participation, the beginnings of proletarian control over communications and supplies, all coordinated by effective political leadership, would be a different matter. But Heath knows full well that nothing remotely like this is possible in the present state of the British Labour movement. The way the workers' leaders have responded to the occupation at the Plessey plant have furnished valuable reminders of this to anyone who doubts it. Heath is probably no more than an averagely competent bourgeois politician but it appears that he can see through the hollow Labourist rhetoric which unfortunately lies in a tradition of the TUC. The

attempts are quite redundant and out of place in the context of the government's present political assault on organised Labour—though no doubt the time will come when a suitably chastened TUC will be glad to endorse some new variant of wage restraint, in return for a seat at the negotiating table.

In the meantime, the domestic policy of the Heath regime certainly promises a drastic sharpening of the class struggle and the abandonment of attempts to go very far in conciliating the organised working class. If any half-way adequate political force existed within the British Labour movement, then this might be a dangerous policy. But the Conservative government knows that the only two political organisations that have any real implantation in organised Labour are quite incapable of furnishing an aggressive leadership for the working class: namely, the Labour Party and the Communist Party. In the past the German and Japanese bourgeoisies have been able to use the relative economic weakness of their proletariats to wage successful imperialist rivalry.

In the coming period we may expect the British and American bourgeoisies to attempt to use the relative political backwardness of organised Labour in their countries to recoup their positions. They know that they have no political challenge to fear from George Meany and Vic Feather, or for that matter from Jack Jones and Leonard Woodcock. Despite the feeble centrism of the leaderships of the Communist and Left Socialist parties in Japan, France and Italy, such a policy of class confrontation would entail significantly greater risks there simply because of the more aggressive political tradition of the workers in those countries. Not only are the groups of the revolutionary left stronger but these political traditions give them greater purchase over the mass of the organised working class. The present government clearly understands that the underlying political loyalty of the working class gives it considerable scope for attacking the economic leverage exercised by the trade unions. This loyalty may have waned somewhat in recent years but there is still more than enough popular reverence for parliamentary legislation and the majesty of the law to make an aggressive strategy the most tempting option. What precise form this will take it is difficult to say. The government will presumably think carefully about which group of workers is to be made the first victim of the IRB. At the same time other measures of a more full-blooded class war should be expected. In the '20s extensive resort was made to the suppression of publications, the imprisonment of political militants, the deployment of police and army units, not to speak of all manner of provocations—of which the forgery of the so-called Zinoviev letter was only the best-known. None of these methods are to be excluded in the coming period and some have indeed already been tried. But we can regard the Special Branch's efforts so far as a faint augury of things to come—after all, the deportation of a convalescent German student and the suppression of an underground magazine or two are just "atomospherics" that leave the real prize of class conflict still to be won, namely the taming of the workers' economic militancy.

REPRESSION AND BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY

It should be added that a British government can wage a vicious campaign of repression without in any way abandoning bourgeois democracy. Indeed to begin with the government will exploit for all it is worth traditional reverence for the trappings of parliamentary democracy: the sanctity of legislation, the majesty of the Law, the supposedly impartial institutions of state power. The capitalist media will give a unanimous chorus of approval and the Labour Party will play out the familiar role of Her Majesty's most loyal Opposition. Given its enormous ideological and material resources the government has every chance of winning its first engagements with organised labour. In short the stereotyped formulation to which I objected at the beginning of this article is seen to be true in a much more ample sense than is usually realised by those who invoke it. The British government is not just averagely concerned to solve its problems at the expense of the workers—it has a more than average need to find such a solution and a better than average expectation of being able to do so in the short run.

A NEGATIVE PROGNOSIS?

It may be thought that the above provides a very negative prognosis for the future of class struggles under the Heath government. I do not believe this to be the case at all. On the contrary the new course for British bourgeois politics opened up by Heath will create a situation in which—at least—revolutionary politics can establish a bridgehead among the mass of the working class. This is both because of the reaction that the government will provoke amongst the most militant and advanced workers and because the bold steps that it has taken are bound to shake many of the pillars of bourgeois Britain: among them precisely those we have mentioned above. Thus entry into the European Community will undoubtedly throw somewhat out-of-gear the traditional ideological and political defences of bourgeois rule. It will tend to undermine traditional national fetishes and ideologies: above all it will further weaken the already waning power of Parliament. From a bourgeois point of view those who argue against entry on the grounds that it will sap the integrity of Britain's "constitution", or lack of one, are perfectly correct. Like many of the rest of our more backward and depressed national industries, the Labour Party might also be very adversely affected by the post-entry political climate. We have shown above the way in which the Labour Party helped to pioneer the whole Atlantic orientation of British capitalism and was thus in a good position to claim the dividends of audacious class collaboration. Things may be rather different in the approaching European dispensation. Labour has chosen for itself the comparatively modest role of being the chauvinist reaction to the new course—even this function it has performed without much credibility. In fact the Labour Party has yet to come up with any very convincing contribution it can make to bourgeois politics in this new period. As a vehicle for integrating the working class it has already shown itself to be notably less important than the current One should, of course, beware of the

organised workers to the bourgeois state. But any weakening of the Labour Party's role in bourgeois politics can only weaken also its ability to integrate the masses it influences into the bourgeois political arena. In the short run the Conservative Party has reason to congratulate itself for having discredited and enfeebled its pseudo-adversary—in the long run it is only preparing the ground for a real antagonist.

THE MEANING OF THE NEW COURSE FOR REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS

The brazen capitalist rationality of the new course and the weakening grip of traditional mystifications will not lead in the first instance to any mass proletarian revolt but they certainly furnish ideal conditions for decisively radicalising the most advanced and militant workers. These workers are emerging from a period in which they won significant gains in economic class struggle. Even now, with unemployment rising to the million mark, the trade unions are still growing numerically, an unprecedented combination which reverses the situation of the late '20s and '30s. More important still, British workers are discovering new methods of struggle which will enable them to greatly extend the arc of class struggle. Indeed it is partly because of the relatively strong economic organisation of British workers that the ruling class is shifting the terrain of struggle onto its home ground: legislation, legality, "public opinion". Although there is no likelihood of the trade union bureaucracies themselves responding aggressively and creatively to this shift in the locus of combat, this is certainly not the case with the younger and more determined militants who have no nostalgia for the "gentleman's agreements" and "procedure" of the old dispensation. They do not want to put their foot inside the door of the mansion of privilege; they want to put the boot in the owner's flabby midriff. However such a reaction will initially be confined not just to a minority but to a very small minority of the most active and class conscious. That is the real flaw in the otherwise intelligent and coherent strategy of the new course. The great advantage which the British capitalist class at present enjoys is one that will tend to disappear precisely to the extent to which it is fully exploited. British imperialism can no longer provide an ideological and material emollient to the domestic class struggle. In these conditions the political loyalty of the workers will be not just used but also used up. The rulers will be forced to expend political capital to defend economic capital. It is most unlikely that the British bourgeoisie really understands this. They naturally see the moderation and reformism of the British working man as an eternal fact of nature. They will allow that the British worker has many defects but he is after all British and thus shares the national reverence for compromise, common sense, negotiation and respect for all duly established authority. These national traits are not seen as transient and historically determined entities which history, especially the experience of imperial decline and of the new course itself, is in the process of eroding. The British bourgeoisie has successfully forgotten those regrettable occasions when British workers failed to conform to type: that is why it will be prepared to risk provoking them. Moreover the fact that the first few times its expectations will probably be confirmed can only fortify it in what will ultimately prove to be its fatal error.

