

CHARTIST

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ALL OUT MAY 1!

- ARE YOUR WAGES keeping up with the rising cost of living?
- DO YOU SUPPORT being prevented in law from striking for more than £1 plus four per cent?
- DO YOU SUPPORT a system which pays hospital workers less than £20 per week—and Company Chairmen (such as Sir Eric Drake of British Petroleum) over £1,170 per week OR NEARLY £30 AN HOUR?
- DO YOU THINK the latest rent-rises under the Government's "Housing Finance Act" are "fair"?
- ARE YOU a supporter of the Common Market with its food-price policies and Value Added Tax?
- DO YOU BELIEVE this Government's "price-freeze policy" is more than a political fraud?
- ARE YOU PREPARED—in fact—to put up with this Tory Government any longer?

IF YOUR ANSWER TO ALL THESE QUESTIONS IS NO—THEN STRIKE ON MAY THE FIRST! A complete shut-down will show the world that it is WE who keep this country going—and can stop it when we like! It will shake this ruling class Government to its roots. The President of the Food Manufacturing Association has told us how food prices will rise this year: BUTTER UP 24 PENCE IN THE POUND. SUGAR UP 19 PER CENT. MEAT 12 PER CENT. FISH 10 PER CENT. An all-out strike on May 1st will give notice that the working class—if its demands are not met—has the strength to throw out this Government and the class it represents right now. It will set us on course towards throwing out the food-profiters, the land-racketeers, the loan-sharks and multi-millionaire employers for good and running this country under workers' control.



LAST YEAR: July 1972, dockers shake the Tory Government. THIS YEAR, LET'S BRING IT DOWN!

BUILD COUNCILS OF ACTION!

THE MAY DAY STOPPAGE must be ALL-OUT, and used to prepare our whole movement for an indefinite General Strike at a later date.

The *Chartist* calls on all supporters: in each locality, try and ensure that at least one body is capable of linking up every section of workers, tenants and unemployed into a Council capable of exercising real power.

Normally, this body would be your Trades Council. But the Labour Party and other political bodies should be brought in, provision should be made for delegates elected direct from the shop-floor (instead of through union branches) and all delegates

In an indefinite General Strike, the resulting "Council of Action" would have to assume full power within the locality. But—in however embryonic a form—it should be set up immediately to help organize the May 1st stoppage and be kept meeting regularly from then on.

Heading the Trades Councils on a national level is, of course, the Trades Union Congress. Before any indefinite General Strike is called, there must be an emergency joint

Conference of the T.U.C. and the Labour Party to meet in permanent session throughout the strike. Already by "defying the law" in support of the May 1 stoppage, the TUC and Labour Party NEC are asserting themselves at least potentially as an "alternative focus of Government". In a full-scale "dual power" situation (such as will arise in a real General Strike) they must go the whole way and assert themselves as a Government or be replaced by those who will. A full programme of nationalization must be proclaimed, opening up prospects for an unprecedented

increase in production through the rational planning and full exploitation of the country's resources.

The Tories have no intention of making real concessions—in the current international economic crisis they cannot afford concessions—unless they are faced with a threat to the power of the class they represent. The only way to postpone the coming General Strike—for those who say we must "choose our time"—is to demonstrate in practice that we are prepared for it. To be unprepared is to invite the Tories to provoke it themselves, on their terms.

LESSONS OF DEFEAT

"THE STRIKES WE HAVE SEEN in recent weeks are a hang-over from a bygone age." Edward Heath was referring to last month's unprecedented yet seemingly fruitless upsurge of railwaymen, gasmen, hospital workers, teachers, civil servants and students.

It was a sinister verdict, made by a Prime Minister whose aim is to break the power of the trade union movement altogether. And in a real sense, the verdict was true.

What is a "hang-over from a bygone age" is the idea of non-political strikes. The gas-men, the civil servants and the hospital workers have learned a bitter lesson. Through years of passivity, they had allowed their standards to slump in relation to the car-workers, the dockers, and other militant sections of the working class. Finally, this year they geared themselves to catch up—using the methods so successful with their fellow-workers in the past—only to find that they were too late. The economic and political conditions of the post-war "boom" years have gone. The old methods no longer work.

