

# WORKERS' FIGHT

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4p

## UNITED ACTION

## CAN SMASH PAY FREEZE



Gas workers outside Mill Hill conversion depot

### THE TORY PRESS WITCHUNT

THIS IS THE CONFRONTATION Heath thinks he can win. The flabby bully boy of Downing St. plans to get revenge for what the miners and dockers did to his Government, by wiping his boots on the Gas workers.

Thus he hopes to deter the miners, hospital workers, civil servants, Ford workers, the railway workers, from pressing their claims.

In fact it can be the confrontation — the decisive one — that we can win, if we mobilise our strength to aid the Gas workers and smash the freeze.

The Press is campaigning hysterically against the Gas workers, trying to spark off a witchunt. Last year the whole of the working class and much of the press sympathised with the miners, doing a dirty job for lousy pay. Gas workers exist in conditions nearly as foul as the pits, where the labour is hardly less onerous.

### YEARLY DEATHS

But most people have never been inside a gasworks, and know little of the conditions. So the Tory press opens the throttles and belches out clouds of lying propaganda, in an attempt to choke off the kind of solidarity action that helped the miners to win.

Every year nearly 90 000 old people die from cold and undemourishment — but there are no press campaigns for a living pension; just the odd report of especially horrible cases, which make good "human interest" copy and build up an image of 'caring'.

But now they are trundled out to be used cynically to bash the gas workers. Suddenly we find more column inches in one week devoted to old people than are normally devoted to the average year's toll of 90 000 dead — dead not because of a gas workers strike, but because

of deliberate, official neglect.

The danger of accidents and explosions during the strike is the responsibility of the Tory Government alone. Any attempt to lay the responsibility on the gas workers is sheer industrial blackmail.

Undoubtedly there will be such incidents — because in any normal week of the year there is on average one serious explosion caused by gas.

But you won't find that in the bosses' press.

The Press aims to witchunt the gas workers back to work the way they did the power workers two years ago. But times have changed. The whole working class has learned great lessons since then: millions will now see victory or defeat for the gas men as a victory or defeat for themselves.

### VICTORY

The most effective answer to that witchunt, and the best way to make

the strike hit hardest, is for other sections of workers to come out with them.

It is sheer madness that sections of workers coming up for a fight against the freeze are being held back, with the gasworkers out in front in the firing line. All together the freeze can be torn apart. If the choice is clearly between an all-out confrontation aiming to win, and toeing the line by giving the field to the Tories, Union leaders, and most certainly the TUC, have chosen the latter.

We must campaign and organise for victory. We can win, now, and smash both the Freeze and the Industrial Relations Act if we mobilise our industrial strength for an all-out battle — THAT IS, FOR A GENERAL STRIKE. The gas workers' action and the other mobilisations against the Freeze — like the major struggles of the last year against the Industrial Relations Act — point logically to a confrontation using the full resources of our industrial strength.

The key demand at the March TUC must be for a general strike. Here and now we must organise mass solidarity with the gas workers — form local militant rank-and-file United Front committees. If the 'leaders' fail, the task falls to us to prepare the counter-offensive and the general strike.

## FULL CLAIM NO LESS!

This is the first national gas strike since gas workers started a major new trend in trade unionism back in 1889.

In the weeks before the strike officially started, 8,000 gas workers

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## POLICE ARREST 24 WORKERS

## ALL OUT MARCH 15th.!

Summonses have been issued for the arrest of 24 building workers. The charge is one of 'intimidation', arising out of incidents in Shrewsbury round the building strike last year. Six have already been arrested, and are on £50 bail.

The contractors' shop stewards' committee at Shotton have called on all workers to strike on 15 March — the day of the trial — against this blatant Tory union-bashing.

Liverpool dockers are already supporting this call



workers  
fight

# BUILD UNITED FRONT COMMITTEES

"Yes, but it's against the law, isn't it?" It's not so often that you'll hear that reply these days. The Industrial Relations Act is 'the law'. The 90-day wage 'and price' freeze was 'the law'. Phase 2 is scheduled to be 'the law', come April 1st.

But to millions of working people, it is clear that if this is 'law and order', then it is not law and order in aid of allowing us to live peaceful, orderly, secure lives. It is law and order in aid of jailing trade unionists, in aid of depriving thousands of a decent livelihood, by ending their jobs or keeping their wages down — and in aid of the interests of the rich minority who control the State and its law.

And so working people have struck back at the Tories — in the strikes over the Pentonville Five, and, now, through the gas workers, Fords, the hospitals.... — to lay down our own order. The Tories have not been able to carry through their plans. They are now resorting to forthright confrontation — no 'special cases', no Official Solicitor.

Their 'price freeze' is a sick joke: grocery prices rose 1.5% in the five weeks up to January 22nd. (That's a rate of over 16% per year!) And only the most gullible can believe their words of concern for the lower-paid after their record with the farm-workers and the hospital ancillaries. The Tories face a wages collision like the miners' strike of a year ago — but in less favourable conditions for them. Their possibility of climbdown is narrower. Their credibility is less. The working class is armed with the memory of the mass solidarity strike of last July, and experience of flying pickets.

**United Action** — with different sections co-ordinated to strike together — can multiply our strength a hundredfold.

**United Front Committees** must be formed at every level — from the top union leaders down to the rank and file in each locality — with a programme of:

(1) Support for all workers actually in struggle — for instance a one day solidarity strike with the Civil Servants on 27th February.

(2) Defend the independence of the trade unions from the state — NO INCOMES POLICE, NO INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT.

Already, in Harrogate, London, a joint civil servants' union — teachers' union committee has been set up. In Manchester, a trade unionists' conference against the Freeze takes place on February 18th.

Particularly important is gaining support from better-organised workers for the less experienced trade unionists now up against the Government. The forthcoming conference of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions must take a lead — organise local Liaison Committees as United Fronts and coordinate them nationally.

But, if unity is our aim, that doesn't mean that we wait to act until perfect coordination is achieved. If the militants don't go first, the hesitant will never follow. The new vigour of the struggle of the past year has sprung from a willingness **not to wait**, not to delay for the 'proper channels', but to choose immediate, direct **action**. It is that vigour that will break the Freeze.

The Tories' hopes rest on the Trade Unions' official leadership. After the AUEW's refusal to take up concerted action had allowed workers' anger against the £60,000 fines to waste away in isolated protests, large parts of the Industrial Relations Act are now established as the norm for official trade union practice. The 'leaders' line is that Phase 2 would be all right, given only a little room for 'special circumstances'.

The line of officialdom — both Trade Union and Labour Party — is to stress kicking the Tories out and getting in a Labour government which (we hope!) will undo the Tories' works. Of course, we are absolutely in favour of kicking the Tories out.

But the official leaders advocate kicking the Tories out as the **alternative** to action now. That means, resigning ourselves to defeat **now**. The danger is that some rank-and-file workers who want to kick the Tories out **as well as** fighting now will be conned into the officials' view.

There is a serious possibility that solidarity action against Phase 2 can escalate to general strike proportions — particularly if the Tories use the penal clauses of the Industrial Relations Act, which remains a vital weapon for them to assist Phase 2. A general strike could go ahead to rip up both Act and Freeze.

The great struggles of 1972 — Chobham Farm, Pentonville Five — teetered on the brink of a general strike. And precisely because they didn't develop their full logic, to a general strike, their victories were partial, and the Act and the Tory offensive remain.

General strike is the perspective militants must prepare. It is the key demand to be raised at the March 5th recall Congress of the TUC.

Stress on kicking the Tories out as **the key** to the situation is dangerous in a mass strike eruption because it allows the 'ballot box trap'. The bosses could get out of a tight situation by promising elections and returning 'Labour to power with Tory policies'.

We cannot rely on the top union leaders. The responsibility falls on the rank and file. Local United Front Committees must prepare; build solidarity here and now; organise mobile pickets where possible; to explain, educate, organise.

## The Dollar and PHASE TWO

The British Government's Phase 1 and Phase 2 policies are so similar to the US administration's Phase 1 and 2 that the Financial Times was moved to comment that it would be possible for the Americans to 'sue' for breach of 'copyright'. The Heath Government, after a series of visits to the States and 'close talks' with 'interested parties' directly copied the Americans and imposed the 90-day Freeze. Later they implemented Phase 2, which with two small exceptions is again a copy of the American Phase 2.

Of course, Britain is not in the same economic position as the USA, but nonetheless it is interesting to look at the 'Nixon Experience' of Phase 2, its effects, and its outcome.

Indeed, the American experience amply explodes the myth of the crisis of 'inflation' as the thing which is wrong with the Western capitalist system. Inflation is a symptom of a much deeper underlying crisis, which penetrates into the very economic foundations of capitalist society.

### PROFITS

The American Phase 2 regulations succeeded in keeping down the level of inflation in the States to around 3%. It was widely claimed as a success by businessmen and the Nixon administration.

It reduced unemployment (slightly), and resulted in an all-round rise in production. Profits went up by 18% and the American Stock Exchange registered an all-time high.

by ROY RATCLIFFE

Real wages either stood still or rose slightly.

Has the experience in the USA shown that the conquering of 'inflation' has cured the ills of American capitalism? Quite the contrary! The success, in capitalist terms, of Phase 2 has in fact materially assisted in transforming the already chronic balance of payments deficit of the US to one of crisis proportions, eventually leading to the devaluation of the dollar.

The resulting expansion of the US economy due to their Phase 2 has boosted imports (up 22%), whilst exports have failed to keep pace (up 13%). This has led to a \$2,010 million deficit in 1971 increasing to a \$6,400 million deficit in 1972.

Despite the initial success of the American Phase 2 regulations in

curbing inflation, the US Administration was forced to remove them, not because of the impending Dollar crisis, but because whilst the restrictions on wages encouraged production in the early stages of Phase 2, the 'restrictions' on profit margins soon began to discourage production. The restrictions had to be removed.

But in removing the restrictions on profits, the door was opened to wages. Thus Phase 2 was dismantled.

This situation could face the Heath Government during the later stages of Phase 2, if of course it is not smashed by then by the British workers. This is why Heath took pains to assure businessmen and financiers in a reply to a question in the House of Commons that "The limit on profit margins would not inhibit increased industrial investment" ... "the object of Phase 2 and Phase 3 would be to ensure that company profits were sufficient to provide increased investment."

The forced sacrifices of the American workers did not benefit them in any way. In fact the huge deficit which Phase 2 helped to create has led the Nixon Administration to draw up budget proposals which cut government spending on the social services and Welfare schemes by \$19,000 million.

### VICIOUS

This in itself is a vicious attack on the US workers, and it is this that Nixon means when he calls for "an austere and self-reliant society". This attack, in line with the 10% devaluation of the dollar on 13th February, will face the American workers with cuts in welfare benefits and cuts in real wages. What a gloriously successful Phase 2!

Let us now for a moment look at the role of the American trade union leaders in this massive confidence

trick. Initially they accepted positions on the 'boards' which looked into pay and price rises, and they only resigned when it began to dangerously reduce their authority in the unions.

The American trade union bureaucracy totally failed to mobilise their members against the freeze and assisted the American capitalists in lulling workers into passive acceptance of Phase 2. Now they promise to be "realistic" in their wage demands during Phase 3 — realistic for Nixon, that is, but not for their own members!