For a permanent and thorough-going implantation of revolutionary politics in the working class, a coherent Marxist political intervention is an absolute pre-condition. All Marxists must of course know how to learn from the masses—but equally they must know how to confront and combat the regressive and backward features of popular consciousness. Otherwise the radicalisation provoked by the new course could be simply another quasi-syndicalist episode in the history of the British labour movement. The practical political implications of the present analysis go far beyond the scope of a preliminary investigation such as I have essayed above. But at least a recognition of the political weakness of the organised working class in Britain and of its role in the current strategy of the ruling class is indispensable for waging a struggle for Marxist politics. Unfortunately those groups on the Left which have an almost exclusively British basis of support find all this very hard to accept. The very circumstance that they, the "international" vanguard, exist more strongly in Britain than anywhere else is itself seen as a tribute to the sound political instincts of at least some British workers. They find it difficult not to pander to Labourism and other manifestations of British political retardation. They have a tendency simply to turn up the volume of conventional Labourist cant rather than seeing the necessity for a complete break with it. If the Labour Left calls for "nationalisation" then the "revolutionary" Left calls for "nationalisation with workers' control"—as if the class character of nationalisation by the bourgeois state could in some way be cancelled out by workers' participation. If *Tribune* calls for a return to Labour, then the Left calls for "Labour to Power with Socialist policies". If Jack Jones talks about a one-day General Strike, then they ask for an indefinite General Strike rather than insisting on all the measures necessary to turn a conventional passive stoppage manipulated by the TUC into a revolutionary mass action. Of course really revolutionary politics can only be forged in this country by breaking with the stifiingly narrow national context. An internationalist practice as well as rhetoric is needed. The growing coordination of the European ruling classes is only the most signal objective development which makes this more than ever necessary and possible.

It remains too early to draw up any definitive balance sheet of British capitalism under Heath. The aim of this article has been to begin the work of identifying the essential coordinates of ruling class policy and their impact on the class struggle. Undeniably there has been an important shift in bourgeois politics and one which revolutionaries should not combat by invoking ancient imprecations. Heath is providing competent class leadership but he is certainly not a bourgeois politician of real stature like General De Gaulle—and we should remember that even De Gaulle's masterly political manoeuvring detonated forces whose bare existence was almost universally unsuspected. If only British Marxists can abandon their traditional



Labour History

Flint Sit-Down (part 2)

[In the last issue we described the workers' organisation both inside and out of the auto factories in Flint. The workers had built an impregnable fortress against attack. The first wasn't long in coming.]

G.M.'s first trick was to get one of their judges to issue an injunction forcing the strikers to leave the plant. After the county sheriff read the injunction, he was laughed out of the plant. When G.M. tried to get an order to have the strikers forcibly removed, an important fact was brought out which caused G.M.'s plans to backfire. It was discovered that the judge who issued the injunction, Edward Black, owned 3,665 shares of G.M. stock worth \$219,000. An embarrassed G.M. was forced to forget this injunction and wait for things to cool off before seeking another. Of course, G.M. had other tricks up its sleeve. About this time a group calling themselves the Flint Alliance was formed. Supposedly it was workers who had been laid off because of the strike. They were "loyal" to G.M. and they wanted to return to work.

In reality the Flint Alliance was composed of G.M. supervisors, and its function was strike-breaking and mobilising vigilante action against the strikers. G.M. was using this group to push a back-to-work movement, claiming that a minority of strikers was "dictating" to a majority of non-strikers. G.M. and its lackeys in the government and the press carried on their campaign of threats and lies against the workers. And when this failed, G.M. resorted to violence.

On January 11th, as workers were bringing food into the Fisher Body No. 2 plant, a group of company guards appeared and overpowered them. They closed the gate and took down a ladder which was being used to hoist food up to the second floor. Then in 16-degree weather, the company turned the heat in the plant off. When this news reached union headquarters, hundreds of workers raced to the plant. When the company cops were overpowered they called the city cops, and then barricaded themselves in the plant's ladies' room, claiming they had been kidnapped. This situation had been set up by G.M. so the cops would have an excuse to attack the workers.

WORKERS DEFEND STRIKE

The cops soon arrived with their guns and gas. They attacked the outside pickets with gas but within five minutes they were forced to retreat by streams of water from firehoses and two-pound door hinges coming from inside the factory.

Then workers on the outside were given empty bottles and hinges for the next attack. The cops hurled more gas and attacked again, and again they were chased off, this time with the outside pickets in hot pursuit. This time the cops opened fire on the unarmed workers, wounding 14. The workers continued to chase the cops, overturning the sheriff's car and chasing the cops up the hill, where they stayed.

The governor of Michigan, Frank Murphy, arrived in Flint and said that he was holding the National Guard in readiness. G.M. had hoped to provoke enough violence to justify calling in the National Guard. But for the time being, G.M.'s hired goons had been forced to retreat. The workers were victorious and the "Battle of Bulls Run" had ended with the "bulls" running.

But G.M. wasn't through by a long shot. Three thousand National Guardsmen were mobilised. Murphy was reluctant to use them against the workers because his political future was at stake. But you can be sure G.M. was putting the pressure on him. On January 13th

two days later G.M. agreed to a truce. National bargaining would begin on all eight demands. G.M. agreed to bargain solely with the UAW. Seventeen plants would remain closed until a settlement but the occupied plants were to be evacuated. The rank-and-file workers didn't like this because it was a truce and not a complete victory. Nevertheless the strikers prepared to leave the factories. But then came some news which changed all of this. Word reached the union that G.M. was planning to meet with the Flint Alliance to discuss representation and recognition of the Alliance by the company. This was a complete violation of the agreement with the UAW. The strikers went back into the plants. G.M.'s double-cross had failed.

G.M. TAKES THE OFFENSIVE

But now G.M. really went all out to break the strike. UAW headquarters in Anderson, Indiana, was smashed by vigilantes. Union organisers and pickets were beaten up. Then G.M. opened the non-struck plants which it had closed. Finally, G.M. located a judge who would issue another injunction, ordering the strikers to evacuate the plants. G.M. had taken the offensive and the workers would have to come up with something

company spies for the important part of his plan. He knew that there were spies among the 30 "most trusted" and that they would report the plan to take No. 9 to G.M. management. This way most of the guards from Chevy No. 4 would be lured away leaving it to the workers.

The next day, February 1st, Travis called a meeting at the union hall supposedly to protest the court injunction hearings taking place that day. In the middle of the meeting he was handed a slip of paper and he told the people that the workers were getting beat up at No. 9 and suggested that they all go down there. When they arrived at No. 9 the battle had already started. G.M. management had fallen into the trap and stationed almost all the company guards at No. 9. When the night shift came in yelling "strike" a fight immediately erupted. By 3.45 the fighting was really fierce and the plant manager from No. 4 ordered more company men from there over to No. 9 to help out. Meanwhile, at 3.30 Ed Cronk led a group of men from Chevy No. 6 to No. 4 but this was too small a force to shut it down. They returned to No. 6 and ran into about 150 other men who were shutting it down. With these reinforcements the group went back to No. 4 which was practically unguarded. They turned off machinery and threatened and pleaded with reluctant workers to join the strike. The

so ineffectual that its scabbing against the UAW had about as much effect as a worm trying to stop a Mack truck.

