

The Red Mole

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EDITORIAL

Since the freeing of the five, Heath has managed to shift attention from his own weakened regime onto the trade union bureaucracy. To buy time the government made a tactical retreat, posing for friendly snapshots with Victor Feather, weeping over the 'tragic' problem of unemployment in the docks, and feigning a conciliatory attitude towards both the Industrial Relations Act and the Housing Finance Act.

But this treacherous nonsense from Heath conceals a more important development. The bourgeoisie has been strongly alerted to the dangers in the situation and is trying to close ranks for a bloody counter-attack against the unions. This is the meaning of the vicious hate campaign launched by the capitalist press against trade unionists.

The newspapers are providing a verbal foretaste of future action by the 'law-abiding', 'democratic' and above all anonymous men who run the civil service, the courts and the army for capitalism. So trade unionists must be able to go beyond denunciations of the all-too-predictable betrayals of Jones and Feather. To ensure victory on the most immediate problems — pay, redundancies, the Act — militants must make their central task the organisation of a struggle against those institutions on whose authority the attacks are made: unless the working class is politically prepared to challenge the power of the capitalist state and develop its own means for controlling society, then Heath will have all the machinery needed to confuse and defeat the trade union movement.

But here we have the historic weakness of the British Labour Movement: when a great opportunity to smash the capitalist's army exists today in Ireland, the Labour Movement does nothing — even supports its enemy's greatest weapon! When the whole legal system stands exposed as a protection racket for private profit the trade union leaders urge capitulation to its law and order. When Parliament is shown to be an instrument for excluding the mass of people from power, both the Labour and Communist Parties proclaim their allegiance to Parliamentary 'democracy'. When the capitalist system brings violence against millions every day, the miserable TUC leaders help spread the latest smear cooked up by the gutter press against pickets and strikers.

The TUC Congress in Brighton will be filled with the traditional resounding resolutions on the economic problems of the working class. But the only road to victory against these social evils lies through a will and a programme of struggle for control of British society by the working class: through combining a massive campaign of solidarity with the dockers with an equally strong campaign in solidarity with the Irish masses and their Republican leaders; through linking union activity with the fight to create new Committees for the Defence of Trade Unions and to prepare the ground for Councils of Action drawing all sections of workers in every area into the struggle; and through matching criticism of the existing leadership with the fight to build a new political leadership which is not frightened to challenge the power of the capitalist state.

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By splitting the dockers

JONES STARTS WITCH HUNT

By PAT JORDAN

Where NIRC, the Law Lords, "States of Emergency", threats by the Government, etc., all failed, Jack Jones has succeeded. He has managed to break the solidarity of the working class in an important — even decisive — strike.

At the very moment when the dock strike was beginning to bite he got it called off for what dockers consider to be a few piffling concessions. The real long-term problems of redundancy are left untouched.

The aim of the Jones-Aldington Report was to get port workers to accept unemployment without a struggle.

The T&GWU leaders took no action to stop its own members from scabbing, let alone mobilise its huge resources for victory. It was left to the rank and file to deal with the scabs by mass picketing. Jones was too busy with Lord Aldington even to organise proper international solidarity. Portworkers in Western Europe complained bitterly of lack of information about the strike. In France, Belgium and elsewhere dockers' leaders stated that all they got was a fifty-word telegram.

The government, forced time and again to retreat in the face of workers' militancy, found it unwise to use the emergency powers and relied upon Jones instead.

Those who think Jones' promise of 200 jobs is going to solve port redundancies should read last week's National Ports' Council report: it forecasts 11,000 dock redundancies in the next year!

Those who think Jones won a majority of dockers at the delegate conference should look more closely: the 30 delegates voting to continue the strike represent 30,000 men. The rest speak for less than 15,000.

Now the press have been given the go-ahead for working up a lynch mob atmosphere against the strikers and the government is free to try to break the striking ports. All the talk about 'essential supplies' that must be moved means nothing but strike-breaking by the state machine. There must be no confusion on this within the labour movement.



Jack Jones gets police protection on his way into the delegate conference

This latest step is just one more example of the way the militancy of rank and file trade unionists is being frustrated by the leaders of the TUC.

The British trade union movement is strong, militant and capable of inflicting big defeats on the Government and employers. We see signs of this every day: the close down of Coventry in the one-day strike against the Industrial Relations Act, the way the building workers have forced their leaders to turn down the employers' offer, the numerous occupations, etc.

Despite this, the Industrial Relations Act remains upon the statute book; the courts can fine unions thousands of pounds; and sackings and rationalisations, involving the loss of hard-fought gains, go ahead. The answer to why this should be so is simple because of the activities of people like Jones and the failure of organisations like the LCDTU to deal with this.

The folly of relying on the so-called left-wing of the TUC is now very clear. On the contrary, Jones has set up the dockers for a defeat which would have severe repercussions

for the whole trade union movement. More than this, his action is also an invitation to the NIRC to slap further fines on the T&GWU for the unofficial action of its members in the docks. He threatens not only the jobs of the dockers but also the funds of the union.

To the attempts by the Government, aided and abetted by Jones and Feather, to isolate sections of the working class like the dockers, a counter-strategy must be advanced. All struggles should be unified on the understanding that every strike, occupation, etc., now takes on the Government and its Industrial Relations Act.