Recession

We have lived through the longest "boom" period capitalism has known. But ours is the oldest capitalist country in the world, with the most antiquated methods of production, machinery and plant. Britain's backwardness means that she is hit hardest as the economic boom of the 50s and 60s gives way to trade war and recession on a global scale. In their fight for survival against their Japanese, German and other competitors, Britain's capitalists must invest in modernizing industry at all costs. But to find the money, they must slash their labour costs come what may. That means breaking our trade unions' power. And that is what the Industrial Relations Act and the Pay Laws

are all about. Last year, investment in manufacturing industry, far from rising, actually fell by 10%! It fell 7% the year before. The Tories cannot allow this to continue. They have decided to take on the working class and they cannot afford to back down now. No mere "industrial militancy" will force them to change their minds.

Throughout last year, this conclusion could be evaded because of the miners' victory and the freeing of the "Pentonville Five". It was not understood that both of these were won by a political challenge to the power of the state. The Tories conceded something only because they were threatened with the risk of losing everything if they did not. They backed down because they were not yet prepared for a General Strike.

Miners' Vote

Now, with their police anti-picket squads formed, their Armed Forces geared to "counter-insurgency" in both Ireland and Britain, their anti-union laws in operation and a whole series of other political and administrative precautions taken, the Tories feel on somewhat firmer ground. Against last month's great strike-wave they decided to call the unions' bluff on the question of a General Strike. This time, when the crunch came, it was the trade union movement which backed down. The TUC Special Congress on March 5th avoided the issue by calling simply for a one-day stoppage and delaying even that until May 1st. The strike-wave was completely betrayed.

But wasn't it true that the miners themselves voted by an overwhelming 63-37 per cent against a strike? And did not the gas men, the civil servants and many others become disillusioned and divided as to whether to fight on? Of course we cannot deny this. But it in no way

lessens the TUC and Labour leaders' betrayal.

For if the rank and file were split, it was for a good reason. They could see the seriousness of the situation. They could see that this time, the Tories meant business. They could see that it was either an all-out confrontation—or nothing. And the majority could see NO leadership or strategy for winning a General Strike. In this situation, their lack of confidence was quite understandable.

The tragedy is that even those who have been calling for a General Strike—ranging from Joe Gormley on the right to the "Workers' Press" on the left—have proved quite unable to answer any of the questions which workers uneasily ask. Those who matter in the working class movement—the decisive layer of shop-stewards and others who can swing the rest behind them—are not completely stupid. They are not to be told that an all-out General Strike would be "only to defend basic rights" or "only to get a General Election." Despite all the hazy ideas and the confusion in the movement, there remains from the experience of 1926 a residue of understanding that at issue here would be state power. The propaganda of the Tory mass-media in its own way makes this point clear.

Power

The fact is that if we are not as a movement prepared for a social revolution, we are not prepared for a General Strike. To "call" for it anyway—on the basis that "all we want" is some "concession" or other from the Tories—is pure clowning which only earns the derision of serious elements in the working class. To renounce the General Strike, on the other hand, is to renounce all struggle against the Tories and to participate in the general betrayal. We have no choice

but to raise the question which is objectively posed, and that is the question of power.

New Methods

Because the Tories are ruling out compromise and concessions, an indefinite General Strike is now the only answer for our movement. Already this is widely understood, and it can only be a matter of time—a few years at most—before such a strike breaks out. Our task now is to prepare for the conquest of state power in the revolutionary situation which the coming General Strike will create. Our present trade union leaders must be told in no uncertain terms: stand up and fight—or get out. We must say to them: place our whole movement on a class-war footing, prepare to take over the economy, prepare for an all-out struggle for power—or resign and make way for others who will.

We must pin down, expose and replace our existing reformist leaders on this issue as central to all others. And at the same time we must insist on ALL our Labour Movement representatives being subject to re-call at any time by the bodies which elected them and paid no more than the average wage for their industry. Only by replacing and controlling our leaders in this way can we begin to build up a really revolutionary leadership for our class.

Without a revolutionary programme, a centralized organization, iron discipline in action and unity through the most flexible use of ALL our existing Labour, trade union and co-operative organizations—we stand no chance of victory. We are up against an experienced and increasingly desperate enemy. The old methods of struggle no longer work. We must turn to new ones if our movement is to survive.

FROM OUR U.S. CORRESPONDENT

CHARTIST Peter Clement reports from Cincinnati.