By this time an impressive array of strike-breakers was lined up against the workers. There were 4,000 National Guardsmen, 1,000 deputised vigilantes, the Flint Alliance and Flint cops, and the Michigan Sheriff's Association of 1,300 deputies. When the question of what to do in case of an all-out attack on the plants came up, the workers were unanimous in their decision. After fighting for so long and hard, surrendering was out of the question. The strikers were determined to hold the plants at all costs and "fight to the death" if need be. On February 2nd the strikers sent this wire to Murphy:

"... The police of the city of Flint belong to General Motors. The sheriff of Genesee County belongs to General Motors ... It remains to be seen whether the Governor of the State also belongs to General Motors. Governor, we have decided to stay in the plant. We have no illusions about the sacrifices which this decision will entail."

Outside the plant the strikers were just as prepared to fight. Thousands of workers came from all over Michigan to Flint to show their support and help in the struggle against G.M. And their wives were more than willing to fight alongside of them. They even carried out their own demonstration with their children in the heart of Flint.

This situation could not last too long; it was time for a showdown. Governor Murphy took the injunction order to John L. Lewis, telling him that he was ready to have the workers removed from the plant. Lewis replied that he would go to the plant and stand with the workers against the Guardsmen. But G.M.'s troops never moved. Thousands of workers and women on the outside and almost 5,000 sit-downers ready to fight to the end forced G.M. to give up on February 11th after 44 days of strike.

G.M. signed a contract with the UAW recognising them as the sole bargaining agent in the 20 struck plants and for all its members in the other plants. G.M. also agreed not to deal with any other group in these plants for six months. This gave the UAW more than enough time to organise these plants and gain sole bargaining rights in them too. All union mm members who had been fired were rehired, negotiations on wages and working conditions were to begin in five days. G.M. immediately raised wages 5 cents an hour. All the sit-downers approved this contract but they had no illusions about their victory. As one worker put it: "What's the use of kidding ourselves. All that piece of paper means is that we got a union. The rest depends on us!"

The workers were successful in the Flint Sit-down because of their determination, militancy and solidarity. The auto workers were forced to assume these attitudes in their struggle with G.M. They were forced by the real conditions of their lives to assume these attitudes. Don't think that workers in 1936 weren't told that they never had it better, that America was heaven on earth, that capitalists were one, big, happy American family. The auto workers in 1936 were told all this and more. But their actual living conditions told a different story. The G.M. auto workers in 1936 either had to submit to the miserable living and working conditions imposed on them by the bosses, or fight to change them. They fought and won. But they won only a partial victory and it is up to the present members of the working class to finish the job.

Nowadays we read in the paper that we, the workers, are to blame for inflation. The government says that workers' wages are too high. At this time the government is just trying to persuade workers to keep their wage demands down. But it's only a matter of time till force is used to keep wages down. Since the choice is obvious we can use the Flint Sitdown strike as a good lesson. But the only real solution is to carry the lesson of Flint a step further. That is, capture the factories and hold on to them, for good. The capitalists have controlled them for long enough.



if the striker was to be carried to a successful conclusion.

The workers did come up with something. They captured Chevrolet No. 4, the largest G.M. factory and the producer of all Chevrolet engines. But Chevy No. 4 was a union weak spot and it was managed by Arnold Leng, an admirer of Hitler who kept it closely guarded. So the union leaders had to be slick in order to capture it. One of them, Bob Travis, devised an ingenious plan to take this vital plant. First, through a company agent, he made certain that G.M. definitely did not expect the union to try and sit down in No. 4. Next, after three more workers were fired in No. 4 for union activities, Travis called a meeting of Chevy union members. 1,500 workers showed up and demanded to take action to get these workers rehired. The meeting was adjourned but 150 stewards and organisers were told to remain. Of these, Travis, Kraus and Roy Reuther picked out 30 of the "most trusted" and told them that on the next day, at 3.20 p.m., there was to be a sitdown in Chevy No. 9. Travis then took aside the two most trusted leaders of Chevy No. 9 and told them that No. 9 was a decoy and that Chevy No. 6 was the real target. They were to hold No. 9 until No. 6 was taken. But three other leaders from No. 6 and No. 4 were also told that No. 9 was the decoy and that they were to rally the men from No. 6 and bring them to No. 4 where the real sitdown was to take place. Thus, only six men knew that a sitdown was

number of strikers increased rapidly and soon No. 4 was taken. The foremen were thrown out of the plant with these words which were very familiar to the workers: "We'll call you back when we need you."

No. 4 was secured against attack on the inside and on the outside it was surrounded by the workers' wives who dared the cops or anyone else to attack. No attack came and Chevy No. 4, the largest unit in G.M.'s empire, was taken. The workers were back on the offensive.

Murphy upped that National Guard force to 4,000 and had them surround No. 4 and Fischer Body No. 2 across the street. The strikers were cut off from the outside. Machine guns and 37mm howitzers were placed on the hill overlooking the plant. G.M. turned off the heat and then the lights but both times they were forced to turn them back on when the workers threatened to light fires. On February 3rd the National Guard lifted its food ban when the workers threatened to damage machinery. Under this kind of pressure G.M. agreed to reopen negotiations while the workers remained in the plants.

In spite of this, tension continued to increase. The sheriff read an injunction to the strikers ordering them to leave the plants. When they refused he asked Governor Murphy for help in ousting them. He was still reluctant but company pressure was definitely on him. Even the AFL "labour leaders" sided with G.M. They demanded that the company reopen its plants

This and the previous article have been reproduced from back issues of an excellent American

THE STATE OF W PAKISTAN

Since 25th March 1971, when General Yahya Khan unleashed the Pakistan Army against the Bengali nation, the situation in West Pakistan has been deteriorating rapidly. The invasion of East Bengal has inevitably created a chronic recession in all sectors of industry in West Pakistan. Two principal factors have contributed to the present state of the economy: the colossal expenditure involved in the maintenance of the armed forces in East Bengal and the sharp decline of the Bengali market for West Pakistani manufactured goods.

At the moment, the military dictatorship is spending over one million rupees a day on the maintenance of the armed forces in East Bengal. The task of these forces is to carry out a ruthless programme involving the systematic massacre of large numbers of Bengalis, in order to terrorise the population and to crush the forces which are carrying out the struggle for national liberation. On the second point, the East Bengalis are no longer buying goods manufactured in West Pakistan. Superprofits have been wrung from this market in the last two decades, and the exploitation of East Bengal has directly financed the development of Karachi and the Punjab. A swift decline in the economy of West Pakistan followed the stagnation of trade in Bengal.