A start can be made by the setting up of support committees for the dockers' unofficial strike — a first step in generalising the struggle against the Government and its strike-breaking attempts. The aim should be for rapid and decisive political, material and industrial support. The responsibility on such bodies as the LCDTU, Action Committees, trades councils and militant trade union organisations is very clear: **ALL OUT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT STRIKE-BREAKING, AND FOR A DOCKERS' VICTORY.**

IRELAND: PROPAGANDA AND PROBLEMS

By BOB PURDIE

Since the invasion of the free areas of Belfast and Derry, the British press has tried to squeeze the maximum propaganda value out of the decline of violence in the Six Counties. Experienced students of British Imperialism's lie-machine will recall the many other occasions on which a temporary decline, or a minor military victory for the British army, has been

hailed as a final breakthrough which will decide the issue and ensure success for the British strategy. There can be no doubt that the IRA is now fighting from a more difficult position, but the claims of the British press are likely to look a bit sick in the not too distant future, as they re-adjust to the new situation. In

fact on the very day on which headlines trumpeted the army's figures showing the decline of violence, the death of the commander of the occupation forces in Casement Park, Belfast, demonstrated the continuation of the military campaign by the Provisional IRA.

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BUILDING WORKERS STRIKE: see page 2

Paul Smith looks at latest developments in

THE BUILDING WORKERS STRIKE



Photo: D. Ryder

It is clear that building workers are not happy with the latest offer. What is not clear is whether they have a strategy to beat any attempts by the bureaucrats to cool off the developing national confrontation with the employers. One way to ensure a cooling off would be to move back to concentrating on regional settlements. It has always been the case that the employers' strength lies in the way the industry is organised. By preventing the militant areas from being used to aid the less militant (through regional deals) the unions are partly responsible for the building workers' lousy rates. Such a move must be opposed.

EFFECTS OF THE STRIKE

The *Financial Times* reckons there are about 90,000 building workers on strike. It was the first paper to break silence on this issue. In a front page article on 12 August, it said that the strike should go to the new

VICTORY FOR NIGHTCLEANERS

The strike of nightcleaners at the Ministry of Defence (Empress Building) in Fulham is over. So too is that at the Old Admiralty Building in Whitehall, where the cleaners came out last week for the same demands against the same contractor, Clean Agents. In both cases the cleaners have won an increase of basic pay to £16.50 per week plus 50p night allowance. They have also won union recognition, and talks are still going on over the demands for more holidays and hiring of more staff.

The settlement came as strike action was having an increasing effect, with the picket of the Empress Building so effective that the Ministry was warning that it might have to close. In this situation the Government was forced to intervene through the Department of Employment to arrange a swift settlement.

HOME OFFICE

Nightcleaners at the Home Office Building in Horseferry Road have also now gone on strike, over the sacking of a supervisor. The real reason for the sacking seems to have been that she was suspected of being the source for a recent *Morning Star* article on the appalling pay and conditions on the building. So far the contractor there has said he is "too busy" to meet the Civil Service Union officials to discuss the strike.

A 24 hour picket is being mounted at the Home Office Building. The cleaners there, like the cleaners involved in the other two strikes, are beginning to look beyond their own strike to more general questions. Socialist Woman has already arranged for them to go to Fakenham to see the film of the occupation and discuss the general problems facing women workers with the women there.

Messages of support and donations for the Home Office cleaners should be sent to the Cleaners Action Group, c/o 13 Middle Lane, London N.8.

Arbitration Board set up by the TUC and CBI. It had previously suggested that for the dockers. But in both cases the rank and file do not want to know. Both cases have indecently exposed the bureaucrats.

SMITH, UCATT, AND THE T&G

George Smith and his fellow members of the UCATT Executive Committee looked pasty faced when they left the regional officials meeting in Birmingham on Thursday. The EC meeting before had recommended acceptance of the increase to £25 guaranteed minimum rising to £29 guaranteed minimum in February 1973. One week later they have had to call for "the most rapid intensification" of the stoppage. Why was this?

ORGANISATION OF THE INDUSTRY

Basically because they did not understand the feeling of their members. The guaranteed minimum includes £2 and £3 bonuses at each increase. The most important way that employers have been able to make the profits they have is because of the way the industry is organised. By always keeping basic rates low big bonuses could buy off the most militant sites, and keep the wages bill low on all the others. It takes several months to organise a site. Organised sites' militancy could not be used to win higher wages for new sites. Every site that started was a new fight. The workers in the industry have had enough. They are for using their strength nationally, to get a higher basic rate.

That's why Smith and Co. miscalculated. Once there was a big stoppage, the building trade workers had some feeling of their own strength, as a nationally organised body.

POLITICS AND TRADE UNIONISM

It is no longer possible for a trade-union

leader to pretend that he or she has no politics. The deal that Smith was prepared to sign showed this. He thought the fight was just for money (with holidays and a shorter working week thrown in as extras). He has no line on the organisation of the building trade. The reason for this is simple. The fight to organise the building trade in the workers' interest is the fight against the "free market" (i.e. capitalist) system. The opening up of new sites depends on the profits that a firm like Wimpey is going to make; not on the need for new homes, hospitals and schools. The organisation of the industry is for profit. To fight to get the trade organised in the workers' interests is to fight against the whole profits system.

CHARTER

Charter has ducked during the strike. As a basic instrument to organise the rank-and-file, new editions of the *Charter* should have been available all during the course of the strike. The shortage of both leadership and information is criminal. A big step forward could have been made by Charter, by organising meetings throughout the country around the Charter demands. Instead we see what the C.P.-dominated leadership of Charter really intended it to be: a ginger group on the bureaucracy of UCATT and the T&G.

AGAIN POLITICS

It is the politics of Charter which are at fault. Changing the faces of the E.C. is not going to change the life of the building workers. The only thing that will affect them is a struggle on the key question that affects them, the casual nature of the industry. Capitalism organises the industry in its interests, Charter's role should be to take up the fight to organise the industry in the building workers' interests.

ROUND THE SITES

The response to the £25-£29 offer has been to spread the strikes.

LONDON: Has decided on a total stoppage by the end of the month. The strike is evidently beginning to hurt the employers, despite the extreme difficulties involved in pulling out all the thousands of small sites. Morale is high: the last demonstration was ten thousand strong and very militant.