The devaluation of the dollar will have a number of effects on the British economy.

First, although the pound is still floating, it will make British exports to the US dearer, and perhaps slow them down. Secondly, this may further worsen the British balance of payments deficit, perhaps up to £1000 million. Even if it does not go quite that high, it still means that the Government will have to take measures to cut down imports.

The most likely event is a further effective devaluation of the £, with all the consequences that flow from that for the working class. If the Government takes measures to hold back imports, it will most likely do this by monetary means.

The consequence of this will be to hold back investment and cut into the small recovery in the British economy that has been evident in the last month or so.

Thus the Government will press even harder to hold back wages. Meanwhile, the £ will also go down in relation to the other European currencies, and consequently make imports from Common Market dearer.

We must learn the lessons of the American Phase 2 NOW — and work for united working class action to smash the British Phase 2.



# CLAY CROSS

## Councillor David Nuttall calls for trade union support

The 11 CLAY CROSS 'rebel councillors' have been surcharged £635 each, and the council's £20 000 Government housing subsidy has been withdrawn. The councillors' reply has been:

- to refuse to send any further repayments to the National Public Works Loan Board (thus offsetting the loss of the £20 000)
- to call for a total rent and rates strike
- to pledge no evictions for arrears
- to start discussing with the two local rent collectors and their union on alternative work for them.

HILARY CAVE spoke to DAVID NUTTALL, one of the Clay Cross councillors, for Workers' Fight.

**HC: Clay Cross is one of the few councils who are still fighting the Government's Housing Finance Act. Why do you think that so many other so-called rebel councils have collapsed?**

**DN:** Well, most of them have been led by the right wing, and it's been a sham fight all along. Most councillors didn't really want to fight because the risks to themselves were too great.

Firstly, there was the risk of being surcharged, as we have been this week. Those whose socialism

is only brought out for public meetings and is kept in mothballs the rest of the time wouldn't risk losing money for the sake of socialist principles.

Secondly, there was the risk of disbarment. This was frightening to many councillors because they are looking forward to being elected to the new District Councils when local government is reorganised. When this happens, the whole position of councillors will be changed to that of semi-professionals. Councillors will be paid for each meeting they attend, and

the sum may be as much as £10 per meeting. You'd only need to attend five meetings a week, as many councillors do now, to be making a pretty good living from local politics.

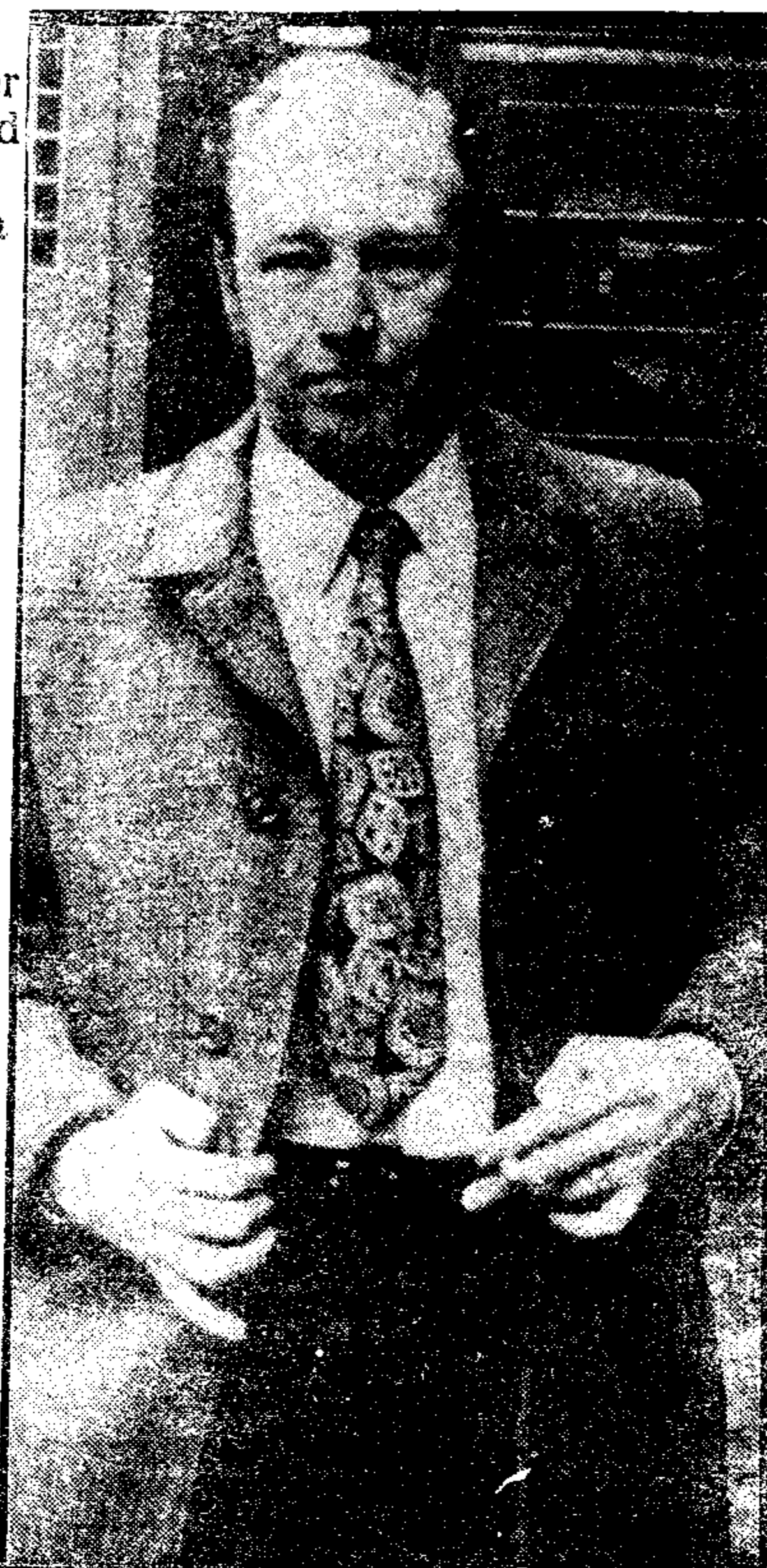
Those councillors who've given up the fight don't know what socialism is - they're too busy thinking of the benefits re-election will bring.

**HC: What part has the Labour Party played nationally in the fight against the Act?**

**DN:** They've done nothing effective at all. Officially, they say it's a bad law, but they're not encouraging or helping those who defy it. The National Executive Committee has given vague promises of financial support for anyone who is penalised for fighting rent rises, but they've not committed themselves in any definite way.

Locally, we've been more successful in the Labour Party. Anyone who voted as a councillor to implement the Act has been put off the North-East Derbyshire Constituency.

In places where the Labour Party is run by the right wing, new people are needed who will stand as councillors with socialist policies. We need to put back politics into local government. Too often councillors act as just administrators and social workers. We need councillors who will ensure that paid employees of councils don't take more power than they should have. Too often these people dictate policies to councillors.



**Cllr David Nuttall**

**HC: Do you think industrial action is important in the fight against the Act?**

**DN:** I think it's very important, but it would have been more useful a few months ago. Clay Cross has had very little actual help from the Derbyshire miners, for instance. Determined and united industrial action was needed, but so many of the leaders in the unions failed to take the necessary steps.

On Wednesday 10th January, the NUM's claim for 1973 was formally submitted. The claim is for an increase in the minimum rates for faceworkers, underground workers and surface workers to £30, £33 and £40 respectively, together with reduction of hours.

This is a similar claim, percentage-wise to last year's successful claim with increases from between £5.50 and £7 in basic rates.

### PREPARE

Last year the demonstrative victory of the miners ushered in a period of great success for the labour movement. And the success of the present claim will depend on them showing the same determination and preparation as they did last year.

'Moderate' talk, as put forward by right-wing union-leader Gormley, that there won't be a need for a strike this year will only weaken such preparation.

Already, as the 'Times' reported on 15th January, 'moderate' leaders of the NUM 'calculate £3 would be enough to reach a settlement', or in other words it would be enough to achieve a relatively quiet sell-out.

Militants must immediately call for preparation for strike action - a complete overtime ban to reduce stocks, meetings to discuss and organise picketing etc. (Last time, in many areas, miners at rank and file level had to patch up the picketing after organisation at official level had turned out to be half hearted and inadequate).

# NUM must reject productivity deals and act now

Another issue for immediate discussion and action is the moves by the NUM toward productivity/efficiency bargaining.

The stated aim of such bargaining is to 'get away from the pattern of major annual confrontations'. The need to get away from this 'pattern' is not entirely clear, at least to the miners - considering that there has only been one 'major annual confrontation' in the last 20 years (last year), and that that confrontation produced such a spectacular revival in the miners' living standards and morale.

Perhaps the executive want twice yearly confrontations? But no, what they are negotiating is an 'efficiency incentive scheme' intended to tie any future wage increases to promises to be more efficient and step-up production. Which in the end boils down to work harder, speed-up, and lose jobs.

### REPORT

As an indication of the form such a productivity deal would take, you only need to look at the report back to the union side of the negotiating committee by its own research team (copies of this report, JNNC/U.S./7/11/72, can be

obtained free from Workers' Fight) in its attempts to 'stimulate thought ... essential to the well-being of the industry' it comes up with such attractive proposals as:-

1. Extension of machine running time (may benefit the 'well-being' of the industry but certainly won't benefit the safety standards and well-being of many face workers, e.g. check erectors)
2. 4-shift working giving a 24hr average (a system already rejected by miners at some pits, e.g. Beavercote)
3. Extended shift time (suggested for those pits where long journeys are required underground so that a greater proportion of the miners' time is actually spent on the job.)

And these are only the initial proposals!

It is true that the report 'insists' on no redundancies, where the demand for no reduction in work force is 'unrealistic'. However if the 'well-being' of the industry requires it, no doubt they will later reconsider the demand for no redundancies to be 'unrealistic'.

### WELL-BEING?

Between 1958 and 1970, the NUM showed great concern for the 'well-being of the indust-

ry'. Result: 400,000 jobs lost; 500 pits closed.

These are the results of trying to adapt union strategy to the 'well-being of the industry' - obviously not the well-being of the miners.

The point is that the employers' yardstick - which the union leaders have accepted - is not social need, or the welfare of the working people, but profitability and competitiveness.

The union leaders are in favour of wage increases - but they are not in favour of making serious and decisive inroads into the profits of the parasitic 1% who own 81% of all privately-owned company shares in order to get those increases.

Even the Wilberforce report last year conceded that it was 'unreasonable' to expect miners' wages to be held down because of the non-profitability of the pits in providing fuel for the industry. If coal doesn't bring a sufficient price on the imperialist markets to make coal mining a profitable enterprise then it certainly isn't the fault or responsibility of the miners.

The absurdities of the markets were created by capitalism.

Miners must make sure that the absurdities of the coal industry are not patched up at their expense.

The message must go out to the union leaders:

**No productivity/efficiency deal!**

**An all out fight for the full claim - defy Phase 2!**



# N BRIEF

The NIRC recently sat in judgement on an appeal brought before it against the G&M WU by Gerry Caughey.