ATTACKS ON WORKERS

The West Pakistani capitalists, however, refused to suffer any losses incurred as a result of the crisis and have taken full advantage of the opportunity to carry out a devastating attack on the standard of living of the working class and the peasantry. The bourgeoisie, with the help of Yahya's military clique, has embarked on a programme of systematic and ruthless oppression, which has been manifested in both the public and private sectors of industry in West Pakistan. The government departments have been forced to cut expenditure drastically. As a result the redundancy rate in this sector has shot up to 80-85% in the last few weeks. In the private sector, banks, battery manufacturing plants, textile mills, sugar mills, printing presses and the whole of the service industry have been very badly hit. In an attempt to maintain their profits the capitalists have taken extreme measures. They have ordered lock-outs, closed a whole number of plants, and sold them to the scrapyards on the pretext of underproduction and unprofitability of the units. Retrenchment of the workers, closing down of industries and mass eviction of tenants by landlords have become a permanent feature of the generally abysmal situation. Since March this year, in the textile industry alone, 400,000 workers have been arbitrarily thrown out of their jobs. Because of the limited development of industry in general, once a worker is thrown out of a job, the likelihood of his finding another is negligible.

The collusion of the military junta with the bourgeoisie is blatant. Under the present martial law regulations, arbitrary retrenchment of workers and lock-outs are illegal; yet no action is taken against the entrepreneurs when these acts occur, nor when workers are dismissed without the correct legal procedure being observed.

RISING PRICES

An additional feature of the oppression is the deliberately created shortage of supply of commodities to the market. The result of this has been that the price of consumer and other primary products has soared, thus ensuring superprofits to the capitalists. The following figures provide an estimate of some of the increases that have taken place in the last three months:

Raw Cotton—50%; Batteries—400%; Cloth—25%;
Petrol—25%; Meat—100%; Oil—30%; Matches—100%;
Soap—33%.

The stagnation of the economy is reflected in the sinking share prices, drastic cuts in all allocations of funds for industrial projects and a chronic shortage of strategic materials. For example, as a result of the crisis in East Bengal, no cheap newsprint paper is being imported from that area.

REPRESSION

Of course the regime itself has taken a series of measures in an attempt to crush any sign of militancy appearing among the workers. The crumbs thrown to pacify the masses in periods of relative prosperity, such as tax relief for the lower income groups, have all been taken away. All political and trade union activity is banned. There is total press censorship, and contradictory reports in the newspapers are a common occurrence.

The repression has quickly spread to the rural areas. Landless tenants eking out a meagre existence by working for the feudal lords are being forcibly ejected from the estates. This is mainly achieved with the help of the police and the collusion of the local bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie. Tear gas, batons and other instruments have been used by the forces of repression in carrying out these evictions.

MILITANCY OF WORKERS AND PEASANTS : THE SANDOZ STRIKE

But the masses are seething with anger under this murderous oppression and there has been strong resistance in many cases. The peasants have vigorously opposed their oppression and armed clashes between police and tenants have taken place in the North West Frontier Province. Landlords have been kidnapped and held to ransom as a reprisal for the atrocities committed against the peasants. Already workers in many of the mass industries are resorting to mass strikes. The militancy of the workers, Martial Law notwithstanding, is rising and can be illustrated by a strike at a pharmaceutical



plant of Sandoz in Hyderabad. 250 workers, 80 of them women, came out for a day, in contravention of the martial law regulations, demanding higher pay, better working conditions and the reinstatement of a worker who had recently been sacked. The employers called in the local bureaucrats to "quell the disturbance". When the news got round to the other industries in the area (Telephone and Telegraph Workshop and Indus Gas) the workers immediately intervened on behalf of the Sandoz employees. They threatened to call solidarity strikes in their industries, too, if the bureaucrats contrived to interfere. The authorities and the employers backed down and the workers' demands were met in full. Similar actions have been successful in other industries. Although strikes are illegal under the present emergency, some militant unions are so well organised that they confidently fight the bourgeoisie tooth and nail and come out victorious in their struggles.

POLITICAL SITUATION

Unfortunately the unions, or rather, Federations of Unions¹, are themselves hegemonised by different political groupings ranging from fanatical religious parties on the extreme right to the Maoists on the left. The situation is further confused by the splits among the Maoists. For example C. R. Aslam's Pakistan Socialist Party supports the West Pakistani Army's invasion of East Bengal and limits itself to propagandistic activity. Major Ishaq's Kissan Mazdoor Party (Peasant-Worker Party) did some important work at the grassroots level but in the last two months has capitulated to the West Pakistani hysteria against East Bengal.

However, despite this disarray in the revolutionary ranks, there are some significant groupings, predominantly Maoist, doing serious, mainly underground, work amongst the peasants and workers.

The student federations are also split according to their political affiliations. Numerous clashes have occurred between the religious fanatics (Jamaatis) and the left-wing groups led in the major universities by the Maoists.

After the general elections the hopes raised by the bourgeois opportunists, and specifically, Bhutto's People's Party², mainly through the use of "left-wing" rhetoric, have been shattered. The more conscious workers have seen through the vile deception of these leaders of "national stature" and stand now in total opposition to them. At the same time there has been a regroupment of the forces of reaction, mainly due to the chauvinism generated by the crisis in East Bengal.

GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA

The State propaganda machine has reinforced this reaction by being ruthlessly efficient in West Pakistan in creating mass hysteria against the Bengali nation³. This has been done through the government-controlled newspapers, which means nearly all of them, and the national radio and television. Two recent examples of the blatant propaganda are the production of a 55-minute colour fiction, purporting to be a documentary, outlining what was claimed to be the "atrocities committed by Awami League cadres, rebels and Indian infiltrators" before the invasion by the West Pakistani armed forces. The other was the publication of a White Paper on the "Crisis in East Pakistan", which is a massive concoction of lies, presented as data on the "barbarities" of the "Awami League hoodlums, bad elements, saboteurs and miscreants." It is noteworthy that the guerrilla fighters are more recently called "Indian agents". The savage attacks on the Hindu minority have become intensified and a systematic campaign is in operation to whip up mass religious hysteria against this minority. People are inveigled into joining the armed forces by being persuaded that they are carrying out a "holy war against the heathens" in defence of the fatherland.

As a result of this "national emergency", political life has become totally paralysed. The bourgeois parties impotently plead for the lifting of the restrictions on their activities. The Maoists, after the stand taken by the Chinese bureaucracy supporting Yahya's actions, find themselves totally confused.⁴ Lacking the analysis put so clearly by the theory of Permanent Revolution, they refuse to give support to the National Liberation Movement until "the class character of

the struggle has emerged". However, because of the role played by the Chinese vis-a-vis Nixon, because of their support of the Ceylonese government and their diplomatic overtures to the Barmese clique led by General Ne Win, there is turmoil in the Maoists' ranks. It cannot be doubted that among the Maoists there are genuine revolutionaries who are in the process of rethinking their whole political line in view of the events of the past few months, and a change in their orientation is possible.

All the indications point towards the fact that the explosion in Bengal has produced a political fermentation in West Pakistan and deep-going change is taking place in the relation of forces in the arena of class struggle. The transformation of this struggle into an armed confrontation in the not too distant future is more than a remote possibility.