MERSEYSIDE: Is also moving towards a total stoppage. They have used the flying picket tactic with considerable success and looked like staying out even if the last offer had been accepted elsewhere.

BIRMINGHAM: Totally rejected the last offer and decided to stay out even if it was accepted. This resolve was stiffened when it was discovered that one of the major local employers, Bryants, had known a day in advance of the Regional Officials that the UCATT Executive Committee planned to accept the offer. All major sites here are closed, although it is reported (subject to confirmation) that the T&GWU have signed a deal in excess of the claim with

cross the UCATT picket lines.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE: A meeting took place on Wednesday (16 August) to call out all the maintenance workers in the steel works in Rotherham. This could close the local steel industry inside two weeks. Workers involved in bricking the kilns walked out two weeks ago. They had been pushing UCATT to allow them to come out, but the Regional Officials had instead granted them "special permits to work 60 hours".

SCOTLAND: The bureaucrats seem intent on calling out as few sites as possible, although several successful demonstrations have taken place. But the flying picket tactic is being used very successfully and a total stoppage is expected shortly in Glasgow.

In other areas not so renowned for their militancy, the response has similarly been to spread the strike. To take just two examples: Preston workers are calling for an all-out stoppage; and Bristol not only rejected the offer unanimously but were the first in the country to stop every site in the city centre.

CHALLENGE TO ISOLATION OF WORKERS IN EAST KENT

Trade union organisation in East Kent has been given a shot in the arm by three strikes over union rights in Chartham, Sandwich and Lydden. The first steps are now being taken to generalise support for these strikes and to build organisations which can strengthen trade union solidarity throughout the area.

At the Toyota factory in Lydden, 25 members of the Transport and General Workers Union have been on strike since 25th July over the sacking of a union militant for "inefficiency". They have all now been sacked. Management has succeeded in keeping the non-unionised work force inside by increasing the basic rate from £18 to £26, the same tactic as used at Fine Tubes. However, the dockers have agreed not to handle spare parts and supplies for Toyota, a move which has strengthened the determination of the strikers.

At Pzifers pharmaceutical factory in Sandwich, 52 workers took strike action after a union representative was dismissed for "misconduct". Management at first refused to negotiate, and told the representative to take his case to the NIRC. But the effectiveness of the pickets has now forced them into negotiations.

At William Griffiths Concrete Works in Chartham, six members of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers struck over a wage dispute. They too have now been given the sack, but still working there are 30 or so members of the T&GWU. These workers, who have the general foreman as their shop steward, have refused even to hold a meeting to discuss the strike. The local T&GWU official has preferred to talk to the management rather than fully explain the situation to his members.

This isolation is, however, being fought against. To a limited extent, the workers involved have helped to picket each other's factories. Meetings to build up support have also taken place in Canterbury, attended by representatives of the men involved and their supporters.

Kent Council of Action (set up to fight the Industrial Relations Act) was much criticised at these meetings for failing to take a lead. It did finally call a meeting for 9th August, but the guest speaker from the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions simply made the usual points about the need for an emergency recall TUC and the need to support the day of action on 5th September. This attitude was vehemently attacked by one of the dockers present, who argued that the LCDTU had failed to provide the leadership and direction needed and that single days of action were not enough to take the working class forward in this period of struggle. His speech was warmly applauded and many later speakers took a notably more militant line as a result. In particular, the inactivity of the Council of Action was condemned and contrasted with the errors of the Support Committee to strengthen the local struggles going on.

There can be little doubt that the 'old guard' is beginning to get worried at these moves to challenge its complacency towards the fragmentation of the work force in the area (caused by the lack of concentrated industry). There can be little doubt also of the need to strengthen this trend. This can best be done by building the Support Committee while these local struggles continue, and preparing more permanent forms of organisation to co-ordinate future workers' struggles.

Kate Lane.

The Press and the IRA

The press's anti-IRA campaign seems to know no bounds. The following incredible item appeared on the front page of *The Daily Telegraph* (11 August) under the heading **DESRAMAULT REFUSES 'IRA HELP'**

"The IRA has offered to help Rene Desramault keep his daughter Caroline away from her English mother, a relative in Lille said yesterday.

"He said M. Desramault had refused the offer when contacted by the IRA recently, although it reportedly would have included cash as well as a European hiding place. He said he did not want to bring politics into a purely family drama."

UNITY AGAINST THE DOCKERS: THE OLD, OLD STORY

by Bob Pennington

Jack Jones' struggle to sabotage the fight against redundancies is nothing new for portworkers.

Their proud history of struggle has given dockers a healthy distrust of 'left' trade union leaders, 'humanitarian' employers, 'honest brokers' from the TUC and 'neutral' Employment Ministers.

Many times the dockers have fought the employers, they have faced the challenges of Tory and Labour governments which have not hesitated to use troops for strike breaking. When their leaders have openly collaborated with governments and employers, dockers have created their own democratic rank and file organisations to conduct their struggles.

THE DOCKERS IN 1945

No sooner had Germany surrendered on 7 May 1945 than the Tory Caretaker government and its National Dock Labour Corporation were negotiating with the unions on how to replace the 'western agreement'. This had given the dockers higher piece work earnings in return for changes in working conditions. From mid-May 1945 until 22 August, Britain's ports were gripped by a series of unofficial strikes and go-slows. Troops were moved into Clydeside on 14 July, into London's Surrey Docks on 25 July and again into the Surrey docks on 1 August. Every port in Britain was affected by the dispute. Meanwhile, the government, employers, trade unions and the TUC maintained a solid united front against the men's demand for 25/- per day basic plus increases tied to the cost of living.

1945 was the prelude to a whole number of major battles on the docks. Strikes took place over the new Dock Labour scheme and in solidarity with the Canadian Seamen's Union.

Without exception the strikes were opposed by the T&GWU and the Labour government, which, like its Tory predecessor, brought in troops to unload cargo.