Caughey was one of the leaders of the great Pilkingtons strike in St Helens in 1970, a long and bitter fight against the solid ranks of employers and union - the G&M of course.

Not a trick was missed by the G&M bureaucrats to break the strike: red-baiting, scab herding, you name it - the G&M did it.

Finally the men tried to form a democratic breakaway union, the Glass & General. But once again their way was blocked, and in the aftermath of the bitter struggle, the attempt failed.

Caughey and others who led the fight to set up the independent union were refused re-admittance to the G&M.

This meant no work at Pilkington's, (who, of course, respect that kind of closed shop) and therefore no work in St Helens, which is as much a company-town as the G&M branch was a company-union. Finally, after nearly three years in desperation, Gerry Caughey took the G&M to the NIRC, and won his case for re-admittance.

Is Gerry Caughey a deserter from the workers' movement? No. He left the Union not to be a scab, but because the Union was a scab. He was refused re-admittance not by democratic decision of the Union's members, but by bureaucratic decree.

And yet - his action in going to the NIRC cannot be defended; because it is just such an action, taken by a militant, not a Langston or a Goad or some other rat of a non-unionist, but by a militant, that serves to mislead the class.

But if the bosses' own special Star Chamber metes out a greater justice than some sections of the trade union movement, and the NIRC stands by doing nothing, then we in that movement are also responsible.

If we don't rid our movement of all undemocratic practices - if we don't make our organisations a model of workers' justice and morality, we will share in the shame of breaking militants and crushing our cause

## Brilliant wit ●

"At the end of the meeting, how far apart did you feel you were from the general council (of the NIRC) in approaching the problems of Phase 2?"

Mr Heath replied: "It wasn't as far as 2 feet, it was about 4 feet 6 inches".

## Obituary of a poor man ●

"All the rooms were infested with bugs... the gas fires were broken, and the flats would have to be fumigated and cleaned..."

From a tenant to a rent tribunal? No. This was part of the statement of a landlord describing his own property.

Apparently he thought this adequate reason for serving notice on the tenants, including Mr Bill Quinn, a 68 year old retired bricklayer, for locking Mr Quinn out, and for burning his few possessions.

All this came out in the evidence to the coroner who recorded a verdict of suicide in the case of Mr Quinn. As the coroner said: "The notice to quit, the changed locks, and the state of his room obviously upset him a great deal".

## ...and a dog ●

We hear that Lyndon Johnson was cremated. He was dead at the time. Unlike his victims.

## Militant? ●

A recent cartoon in the English paper 'Militant' (No 142) shows two masked 'gunmen'. One sports the red hand of Ulster, and the other a tricolour. They are being stopped from fighting by a heroically muscular figure: The Trade Unionist.

This socialist superman points his sure and messianic finger at the fat capitalist and says: 'There's your real enemy'.

The trouble is, my dear, spineless militants, that it is more than likely that the Loyalist in your drawing is a card-carrying member of the AUEW, and quite possibly the IRA man isn't. In fact, that's one reason the fighting started - job discrimination against Catholics, which kept many of them unemployed for all or most of their lives.

But what is worse is the equating of the two 'gunmen'. For socialists, the struggle of the Republicans against British Imperialism and Orange rule is a progressive struggle to be supported. The struggle of the 'Loyalists' for Orange ascendancy must be opposed with all our force.

The mind of the 'Militant' has been affected by the 'English disease': the arrogant judgement of all struggles by the norms and forms of the most routine English trade union struggles and imputed virtue.

From Eric Heffer's statement giving the reason for his resignation as a front bench spokesman on industrial affairs, the news has leaked out that the Labour Party National Executive Committee would have pledged support to the TUC for a one-day General strike.

So what was its attitude to Reg Prentice, Labour's main front bench spokesman at the time, who gave vent to the same disgusting anti-working class venom against the dockers jailed in Pentonville as did the Tories?

# N. IRELAND MORE MURDERS BY ORANGE GANGS

In the run up to the Border Referendum (8 March) and the British government's White Paper, the political situation is becoming increasingly critical and daily the level of Loyalist violence escalates, in an attempt to force the British government to restore Stormont.

Orange murder gangs have, after a short lull, recommenced their campaign of sectarian murders against random members of the Catholic community in Belfast.

The ease with which these groups can penetrate the ghetto areas from which the Irish Republican Army operates says something for the vigilance of the British army. In Belfast, where there are two Protestants for every Catholic, five of the seven battalions of the army in the city are stationed in Catholic areas. Despite this vast military presence the army appears unable to stop the murders.

They clearly approve of softening up the Catholics for an even greater military presence. While the 'no-go' areas existed and were policed by the IRA, the Orange murder gangs were unable to carry on their foul activities - now, with the British army doing the protecting, these gangs find no difficulty.

While the murders continue and the IRA is prevented by the Army from protecting the area, the British military strategists hope that Catholics will turn to the British army for protection.

## REACTIONARY STRIKE

The assertion that the army is in Ireland to protect people and keep the two sides apart must be clearly seen as nothing more than a smoke-screen to cover up its military campaign against the Catholics and their militia, the IRA, who are determined to destroy the sectarian Orange State and drive British imperialism out of Ireland.

The latest Loyalist rampage followed the detention of two Protestants who had been arrested after having thrown a live grenade into a bus full of Catholic workers. One worker was killed and several badly injured.

Frequently in the past Loyalist groups have demonstrated in favour of internment and Loyalist politicians have never ceased to call for greater and greater army repression - but only against Catholics.

The climax of the protest came on Wednesday 7 February with the so-called Loyalist general strike, called by the United Loyalist Council. The organisations which make up the Council, with the exception of the Loyalist Association of Workers, are not organised on an industrial and working class basis. And Craig, leader of Vanguard, the Council's political face, is in fact well known for his anti-trade union views.

Industry was brought to a standstill more through intimidation than voluntary withdrawal of labour. The UDA and other Loyalist military groups were mobilised to harass any workers who decided to go in to work. Most schools had been closed to prevent harassment of school children by Tartan Gangs. Those offices which did open were

from AUSTEN MORGAN  
in BELFAST

closed by bomb scare telephone warnings. The police advised the closing of premises to prevent retaliation by Protestant gangs. The strike, nevertheless, showed the Loyalists' industrial power. But it is clear that it is not a tactic the militant Loyalist groups could carry out for very long. The middle class leaders of these groups are well aware that sustained industrial action could present a serious threat to their own class interests. Craig himself appears not to have been associated with the strike call.

## 'DEMOCRACY'

The Loyalists talk of democracy and the rights of the majority - but the Border Referendum itself has nothing to do with democracy. There are two sides to the Border, and any genuine referendum would have to embrace the people of all Ireland, 32 counties. As it is, it's a vote within a gerrymandered area, about the very border which secures this gerrymandering. It is an exercise in 'democratic' window dressing consistent with the sort of white-wash that cleared the Army's Bloody Sunday murderers.

## SEAN MATGAMNA EXAMINES THE FORCES IN THE FRENCH GENERAL ELECTION

# FIELD

THE 'LEFT' COULD WIN FRANCE'S MARCH GENERAL ELECTION. So say the public opinion polls. The Union of the Left, made up of the Communist Party (CP), Socialist Party (SP) and the Left Radicals, can gain a small majority in the National Assembly.

The 'first round' takes place on 4th March, and then, a week later, comes the second and final vote, with the candidates getting low polls in the first round eliminated.

This could spark off the biggest crisis for France since the strikes of May 1968. For 'strong man' president Georges Pompidou has declared on television that he will not allow 'the Left' to form a government, whether or not they have a majority.

Under the Gaullist constitution imposed by Charles de Gaulle and the French Army in 1958, Pompidou does have the power to form a government reflecting his own views, regardless of Parliament, though it has then to submit itself for a vote of confidence in Parliament.

The question is, what would the 'Left' do then?

The weak-kneed leaders of the Left showed their true colours when they betrayed the great





## THE MESSAGE OF THE BLACK STRIKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA:

# VORSTER! YOUR END IS NEAR!

An African going on strike in South Africa risks losing his job and so his right to be outside a poor rural reserve (called Bantustan). According to the ruling Apartheid ideology, Africans are 'at home' in the Bantustan and are only temporarily in industrial areas.

Striking by Blacks in South Africa is a criminal offence. Black trade unions have no legal or negotiating status, so downing tools means no strike pay. The strikers have been faced with arrest, baton charges, dogs, tear gas, armed police in battle dress, troops and helicopters.

Despite all this, up to 100 000 Africans in Durban, one quarter of the African work force, have staged strikes over a period of five weeks. They included shipbuilders, steve-

dores, drivers, textile, brick, and tea company workers. Their solidarity and militancy has been magnificent.

They have protected each other by refusing to allow their leaders to be identified by negotiating with employers. They have brought fellow workers out by invading the offices where they work. When strikers marching on a factory were stopped by police dogs and then tear gas, they were replaced by a second group as soon as the gas cleared.

The strikes were broken only when the municipal workers, numbering 15,000, were threatened with the sack. They had spread in the Durban area and to Cape-town.

Some workers, for example 2600

textile workers, have lost their jobs. But many others have gained

The strike was sparked by substarvation pay. An average family needs at least £10 per week to live at the basic subsistence level. More than three quarters of Durban's black workers live below this. The tea company was paying only £5 per week. The brick workers got less.

Now the tea company workers have gained £1.50, and also the reinstatement of sacked workers. Overall the gains have average £1 per week. Small, but with the defiant militancy of the black workers, a significant threat to the South African white bosses.

### OVAMBOS

It is a year since a general strike of Ovambo workers in South Africa's colony of Namibia (South West Africa) shook the Apartheid dictatorship. Vorster's retaliation, after ending the strike, was to send many black workers back to the Bantustans.

The economy, however, depends on black workers — so this move created serious economic problems. The Durban strike was, therefore, met with a relatively 'cool' approach — the workers were not shot or deported. But this softening only led to a spreading of the action.

The Government is caught; the mass strike points to its overthrow. And it expresses the basic, predominant working class character of the black majority. It points towards the coming South African revolution, which will transform the whole of Africa

The Government have de facto conceded the right to strike — but they aim to ride out the movement by not changing the law; not allowing black unions, that is, permanent organisation; and striving to keep the workers atomised, not letting any formed leadership emerge. Any concessions they are forced to make will redouble the impact through increasing the workers' self-confidence.

### GENERAL STRIKE

The Government managed to resume control because of the inadequacy of the general strike weapon in itself. In itself, the general strike is merely passive: 'people doing nothing on a large

scale'.

Because the general strike did not move the use of force — armed insurrection — the Government was able, finally, to quell the strikers through its use of force. (Which is not to say that the strike shouldn't have been started, or didn't yield gains!)

In the conditions of South Africa, guerrilla and armed struggle will be a necessary front of revolutionary action. The creation of armed detachments is vital if the regime is to be prevented from prevailing simply through monopoly of armed force. But it is clear from the Durban strikes that the foremost role will be played by the action of the urban black workers. The guerrilla struggle will have to be linked with and led by the activity of a workers' political party (necessarily an underground party).