—Mohd Hussein, writing from Karachi

FOOTNOTES

1. The Unions in Pakistan are based on separate industrial units rather than on trades as in Britain. Unions are federated according to the political loyalties of the employees.
2. There has been a split in Bhutto's People's Party. The "left wing" has a "socialist" rhetoric, while the main group, led by Bhutto and backed by powerful business interests and feudal landlords, has given up all pretence of pursuing anything resembling a socialist programme.
3. The propaganda is quite sophisticated. Recently the role of the British Army in Northern Ireland has been equated with the operations of the West Pakistani Army. The British have been exposed as hypocrites and advised to put their own house in order. In this way the British press and BBC have been stripped of any credibility that they might have had under "normal circumstances". The influence of the Western Press on the Western Pakistanis has been effectively destroyed.
4. The Maoists' view is that Sheikh Mujib is clearly an agent of British and American imperialism. (Why else would these powers afford him such strong support?) The Maoists claim that Mujib in fact tried to destroy the Left in Bengal before 25th March through the agency of the Awami League forces, and that he would certainly not have allowed the left to gain a foothold after his victory. Adamjee and other West Pakistani industrialists were protected by the Awami League and large mobs were unleashed against the common Bengali. The Maoists further believe that "the evidence is uncontrovertible that before the invasion of Bengal by the armed forces, a fascist genocidal campaign against the non-Bengali minority, mainly Urdu-speaking Biharis, was launched, in which 100,000 people were massacred." Some of these allegations might be correct but (a) Yahya's class role is obscured, and (b) Marx and Lenin are discarded on the question of self-determination.

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Hugo Blanco deported



The following appeal was made by Hugo Blanco in Mexico City Sept. 19. It is reprinted from the Sept. 27 Intercontinental Press.

At the beginning of this month, the Peruvian teaching profession, organized in the Federación Nacional de Educadores del Perú [National Federation of Educators], initiated a strike of national scope in answer to the refusal of the government to improve their precarious living conditions, conditions that contrast vividly with the opulence in which the military lives. In spite of the efforts of the reactionary forces and the government, the strike movement was growing stronger day by day, supported as it was by the students, their parents, and broad sectors of the population.

The military junta, frightened at the dimensions of the movement, opted for a repression and violently broke up the teachers' demonstrations, jailing hundreds of teachers, students, and workers. Finally, the junta announced that they had deported various persons, including student and faculty strike leaders and myself.

I have been deported to Mexico, where fortunately I have been given permission to reside as a "visitante" (visitor), but I am ignorant of the fate of the rest of my "deported" colleagues. The press remains silent. Could it be that the Peruvian government has killed them? Are they hesitating before carrying out the deed?

As a revolutionist and as a Peruvian, I am worried about the fate of my friends. I demand that the Peruvian government inform the world as to what they have done with these students and strike leaders they say they have deported.

I appeal to the student and political organizations, the unions, and the intellectuals who have in the past been able to stay the murderous hand of the military to mobilize once again in defense of Peruvians whose lives are in danger. This is a matter of the most extreme urgency. Immediate action is called for to achieve the liberation and the safety of these fighters.

IRELAND MEETINGS

The Spartacus League is arranging a series of meetings in towns and cities round the country with speakers and the film *Urban Insurgency in Northern Ireland*. Watch out for further details of meetings in the localities listed below:

October	7th	York
	8th	Bristol
	11th	Cardiff
	12th	Stafford
	13th	Keele
	14th	Nottingham
	15th	Leeds
	18th	Lancaster
	19th	Liverpool
	20th	Manchester
	21st	Birmingham
	22nd	Coventry
	25th	Norwich
	26th	Colchester
	27th	Canterbury
	28th	Brighton

The Spartacus League will also be organising separate series of meetings in Scotland and London, also with the film. Details will be posted locally, but if you want to be put in touch with SL militants in these areas, write to the Spartacus League, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

Ceylon Oilworkers Defy Anti-strike Law

The first strike in direct defiance of Ceylon's Essential Services Order began August 31, when operators at the Sapugaskande oil refinery walked out, completely shutting down the plant.

The strikers are members of the Operations Staff Union, whose secretary, K. Tiruchelvam, was fired July 9 for expressing opposition to anti-strike legislation.

In the wake of the job action, nearly all the technicians, clerks, and laborers, who are members of unions whose leadership supports the government coalition, resigned from their unions and requested membership in the Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU), which has opposed the State of Emergency as well as the witch-hunt unleashed by the Bandaranaike regime in April.

The workers took this step in order to avoid being used as strikebreakers by their old leaderships.

With the refinery out of operation, Ceylonese press reports indicated that Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike had requested strikebreaking assistance from Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. Four Egyptian technicians

traveled to Ceylon to investigate the situation, with the aim of determining whether Egypt could provide a sufficient number of scabs to get the factory running again.

On September 10 Bala Tampoe, general secretary of the CMU, sent a letter to T. B. Subasinghe, minister of industries and scientific affairs, protesting both the firing of Tiruchelvam and the regime's plans to break the strike. That letter, a copy of which was also sent to the president of the Arab Petroleum Workers Federation in Cairo, said in part:

"The Executive Committee of our Union considers that the strike should be settled immediately by negotiation with the Operations Staff Union, and that any effort to break the strike, by importing refined oil, or by seeking to utilise the services of operators from abroad to work as blacklegs at the refinery, would be completely unjustified and would be directly adverse to the interests of the working class and to the rest of our people, who will have to pay for the costs of such strike-breaking efforts." □

THE "RECONSTRUCTORS" ARE THEMSELVES BEING "RECONSTRUCTED"

Comrades will know that despite our serious political differences with other revolutionary organisations, we have always attempted to debate these differences at a political level and have denounced the use of Stalinist-type slanders ("imperialist/bourgeois agents", "Stalinist spies", etc.). Therefore it is with regret that we note that two groups, which have always used this terminology with regard to the Fourth International in the name of reconstructing this same International, are now slandering each other in this absurd fashion.

The Healy group in Britain, known best as the publishers of the *Workers' Press*, and its "sister organisation" in France—the Lambert group—have recently, it seems, taken to using unsterile language towards each other.

The role played by Lora in the recent events in Bolivia (cf. *International 6* for details) has forced Healy to publish a denunciation of him in the *Workers' Press*. Considering that Healy was, not long ago, quoting Lora to the effect that the F.I. leader in Bolivia, Moseoso, was agent of the bourgeoisie (and this at a time when Moseoso was being hunted by the Bolivian police), this about-turn has surprised Lambert. Thus the latest meeting of the Central Committee of Lambert's group had the following to say in relation to the denouncers of POR—the name of the organisation which Lora misappropriated when he split from the F.I.:

"The Central Committee of the OCI, member of the International Committee, declares that those who attack the Bolivian POR are attacking the party which has inspired and been the driving force of the Popular Assembly, the organ [sic] which represented the Bolivian proletariat's struggle to establish its own power and which was opening the way to the dictatorship of the proletariat in Bolivia. Those who are attacking the POR are thus declaring themselves as enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They are going over to the side of the Imperialism and Stalinism. They are becoming agents of counter-revolution and are enemies, whether conscious or unconscious, of the Fourth International."

Neither Mr. Healy, nor his close comrade-in-arms Mr. Banda, were available for comment to a *Red Note* reporter. We trust, however, that the comrades of the *Workers' Press* will not allow these slanders to go unchallenged, and that the combined talents of Messrs. Slaughter and Kemp will be brought into action to teach Monsieur Lambert the real meaning of the dialectic.

—Charles Hoare

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Repression in Britain The Black Peoples Struggle

The recent murder of George Jackson and the campaigns which have been instigated to fight for the freeing of the other black militants in prison in America have demonstrated the viciousness of the racist American legal system.