WORKERS' DEMOCRACY

In most of the major ports the men elected their own rank and file committees. In London these committees invariably included representatives from both the T&GWU and the NAS&D. It was such a committee which led the 'Zinc Oxide Strike' in 1948 when the National Dock Labour Board disciplined 11 dockers for refusing to load zinc oxide for less than 5/- a ton as opposed to the official rate of 3/4d. In defence of their victimised mates the dockers closed the entire port of London. Speakers from the London Committee went to Liverpool and 60 per cent of the Merseyside portworkers came out in support of the London men.

On February 2 1951 Merseyside dockers began an unofficial strike against an agreement on wages negotiated by their union and accepted the previous day by Merseyside docks' delegates at a conference in Liverpool. The agreement gave dockworkers an increase of 2/- per day, with corresponding increases for pieceworkers. In return the unions had agreed to mechanisation, new manning schemes, measures to abolish restrictive practices and the reduction of absenteeism.

The Merseyside Portworkers Defence Committee — an unofficial body — had been campaigning for a Dockers' Charter which included a guaranteed wage of 25/- per day, 14 days paid holiday and a pension scheme. The T&GWU rejected the scheme as being 'unpracticable'.

The strike, which began in Birkenhead, spread immediately to Liverpool and three days later Manchester came out. By 8 February 77 ships were idle in the three ports, although attempts to spread the strike to London had met with only limited success.

RED-BAITING DEAKIN

Arthur Deakin, the hysterical anti-communist who was then General Secretary of the T&GWU, denounced the strike and alleged it was part of a conspiracy by the World Federation of Trade Unions 'to strike at countries which do not have the Communist outlook'. The next day dockers Johnson, Harrison and Crosby from Merseyside and Constable, Timothy, Dickens and Cowley from London were charged at Bow Street



Unity against the dockers: police move in to protect union bureaucrats from their members

Magistrates' Court with 'having conspired to induce dockworkers to take part in strikes in connexion with trade disputes in contravention of the Conditions of Employment and National Arbitration Order'. This was the infamous Order 1305. The Minister of Labour who had used his special powers under Order 1305 was the 'left' social democrat Nye Bevan, patron saint of Labour's contemporary 'left wing'.

That day 6,700 London men demonstrated their confidence in British justice by joining the strike. Merseyside voted unanimously to stay out until their leaders were released and Order 1305 was rescinded. By February 23 over 16,000 men were on strike in Glasgow, Birkenhead, Liverpool, Greenock, Manchester and London. Finally Sir Hartley Shawcross, Labour's Attorney General, agreed to drop the charges on the grounds of the 'jury's illogical findings'. This no doubt disappointed Lord Chief Justice Goddard, the presiding judge, who had not bothered to conceal his delight at being able to denounce the workers.

Dickens and Constable were later expelled

from the T&GWU for their militant activity and the employers tried to sack Constable on the pretext that he did not have a union card. This action provoked a mass walk-out and the bosses and their full-time trade union allies were forced to accept Constable's re-instatement. He continued as a dock militant for many years afterwards.

The present struggle in Britain's ports brings home once again this crucial lesson of history: that nothing has been gained or can be gained without the independent action of the ordinary dockworkers. This truth applies to all workers and to all their basic social problems.

But another lesson can be learnt from the most recent and most spectacular victory in dockland: the freeing of the Five showed that to solve the present problems of the working class, workers in one industry, like the docks, cannot and need not stand alone against state, employer and union boss. When such barriers are broken down in the struggle the working class has a world to win.

YEAR'S STRUGGLE ENDS IN DEFEAT

The strike at Brannans (thermometer factory) in Cleator Moor, Cumberland, has collapsed. It began in June, 1971, when seven men were arbitrarily selected for staff status and a pay increase despite continuing to do exactly the same work as before. The resulting strike was made official by the AUEW almost immediately — union recognition in the factory had only been won after a long struggle, and the seven had promptly handed in their union cards on getting staff status.

At first the strike was almost solid. But the management resolutely refused to negotiate, issued an ultimatum declaring that strikers who failed to return to work would be 'sacked', and brought in blacklegs. Cleator Moor is a small town, with a high level of unemployment, and the strike caused deep divisions within the community, in some cases actually splitting families. Eventually only a hard core of fifty (two-thirds of them women) were still out. Last month the West Cumberland district of the AUEW voted to discontinue a local levy of 5p a week, and the union executive took this opportunity to also withdraw strike pay. Without further funds, the remaining strikers were forced to abandon the struggle and join the dole queue.

Muriel Hillon, formerly a shop steward at the factory and leader of the strike committee, considers that the strike failed for two main reasons. Factories in the area are widely scattered, and as Muriel Hillon says: "You just don't get the unity you find in big towns. But I think more could have been done to publicise the strike within our union. If workers had heard about the strike through their branch and gone back to their factory and found they were handling an order for Brannans, straight away they'd think: 'Well, this shouldn't be going out.' If the union had let them know and asked for support, it would have helped enormously."

The union sell-out at Brannans is not an isolated case. The strike at Fine Tubes, Plymouth, which has now dragged on for over 2 years, could have been won by now had the unions concerned (AUEW & T&GWU) organised blacking on a national scale — yet official union support remains at a token level. The T&GWU makes a to-do about its concern for the problems of the woman worker (to say nothing of the OAP's), but faced with the very real hardship of the nightcleaners in their attempts to get organised, looks the

PICKETING PROBLEMS

From ANNE MACLELLAN

and JIM MORRISON

Some of the more immediate problems in winning the docks strike are well illustrated by recent events at Montrose, a small unregistered port where 500 dockers and 200 police clashed on Friday 4th August. The clash occurred after police refused to allow pickets to speak to the drivers of lorries entering the port, which is 30 miles north of Dundee. Police also refused to allow any of the pickets to go inside to speak to the scab labour working the dock, the main objective of the picket apart from that of stopping the movement of cargo.