DURING HIS VISIT here some weeks back, Ted Heath said he wished Britain's trade unions would show the same kind of "obedience that the American unions have shown." He praised the U.S. unions for "helping President Nixon restrain wages." True enough, Nixon is pushing through his "Phase Three" measures with very little resistance. Shortly after he had been well received by the labor bureaucrats at the recent AFL-CIO executive council convention in February, a cost of living official announced that labor leaders have promised to keep 1973 pay boosts in line with those negotiated last year, which averaged 6.3%. Honouring this agreement, the leaders of the fifteen unions that represent half a million railway workers reached a tentative settlement with the railroad

companies on March 13 under which wages and benefits would be increased by only 10.7% over 18 months beginning July 1.

The announcement that Nixon was ending wage price controls (when he could rely on the Meyns and Woodcocks to control wages why keep the phony price controls?) marked the beginning of his "Phase Three"! Since then, we have witnessed more and more cutbacks which aim at reducing the collective wage of the U.S. working class. In his budget speech and elsewhere, Nixon has outlined the cuts he plans in Medicare, housing, welfare, and education whilst in industry more value is being squeezed out of the workers by productivity swindles and speedups (in the week ending March 16 the number of cars produced in the U.S. was up

18.3% on the same week last year). Food prices rose 2.7% in January and in reference to the high price of meat we have heard various suggestions sparked off by Nixon's remark that it would be a good idea, whilst the Federal Bank Chairman, Burns, thinks cheese a good substitute.

So far this year, teachers in three major cities have shown that it is possible to win some concessions. Chicago teachers in January won almost all their demands (2.5% wage increase, reduction in class sizes and a shorter work year). St. Louis teachers did not gain so much out of their 28 day strike—only \$1000 wage increase this year plus bargaining rights. On a somewhat bigger scale the Philadelphia teachers' strike lasted over eleven weeks. The teachers' demands

were a 5.7% annual wage increase, smaller classes and more preparation time. During the strike, 800 teachers were arrested for picketing and two union negotiators jailed for contempt. Local union leaders representing 100,000 workers were forced to call a one day general strike on February 28th. Leaders on both sides fearing such a strike, they came to a quick agreement which gave the teachers a 4% wage increase but class-size reductions will not begin until 1975.

It is likely we will see more strikes like the one in Philadelphia, as contracts for large numbers of workers expire this year. Socialists in the U.S. must learn to intervene in these struggles to build a mass American Labor Party capable of leading the working class to power.

THE FOLLOWING WORDS WERE WRITTEN BY LEON TROTSKY — LEADER, WITH LENIN, OF THE RUSSIAN OCTOBER REVOLUTION. THEY WERE PENNED IN 1934 IN RESPONSE TO A SOCIAL CRISIS IN FRANCE WHICH CULMINATED TWO YEARS LATER IN AN OPEN REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION. THE FAILURE OF BOTH "COMMUNISTS" AND "SOCIALISTS" TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS SITUATION PAVED THE WAY FOR FASCISM AS TROTSKY HAD FORECAST. HITLER CONQUERED FRANCE UNDER MARSHALL PETAIN WITH THE CONCURRENCE OF VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE FRENCH RULING CLASS.

IT MAY SEEM FAR-FETCHED TO SUGGEST THAT TROTSKY'S WARNINGS APPLY TO OUR OWN SITUATION TODAY. EVEN THE LATEST POLICE ANTI-PICKET SQUADS HARDLY MAKE POSSIBLE AT THIS STAGE A CALL FOR THE ARMING OF PICKET LINES! BUT WHILE THE SITUATION MAY NOT BE REVOLUTIONARY, WE ARE BEGINNING TO ENTER A PRE-REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD. AND ONE HAS TO BEGIN PREPARING FOR REVOLUTION AT SOME POINT. EVEN NOW IT IS NECESSARY THAT AT LEAST SOME OF US SHOULD BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE FULL IMMENSITY OF THE TASKS WHICH WILL FACE OUR CLASS ALMOST CERTAINLY IN THE DECADE AHEAD. IT IS NOT TOO EARLY AT LEAST TO BEGIN CONSIDERING THE PROBLEMS WHICH TROTSKY RAISES HERE.

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

(EXTRACTS FROM LEON TROTSKY'S "WHITHER FRANCE?")



EVERY REVOLUTION is prepared by the march of economic and political development, but is always decided by open armed conflicts between hostile classes. A revolutionary victory can become possible only as a result of long political agitation, a lengthy period of education and organization of the masses.