The South African revolution, now taking shape, promises to be much more like the 'classical' Russian revolution model than like other 'Third World' revolutions of the last 30 years.

### MURDEROUS

What about the white workers? They are formally workers, true; but they form a privileged, racist caste. In the face of any decisive class action by the black workers, they instinctively and automatically side with the murderous regime. To rely on abstract class unity is to live in dreamland.

And what about us? British bosses can pretend superiority to and even horror at Apartheid. But the fact is that the South African bosses are scarcely more than well-paid African area agents for British and US imperialism. British investment and trade is massive, and arms deals continue. Apartheid is merely the underside of 'British democracy'.

Many firms in South Africa are actually international companies. In Britain, France or the USA, they pay one wage; in South Africa, the starvation pittance apartheid allows them to get away with. Recent moves by US workers to force the Polaroid company to pay the same wage in South Africa as in the 'white' countries point a way in which we can aid the struggle of South Africa's working class.

# TROTSKYISTS 300 CANDIDATES

strike of 10 million workers in 1968. But that magnificent general strike showed, and not for the first time, what the French working class is made of.

Even if the leaders would 'respect' and accept — 'under protest', of course — the lawfulness of Pompidou's decrees, the militant workers of France might not.

They might instead choose to take to the streets, or occupy the factories, despite their leaders.

## UNION OF THE LEFT

The Union of the Left stands on a programme of small reforms, and has not, so far, aroused much real enthusiasm amongst the workers. It proposes to initiate progress towards (only 'progress...towards!') a 40-hour, 5 day week (already gained by the general strike of 1936, though a dead letter since 1939); a minimum wage of 1000 francs (i.e. about £80 per month); & retirement at 60 years for men, 55 for women.

Other planks are: unemployment pay at least up to minimum wage; some restraint on the bosses' right

to fire workers; reduction of the powers of the President; to restore proportional representation for elections.

France remains part of the imperialist alliance, NATO, though it threw NATO armies (ie the US) out of France in 1967. How will the Union of the Left treat NATO?

It will work for the simultaneous dissolution of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact — and until then stay in NATO.

Yet the Union of the Left is denounced as ... a communist conspiracy by the Gaullists!

Its real nature, its cap-in-hand respect for the bosses and their state is shown by the way it argues for its reforms, saying — "France's economy could afford them without an increase in taxes". The French tax system still heavily favours the rich, more even than most West European countries!

What is the Union of the Left? The Communist Party is the workers' party. It has had a revolutionary, and then 'classical Stalinist' past. Its reformist policies now are like those of, say, the pre-war Labour Party.

The Socialist Party, once based



**AS** the eyes and ears of the world fixed upon Vietnam last month, a shot rang out un-noticed. An assassin's bullet shattered a great mind of the African revolution.

Amilcar Cabral, leader of the national liberation struggle in Guine-Bissau, was slain by agents acting on behalf of the Portuguese dictatorship.

For over a decade, the working class and oppressed peoples of the world have drawn courage and inspiration from the struggle of 35 million Vietnamese against the mightiest military power in the capitalist world.

However, a wall of silence has surrounded another genocidal war, waged against 14 million Africans in Angola, Guine, and Mozambique.

Portugal, Britain's 'oldest ally', drops American napalm from Italian planes directed by German radio. It is hardly surprising that little news of these events in so-called Portuguese Africa filters through to the British press.

It is with large-scale aid from NATO and South Africa that the rotten teeth of Portuguese colonialism still bite into African soil. Portugal cannot even make toy planes, let alone the jets it uses in Africa.

But for Portugal to wish to retain its 400 year old empire at a cost of over 50% of its annual budget seems odd in an era when 'decolonisation' has been accomplished everywhere. How could the fascist dictator Salazar make such an incredible statement as "Africa doesn't exist"?

#### AGENT FOR IMPERIALISM

For Cabral the answer is that Portugal hasn't decolonised because it can't 'neo-colonise'. It can't do what other imperialist powers have done — maintain economic domination without direct political control.

Portugal, one of the most under-developed countries in Europe, is herself a semi-colony of imperialism, with almost her entire industry and capital owned by the rich nations. With insufficient capital to exploit her colonies indirectly Portugal acts as an agent of imperialism in Africa.

The services Portugal provides for imperialism are two-fold, its direct military presence being the most obvious. As long as Portugal remains in Mozambique and Angola, the white racist regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia can rest secure. The other way imperialism benefits is by the exploitation of these countries' resources. Companhia Uniao Fabril, which holds a monopoly on the export-import trade with the colonies, is, in the main, owned by French, British, and Belgian and German capital. In the interests of Angolan diamonds, Mozambique oil, and Guinean cash crops Portugal fights her war and the war of others.

#### THE PAIGC

The movement for national liberation in all three countries began in the late '50s and early '60s. In Guine's capital, Bissau, Cabral and four or five other intellectuals built a base among the workers for their party, the PAIGC (Independent African People's Organisation of Guine and Cape Verde). A strike of Bissau dockers was smashed when the dockers

By Bas Hardy

were forced back to work at gunpoint, with some fifty dead. In Angola, too, the response at the first stirrings of revolt was vicious. 8000 African lives were lost in 1961 alone.

The violence of the coloniser ended any reformist wishfulness which may have existed in the early days of the PAIGC. As Cabral said:

"The struggle is always armed because the colonialists and

Amilcar Cabral (centre)



**WHO  
WILL  
RULE  
NOW IN  
VIET  
NAM?**

# CABRAL: OF A DYING

imperialists have already decided to use arms against you. They drowned people in rivers they burned people with petrol, they destroyed villages suspected of welcoming our party."

The move to the countryside and the move to armed struggle were not dictated by choice, but by necessity. Cabral's party was intent on liberating the people, but what did the liberation of the people mean in con-

crete terms? And how was the PAIGC to enlist the support of the rural population?

#### SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Cabral's conception of independence differed vastly from that of the leaders of many of Africa's 'independent' states. He already observed that with decolonisation came 'neo-colonisation' — control of the economic resources

More than two weeks after the 'cease-fire', fighting still continues sporadically in Vietnam. The settlement has, so far, seen nothing, except that for the moment there is a shift away from large-scale military activity to political activity; but even so the possibility that all-out war will return cannot be ruled out.

The settlement proclaimed a cease-fire, with the Provisional Revolutionary Government and the Thieu regime each remaining in control of the areas of South Vietnam occupied by them as of 27 January. This means that the PRG controls the greater part of the land area of South Vietnam, but Thieu controls 90% of the population, including over 600,000 in refugee camps.

All US military forces are to be withdrawn from South Vietnam within sixty days of the cease-fire.

This does not prohibit the maintenance of US forces elsewhere in Indochina, in Thailand for example, nor the presence of US personnel in Vietnam in the guise of 'civilian advisors'. It has been estimated that 10,000 of these 'advisors' may remain after US troop withdrawal. And Vietnam remains surrounded by US air power.

New military supplies to the South from either side are prohibited, but replacement of used-up or worn-out materials is permitted. The US had prepared for this clause by building up Thieu's armed forces to enormous strength; Saigon now has the third biggest airforce in the world.

The question of the political regime in South Vietnam is supposed to be settled by free elections — but Thieu has a veto on the holding of these elections.

Prisoners of war are to be exchanged, but Saigon's 200,000 political prisoners are left in Thieu's hands. There are serious fears for the lives of many of these prisoners.

There is no reason to suppose that either Thieu or the US are likely to keep the terms of the treaty, or of the cease-fire which now seems likely in Laos.

#### 'CEASE-FIRE'

Within 24 hours of the time the cease-fire officially took effect US bombers were pounding the countryside of Laos. This despite the accords' provision calling all parties to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Laos and Cambodia.

The US showed no respect for the 1954 Vietnam agreement, and the whole of its war in Laos has been in direct contradiction to the 1962 Laos agreement.

Thieu is 'bound' by the accord to guarantee democratic liberties: freedom of speech, of press, of association, of movement, etc. In new edicts have been issued threatening foreign pressmen with expulsion in case of "anti-Vietnamese activities". The Vietnamese press is reduced to a tiny handful of heavily censored papers that cannot afford to pay Thieu's levies.



# VICTIM COLONIALISM

es and industry of the African states remaining, by and large, in the hands of the western powers. Cabral saw that the national revolution could only become meaningful if it was accompanied by a social revolution. This meant eliminating the chances of a developing national capitalist class which would act as an agent of imperialism in exploiting the workers and peasants.

"We have to ask, what does the 'liberation of the people' mean? It is the liberation of the productive forces of our country, the liquidation of all kinds of imperialist or colonial domination in our country, and the taking of every measure to avoid any new exploitation of our people. We don't confuse exploitation with the colour of one's skin". The struggle in Guine obvious-

ly differs from that in the industrialised countries, but it is also different from the situation in Asia. In Guine, there is no mass of peasantry deprived of land, except in marginal cases such as the imposition of cash crops.

In the majority of Guinean tribes the land is owned communally. In tribes such as the Balantes, this land is worked in family groups, while in the case of the Fula, the most conservative tribe, the agricultural surplus is appropriated by the chiefs who are thereby enabled to employ artisans to do work for them.

The Portuguese did not own the land, but appropriated the labour of Guine's tribes in the form of taxes. By depriving the peasantry of much of its agricultural produce and farm anim-

als, the colonisers thus gave them the incentive to revolt.

Within the framework of the old co-operative system, Cabral's party attempted, in the liberated areas, to improve the technical aspects of farming, while at the same time attempting to undermine the conservative influence of the chiefs in the case of the Fula.

## FIGHTER

So far the liberation forces in Guine control more than two thirds of the country. A population of 800 000 Africans have faced more than 35 000 troops and gained the upper hand in the struggle, showing that resistance is not the only thing that is possible, but so too is victory.

"...we are showing Africans that it is possible to transform one's life; it is possible to fight the great colonialist-imperialist powers in our continent. Our struggle is part of the making of our African history".

The PAIGC has given the majority of Guine's people the opportunity to read and write, which was denied them before. The literacy rate is now surpassing

that of the 'mother' country (in some areas of Portugal 80% of the people are illiterate). Doctors and nurses have been trained by the PAIGC.

They merit our support in their struggle, irrespective of any criticisms we may have of their ideas. They see the relation of Guine with the world economy after liberation in vague and utopian terms of cooperatives in Guine meshing in with "an international cooperative". They observe the puny development of the working class in Guine — but remained trapped by the borders set up by colonialism, and do not link with the powerful working class elsewhere in West Africa. They have shown illusions in various non-revolutionary 'nationalist' regimes.

But PAIGC has showed that the people of Africa can register real achievements without — in fact, in spite of and against — 'advanced' European people.

Thus Cabral helped to advance the liberation movement throughout the 'Third World', and to strike blows against the racist view of black people as 'inferior'. Not only Guine, or Africa, but the whole world has lost a great fighter for freedom.

others have been forced to close by his strong-arm banditry.

Anyone caught distributing NLF literature or flags, or trying to enter an NLF area, is arrested.

## CONCESSIONS FORCED

The withdrawal of US troops is clearly a big victory for the Vietnamese people. But, overall, the settlement shows many important concessions to the US. Crucially, military and political settlements have been separated; that is, a cease-fire has been declared while the Thieu regime still remains in power. It is reported that the same principle has been accepted for the Laos cease-fire.