An attempt to alter the balance of forces by holding a mass picket the following Monday proved impossible. Concentrating on Montrose would have meant abandoning many of the other unregistered ports which have recently sprung up in the area. So militant picketing there was ruled out, and the effects of this situation were reinforced by the lack of any real organisation or leadership. Several potentially fruitful suggestions by the rank and file about tactics were simply not taken up. The resulting attitude towards the local union 'leadership' was best summed up in one docker's phrase: "Here comes the back to work squad."

Among those picketing at Montrose were Aberdeen dockers. Having just been involved in a dispute over the payment of Social Security benefits, they were only too well aware of the role of the press, which had described them as 'spongers'. They, like other dockers, have already seen the effects of this, being refused service in shops, pubs, garages, etc. One group was even stopped from using the toilets in Invergordon! Another effect of this campaign is that students are increasingly being persuaded to act as scab labour, particularly in the northern ports. This is a point which we are taking up with the National Union of Students.

The situation in Montrose reflects that faced by striking dockworkers throughout Britain. The problem which is holding their struggle back, and which has to be overcome if a real victory is to be won, is their isolation in terms of active support from the rest of their class and from other social layers which could be won to support them. The turning point in the miners' strike was the closure of Salford depot when the intervention of engineering workers in active struggle decisively altered the balance of forces in that situation in favour of the working class. That is the kind of situation which must be fought for today.

other way and talks of realism. Hugh Scanlon and the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions have just decided to demonstrate their reasonableness by dropping the "Equal Pay" part of their package of demands in their national negotiations with the Engineering Employers Federation — and dropped the interests of their women members along with it.

Recent events have shown that union solidarity only works in practice when the rank-and-file take responsibility into their own hands. Now the Law Lords' decision puts the onus on union officials to keep their members in line, union members must learn to decide for themselves and to organise active solidarity with all sections of the working class under attack. One expression of this need is seen in the local women's committees already growing inside the unions to ensure women's interests are no longer brushed aside. The organisation of Trade Union Defence Committees in all areas is also an urgent priority in this respect. Let there be no more Brannans!

James O'Hegarty
Marilyn Scotcher

VIETNAM: THE WAR REACHES MOST VITAL STAGE

In these articles, Andy Scott answers three crucial questions about Nixon's escalation of the war in Indochina: what it is doing to Vietnam; what the American war aims are; and what Moscow and Peking seek from the struggle.

AMERICAN STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The liberation forces' spring offensive destroyed Nixon's main tactic against the Vietnamese people: the attempt to rely on the mercenaries of the puppet regime in Saigon to defeat the revolution — the policy known as 'Vietnamisation'. The American administration therefore plunged into a desperate escalation of the war: for the first time the bombing was carried up to the Chinese border; for the first time the harbours of North Vietnam through which 80 per cent of the liberation forces' military supplies had passed were mined; saturation bombing of the main cities in the DRV (Democratic Republic of Vietnam — North Vietnam) was started and the bombing of the dykes began. As the *New York Times* editorial pointed out on 10 May: "The President is in fact leading the country down precisely the road — though by different means that President Johnson did in 1965".

STRATEGIC REASONS

The *New York Times* spell out the strategic reasons for this continued escalation on 8 July: "As the Pentagon Papers show... (Washington policy makers) were motivated by the desire to contain China and what they considered to be the Asian branch of 'international communism' to protect the 'dominoes' of non-Communist Asia, to discredit the Communist theories of guerrilla war and 'wars of national liberation' and to demonstrate to allies everywhere that the United States would honour its pledges and make good on its threats no matter how difficult the task or insignificant the terrain".

In other words, the strategy of the U.S. administrations in South East Asia is prompted to protect the natural resources of the region (particularly in regard to the oil deposits found after 1965) and discourage anti-imperialist movements of South East Asia.

South East Asia is a vast reservoir of imperialist exploitation. But the effects of an American defeat in Vietnam, or even a setback, would jeopardize U.S. credibility on a global scale. The *New York Times* again points out, "...the Johnson administration feared an outbreak of other 'wars of national liberation' in the Asian, African and Latin American countries and Mr MacNamara wrote in his March 16th memorandum to the President: 'the South Vietnam conflict is regarded as a test case'." This strategic concern had underpinned every twist and turn of American policy in Indochina from Truman's first involvement to Nixon's escalation.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF ESCALATION

1949: With the victory of the Chinese revolution Truman dropped his 'neutral' posture in the war between the Viet Minh and the French occupation forces in Indochina. America became militarily involved, in line with its offensive against China and the Asian Revolution.

1954: Eisenhower created the puppet Southern State under Diem as the first step in the reconquest of Vietnam by imperialism. As the Pentagon papers admit, without US intervention "the Diem regime certainly, and an independent South Vietnam almost as certainly, could not have survived".

Early 1960's: Kennedy secretly sent combat forces into the South and, as the *New York Times* revealed, he simultaneously "ordered the start of a campaign of clandestine warfare against North Vietnam to be conducted by South Vietnamese agents directed and trained by the CIA and some American Special Forces Troops".

1964: U.S. tactics were destroyed by the upsurge of popular resistance in the South

led by the National Liberation Front. In late 1963 Defence Secretary MacNamara had reported on returning from Vietnam: "The situation is very disturbing. Current trends, unless reversed in the next two or three months, will lead to a neutralisation at best and, more likely, a Communist-controlled State". Later U.S. propaganda claimed they were responding to an "invasion from the North", but MacNamara made it quite clear in private that the decisive problem was NLF control "over a very high number of people in certain key provinces" and the "deterioration in the countryside".