But the armed conflict itself must likewise be prepared long in advance.

The advanced workers must know that they will have to fight and win a death struggle. They must reach out for arms, as a guarantee of their emancipation.

In an era as critical as the present, the party of the revolution must unceasingly preach to the workers the need for arming themselves and must do everything to assure the arming, at least, of the proletarian vanguard. Without this, victory is impossible.

The most recent electoral victories of the British Labour Party do not at all invalidate what is said above. Even if we were to allow that the next parliamentary elections will give the Labour Party an absolute majority, which is not assured in any case; if we were further to allow that the party would actually take the road of socialist transformations—which is scarcely probable—it would immediately meet with such fierce resistance from the House of Lords, the king, the banks, the stock-market, the bureaucracy, the press, that a split in its ranks would become inevitable, and the Left, more radical wing would become a parliamentary minority. Simultaneously the Fascist movement would acquire an unprecedented sweep.

Alarmed by the municipal elections, the British bourgeoisie is no doubt already actively preparing for an extra-parliamentary struggle while the tops of the Labour Party lull the proletariat with the successes and are compelled, unfortunately, to see the British events through the rosy spectacles of Jean Longuet. In point of fact, the less the leaders of the Labour Party prepare for it, the more cruel will be the civil war forced upon the proletariat by the British bourgeoisie.

"But where will you get arms for the whole proletariat?" object once more the sceptics who mistake their own inner futility for an objective impossibility. They forget that the same question has been posed before every revolution in history. And despite everything, victorious revolutions mark important stages in the development of humanity.

The proletariat produces arms, transports them, erects the buildings in which they are kept, defends these buildings against itself, serves in the army and creates all its equipment. It is neither locks nor walls which separate the proletariat from arms, but the habit of submission, the hypnosis of class domination and the nationalist poison.

It is sufficient to destroy these psychological walls—and no wall of stone will stand in the way. It is enough that the proletariat should want arms—and it will find them. The task of the revolutionary party is to awaken this desire and to facilitate its realization."

Words & Deeds

To utilize the favourable possibilities it is necessary to have a revolutionary will, an iron determination to conquer, a bold and perspicacious leadership. *L'Humanite* agrees in words with the slogan of "arming the workers" but only to renounce it in deeds. At the present time, according to this paper, it is inadmissible to advance a slogan which is only opportune "in a full revolutionary crisis". It is dangerous to load your rifle, says the "too-prudent" hunter so long as the game remains invisible. But when the game puts in an appearance it is a little too late to load the rifle. Do the strategists of *L'Humanite* really think that in "the full revolutionary crisis" they will be able without any preparation to mobilize and arm the proletariat?

The struggle for power must begin with this fundamental idea: that while under capitalism it may still be possible to resist further aggravation of the situation of the masses, no real improvement of their situation is conceivable without a revolutionary invasion of the rights of capitalist property. The political campaign of the united front must base itself upon a well-elaborated transitional programme, i.e. on a system of measures with which a workers' and peasants' government can assure the transition from capitalism to socialism.

Now a programme is needed not to ease the conscience but to guide revolutionary action. What is a programme worth if it remains a dead letter? The Belgian Workers' Party, for example, adopted the pompous plan of De Man with all its "nationalizations". But what sense was there in it when the party did not lift its little finger to realize it? Programmes of Fascism are fantastic, false, demagogic. But Fascism carries on a fierce struggle for power. Socialism can advance the most scientific programme but its value will be equal to zero if the vanguard of the proletariat does not unfold a bold struggle to capture the state. The social crisis in its political expression is the crisis of power. The old master of society is bankrupt. A new master is needed.

If the revolutionary proletariat does not take power, Fascism will inevitably take it!

A programme of transitional demands for "the middle classes" can naturally assume great importance if this programme corresponds, on the one hand, to the real needs of the middle classes, and on the other, to the demands of the development towards socialism. But once more the centre of gravity does not exist now in a special programme. The middle classes have seen many programmes. What they need is confidence that the programme will be realized. The moment the peasant says: "This time it seems that the working class parties will not retreat"—the cause of socialism is won. But for that it is necessary to show in action that we are firmly prepared to smash every obstacle in our path.

There is no need of inventing means of struggle. They are provided by the whole history of the world working class movement.