But it is not only the American system which can perpetrate such acts of violence as the cold-blooded murder of George Jackson or the massacre in Attica. In Britain the systematic brutalisation of black people has been taking place for years and is now steadily on the increase.

BRITISH RACISM

Here in Britain too acts of racist violence are committed against the people not only by individual fascist thugs but by the better organised strong-arm men who serve the ruling class—the police.

For example, two years ago the body of a Nigerian, David Olawale, was found dumped in a river in Leeds. In the face of overwhelming evidence, the authorities themselves have at last been forced to admit, after attempts to cover it up, that the police were involved in this brutal slaying, and two fuzz have been charged with murder.

These are not isolated incidents. Recent court cases reveal a great many instances of sadistic and vicious acts by these agents of the ruling class. In at least two cases this year police have deliberately pushed black people through windows at police stations, then charged them with malicious damage. These charges have resulted in convictions in the racist courts.

Arrests are always carried out with savagery and black people expect as a matter of course to be beaten up and brutalised by the police on any pretext.

It is significant that by far the largest number of attacks on black people take place behind closed doors. Once dragged into a police van, black people are at the mercy of police brutality, and, outnumbered, are always beaten up on their way to the police station.

The brutal racist methods of the police have been quite clearly demonstrated in the course of several trials this year which have involved members of different black organisations in Britain.

The results are almost invariably the same. Convictions are brought on charges black people are so familiar with—obstruction, resisting arrest, malicious damage, assault—when in fact what they have done is bravely resist brutal attacks.

THE METRO INCIDENTS

A case currently before the courts is that of the Metro Youth Club in Notting Hill, where police arbitrarily attempted to arrest a young black playing around outside the club. (It is significant that later they actually charged a youth who had never left the club all night!) When members of the club came to the youth's rescue, police called in massive reinforcements and in the hours following attacked and brutalised the blacks, arresting several of them. The beatings were so bad that the defendants were not brought to court the next day, as required by the law, but the day after. All the publicity about the incident concentrated on the injuries received by the police from black people defending themselves from attacks, the savagery of which they well know, especially in an area like Notting Hill which has a particularly large concentration of fascist-minded elements in its local police force.

The resistance put up by black people is becoming more and more vital. The courts are viciously, flagrantly, racist. There is not much hope of even bourgeois "justice" for black people within the system and the repression of black people is intensifying.

HISTORY

Of course this repression is not new. It has existed ever since Britain first used brutal force and ruthless violence to establish and maintain control over black people in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. More recently, after the last war, black people were forced to come over to England to provide the cheap labour necessary for the economy. They were duped into coming here with promises of good jobs and a higher standard of living. Since unemployment was high at home due to the pillage of the indigenous economy by British imperialism, black people pinched and scraped to pay their fares to come to the "promised land". They found that they had been imported to perform the menial, low-paid tasks which were refused by the majority of white workers. They were still treated as a subject race, living in neo-slavery. Black people suffer dual oppression, not only as workers but also as blacks. Their oppression as black people is generated by the ideology of racism which was evolved out of imperialist expansion. To consolidate and further the exploitation of the expropriated lands, and to justify their acts, the white masters created the myth of white superiority. Erudite books have been written by bourgeois intellectuals to give backing to this myth, and racist

propaganda, in the form of, for example, newspaper articles, TV series, comics and the presentation of history in the education system has been effectively disseminated and is reflected in all the workings of bourgeois society.

BOMB ATTACKS

Take, for example, just one of the incidents which occurred this year.

A bomb was thrown through the window of a house in Sunderland Road, Forest Hill, by a group of fascist thugs during a party held by some black people. Several of the people suffered severe injury, third degree burns, like those caused by napalm in Vietnam. As is usual in cases where black people are the victims of violence, the bourgeois press totally ignored the incident. The white thugs guilty of the crime were simply charged with arson. No mention was made of the horrible injury inflicted on the innocent people. Why was not a charge of attempted murder brought against them? And this happened in the same week when a bomb attack on the property of Robert Carr, Tory Minister for Employment, causing slight damage, was given extensive press coverage. (The *Daily Mirror* offered a £10,000 reward to anyone who could come up with the desired information.)

Consequently, the white working class, imbued with the dominant (bourgeois) ideology, is strongly racist in its thinking.

IMMIGRATION BILL

This thinking is further encouraged by the increasing legal sanctions being given to racist acts of violence. The Immigration Bill is one of these measures. Under this Bill black people can be prevented from entering the country with no right of appeal. They have to register with the police, informing them of any change of job or address, and reporting to them each year. There are wide powers of deportation, and the Home Secretary can simply order deportation if he deems that it will be "conducive to the public good". This means that black people are being forced to passively accept the dictates of the system.

Any deviation from "good behaviour" (i.e. behaviour acceptable to the ruling class) will mean the deportation of that black person. This includes of course industrial action such as strikes, etc., which will be increasingly dangerous under the Industrial Relations Act. So the bourgeoisie have provided themselves with a force of wage-slaves, effectively under their control, who can be used to provide scab labour.

The police will have full legal backing in their daily harassment of black people because they are entitled to stop, search and hold any black person on the mere suspicion that he might be an "illegal immigrant". Under the present circumstances the only valid means of proving one's identity may be a passport. The South African ruling class knows the value of that measure. It seems that the British ruling class have found there are still some things left to learn from South Africa!

POLITICAL AWAKENING

It is this constant process of what Huey Newton calls "learning through direct experience" which quickly radicalises black people and leads them towards acquiring a revolutionary consciousness generally ahead that of the white working class. Trotsky said almost forty years ago, talking about the American blacks, that with their political awakening, bourgeois ideology will be exposed and that black people, in breaking with this ideology, would form part of the vanguard leading the struggle against imperialism.

The extent to which this political awakening is taking place, especially among the black youth who are not shackled by the "Uncle Tom" mentality of the older generation, can be seen in many of the incidents which occur daily. For example, recently, in a visit to a school in South London, a police chief accused the Jamaican kids of being mainly responsible for the thefts of bicycles in the area. The kids knew perfectly well that he was a liar.

The realisation of this sort of "institutionalised racism" thus sinks deep into the consciousness of black people at a very early age.

And the growing awareness of the oppressive nature of society has resulted in black people's growing militancy and developing consciousness of the need to organise.

To quote from the paper of one of these organisations: "We live... having no constitution, no rights, no safeguards... [Arrest is] a continual experience practised every day by the police, who throw us in direct confrontation with the lawyers, judges, the prison authority, the Home Office, Parliament and the Establishment."

BLACK ORGANISATIONS

When black people get organised in the face of this confrontation, the police and other agencies of the bourgeoisie begin to feel that this resistance is a threat to their



authority and intensify the repressive measures. More and more frequently now it is members of black organisations who come up in the courts individually and now more frequently in groups, on unrelated trumped-up charges, such as driving offences, theft, etc.

Some black groups have had to leave their premises due to the continued harassment by the police. Always attacks on organised black people are resisted by them. Generally they have no choice. The pigs viciously step up their attacks and the result is a massive confrontation between black people and the racist pigs.

POLICE VIOLENCE

The violent nature of these confrontations is becoming more open, more recognisable. But it is used by the ruling class to deepen the division between the black and white working class. Thus, with all the methods at their disposal, for example the bourgeois press, they twist the reality, impute the violence to the blacks and reinforce the prejudices of the white working class.