1965: Johnson opened a new phase of escalation by launching the bombing of the North. The aim was to save the situation in the South by inflicting enough destruction in the North to make the DRV pressure the NLF to moderate their actions in the South. As Maxwell Taylor, U.S. ambassador in Saigon put it to the *New York Times* the bombing was a "will-breaking device to inflict such pain or threat of pain upon the DRV that it would be compelled to order a stand-down of Vietcong violence".

1968: The Tet offensive destroyed these tactics and the American leaders who put them into practice. After three years of saturation bombing, the Pentagon reported: "The Vietcong now hold the initiative". Westmorland demanded 200,000 extra troops and an intensification of the bombing of the North and was sacked. Once again, blinded by imperialist arrogance, Washington had underestimated the combativity of the Vietnamese liberation forces.

Summer 1968: following a CIA report that "it is out of the question for US/GVN forces to clear South Vietnam of Communist forces" and following acute demoralisation in the US Army and great opposition to the war in the USA, Johnson opened the Paris Peace talks and ended the bombing of the North to concentrate all airpower against the South. Privately, as the Pentagon Papers reveal, the US administration was badly shaken: "This growing dissatisfaction accompanied, as it certainly will be, by increased defiance of the draft and growing unrest in the cities because of the belief that we are neglecting domestic problems, runs great risk of provoking a domestic crisis of unprecedented proportions". The demoralised MacNamara was urging a coalition government including the NLF. At this point Nixon took over.

NIXON'S TACTICS

When Nixon took office at the end of 1968 the two factors which were in fact central to war — the determination of the Vietnamese freedom fighters and the growing indignation of the American people at the atrocities committed in their name — were beginning to catch up on the butchers of Vietnam. Nixon's first task was to work out tactics to overcome these two problems.

His policy was three-fold, first, the concept of 'Vietnamisation' (the tactic of using the South Vietnamese as cannon fodder in the struggle, thus allowing him to remove sections of US ground forces and pacify anti-war feeling at home); secondly, to try to stabilise the Thieu regime, thus avoiding at least initially, escalation of the bombing of the North, and, thirdly, to limit US involvement increasingly to technical support (i.e. to return to what Murray Marker in the *Washington Post* termed "the post-Korean war concepts of 'surgical' and 'immaculate' warfare").

THE MYTH OF 'VIETNAMISATION'

But Nixon found himself almost immediately wrapped in a web of contradictions. He attempted to give the shaky Thieu regime a breathing space by invading Cambod-

ia and Laos in 1970 and 1971. But the only result was a crisis for his 'Vietnamisation' policy. The puppet troops' adventure in Laos was summed up by the *New York Post* on 20 March 1971: "As the South Vietnamese conduct their current 'sweep' — a headlong retreat back to the border — the perfectly good old word 'rout' seems more in order. They have suffered heavy casualties and withdrew immediately from the positions around Tchepone — the only area in which they were outside the range of U.S. artillery — as soon as the North Vietnamese attack threatened....."

"And this army, carried into battle by American helicopters, supported by as many as 2,000 bombings and strafing sorties a day, totally dependent on us for defence and supply, spiking its guns and heading for home one month before even the earliest pre-invasion estimates — this is the army President Nixon said can 'back it on its own'."

NEW SITUATION

Thus, having set out to stabilise the Thieu regime through invasions of Cambodia and Laos, Nixon found himself by the summer of 1971 with the following new situation: he had extended the war to a sub-continental level; the consequence was a growing crisis for the regimes in Vientiane (capital of Laos) and Phnom Penh (capital of Cambodia); a bad mauling for the Vietnamisation programme; and a resulting crisis of confidence in the Thieu regime whose lack of social base, popular support and moral fibre was being exposed. Nixon therefore reverted in desperation to the technique (tried and proved a failure under Johnson) of trying to bomb the North Vietnamese to their knees to pressurise them to control the liberation forces in the South. The massive thrust forward by the liberation forces in March this year (particularly in Quang Tri province where the 'puppet' forces streamed South 'like a table out of control') merely emphasised the bankruptcy of the 'Vietnamisation' policy. Sydney H. Schanberg, echoing the humiliation Nixon had received in Laos and Cambodia, painted the picture: "Thousands of panicking South Vietnamese soldiers — most of whom did not appear to have made much contact with the advancing North Vietnamese — fled in confusion from Quang Tri province today. Commandeering civilian vehicles at rifle point, feigning non-existent injuries, carrying away C rations but not their ammunition and hurling rocks at Western news photographers taking pictures of their flight, the Government troops of the Third Infantry Division ran from the fighting in — one of the biggest retreats of the war."

Nixon was thus posed with an acute dilemma: either abandon Vietnam or up the stakes in an unprecedented and desperate military bid to drive the North Vietnamese to come to terms. Unfortunately for him, the latter course posed a thorny problem. The disintegration of the 'puppet' troops meant that the only way open to the U.S. to bring the North to its knees was through the escalation of the technological war: saturation bombing directed against the civilian population; bombing the dykes with the monsoon period looming ahead, mining the harbour of Haiphong (techniques that had been discussed and rejected by previous administrations). All of these actions held the risk of bringing in the U.S. into direct conflict with the workers' states. The problem for Nixon was, therefore, whether the Soviet Union and China could be 'persuaded' not to retaliate in the face of such genocidal policies. In the event, they proved very accommodating to the 'butcher' of Vietnam.



National Liberation Front members in underground train

Nixon's escalation tactics this Spring depended on one central question: whether the Russian and Chinese workers' states would unite in solidarity action with the Vietnamese people to crush the U.S. administration's genocidal initiative. As an administration official told the *New York Times* on 20 May: "You can be sure that they weighed that angle with the utmost care... If they thought there was any serious likelihood of Russian or Chinese reaction — such as sending in troops — they wouldn't have gone ahead". For once both the Russian and Chinese leaderships did manage to find a common policy. Any confusion as to the nature of this policy must be swept out of the international movement in solidarity with the peoples of Indochina if this movement is to play an effective role in the present situation.