A concentrated campaign in the working class press pounding steadily on the same key; real socialist

speeches from the tribune of parliament, not by tame deputies but by leaders of the people; the utilization of every electoral campaign for revolutionary purposes; repeated meetings to which the masses come not merely to hear the speakers but to get the slogans and directives of the hour; the creation and strengthening of the workers' militia; well organized demonstrations driving the reactionary bands from the streets; protest strikes; an open campaign for the unification and enlargement of the trade union ranks under the banner of resolute class struggle; stubborn, carefully calculated activity to win the army over to the cause of the people; broader strikes; more powerful demonstration; the general strike of toilers of town and country; a general offensive against the Bonapartist government for the workers' and peasants' power.

November 9, 1934

General Strike

The general strike, as every Marxist knows, is one of the most revolutionary methods of struggle. The general strike is not possible except at a time when the class struggle rises above particular and craft demands, and extends over all occupational and district divisions and wipes away the lines and the parties, between legality and illegality, and mobilizes the majority of the proletariat in an active opposition to the bourgeoisie and the state. Nothing can be on a higher plane than the general strike, except the armed insurrection. The entire history of the working class movement proves that every general strike, whatever may be the slogans under which it occurs, has an internal tendency to transform itself into an open revolutionary clash, into direct struggle for power....

The leaders of the proletariat must understand this internal logic of the general strike, unless they are not leaders but dilettantes and adventurers. Politically this implies that from now on the leaders will continue to pose before the proletariat the task of the revolutionary conquest of power. If not, they must not venture to speak of the general strike. But by renouncing the general strike, they renounce thereby all revolutionary struggle...

March 28, 1935

RETREAT ON THE RAILWAYS

CHRIS TAYLOR
and KEVIN MOORE
(NUR)

ASLEF'S RETREAT LAST MONTH must serve as a warning to all railwaymen. It is a sure indication of the sell-out looming up in the current negotiations on the wage application for 180,000 railway workers. ASLEF's Executive Committee just instructed its members not to co-operate with management, to ban Sunday work, and to carry out two 24-hour stoppages. Then suddenly the action was called off—in order that negotiations could continue. The urgency of the demand for "£40 now" for train drivers has been dropped. Instead a sub-committee of the Working Party into drivers' pay has been set up, which will visit every depot in the country.

FUTURE

Ray Buckton has publicly stated that if the British Railways Board is prevented by Government policy from increasing the basic rate for drivers then — providing a figure could be agreed upon — the actual money could be paid sometime in the future. He has failed even to specify a date.

BLACKLEGGING

At the same time that the leaders of this small craft union were betraying their members, the attitude of the National Union of Railwaymen leadership was little short of blacklegging. Circulars were sent to NUR members working for National Carriers Ltd. telling them that if they were asked to move by road goods which normally went by rail, then this would be quite in order.

UNDERGROUND

Despite these instructions, the majority of NUR footplatemen refused to scab on their fellow workers and joined the ASLEF men during the two 1-day strikes. On London Transport NUR members on the Underground, where ASLEF is much weaker, would not work special rosters which the management had arranged in an attempt to minimize the disruption caused by the ASLEF strike.

Now, with the discussions on the general wage claim taking place, the action which the leaders of the three rail unions are taking is nothing short of a sell-out of the rank- & -file. Why otherwise are Buckton, Sir Sidney Green (NUR), and Coldrick (Transport Salaried Staffs Assn.) giving such close consideration to the offer the Railways Board has made?

The offer is £1 plus 4% of the wages bill!

STAB IN THE BACK FOR N. LONDON HOSPITAL WORKERS

THE RECENT struggle of the North London hospital employees for their wage claim of parity with the municipal employees' agreement provided a classic example of the timidity and downright treachery of the leadership of the General and Municipal Workers' Union (GMWU).

Along with three other unions (the T&GWU, NUPE, and COHSE), the GMWU organises the manual workers in the Health Service. In the North London Hospital Group, which covers the Whittington Hospital at Archway and the Royal Northern at Holloway, the GMWU has a virtual monopoly of membership; however the full time union officials have not bothered for years in really organising the

workforce and until the strike broke out there were only five shop stewards in the entire hospital group. But, a sort of lead was finally given by the leadership of the GMWU, and hundreds of workers at both hospitals joined the union. For the first time it seemed to them that there was some point in paying 18pence a week dues.