So we should not be at all surprised by the savage tactics adopted by the police, since violence is implicit in the institutional apparatus of the state defined by Engels as "an armed body of men" to maintain the rule of one class over the others. In a bourgeois state the repressive agents are used by the capitalist class to force the working class masses into submission, and perpetuate the ruthless exploitation of man by man.

We should also recognise the inevitability of this violence rising to the surface in the areas where black people are forced to live—ghettos where poverty and oppressive conditions drive kids onto the streets, create tensions in the home and breed situations which are exacerbated by the racist attitudes of the police.

"Industrial capitalism," wrote Robert Lynd 27 years ago, "is an intensively coercive form of organisation in a society that cumulatively constrains men and all of their institutions to work the will of the minority who hold and wield economic power, and this relentless warping of men's lives and forms of association... is an impersonal web of coercions dictated by the need to keep the system running."

It is this coercion which is taking a visible form in the confrontations between organised black people and the bourgeois state apparatus.

Revolutionaries, who have recognised this violence for what it is, are therefore committed to the support of black people in their fight against repression, because we recognise that this is a crucial part of the working class struggle against capitalism. Each time black people are brutalised by the agents of that system, we support their resistance.

The "Mangrove" case is just one example of this resistance. The trial of nine black militants who stood up to police attacks during a demonstration against just this sort of victimisation, which took place in Notting Hill in August last year, begins at the Old Bailey on October 4th. Those who are not convinced that racism is inherent in the legal system of British imperialism should try and attend the trial.

—Lucy Gray

International Marxist Group

British Section of the Fourth International

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Students & the Class Struggle

The spectacle of a bourgeoisie in crisis has its funny side and nothing is more ridiculous than the agony of the world's most puffed-up ruling class—the one we face in Britain. Students will be given the chance to witness an example of the bourgeoisie's crisis when the colleges open, since it is customary at this time for college principals and vice-chancellors to introduce the new "boys and girls" to the splendours of our establishments of higher learning.

What should these gentlemen try to say? How can they carry it off? One of the present pillars of our academic establishment, Professor Harrod, has written a book in which he describes what Cambridge was like at the start of a new year when Keynes was teaching there: the staff's enthusiasm and excitement to meet the new students, eager to give them a platonic embrace and introduce them to the mysteries of academic life. Today, the educational bosses, even in Oxford and Cambridge—the academic Rolls Royces—can face the new year with nothing more than threadbare double talk and sordid little schemes for repression.

If a college principal tries to drag up the old story about college being a place of "independent scholarship" or the training of unfettered, critical minds, even his own staff could hardly avoid sniggering. Such talk is about as convincing as Lord Stokes telling his workers that the company's aim is to improve the quality of their lives. Some of the college bosses may try the more "modern" line about the role of higher education as a supplier of first class personnel for industry. But what if someone got up and pointed out how many thousands of graduates are now unemployed? Another favourite theme of these start-of-term speeches, one designed to play on the "idealism" of students, was talk about the civilising role of the university in the local "community"—its responsibility to act as a stimulating influence on the surrounding society. But in the present situation it is becoming rather difficult to gloss over the fact that the so-called "community" is anything but united, and a number of students have got into serious trouble with their own masters through trying to involve themselves in the struggles of workers and other sections of the "community" outside. All in all, the college principals can hardly avoid making fools of themselves in the eyes of students with any awareness of the social situation in Britain at the present time.

THE MORE ABSURD, THE MORE REPRESSIVE

But this ideological bankruptcy in the field of higher education is no laughing matter for the academic establishment. The more impotent they are in the struggle to convince with ideas, the more violently must they try to crush independent thought and action on the part of the mass of students.

When a student makes a fool of himself or talks nonsense, he is taught to recognise his mistakes and to try in all humility to present things as they really are in future. Too often students imagine that their managers will accept the same procedures when they are found to be talking rubbish or behaving in an intolerable way. In every case, from LSE to Warwick, from Swansea to Northern Poly, student unions have wasted months of their time trying to convince their bosses that they have made a silly mistake and that all that is required is a change of mind. This procedure has never worked: the more absurdly the authorities behave, the more viciously they repress attempts at reform. The more cogently Warwick students asked for a social building under their own control, the more frenzied became the spying and repression of the authorities; when Swansea students modestly called for an end to regimentation in halls of residence, their leaders were threatened with wholesale expulsions; growing interest of students at Oxford in the affairs of the university brought the authorities to push through new disciplinary weapons; the dean of students at Norwich was accidentally discovered to be devoting his energies to systematic spying on "dubious" elements; the handful of staff who issued a mild protest were all but thrown out on their ears. Phrases like "the quest for truth" have acquired a distinctly ominous ring in British colleges. Their applicability is increasingly restricted to the meticulous scholarship of the Special Branch. It's true that the professionals in this sphere of learning are not yet fully integrated into the "academic community". The squad of plain clothes coppers padding around East Anglia university last year were unable to escape notice, and the poor Special Branch man planted in Keele stuck out like a sore thumb.

In the meantime, on a growing number of campuses, small bands of amateur coppers are being recruited by such organisations as the Monday Club. The York University branch of this organisation spent its spare time last year trying to ensure that their Union President is jailed for years on an incitement charge. Student Monday Clubs have been gathering information for the extreme right-wing Tory M.P., Biggs-Davidson, who is attempting to push through legislation against student unions. An organisation was formed last month by a certain Francis Bennion, based in Sussex, whose sole purpose is to collect files on left-wingers in order to bring private prosecutions against them for participating in demonstrations. The Special Branch itself now has a policy of recruiting at least one student on every campus to supply it with information on socialist militants.

THE INTEGRATION OF EDUCATION INTO THE CLASS STRUGGLE

The repressive drive in higher education has been proceeding for more than two years—the jailings of Paul Hoch and others, which occurred under a Labour government, marked a decisive turning point towards systematic repression. But

in spite of its long duration and growing force, a large number of liberal or "radical" staff and students union officials still refuse to engage in a determined fight against it, or even recognise its causes. The fundamental roots of the repression—the main question throwing students into action in the present period—lie in the overall social-political situation in Britain today. The starting point for understanding how events will proceed in the education system must be the general crisis of the capitalist class and the way the political leaders of this class are attempting to get themselves out of the mess.

The general context can be summarised briefly as follows: now that the boom has come to an end and the last vestiges of benefit from British imperialism's former dominant role have disappeared, the employers find themselves mortally threatened by foreign competition and too weak to defeat the working class in a struggle on the economic front; this crisis in the economy is combined with a profound crisis of the ideas, values and institutions of Britain's past imperial greatness; at the same time the bourgeoisie still goes almost unchallenged in the political sphere—the Labour Party leadership will not launch any struggle in the interests of the working class and workers have as yet no alternative to which they can turn at the present time.

The present state offensive against the working class through deliberately created unemployment and the IRB (as well as a mass of lesser measures) provides the framework within which all other social struggles are fought out. It gives the green light to reactionary elements everywhere to go onto the attack—hence the surfacing of Monday Clubs, spying networks, victimisation, etc.