DIPLOMATIC MORSELS

Towards the end of his visit to Peking in February this year Nixon proclaimed at a banquet given in his honour: "We have been here a week. This is the week that has changed the world". An exaggeration perhaps, but the spectacle of Chou en Lai and Nixon toasting each other in champagne as the bombs rained down on the Vietnamese certainly symbolised changes very favourable to U.S. global strategy. The essence of Nixon's strategy towards both China and Russia was to offer certain tempting diplomatic morsels in exchange for a blind eye being turned to what was happening in South East Asia. What Nixon had to offer to the Chinese bureaucracy was above all 'recognition by the international community', recognition which Peking craved after years of being out in the diplomatic cold. There were also no doubt ambiguous promises that Taiwan would at some future date be persuaded to reach an agreement with Peking and that the U.S. economic blockade of China would be lifted. As the journalist L.F. Stone in the June 15 *New York Review of Books* commented: "Peking bought its admission to the United Nations, bought its way out of containment

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THE ARITHMETIC OF GENOCIDE



in Vietnam

On 16 April, for the first time in the history of the Indochinese war, Hanoi and Haiphong North Vietnam's two main cities were subject to saturation bombing. The tonnage of the B52's on that day equalled the destructive power of three-quarters of the nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima. These planes are at present flying a daily average of ten six-plane missions, which is the equivalent of 2 1/2 nuclear blasts against the Vietnamese people every day. By October of last year, the Nixon administration alone had dropped greater tonnage of bombs on Indochina than the total American bombing of Asia and Europe in the second world war and the Korean war put together. The *Scientific American* in its May issue calculated that between 1965 and 1971 — that is, before this Spring's escalation — the United States had poured the equivalent of 450 nuclear bombs on Indo-China, and the writers commented: "From the air some areas of Vietnam look like photographs of the moon." The authors state that in the South the Pentagon's policy has been to "disrupt and destroy the social and economic fabric of rural, agricultural Vietnam in order to drive the peasant population into areas under central control and to deprive the guerilla enemy of a power base". Such massive bombing has not only disrupted the social base of the Vietnamese peasantry (by breaking up the intricate irrigation systems for rice-growing, by destroying livestock and damaging large sections of timberland); its impact can be permanent. The craters, filled with water become permanent features of the landscape and breeding grounds for mosquitoes; laterisation can occur around the edges of the craters themselves; the tearing of hilly terrain causes soil erosion. The additional use of herbicides such as 'agent orange' to defoliate wooded areas has much the same impact. The *Scientific American* estimates that the use of this chemical between 1961 and 1970 "destroyed upwards of a quarter of a million acres of mangrove forests" and permanently damaged the soil.

The conclusion drawn by the authors shows the lengths Imperialism will go to in its

attempt to stem the rise of revolutionary struggle: "The cumulative effect of the munitions attack on the land has to be seen to be grasped fully. Reports by military observers speak of the landscape's being 'torn as if by an angry giant' and of areas of the green delta land's being 'pulverised into a gray porridge'. Still to be assessed are the effects of the persisting bombardment on the people's habitations, on the animal life and general ecology of the region. The damage caused by the large-scale disorganisation of the environment may be felt for centuries".

American war scientists have devoted great attention to the problem of ensuring that the pilots' cargoes are not squandered. The so called 'Igloo White' technique involves dropping small acoustic devices on a given area. These transmit any sound or vibration to a computer system which guides waiting bomber squadrons onto the target. TV cameras and laser beams are used to assist the bombers. Mines are fitted with triggers which respond to sound, pressure or vibration. The anti-personnel bomb can now spray one quarter of a million pellets over a 45,000 square foot range.

The U.S. administration is proud of the accuracy of its vast bombing apparatus. In the face of questioning on the effectiveness of air-power against the Vietnamese liberation forces the Defence Department has produced volumes of evidence to demonstrate the precision of its bombing techniques. This wealth of Pentagon material cannot be refuted and in fact the events of the last 3 months make it particularly worthy of study by opponents of American aggression in Indo-China. For on 8 June the North Vietnamese spokesman in Paris Nguyen Thanh Le informed the world that between 10 April and 24 May a total of 580 bombs had been dropped on the dykes of the Red River delta and Tonkin bay. At first the administration launched an international campaign to denounce what they called a 'big lie' and 'communist propaganda'. But



Repairing a dyke hit by U.S. bombs

a whole series of international witnesses have since confirmed the North Vietnamese declaration and last week's evidence from President Johnson's ex-Attorney General has removed the last shadow of doubt as to who has been doing the lying. The Pentagon is therefore now claiming that such bombing is 'accidental', that its own incontestable proofs of the B52's deadly accuracy are not to be believed after all!

This attempted about face on Nixon's part is understandable. The destruction of the Tonkin dykes as the monsoon period approaches can turn the Red River delta into a mass grave for its fifteen million inhabitants. As Anthony Lewis, the *New York Times* reporter put it on 26 June: "No one should be in any doubt about what systematic destruction of the dykes at this time might mean. It would bring into play, justifiably for once, that much-abused word Genocide".

COW AND PEKING - MIRACULOUS UNITY

with the blood of the Vietnamese people. The same commodity — in such plentiful supply — has brought Nixon to Moscow. If it were not for Hanoi, Moscow would have little to sell".