Right from the beginning the District Officer for the area, one brother Tarling did his best to cover up any sign of a strike being on. The pickets armbands, the strike posters and even leaflets were delivered late to the stewards, most of whom had never been on strike before. It soon became obvious to every shop-steward that the full-time union officials would not be of any use. If the strike was to be won they would have to win it themselves!

At the meeting of their union branch a few days after the start of the strike, the municipal workers in the same branch pledged their support. The dustmen and the road-sweepers refused to cross the picket line (though shamefully Alan

Fisher instructed the NUPE members of Camden to pick up rubbish from the wing of the Whittington Hospital that lies in the Borough of Camden). The caretakers organised a collection which everyone of them contributed to, and many of the municipal workers helped with the picketing.

RETURN

Besides this many local union branches helped with money and pickets. One NATSOPA chapel sent £5, an NUR member helped as a picket for the whole of the strike and the students of the nearby polytechnic had two collections which raised nearly £100. However the support yielded by the local activists found precious little reflection at BRENT HOUSE, the union's regional H.Q. After telling the men and women to "co-operate with the police and not to use too many pickets", Tarling then cut off the strike pay of most of the strikers by using a little-known union rule that recipients of benefits must

by a G&MWU
shop steward

have continuous contributions for the last 6 months. As most members had only just joined, and others had not a record of continuous contributions, this cut off much of the regular income to the strikers. After this blow, stories started spreading that other hospitals were going back — stories cultivated by the national press and the GMWU officers — and eventually the strikers voted to return, due to an increasing feeling of betrayal.

As we go to press however, the mood of the workforce is far from one of defeat. They feel bitter, annoyed and sullen, and now want a clean out of the officers of the union. In this they will be joined by the gasmen, municipal workers and many others who have suffered at the hands of Basnett and his predecessors, whose days of running a company union are now severely numbered.

LIAISON COMMITTEE PLAYS WITH GENERAL STRIKE

by ASTMS delegate Glyn Beagley
No 8 Divisional Council
(in personal capacity).

then an all out General Strike".

against Scanlon, Jones and their friends. Delegates seemed to be more interested in attacking the "ultra lefts".

CONFRONTATION

But conference failed to live up to expectations. For a start, the platform, in completely bureaucratic fashion, refused to allow any amendments to the document to be put forward. Far worse, most platform speakers, and delegates allowed to speak, never dealt with the crucial questions of the hour — how to prepare for the unlimited General Strike, and how to bring down the government and the ruling class.

It's no good just playing with the idea of a General Strike in platform documents, and not explaining just what this means. A General Strike means an all out confrontation with the government, a fight to the finish, and asks the question "Who runs the country?". Speaker after speaker shied away from saying how we are to prepare for that situation.

And hardly a word was said

FRIGHTENED

One of the more significant contributions came from Derek Fullick, leader of the footplatemen at Waterloo. "We must meet force with force," he said. "We have the might, but we're frightened to use it. The TUC's action in calling a 24 hour stoppage is like fighting with one arm tied behind your back." Unfortunately, these points were developed no further.

Instead, Chairman Kevin Halpin concluded by turning his anger, not on Feather, Scanlon or Jones, but on CHARTIST John Quirke, a TSSA member, saying that "people come from unions that have never been out on strike, and talk about revolution...". The central questions facing our movement were left unanswered.

DESPITE THE FACT that over 1,000 delegates representing 400 organisations attended the Conference of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions on March 31st, very little lead was given to the trade union movement.

What was needed was a clear answer to the attacks of the Tory government. That meant not only co-ordinating activity to enable a total shutdown on May 1st — but also using the one-day General Strike to prepare our movement for a fight to the finish in an all out General Strike situation. What was needed was a fighting alternative to the rotten politics of the 'left' trade union leaders, in particular Hugh Scanlon, whose concessions to the Tories represent a serious threat to all trade unionists.

CAMPAIGN

The document presented by the platform to the conference seemed to represent a step forward, calling for "the mounting of a campaign, using all forms of agitation and action aimed at getting the General Council to call a series of 24 hour General Strikes, and if such action fails to force the government to drop its anti-trade union legislation,

THE PEACE THAT

by Frank Hansen

THE DEPARTURE of the last 5,000 official U.S. troops from Tan Son Nhut air base on March 29th, was hailed by the world's press as the "end of American involvement in the Vietnam War" (Guardian 28/3/73). This assertion is a deliberate attempt to conceal U.S. imperialism's real intentions in Indo-China.