But as well as this more or less automatic spin-off from the government's political fight against the labour movement, various branches of the state apparatus have their own specific objectives in higher education in the present period: first of all the government must try to prevent students intervening in the general social and political struggles, particularly those of the industrial working class. The reason for this lies in the students' capacity for rapid mobilisation, for establishing political networks, for engaging in almost fulltime political work, for adopting very militant forms of struggle, for disseminating revolutionary ideas, etc. In such a period, the ruling class cannot afford to take these phenomena lightly: policies must be worked out to stop them. In addition, the educational bureaucracy itself, though it has no special interest in these wider political considerations, knows very well that the only force capable of leading the mass of students (and also the junior teaching staff) in their struggles for better conditions is the revolutionary left. Hence their willingness to support a student-bashing offensive.

It is important that the revolutionaries avoid imagining that this attack will be concentrated purely, or even mainly, at the level of direct repression, victimisation, attempts to destroy student unions, etc. Though all this can be useful from the state's point of view, it does not get to the root of the problem and can therefore produce the opposite of what is intended. More fundamentally, the state must deal with the two main conditions which favour the political involvement of students: first, the looseness of administrative control over students and staff—the actual work situation of students still gives them relatively greater freedom to choose their own priorities than any other section of the population; secondly, the economic independence of students from their direct boss, which is greater than that of all other wage earners. If the working class was as free as students to decide when and how much they would work, and if they received a relatively secure grant once every three months, the factories would tower above the campuses as hotbeds of revolutionary agitation and action! To these main conditions a third might be added: the very much greater democratic control by students over their local unions than exists in the labour movement. The very fact that students are in transit through colleges makes it impossible at the local level for the kind of bureaucratic consolidation which can occur in the trade union movement.

It is not clear to what extent the government and central bureaucracy has hammered out a systematic plan of attack in the colleges. Such things can take time when the state's battalions of political tacticians, planners, lawyers, accountants, executives and strong-arm boys are so urgently called for on so many other fronts, and when Thatcher has been busy committing crimes in other sectors of education. Nor should we expect the offensive to be pursued with a great fanfare from one end of higher education to the other: the favoured method in the past has been to feel the way forward through little local experiments, a victory here, a new precedent there and only on the basis of such piecemeal gains is the new point introduced across the board. Nevertheless, when the state's plans do emerge, they will probably contain the following main elements:

1. The mailed fist against the left whenever it makes a mistake, combined with tacit support for the extreme right's anti-student's union activity.
2. Victimisation of revolutionary members of staff: the relationship of forces within the teaching staff in most colleges now favours such a policy.
3. Tighter integration of the mass of students through new assessment procedures and legal contracts; similar new contracts for staff.
4. Destroying the economic independence of students through a new payments system of some kind—the loan idea is just one among many that are being knocked around at present.
5. Attempts to integrate student union apparatuses more

firmly into the college bureaucracy through new charters, etc.

6. A stepping up of routine police surveillance—political files, blacklists, Special Branch liaison, etc.—developing towards the kinds of links between internal regime and police which now operate with such quiet efficiency in the schools.

COUNTER-STRATEGY FOR THE REVOLUTIONARIES

The first and main mistake that revolutionary socialists can make is to take as the starting point for their tactics the immediate situation facing them inside the education system. The only realistic counter-tactics are those which start from the overall needs of the struggle for working class power. It is quite illusory to imagine that the trend of events in higher education can be reversed if the state manages to inflict a major defeat on the working class. Revolutionaries must at all times stress that any victories won in the education system will be the by-product of the general revolutionary struggle in Britain, and the biggest task for socialists is to destroy a narrow students-union conception of the problems as something which has nothing to do with politics.

This truth, elementary for a communist, is denied by the work of the present NUS leadership, and in particular by Digby Jacks, the Communist Party member who is its current president. Jacks told the press after his election that he would put the interests of NUS before those of communism. This is simply an encouragement for those who don't want to look further than their toes while the bourgeois state is allowed to choose its time for cracking down on students and dividing them from the struggles of the workers. Perhaps Jacks will argue that he did not really mean what he said, but that it was necessary to say it given the witch-hunting atmosphere in Britain today. Such an argument only exposes his reformism more clearly: it assumes, that the best way to fight the ruling class is to make a public capitulation to liberalism while pursuing the struggle behind the scenes; in other words, Jacks adopts a classical bourgeois approach to politics: confuse the masses while you struggle for control of the apparatus, then try to restrict politics to the manipulation of the bureaucratic apparatus with the minimum of popular mobilisation required to give the show some semblance of credibility.

Genuine communists must take as their first task continuous explanation of the whole political and social context in which the educational crisis is taking place, making use of every opportunity to demonstrate to students the actual meaning of such things as the struggle in Ireland, the acute unemployment, the UCS crisis, the Common Market negotiations, etc. Equally important, revolutionaries must seize every opportunity to involve the most aware students in all the political struggles and campaigns of the left. For example, the demonstrations in solidarity with the Irish people's struggle against British imperialism being held in Glasgow on October 16th and London on October 31st must be made the focus of a major mobilising campaign in all colleges up and down the country. The Anti-Immigration Bill demonstration in Nottingham on October 23rd should involve hundreds of students in the Midlands. Students should be drawn into local and national activity in the fight against unemployment and in solidarity with the Clydesiders. And all this work must be seen as the *precondition* for an effective struggle within the educational system, for the success of the latter struggle depends above all on the strength and awareness of the hard core of socialist militants in the colleges, and it is through their all-round political involvement that they will increase their strength.

Once the political struggle is put first, the way in which revolutionaries should relate to the student struggle within the colleges becomes clear: in the first place, in order to win wide support for socialist ideas and action from the mass of students, revolutionaries must not stand aloof from the concerns of students, however trivial they may appear, nor must they ignore the organisations which students look to for leadership—mainly the students unions—however bureaucratic these may be. Secondly, precisely in order to be able to involve large numbers of students in the wider struggle for socialism, it is necessary for revolutionaries to fight tooth and nail against any attempts to further regiment the mass of students through course assessment, legal and disciplinary restrictions etc., against attempts to destroy what financial independence they retain, or against efforts to shackle the students unions. The past history of struggles in the education system is littered with examples of the socialists breeding distrust among the students as a whole simply through their haughty contempt for the "trivialities" of college life and their generally cliquish and aloof attitude. Such postures are to a large extent due to the inability of socialists to discipline themselves to the point where they are capable of showing the connections between the events in the college or locality and the struggle for socialism and of explaining their point of view in a clear and direct way. Denunciations of the "apathetic and reactionary mass" are used as a convenient escape route from hard work.

THE TASK OF SOCIALIST STUDENTS

The basic tasks of socialist students throughout the coming year should therefore consist of developing the two following lines of work: first and foremost trying to mobilise all possible forces in the colleges for the most important political struggles of the day, bearing in mind the decisive role which the struggle of the state against the labour movement is going to play in shaping the future course of events. Secondly to be in the front line of the struggle extend to the full the freedom of action and organisation of the mass of students: the awareness and organisation of the students must be built up to the point where every attempt at repression or victimisation is given a united and crushing reply. For these twin tasks to be pursued effectively requires a tireless effort on the part of student socialists to deepen their understanding of the crisis in Britain and of the working class movement. Such an understanding cannot be achieved simply by theoretical study, though that is necessary. It requires above all from students a commitment to the actual struggles being fought out between the classes in Britain today. Only through such a militant stand can students acquire the necessary energy and discipline to help find the right path out of the crisis of bourgeois society.

—Oliver MacDonald