The essential points of the settlement are not widely different from those proposed in 1965 by MacNamara (US war chief).

Why have the heroic Vietnamese fighters been forced into these concessions?

They have been subject to the most brutal military assault in human history. Since 1965, between 14 and 15 million tons of bombs have been dropped by the US — about 720 times the equivalent of the Hiroshima bomb.

In just eleven days — 18 to 28 December, 1972 — the bombing exceeded the tonnage dropped by Germany on Britain in the whole period 1940 to 1945. Nearly one-seventh of the total land area of South Vietnam has been attacked with defoliants.

The US has spent an average of over £1000 a second, every second, for ten years, in its project of mass murder.

But, even against this onslaught, the Vietnamese had showed, most recently by their Spring 1972 offensive, that they could and would fight back. But there was a further blow: the treachery of the Moscow and Peking bureaucrats.

Bit by bit, Nixon went further with his attacks, testing the reaction of Moscow and Peking. Johnson had ruled out the mining of the ports of North Vietnam for fear of Russian and Chinese reaction. Nixon tried it — and there were no

more than mild complaints.

The USSR only supplied the North with outdated SAM-2 anti-aircraft missiles, holding back on the more advanced SAM-3s and SAM-4s. By contrast, liberal military aid was sent to the capitalist state of Egypt. Both Moscow and Peking welcomed Nixon in cordial talks, and the US had a new propaganda weapon: photographs of Mao and Nixon shaking hands were dropped over Vietnam.

And Communist Parties all over the world failed to mobilise their strength in working-class solidarity action, strikes and blackings.

Already US planes had struck at the dykes of the North, without Soviet or Chinese reaction. If they had gone ahead with a full-scale attack, all the heroism and all the resourcefulness of the Vietnamese could not have saved North from almost total social destruction.

## SETBACK

The settlement is a setback. But it is very far from being a total victory for the US. The fact that they have had to abandon hopes of restoring capitalism in North Vietnam, and even cede a portion of the South to the liberation forces, is a victory for the Vietnamese.

And the power of the anti-war movement would make it very difficult for Nixon to resume bombing. 71% of the US population stands opposed to more bombing even if the NLF and the North Vietnamese break the cease-fire.

What about the military situation in Vietnam?

Thieu's forces, according to report, have regained lost ground to bring the situation back to that previous to the cease-fire, in terms of control of main highways. But the liberation forces have won control of a number of hamlets, particularly in the Mekong delta.

The winning over of hamlets — as much a political as a military operation — seems to be the centre of the NLF's strategy. According to the 30 January issue of the Paris daily 'Le Monde' —

"... their ambition is to carry through the encirclement of the towns, thus to reduce to nothing the 'pacification' programme (of Thieu and the US), progressively to gain control of rural production, and, thus, to encourage bit by bit the return to the land of an increasing number of urban unemployed..."

"... the towns do not interest the Vietcong in the present stage of the struggle. The best proof of this is that they haven't even tried to raise their banner over Saigon-Cholon, which wouldn't have required much effort..."



## SOLIDARITY

Our solidarity is still as much as ever necessary. But our solidarity must be unconditional support of the right of the Vietnamese people to determine their future free of US interference. To support the concessions forced from the Vietnamese by the US — with such slogans as 'Force Nixon to carry out the agreements' or 'Support the Hanoi 7-point plan' — is no service to the Vietnamese.

The PRG, it is true, have supported such slogans as 'Sign Now'. We believe they are wrong. It is misguided, in our view, to weaken one's solidarity for fear of disagreeing with or criticising the Vietnamese.

Particularly now that the struggle has moved more to the political level, we must — without for one minute lessening our support for the NLF, as long as it is the force actually fighting against Thieu and the US — state clearly what the situation is, and what we stand for.

The NLF's programme includes the 'right to free enterprise' (this is re-stated in the cease-fire treaty) and even includes a breathing-space for landlords. That is not our programme. Our programme is for a state based on the power of the democratic workers' and peasants' councils in Vietnam, as the only way to really kick out imperialism and its local agents, and to open the way to the development of the country's resources.

And we believe that the strategy of 'surrounding the towns' is not the best one. Organising resistance among the workers in the towns, in the midst of Thieu's camp, is a vital task — which cannot best be undertaken on a programme of 'Free enterprise'.

\* \* \* \*

The blacking of US shipping organised by Australian and Italian dockers, and the 20 January demonstration in London, signalled a rebirth of the solidarity movement. We must not allow it to die now.



# A BOOK YOU SHOULD READ

## 1905 and the PERMANENT REVOLUTION

1905 - published by Allen Lane: The Penguin Press. Translated by Anya Bostock

**AT** THE BEGINNING OF this century the Russian state stood as the mightiest bastion of reaction in Europe.

Whereas most of the European countries had erupted in democratic revolutions sweeping away the old feudal autarchies, the Russian state remained inviolate.

Tsarist Russia sprawled over vast areas of Europe and Asia, from relatively advanced European Poland to Asiatic Manchuria; from Muslim Turkestan to the primeval inhabitants of the Siberian forests who worshipped blocks of wood.

To hold this vast expanse together the state spent up to 60% of its budget on maintaining a massive army, equipped with the most advanced weapons to be bought in Europe.

But in 1905 the Tsarist state, never before threatened from within Russian society, was shaken to the core by the industrial working class — a class which comprised only 5% of the population and had scarcely been in existence more than a few decades.

Trotsky's book, 1905, which has recently been published in full for the first time, is about how the Russian working class, in the space of 12 months, came of age and outstripped the working classes of Western Europe in its revolutionary endeavour.

Not only was Trotsky an eye witness to the events of 1905 and an active participant (he was chairman of the Petrograd Soviet at the ripe old age of 25), but he was also the most prominent advocate of the only theory which explains not only 1905, but 1917 as well. It is this theory, the

theory of Permanent Revolution, which Trotsky expands and defends in his book.

### ISOLATION

Russia's slow historical development was reflected most sharply by the absence of those classes which are a prerequisite for the organic development of capitalism, and which in Europe had led to the revolutionary formation of democratic nation states. Russia remained a feudal autocracy, where the radical ideas of revolutionary Europe found no class in which to flourish.

But Russia was not left to develop in isolation, slowly in the wake of Europe. It developed in continual competition with capitalist Europe and later with capitalist Japan. Defence of the Empire, both from outside, and from a breakup along national lines from within, was always the first concern of the state.

And as industrial capitalism developed, so did the technology of war. Against industrial France and Britain in Crimea, against Japan at the beginning of the 20th century, Russia needed home production of arms, warships and railways, and consequently coal mines and an iron industry.

The Russian state, which had always stifled the development of capitalism, was now, itself, forced to import capitalism from Europe. At the instigation of the state advanced European technology and European capital poured into Russia.

The most advanced mode of production was thrust into the arena of Russia's backward class relations. The outcome could not

have been other than to inflame the inherent contradictions within the state set-up.

Capital needs to be its own political master; it requires control of its own state in order to make and enforce its own laws; it has to put an end to state restrictions on trade and labour and abolish feudal taxes. These problems, the problems of a bourgeois revolution, were thrown to the forefront of Russian society by the importation of the capitalist mode of production.

In the classical French bourgeois revolution of 1789, the emerging capitalist class was lifted to power on the backs of the petty-bourgeoisie. But in Russia there was no independent bourgeoisie, that had spent years developing its power. Capitalist development was closely tied up with the Tsarist state and the landlords.

There was no class of artisans in the towns. There was, of course, a vast scattered peasantry, with a long tradition of isolated struggle against the landlords; but it was inconceivable that the revolution could triumph without a class in the towns that could lead the peasants. Where was this class to come from?

### MARXISTS

In 1861 the serfs were emancipated. Peasants were driven by their miserable conditions into the towns. Ultimately as mechanised industry was transplanted into Russia they manned some of the largest factories in Europe. Uprooted, raw, unrecruited to wage slavery, the Russian workers became a revolutionary force.



On the negative side, they had not gone through generations of maturing as urban artisans, of building up strong guild and later union organisations. But neither were they steeped in reformism, which was already beginning to grip the European working classes. Rather, they still retained the fiery qualities of the peasant revolt.

The Russian Marxists saw the working class as playing the role of the Jacobin masses of Paris or the Model Army of Cromwell: the shock troops of the bourgeois revolution.

Trotsky's account of 1905 is a documentation of how the Russian workers (in particular, the Petrograd workers) overcame their inexperience and political naivety.

On January 9th the workers of Petrograd, under the leadership of a priest, Father Gapon (who, incidentally was also a police spy) walked in procession to petition the Tsar. The petition demanded, or rather pleaded for, an eight hour day and the right to strike.

Under religious banners the workers marched to the Tsar's palace. They never got there. The troops opened fire on the demonstration and the dead were counted in hundreds. A wave of strikes spread over the whole



Trotsky (second from left) with a group of revolutionaries under arrest and on their way to exile in Siberia after the events of 1905



breadth of Russia, and the storm was not to die down until the end of the year.

The story of 1905 is essentially the story of how the Russian workers threw away the religious banners of Father Gapon and took up the banners of the Marxists; how they rejected pleading with the Tsar and took up the general strike as a weapon to overthrow the autocratic state; and, most importantly, how they gave to the working class of the world the most advanced form of workers' organisation: ever to be seen before or since — the Soviet.

Towards the end of September a strike of typesetters broke out in Moscow. The Petrograd typesetters came out in solidarity and a meeting was held of workers' representatives from the printshops, engineering workers, and other smaller trades. The meeting decided to form a workers' council and it was from this that the Petrograd Soviet began. The Soviet was to last only 50 days, and yet in that time it gained such influence that it could, at 24 hours notice, call out the whole of the Petrograd working class and call for a return to work which would be just as solid. The strength of the Soviet was that it met the needs of the working class which had no ready made machinery to co-ordinate its struggle.

What it lacked in organisational experience, in traditions, it made up for by a complete lack of bureaucracy. Representation to the Soviet was by direct election from the factory floor — one delegate to every 500 workers. It was this direct link with the masses which gave the Soviet its fighting strength and which ensured that it both reflected and led the revolutionary aspirations of the workers.

## SOVIET

The Petrograd typesetters went back to work, but not for long. On October 9th the railway workers declared a national strike with political aims. They demanded a democratic constitution with universal franchise. The Soviet decided to turn the rail strike into a general strike.

Delegates were sent out to the factories and as often as not their mere arrival was enough for work to stop. The October strike spread to massive proportions, led and co-ordinated by the Soviet.

But the Soviet was far more than a strike committee. Innovating unique methods of struggle, it became the total leadership, not only of the working class, but of the whole struggle against Tsarism. For example, one of the Soviet's demands was for freedom of assembly. But they didn't just demand it ... they took it. The universities and technical colleges were occupied and used as meeting places.

The Soviet demanded an end to censorship of the press — and implemented it. During the strike they brought out their own daily newspaper 'Izvestia'. This was printed by occupying a different printshop for each edition. When the October strike ended and the newspapers could appear again, the Soviet issued an order stating that no newspaper should hand over its copy to the censor's office. The editors of the most reactionary newspapers were forced to ask the Soviet for a written order to defy the censor.