In fact, behind them, the Americans leave the bulk of the Seventh Fleet stationed off the Vietnamese coast and all the airforce installations and B52 bombers in Thailand and Guam, which account for 90,000 troops. These bases can be used at any time to unleash the sort of murderous destruction perpetrated against North Vietnam last Christmas. According to official U.S. statistics, 70,000 tons of bombs were dropped on Cambodia and South Laos from these installations during February of this year i.e. in the month following the Vietnam "ceasefire". This figure is higher than the monthly average for 1971 when all of Indo-China was being blasted. If you add to this the thousands of CIA - trained special advisors attached to the South Vietnamese forces, not to speak of the millions of dollars of military and economic aid which is daily being pumped into President Thieu's rickety regime, it is quite clear that anyone who believes that the U.S. have abandoned their decade-long struggle to smash the Vietnamese revolution and have meekly settled for peace with honour needs a brain transplant!



ON A UNITED STATES AIRCRAFT CARRIER :
LOADING BOMBS FOR USE AGAINST VIETNAM.

CONCESSIONS

It is also obvious that the present accords cannot provide a lasting basis for peace. Furthermore, they do not represent a significant victory for the NLF and the DRV (as most of the revolutionary left suggest). This can be seen by an examination of the agreement's specific terms and their subsequent history.

The U.S. concessions are as follows;

1. HALT TO THE BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM. Although this gives North Vietnam an opportunity to recover economically and militarily following the terror bombing of last winter, the U.S. have in no way forfeited their ability to wreak havoc by intensive aerial bombing.

2. WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS. This marks a recognition by the U.S. that it cannot win a decisive victory on the ground against the NLF. While the withdrawal of official U.S. troops from the South represents a gain for the Vietnamese revolution, it was not a concession that Nixon suddenly decided to make in January 1973. With the Tet offensive of 1968 and the massive anti-war demonstrations which swept the West during that year, the U.S. army ceased to be an effective fighting force and its subsequent phased withdrawal was inevitable - at least in so far as the U.S. government was unprepared to face the massive upheavals both at

home and within its own army in Vietnam. Nixon seized upon the political lull created by the blunders of the North Vietnamese leadership who agreed to enter the Paris Peace Talks, to build up his aerial power and to boost the South Vietnamese puppet forces. He then proceeded to escalate the war by intensifying the bombing and invading Cambodia. Thus in terms of the 1973 agreements the withdrawal of troops is little more than a diplomatic gesture.

Imperialism's real position in Vietnam is stronger today than it was in 1968. The Thieu regime not only survives—it is stronger than it was three years ago, having been built up by 'Vietnamization' and protected by massive US air cover.

In contrast, the Northern and NLF forces have abandoned the most fundamental plank of their programme by negotiating on the basis that the Thieu government remains in office and in control of some of the most important cities in the South of Vietnam. The reason for such a major concession following the successful spring offensive of last year are threefold:

1. The force of the U.S. winter bombing, in which the equivalent of nearly three Hiroshima bombs

were dropped on North Vietnam every day and Haiphong harbour was mined.

2. Pressure from the Soviet and Chinese governments who have always found the Vietnamese revolution an embarrassment and have always sought to establish a stable status quo in S.E. Asia. They have consistently refused to supply North Vietnam with the most modern armaments preferring to concentrate their efforts on reactionary regimes like Egypt and Pakistan. At a time when North Vietnam was suffering under the most savage bombings ever recorded in history, both were engaging in negotiations with Nixon in order to hatch the present "peace" sell out and to openly betray the Vietnamese revolution.

3. The political blunders of the North Vietnamese leaders themselves. Both in 1954 and in 1968 they entered into negotiations at a time when final victory was in sight. By so doing they gave the U.S. a breathing space which it thankfully accepted in order to regroup its forces.

The present situation is not only unstable, with two armies and two state powers - the Thieu regime and the Provisional Revolutionary Government - controlling different

areas of the South. It is also extremely dangerous as far as the Vietnamese revolution is concerned. Thieu has made it quite clear that he will not allow himself to be ousted by a peaceful process and has declared that free elections will not take place until the North Vietnamese forces have been withdrawn. He continues to operate a bloody repression in the areas under his control with at least 200,000 political prisoners brutally interned in his jails. Furthermore the South Vietnamese army has launched large offensive operations in order to "relieve outposts" at Ton Le Chan and Rach Bap. Past history and the logic of the situation suggests that the puppet regime will step up these violations in order to push back the NLF and the latter will be forced to react violently in order to survive. Much depends on how seriously the NLF is prepared to abide by the "ceasefire" and to what extent arm shipments from China and the U.S.S.R. have dried up. At present it would appear that they are utilising the lull in order to consolidate their position - building a network of military roads and an oil pipeline to the South. On the other hand, they withdrew their newly established missiles at Khe Sanh. But the situation gives every indication that a full blown civil war will resume despite the pressures of the Big Powers.