The Soviet organised its own armed militia to keep order on the streets, often dispersing anti-Jew-

ish pogroms while the army, as usual, stood by and watched.

On October 18th, the autocracy capitulated to the strike and promised a democratic constitution. It was only a promise, but the damage was done. The Russian state, seemingly so impregnable, was shown to exist only by default — the working class had rattled it with a two week strike. Meanwhile, the Soviet, which had started out as a weapon of the struggle, had developed into an alternative government, with its own troops, its own laws, and its own assembly.

The Soviet was to call two more general strikes, the last one in December being intended as a prelude to an insurrection. In fact the insurrection only took place in Moscow where it was defeated; in Petrograd the Soviet was smashed and its leaders arrested just as the strike began.

In fact unless the revolution could sway the peasantry and in particular the army, then there was little hope of victory. It was to take three years of the bloody slaughter of world war I to turn the army's rifles onto its officers.

## FORESIGHT

For Russian Marxists, 1905 posed concretely and sharply the theoretical differences which had already split them into two factions — Bolshevik and Menshevik.

Trotsky — who was at that time in neither faction — and the Bolsheviks saw that the revolution would have to be led by the working class, and in 1905 they saw their ideas vindicated by the independent, leading role played by the class and the transparent weakness of the bourgeoisie.

The Mensheviks, however, could see nothing else but that the revolution was defeated; and said that the class had been too audacious. It should have kept within the narrow limits prescribed by the bourgeoisie, who were the historically determined leaders of the revolution.

Against the Mensheviks, both the Bolsheviks and Trotsky stressed the independence of the working class as the only guarantee of the success of the revolution. Where they differed was on the tasks of the workers once Tsarism had been overthrown. The Bolsheviks envisaged the working class taking the lead in installing radical democracy, but within a capitalist state and capitalist property relations.

Trotsky saw that the working class, having overthrown Tsarism, would immediately be brought into conflict with the capitalist class. Either the capitalists would overthrow the workers' government, or the workers' government would be forced to nationalise the factories and overthrow capitalism.

1917 was to prove the precision of Trotsky's analysis. Yet without the work of Lenin and the Bolshevik party, that 'foresight' would have been wrong. In the words of James Connolly, "The only true prophets are those who carve out the future they announce"

The theory of permanent revolution is a key to understanding revolutionary developments since 1917 and today. But if it is taken as a general scenario, a description of a self-propelling 'process', it can lead to that political impotence that Trotsky would have known had there been no Bolshevik Party in 1917.

PAUL ITIZÉ

## Permanent Revolution

no.1  
25p



SPRING 1973  
Permanent arms economy ■ luxemburg on general strike ■ s.L.'s philosophy ■ socialists and the labour party ■ irish republican programmes ■ trotskism in palestine ■ the engineers' sit-ins ■ transitional societies □

## JUST OUT

New  
Marxist  
Journal

FROM:  
98 Gifford St  
London N1

FROM PAGE 5

## FRENCH ELECTIONS

on the working class, is now a party of the lower middle class and some white-collar workers: a mix between Britain's Jenkinsites and the 'left' of the Liberal Party. 50% (according to a 1957 survey; probably no fewer today) of its members are municipal councillors. In France such officeholders are much more 'professionals', organically part of the State, than in Britain (at least until the new system of paid councillors (see p. 3) comes in).

The Radicals are roughly like Britain's Liberals.

The Union of the Left is in fact primarily a Parliamentary alliance. The prospect of ending Gaullist rule aroused a muted working class enthusiasm, but so far, according to the polls, the main electoral gains have gone to the Socialist Party. The Socialists have publicly refused to guarantee that they will be bound by the discipline of the Union of the Left in forming a government. The more seats they win the more likely they are to double-cross the CP and form a 'Centre' or 'Centre-Gaullist' government. Especially so if Pompidou chooses to drive a wedge in by provoking a crisis.

## Trotskyists

On the revolutionary left, the Ligue Communiste and Lutte Ouvrière, two of the three large French Trotskyist groups, have formed an alliance to mount a major electoral campaign. LO fields 171 candidates and the LC 133. A bigger effort was prevented only by the refusal to join in the agreement by the third group, the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste.

This peculiar sect combines the organisational sectarianism and gangster tactics typical of the Socialist Labour League in Britain with near-reformist politics. In 1968 it disgraced itself by abandoning the student barricades which sparked the strike of 10 million workers, before the fighting even began. They are fielding 19 candidates themselves, but put their main stress on campaigning for a "workers' government", meaning a CP-SP coalition (as long as it doesn't include the left radicals...) They oppose voting for LO or LC candidates.

Habitually, the OCI 'pressurises' the big 'workers' parties' (pre-tending Mitterand's party is what the Socialist Party was in the '30s) for 'the workers' united front'. It talks of the Union of the Left "satisfying" the "elementary and basic demands" of the workers, if only it will break with the small rump of radicals (who adhered to the programme agreed by the SP and CP without any change)!

The OCI's slogan for the Workers' United Front ignores the two questions Marxists consider vital: the Transitional Programme for overthrowing capitalism, which is advocated by revolutionaries as the goal of an otherwise meaningless or purely parliamentary unity. And the question of the state as an instrument of the bosses in society.

Making a big issue over the radicals, the OCI capitulates to the CP and SP. With 350 Trotskyist candidates fighting for a non-reformist policy, the OCI says: vote CP or SP — and combine this with denouncing the other groups as 'liquidators of Trotskyism'!

"In no case will we call for a vote for the candidates of the Ligue Communiste and Lutte Ouvrière, crypto-stalinist candidates propelled by the bourgeoisie", stated OCI leader S. Just. Instead he will vote for the real stalinists!

In fact, though, this sort of orientation much more to the SP than to the CP, which, when talking to non-CP reformists, it calls the 'liberticide' (killer of liberty) party. In parallel, it works mainly in the minority, primarily white collar, union linked with the SP, 'Force Ouvrière' — a CP sponsored split-off (1947) from the main federation, the CFTM (linked with the CP).

Without making dogmatic judgments, the LO and LC policies for the second round seem doubtful to us. The LC says vote for the whole Union of the Left, LO says vote for CP or SP candidates, but not the radicals.

LO reasons that the SP has residual working class support, and the workers will see it as part of the working class front. LO argues that all three are equally reformist.

But a reformist working class party is not the same as a reformist middle class party. The SP and the radicals function as a 'safety valve' in the Union of the Left — if things get hot, they can go over to a coalition with the Centre or the Right, without risking a massive internal revolt as the CP would. Or if they do form a coalition with the CP, the CP can blame any failures of carrying out the programme on its allies, just as it hides its own fundamental reformism behind the "need" for 'left unity'. Any SP double-cross will give it a good-scent alibi before the working class.

No wonder a big minority at the recent LC congress argued for a vote for CP candidates only at the second round. Abstract assessment of 'reformism' or degrees of 'reformism', or of 'global reformist alternatives', is inevitably inadequate and misleading unless linked with a firm analysis of the class base of the 'reformists'. When revolutionaries vote for non-revolutionary parties, it is only because they have a working class base.

Nevertheless, the 300 candidates in the first round are a major achievement for the French revolutionaries. Each group retains the right to make independent propaganda. It gives an opportunity to make revolutionary ideas known.



# Workers' Fight & the Fourth International

## REPORT OF W.F. SPECIAL CONFERENCE ON THE F.I.

On Saturday & Sunday January 28/29, **Workers Fight** held a special Conference on the Fourth International. Its purpose was to consider the group's position on the Fourth International.

It had been prepared for over a long period by schools, meetings, discussions which involved all the members of the group. The conference **unanimously** decided to reiterate the **political essence** of our declaration of 'critical support' for the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, but to eliminate the organisational ambiguities of that formula by redefining our activity and attitude as a 'fight to regenerate the Fourth International', recognising the USFI as the Trotskyist mainstream.

The unanimity with which the political substance of the attitude to the USFI (which we adopted in 1969) was reiterated marked a major change, a clarification in the politics of the group: at every other conference since 1969 a major section of the group has opposed the majority position on the Fourth International, sometimes coming close to getting a majority.

Equally unanimous was the agreement on the need for a sharper definition of the inadequacies of the USFI, mainstream though it is — though no section of Workers Fight has ever denied its deficiencies or advocated other than **critical support**, or argued against the organisational independence necessary in Britain to stave off the warping and crippling effects of the degenerate form of Trotskyism which the USFI represents.

It was decided to publish a full account of our reasons for changing the formula, and recognition of the need to maintain a separate organisational existence. The main documents of the discussion, '41 Theses on the Fourth International', will also be published soon.

Why now, when the British working class is preoccupied with major struggles, spend so much of the group's time and resources on such a discussion? Because without reference to the struggle for an international working class party it is impossible to function as true revolutionaries in any one country.

### INTERNATIONALISM

Capitalism is a world wide, inter-meshing system, none of whose parts can be understood apart from the whole. Marxists see socialism as the elimination and withering away of all class contradictions and also the state which grows out of these contradictions, after the working class has taken power.

This is **inconceivable** except on a material level of relative abundance, which eliminates the primitive struggle for existence which has been the urgent concern and permanent regulator of all human history so far. Socialism must **take off** from the highest point of production reached by capitalism, on the basis of the resources and division of labour, of the **whole world**.

Therefore any programme of socialism is either a world programme or it is **utopian nonsense**. The working class is either a world revolutionary class or it is **impotent**. Revolutions in single countries, or continents, are only steps towards world revolution. Prolonged isolation amidst backwardness can lead to such mutations as Stalinism, combining elements of post-capitalist society with some of the worst barbarisms of class society.

For this reason socialists have tried to organise a world revolutionary party: the First International, 1864-72; the Second, 1889-1914; the Third

(Communist) International, 1919-33; the Fourth, founded in 1938.

The basis of the 3rd and 4th Internationals was the international Communist programme. After the Russian Revolution, Lenin, Trotsky, and the Bolsheviks, founded the new Communist International to organise the world revolution, breaking with the practices of the Second International.

It attempted to fuse the fronts of the class struggle — the general political struggle with the sectional industrial struggles, and both with the ideological struggle — into a strategy for working class power. For legalism they substituted audacious revolutionary action to smash the capitalist state.

### COMMUNISM

The sham 'internationalism' of the Second International meant imposing the norms of the advanced countries on the 'backward', its opposition to nationalism meant compliance in the 'national' slavery of the colonies.

Communist internationalism passionately championed the national rights and interests of the oppressed peoples of the world, distinguishing the nationalism of the oppressed peoples from the nationalism of the oppressors.

The first four Congresses of the Communist International were a great communist renaissance, which codified experience and analysed reality.

The Fourth International was founded by Trotsky to defend and develop the programme of the Communist International, after the rise of Stalin's bureaucracy in Russia had led to the degeneration of the International. It suffered cumulative defeats, but succeeded in one vital thing — it preserved the banner, the programme, and the unfalsified tradition of communism, in implacable opposition to the counterfeit rag which Stalin's 'Comintern' dragged through the mud and covered with the blood of honest revolutionaries.

Faced after world war 2 with reanalysing the world, where vast changes had taken place, where capitalism was entering an expansionary boom at the same time as forces other than those of Trotskyism carried through a major part of the programme of the Fourth International (in Eastern Europe and China), the International entered a political crisis which has continued uninterruptedly.

One current opted for the idea that the Stalinist states were new types of class societies — bureaucratic collectivist or state capitalist. Implicitly this meant breaking with some of the basic ideas of Marxism (See '41 Theses'). The mainstream which reorganised itself at the 3rd World Congress in 1951 developed the analysis of the new Stalinist states as deformed workers' states.

This basically correct codification proved inadequate to answer the subsequent questions of supplementary analyses, orientations, and tactics, posed to the movement, and two distinct trends emerged from the 1951 Congress.

One subsided into a primitive dogmatism based on a historically uprooted version of 1938 Trotskyism, without relation to any problems or developments in the world since. Implicitly it became a tendency to liquidate Trotskyism back into utopian socialism, based on timeless dogmas; to cut its roots. In Britain this has been the Socialist Labour League; in France the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste.

The second genuinely attempted to come to grips with the real problems, to draw conclusions from the codifications of 1951 and after; but normally did this by political mimicking and adaptation — to 'left' social democracy, Maoism, etc. It affirms the basic ideas of Trotskyism, but doesn't always seem to have a use for them. This is now the USFI; its current British representative is the International Marxist Group.

Both strands arise from the failure to **integrate** the post-war experience into Marxist theory, and the resulting **destructuring** of that theory.

The separation dogmatism/adaptationism, though a convenient shorthand, is partly artificial. The dogmatists (the SLL, OCI, etc) have **not** been free from adaptationism, or the tendency to liquidate Trotskyism organisationally and politically (see, for example, page 11, on the OCI).

Not have the 'chameleons' been undogmatic — whereas the SLL & OCI **hide** from the real world behind dogmas, the USFI has often only succeeded in viewing the world in a very distorted way through ideas used as rather cumbersome dogmas: though at least the **outline** of reality comes into the picture.

### WORKERS' FIGHT

Originating from the SLL, Workers Fight had by 1969, partly by confronting the problem of the supporters of the 'state capitalism' theory of Stalinism, the International Socialists, reached these conclusions —

1) That, as we had believed before joining IS, the new class theories were a complete break with Marxism;

2) The SLL/OCI tendency were not merely sectarian bigots who just happened to have developed a totally incoherent, indeed schizophrenic, world outlook, which, for example, saw Mao's China as a workers' state but refused to see that Cuba was, too. All their politics, even formally correct 'dogmas' had had their roots in reality cut.

Their version of the history & problems of Trotskyism, the myth of 'Pabloism', was a lying mystification, an attempt by one section of the post-1951 movement to use a bogeyman theory to 'explain' all the real problems of the movement.

Not a single one of the alleged traits of 'Pabloism', bar the late-1960s support for guerrilla struggle, was absent from one or other of the anti-'Pabloite' tendencies. Far from explaining anything, the myth of 'Pabloism', though given a certain apparent credibility by the opportunist faults of the USFI, like all superstitious fairy tales **hinders** understanding of the real problems — and substitutes Fictional for real solutions.

The systematic lying of the SLL/OCI tendencies is merely a conscious continuation of the self-deception and rejection of all rational politics which is at the root of their 'solution' to the problems of post-war Trotskyism. Their internal lack of democracy and gangsterism result from ideological bankruptcy and consequent fear of questions and free discussion. The result is the dictatorship of a priestly caste led by a Healy or a Lambert — essentially a negation of everything Trotskyism stands for — the subordination of the world to rational working class control.

The tragic joke against these dogmatists is this: they developed independently after 1951, in polemical opposition to the USFI (then the ISFI) which, in a period of stagnation of the workers' movement in the metropolitan countries and big struggles in the colonies (Indochina, Algeria) tried, with meagre resources to apply basic principle of Lenin's Comintern, that revolutionaries in the advanced coun-

tries must **actively** aid the revolts in the colonies.

In self-righteous, though incoherent, anger against the 'Pabloites', and some of the one-sidedness of their approach to the colonial revolution, they wound up disdaining the struggles in the third world in an explicit way that even the Second International before 1914 would have found shameful!

There is a peculiar **tendency** in the IC groups towards filling the dehydrated forms of dogmatized 'Trotskyist' ideas with Second Internationalist content.

This is almost total in the French OCI. Whereas the SLL has a revolutionary position on the Middle East, the OCI actually equates Israel (a racist state comparable to South Africa) and the Arab states. The OCI supporters in Zionist-occupied Palestine ('Israel') accommodate to Zionism in the name of promoting Jewish-Arab working class unity — which is equivalent to South African 'Trotskyists' trying to ignore Apartheid, the better to promote working class unity!

Uniformly the OCI's politics, pseudo-Trotskyist in appearance, are a giant step backwards — on Third World struggles; on the idea of an organic ripening of working class consciousness, rejecting the idea that there is a Marxist method, and a crucial struggle on the ideological front; in its relationship with the rump of the social-democratic bureaucracy in France, and its separation of the idea of a united front from the **programme** of the united front; and of the workers' government from the question of the class nature of the state.

Since splitting from the SLL in 1971, this group has created, with a few satellites, an 'Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International'. — but, given their politics, they will only manage to 'reconstruct' the Fourth International ..... back into the Second! Or a preposterous miniature caricature of the Second!

### U.S.F.I

3) The rational mainstream, which had developed the general outlook we believed to be Trotskyism, was the USFI. Committing gross errors, never really adequate in the post-war period, it had nevertheless not betrayed Trotskyism.

Its decision, made in 1967, that a political revolution was, after all, necessary in China, though an **empirical rectification never adequately explained in relation to the past positions**, removed the last principled difference which had divided us from the USFI. We declared critical support for the USFI.

Support meant recognition that this was the mainstream, and a definitive break with the 'anti-Pabloites'. 'Critical' meant understanding that **membership** of this tendency was not compatible with revolutionary practice, then, in Britain at least.

When 'Workers Fight' first appeared in October 1967, we were primarily involved in rank-and-file struggle in the ports. The proto-IMG was hobnobbing in the Workers' Control movement with Jack Jones — who was actively sabotaging the dock strikes of that period. Their paper carried no criticism, and only a veiled hint of disapproval, **without mentioning Jones by name**.

The IMG behaved with gross irresponsibility, indeed ideological and political cowardice, in refusing to enter the inchoate centrist regroupment that was the 1968 International Socialists — the creation of the present bureaucratized IS, and the consolidation of the control of the Cliff tendency, was not inevitable,

See p.12



# National Action Committee is steelworkers' next step!

## Shotton

At Shotton Steelworks, Flintshire, the British Steel Corporation plans to make half the 13000 workers redundant. But the workers are not going to take this lying down. They know that for too long now, workers in the steel industry and elsewhere have been easy prey for the employers because of their isolation.

To break out of that isolation they have called a delegate conference in Connors Quay on 30th April. Delegates from all the BSC plants in the country will be invited. At last it seems that a National Action Committee against steel closures may get off the ground.

Shotton workers have not been slow to show that they are not just asking for solidarity, but also ready to give it. Only the other day a delegation went down to London to take part in the mass picket at Briants Colour Printing. So far, though, they have not decided to take Briants as their model: there are as yet no plans for a work-in or an occupation with no production, though these ideas have been put forward at action committee meetings.

The only existing national coordination so far has been by the officials of the trade unions

— and so far all they've been discussing is redundancy pay. But the next time they meet, in Sheffield on 7th March, they will find a massive lobby waiting for them. The 2000 men Shotton are sending will hopefully be only a small section of the men waiting to tell the trade union leaders that it's jobs they want, not redundancy money.

Details of the National Delegate Conference from the Secretary of the Shotton Action Committee: K W Monti, 25 Chester Close, Shotton, Deeside, Flintshire.

### REAL STEEL NEWS

"Real Steel News is produced by steelworkers who don't believe that anything can be achieved in this society by sitting around and waiting for a better day"

No. 4 now out. Articles on National Action Committee; Shotton - a question of viability?; Teesside wages; employee directors; safety. From Phil Thome, 3 Heather Close, Stockton on Tees.

## Hartlepool

On 2 February another 2850 jobs were added to the British Steel Corporation's list for the chop. At Hartlepool, the North Works and all of the South Works except the plate mill are in line for closure by 1975-76. Even the plate mill's future is uncertain after 1975-76.

An action committee, backed by the council, has been set up. But will this committee go ahead to united action with other steelworkers from Shotton, Stanton, Ebbw Vale, East Moors, on a clear basis of cut the hours, not the jobs: a 30 hour week with no loss of pay?

Or will it fall into one of the many blind alleys that have diverted other action committees? Straining to prove 'viability' of 'their' plant (and never mind about anywhere else....)? Asking for an inquiry to prove 'viability'? Relying on MPs to do it all? Waiting to vote Labour at the next election?

Hartlepool has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the country. Steelworkers cannot afford any blind alleys in their fight against redundancies.

MIKE EDWARDS

## AUEW TOKEN STRIKE FAILS TO INSPIRE MERSEYSIDE

The 19 January stoppage and demonstration on Merseyside against the AUEW fines was strengthened by steelworkers from Shotton, threatened with the loss of 6500 jobs.

But its main conclusion was the inadequacy of isolated protest action against the Industrial Relations Act. The stoppage was supported by, amongst others, shipbuilders from Cammell Lairds, Stone Manganeese, Plesseys, and Standards. But many carworkers, including Fords and most of Vauxhalls, did not come out. Dockers voted to stay at work. The demonstration numbered 6000.

Many workers have responded to the one-day stoppages by coming out on one or the other, but not both, or not coming out at all; mere token action seems to be a waste of energy. Thus, by refusing to give a lead for nation-wide, decisive action, the AUEW leaders have helped to dissipate the militancy that is their union's only sure protection.

Colin McCowen  
Cynthia Baldry

## RENTS: SCOTLAND TAKES THE LEAD - SIX REBELS

In SCOTLAND six councils are still defying the Housing Finance Act. CLYDEBANK council has been fined £5000 for contempt of court for failing to follow a court order to raise rents. Immediately after the news of the fine, Monktonhall and Bilston miners sent telegrams saying "Stand firm - we pledge any action or support called for"

In Over the Bridge (LIVERPOOL) court orders served on four tenants, including leading militant Micky Keating, expire on 14 February. This strong area (40% on total rent strike, nearly all the rest on partial) will be faced with its first real test

MANCHESTER Tenants Action Group, at its 5 February meeting, noted that rent strikes had faded in many areas, and resolved to work towards a total rent strike, in October.

For news from Clay Cross, see page 3. Liverpool councillors, page

Teesside council, like many others, has been sending out letters to tenants saying that they are raising the rents 'under protest'. This is one of the replies they got:

Dear Sir,

If your letter re 'Housing Finance Act 1972' did not have such serious undertones, it would be

laughable. You state that you are carrying out the provisions of the Act under protest..... what form of protest are you going to take?.....

Why don't you take a lead from the Clay Cross Council in Derbyshire, who have been fighting the so-called Fair Rents Act for quite some time.... They have organised Tenants Associations and have instructed their tenants not to pay the rent rise, and not, as you have done, taken the easy way out and sent everyone these nasty little letters informing them that you have to implement the Act but under protest.