Y.S. LEADERSHIP PROVED BANKRUPT BY EVENTS

LAST JULY, a massive strike wave swept the British labour movement in defence of the five dockers jailed by the Tory government. The TUC was forced to call for a one day General Strike if the dockers were not released.

Outside Pentonville prison, where militant dockers awaited events, leading YS members arrived to sell their paper. What was their headline for this week which rocked the Tories? "Bring down the government"? "Prepare for a General Strike"? Neither. "Toryism is Corrupt" was the message for militants leading the biggest unofficial strike movement for decades. This was nothing new, however. At the Young Socialists' conference only 3 months before, the leadership had outlined its perspectives. There was to be a lull in the Tory attacks on the working class. The miners' strike had forced them to change tactics. Big business didn't like their confrontation policies, and was preparing to ditch them in

favour of a Labour government.

All this was proved basically wrong by events. The Tories, driven on by the economic crisis, followed the jailing of the dockers by imposing huge fines on the unions, and then introducing the laws to freeze wages. So much for the lull!

It is in this situation, in the context of financial crisis, escalating trade war, a complete lack of investment, and a Tory government out to smash the unions once and for all that the Young Socialists' Conference meets this Easter.

This time a change must be made. A movement must be built which will carry out a real fight against the leaders of the labour movement who hold back the struggle to defeat the Tories, or who aim only to "protest"—a movement whose aim is the seizure of state power by the working class.

'PROGRAMME NOT ENOUGH'

We talked to three delegates to the Young Socialists' National Conference, who explained what they thought was wrong with the Y.S. ...

GRAHAM BASH from Brent East has a resolution down on the General Strike. "The trouble with the YS leadership is that they see everything in terms of a "socialist programme" calling for the nationalization of the monopoly firms. This isn't anything like enough. The Labour Party adopted such a programme at last year's party conference. The job now is to show how it can be implemented."

NORWOOD YS delegate Paul Moore voiced his dissatisfaction—"The YS has missed out this year on issues which it should have been campaigning on. For instance my branch called last Christmas for a

campaign against Dick Taverne (one of the 69 Labour MPs who voted with the Tories and who was elected at Lincoln). The YS National Committee has consistently avoided a fight against the Labour traitors who kept the Tories from defeat over the Common Market.

GLYN BEAGLEY delegate from Streatham, is moving a resolution urging a further campaign against the Housing Finance Act. "The last one didn't come to much though," he said. "Much of the progress we've made in Lambeth was due to our battle over the rent increases. But the national YS campaign seemed to fizzle out just when the struggle really started."



ABOVE: "FREE THE FIVE" MARCH, JULY 1972

COME TO THE LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS' CONFERENCE
(SKEGNESS EASTER 1973)

- * BUILD a movement to clear out the traitors in the trade union and Labour movement who refuse to fight the Tories!
- * BUILD a movement which will prepare for the seizure of state power, in order to carry out the Labour Party programme of nationalizing the monopolies!

FOOTBALL CHALLENGE



The Lambeth Labour Party Young Socialists have been beaten only once this season; latest opposition was Wandsworth International Socialists, who went down to a 5-3 defeat. The team would like to issue a challenge to anyone who dares take them on - so write in if you are interested.

LAMBETH LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS

PUBLIC MEETING

Brixton Training Centre, opposite Town Hall
Thursday, May 24th 8pm All welcome

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Your YS Branch

NORWOOD YS meets every Thurs-
day at 264 Rosendale Road, SE24
at 8pm.

STREATHAM YS meets every Tues-
day at 298 Streatham High Road,
(behind photo studio near St. Leonard's
church) at 8pm.

BRENT EAST YS meets every other
Wednesday at 7 Park View, Olive
Road, NW.2 at 8pm.

VAUXHALL YS meets every Wednes-
day at 179 Kennington Rd at 8pm.