The difference between the two councils brings to mind a simple but effective story I once heard about two men who were about to be executed for something they hadn't done.

The first man said "I hope you understand that you are wrong in what you are doing", but, alas, he was still executed.

Now the second man, whilst awaiting execution, got some friends organised to fight for his life by the best means possible and they managed to smuggle a gun to him. When he was led up to be executed, he said exactly the same as the first man, and then drew his gun and shot the executioner, and he got away with his life.

Who in your opinion is right, the first man or the second?.....

JOHN BRYANT

## MILITANT TEACHERS DEBATE POLICY

250 teachers, members of the militant 'Rank and File' group, met in London on 10th and 11th February. A main item of discussion was action over the current pay claim and over the London Allowance.

90 schools in London will be called out officially for three days as from 20th February. Two further waves of three-day strikes will follow. 91% of teachers balloted had voted for strike action.

The 'Rank and File' conference decided to press for a national strike of the National Union of Teachers, and a joint demonstration with the CPSA, on 27 February. It also called for local committees uniting workers from different unions against the freeze, and for local conferences against the freeze (see p. 1 for Manchester conference).

The other major issue discussed at the conference was 'Rank and File' policy on 'democracy in schools'. About a third of the conference called for a change in the established policy. They pointed out that there was a contradiction between Rank and File policy of opposition to Margaret Thatcher addressing union conferences, and support of teachers' participation in joint governing bodies with Local Education Authorities "within the framework of national education policy". Rank and File's approach could lead to teachers taking responsibility for reactionary government policy in the name of 'democracy'. A clear, consistent line for the independence of trade unions from the employers and their State was needed.

The majority favoured continuing established policy, but without doubt discussion in Rank and File will continue.

JOHN BLOXAM  
CYNTHIA BALDRY

## HACKNEY: NUT-CPSA ALLIANCE

The hypocritical shambles of the Tories' prices-soaring, wages-frozen 'Phase 2' has pushed even those workers previously least militant into action.

On 12 February 250000 civil servants, members of the Civil & Public Service Association and of the Society of Civil Servants, started an overtime ban, in support of a claim for 20% pay rise. There is to be a one-day stoppage on 27 February, to be followed by selective strikes of no longer than one week's duration in the strongest areas.

This selective strike tactic may be all right for the 'special case'. But now everyone's 'special case' is part of a general problem: the fight against Phase 2. It is vital for civil servants to link up with other workers confronting Phase 2.

Already in Hackney (London) a joint CPSA-NUT action committee has been formed. This action should serve as a spur for the union leadership towards all-out action, united with other unions against the freeze.

STEVE WOODLING



# Gasmen

from p.1

took unofficial action. Teams of flying pickets had already been organised – a clear message to their union leaders that they mean business.

But these leaders of the G&MWU have started out the strike by pulling their punches, with tactics of non-cooperation and scattered short strikes. Militants around the country are pressing for more effective action.

The Tories have put out the fraudulent proposal, that workers admit defeat in advance and agree to submit their claims to a 'Pay Board' which doesn't even exist! Trying to buy time until March 31st (when the Phase 2 Bill becomes 'law'), Heath casts around for some unemployed lawyer or failed politician to head the Board.

The trade union leaders have not dared to openly endorse this transparent trickery – but they have not rejected it either. We must tell them clearly – No Pay Board – the full claim – NOW!

Doing one of the heaviest and dirtiest jobs in industry, working difficult shifts and incredibly long hours, they still barely make a living wage. In this year of inflation 1973, a Gas Board labourer earns a basic wage of £19.10 gross. To gross £30 he must put in a 60 hour week.

No wonder the gas workers describe their conditions as Dickensian!

In the last five years, 22,500 jobs have been slashed, while gas workers produce 3 times the output of 5 years ago. That's where the Gas Board's £15 million surplus came from last year. And that's why one of the most urgent demands is for a cut in hours.

## TEST CASE

The difference between the £2 offered and the men's demand is ... 81p. They deserve more. They need more.

That they are putting up this determined fight over such a margin, and that the Government will not budge on such a margin, points clearly to the nature of this fight. This is a new test case for the Tories – and for the working class.

The harder and faster the gas men hit the Government the less time there will be to witchhunt them back to work

## APOLOGY

We apologise for the delay in appearance of this issue of Workers' Fight. Since producing the last issue, we have organised a special conference on the Fourth International (see p. 11) and got out a magazine (see p. 9).

We do not have a large professional staff, as the capitalist Press does. The editing and production work of the paper rests entirely on a few people, all of whom have to get a living, somehow, besides their work on the paper. It proved beyond our resources to produce the paper regularly at the same time as organising the conference and doing the magazine.

With this issue, we are launching a campaign for £1000 towards gaining better and more regular appearance of the paper. We appeal to all our readers to contribute.

Published by Workers Fight, 98 Gifford St. N.1, & printed by voluntary labour.

## Jones-Aldington

# Gift Horse

# Or Trojan

# Horse ?

With all the tripe the press is turning out at the moment, one would be tempted to believe that the Jones Aldington Committee were weeping tears over their miscalculation on how many men they could get rid of under their voluntary severance scheme for dockworkers over 55 and men passed unfit for dock work by the doctor.

On taking a closer look at the men who are taking the severance carrot, we find that they are young men, who play football and rugby at weekends, men who are

fit as fiddles.

Rumour has it that one man in Manchester went to the nurse with something in his eye, and she said "Will February 17th do for severance?"

But, contrary to what the press says, the employers are not too sad. They are taking advantage of the situation by pressing for the recruitment of temporary labour – men who will start on a six-month guarantee of work, and after that six months can be sacked or re-employed.

A man on the temporary register won't feel like defending his rights for fear of his employment being terminated after six months. It is now becoming crystal clear that the severance scheme is just an expensive plan to undermine the militancy of the dockworker, with Jack Jones being fully aware of all the implications and willingly following the employers' line.

A determined fight back must be made now. No temporary labour! The National Stewards' Committee leaders must get up off their backsides now and re-convene at the earliest possible moment, or it will be a serious defeat for the dockworker.

Harold Youd

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Please send WORKERS' FIGHT for

6 months / 12 months

I enclose 75p. / £1.50

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.....

.....

Send to: Business manager, 98 Gifford Street, London N.1

## Anti-Freeze Conference

Transport and General Workers' Union hospital workers have voted for an all-out indefinite strike, confirming the result of the National Union of Public Employees ballot.

While the leaders dither, the rank-and-file have gone ahead with one-day strikes in many places. After an unofficial strike at St George's Hospital, Tooting, senior steward Mick Boulton was reinstated.

But hospital workers have not been slow to see the importance of solidarity from other workers.

On Sunday 18th February, the United Manchester Hospitals branch of NUPE is calling a conference on 'How to Fight the Wage Freeze'. Trade union delegates from many industries will be meeting, and there are plans to set up an ongoing United Front organisation.

Speakers at the conference will include Bernard Panter (AUEW District Secretary), Wally Preston (Secretary, Power Workers' Combine), David Nuttall (Clay Cross Councillor), and Roy Ratcliffe (AUEW, ex-Gross Strike Committee).

# £1000 FIGHTING FUND APPEAL

As the fight heats up against the Government's pay freeze, it becomes more and more necessary to have a paper which tells the truth about workers' struggles in Britain and Internationally. A paper which gives a clear lead and strategy.

To play this role effectively, we need to improve the quality and regularity of Workers' Fight. We must enable it to reach more and more militants.

At a recent conference of Workers' Fight supporters it was decided to appeal for £1000 to make this possible. The conference backed up its words with a collection of £70. Now we need all the support we can get from you, our readers, to raise the rest.

Send all donations to Rachel Matgamna, Workers Fight national treasurer, 98 Gifford St, London N.1

FROM PAGE 10

## FI. Conference

but the result of a defeat for Trotskyism, in 1968 and after.

Our expulsion from IS, in December 1971, posed sharply the issue of our organisational relations with the USFI. Was it possible to maintain a serious orientation towards the working class, to continue the positive work we had done in IS, as part of the IMG?

Negotiations with the IMG (which had helped the IS leaders with factually useful information against us in November 1971) showed it wasn't. We proposed to them a preliminary period of discussion coupled with action in producing a joint workers' weekly paper. They refused. Manoeuvres, attempts to exploit the question of the Fourth International in a petty factional way – that was their main concern.

Over the last year we have watched this tendency in amazement – genuine, not rhetorical! Its preoccupations have been determined by the dynamics of the development of its 'own' insignificant and muddled ideas, not by the dynamics of the class struggle erupting around them.

They stood Lenin's ideas on propaganda, agitation, and calls to action, on their head, just when the class struggle rendered them vital. They stood theory on its head again by declaring that Lenin's analysis of imperialism, the theory of capitalism in its period of decay and parasitism, which underlies the concept of the epoch as one of wars and revolutions – this analysis flowed from the concept of the epoch!

It was this same 'concept' that ex-

plained opposition to 'Popular Fronts' – subordination of communists to alliances with 'left' bourgeois politicians. That was one in the eye for poor old Marx, who insisted as long ago as 1850, before the epoch of imperialism, on the political independence of the working class as a basic principle.

And so on, and so on. The IMG is an unhealthy tendency, and it is only latest example of the inability of the International which fosters it to build a serious organisation in the British working class. The dynamic of its leadership is not that of a group which seriously assesses and learns from its mistakes, judged by the needs and the experience of the class struggle, but that of an intellectual clique dominated by the periodic rush of 'brilliant' new ideas to the head.

To fuse with that tendency would be to adopt the existence of an opposition faction, one of a number, within an unhealthy organisation, whose size and importance in the working class, even compared to our own small size, does not recommend such a policy. There are many excellent comrades in the IMG. We think they are wasted there – and the British working class cannot afford such waste.

Workers Fight will fight for the communist internationalist programme in the British working class. The IMG, so far, has been nothing but a diversion from this work.

Not a single voice, except that of a non-member of the group, a visitor, was raised in the conference in favour of fusion with the IMG.

We will contribute to the necessary regeneration of the Fourth International

by building in Britain and by attempting to contribute to the clarification of the political problems that have beset the movement since the war. We seek dialogue, discussion, and exchange of material with the USFI, and where possible practical collaboration with the IMG.

## REGENERATION

By referring to 'regeneration', we do not mean that the USFI has degenerated. On the contrary, in 1967 it was regenerated by the decision on China. We mean that the only explanation for the last quarter century of the FI's history is that it has been a degenerate form of Trotskyism. The basis of this degeneration has been the destructuring (in the case of much of the SLL/OCI material, the complete reduction to non-rational gibberish) discussed above.

We regard ourselves as standing organisationally apart from the USFI. We do not oppose the necessity of an International, nor (like IS) do we break with a basic principle under guise of separating ourselves from a tendency. But it is toy internationalism which sacrifices fighting for the communist internationalist programme amongst the working class it can reach to a bare organisational fetish. This sham internationalism – the attitude that would dictate that we must join the IMG at the expense of our practical work – is possible only for self-indulgent romantics who feel little responsibility to the working class they live amongst.

Feeling that responsibility, the WF conference had no choice but to vote as it did.

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