The great advantage of these concessions from the point of view of U.S. imperialism is that they cost it in real terms practically nothing while at the same time being most tempting to the Chinese bureaucracy, especially since they all help to flatter Chinese nationalist sentiment of which the bureaucracy feels itself to be the most faithful custodian. A careful analysis of China's policy of congratulating Yahya Khan on his brutal attempt to suppress Bangla Desh and of congratulating Mrs Bandaranaike on the bloody suppression of the uprising in Ceylon must certainly have helped U.S. imperialism to correctly estimate Peking's willingness to do deals of this sort. We should remember that every one of China's 'brilliant' diplomatic coups has been bought with the blood of revolutionary peasants and workers. The Geneva convention itself should not be forgotten, there it was the combined efforts of Chou en Tai and his Soviet counterpart which persuaded the Vietminh, who had all but swept the French imperialists out of Vietnam, to accept the dismemberment of their country and a continued imperialist presence in the South.

MOSCOW

The sight of Peking wining and dining with the 'butcher' made Moscow throw all restraint to the winds. Just at the time when the massive escalation in bombing Hanoi had begun and the mining of Haiphong accomplished, it welcomed him as an honoured guest. It did not take much to persuade Moscow to join, against the Vietnamese revolution. Over the same champagne glasses, the Kremlin bureaucrats, in exchange for pledges of increased 'co-operation in medical science and public health', 'co-operation in science and technology' and a joint space exploration programme sold the Vietnamese revolution down the river. But from Moscow's point of view the most coveted 'concession'

was U.S. endorsement of their idea for a European security conference. Such a conference they feel is essential to consolidate their grip on Eastern Europe. In this way the Soviet bureaucracy's embarrassment in Czechoslovakia becomes a reason for helping the U.S. overcome its predicament in Vietnam.

The only thing on which both the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies were united was in their following, to the letter, the Stalinist position of "peaceful co-existence" which, boiled down to its essentials, means class collaboration in the interests of a bureaucratic caste at the expense of world revolution. Indeed, U.S. imperialism now finds itself in a situation where Peking and Moscow are actually competing for its favour. The virulent hostility between them puts U.S. imperialism in a most advantageous position since it allows them to play one bureaucracy off against another.

This is not, of course, to deny the verbal barrage which followed the drastic escalation in the North. What both failed to do was to threaten to break the blockade of Haiphong, to call for international protest against the war crimes of US imperialism and to warn Nixon that any escalation would meet with joint retaliation from the workers' states. The criminals behind the butchery of the Vietnamese people are not only to be found in Washington but also in Peking and Moscow. The figures are clear, during the period 1967 to 1971, Soviet military aid is estimated to have decreased from \$505 m. to \$100m, and Chinese aid from \$145 m. to \$75m. (Associated Press dispatch, 12 April). Even according to the figures issued by Washington, the combined Soviet and Chinese military assistance to North Vietnam amounted to only one fifth of what the US Government spent on the war in 1971.

ESCALATION

The massive escalation of troops and the bombing of North Vietnam in 1965 by Johnson led to this Pentagon assessment: "The most interesting reactions of course are those of the 'Bloc countries'. As predicted in CIA's Oct. 5, 1964

of the two principal Communist powers to the limited US reprisal attacks were relatively restrained, with both Moscow and Peking pledging unspecified support and assistance to Hanoi. Neither raised the spectre of a broad conflict or portrayed the U.S. actions as a threat to 'world peace'...". The extract reveals that the ability of US imperialism to escalate the war had, at every stage, been based upon the knowledge that the Soviet Union and China (committed to the pernicious doctrine of 'peaceful co-existence') would offer no retaliation apart from demagoguery. What it proves negatively is that if the workers' states had reacted firmly, such escalation could have been stopped. Washington, unlike many 'lefts', knew that behind the rhetoric lay a 'paper tiger'.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

The complicity in U.S. escalation of both the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies will obviously work towards fostering a re-division of the country along lines similar to the Geneva Convention. Sihanouk, the deposed Cambodian monarch supported by Peking, has not only admitted his willingness to head a coalition government in Cambodia (including the military butcher Lon Nol) but has evinced a line towards South Vietnam which *de facto* admits the legitimacy of the Thieu regime. The fact that Peking supports Sihanouk gives some indication of their attitude towards a solution in Vietnam. It is obviously hoped that, through the combined pressure from Moscow and Peking and bombardments from Nixon, the Vietnamese people can be brought to stomach a similar deal to that concocted in 1954. The impact of this criminal collusion depends upon the same factors that have led U.S. imperialism ever deeper into the mire of Indochina: the determination of the Vietnamese liberation fighters to continue their valiant struggle, and the ability of revolutionaries around the world to narrow the room for manoeuvre of Nixon in his forthcoming deals with the bureaucracies.

The 'Pentagon Papers' show that the massive anti-war marches in the U.S.A. (and throughout the world) were partly responsible for the reduction of troops in Vietnam. The responsibility

of revolutionaries, following on the cynical betrayal of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies, has increased tenfold. The only allies of the Vietnamese revolution remain the masses of people throughout the world who vehemently oppose the genocidal policies of the U.S. administration.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Successive British governments (including the Wilson government which stamped on Labour Conference decisions) have provided U.S. imperialism with invaluable political and moral support during the gradual escalation of the war and introduction of the worst barbarities. British industry (as in the case of Rolls Royce which provides engines for the 'Corsair' fighters or Elliott Automation which manufactures equipment perfecting fighters' bombing techniques) has directly contributed to U.S. imperialism's war effort.

The defeat of the Indochinese revolution would set back the world revolution; a decisive setback for Nixon in his genocidal activity would act as a mighty lever not only for national liberation struggles world-wide (particularly that of the Irish people for self-determination) but also for the class struggle within the imperialist centres. On 28 October and 18 November the National Peace Action Coalition in the U.S.A. is calling for international protests against the present escalation of the war in Vietnam. The call for solidarity demonstrations must become a concrete manifestation of proletarian internationalism. The IMG, which intends to work for a demonstration this 20th Autumn, calls upon all revolutionary groups to see this as a central task in the coming period. It is also a central task to ensure that such action takes place not under the banners of 'Peace' or 'Negotiations' (which is to fall into the trap being prepared by U.S. imperialism and the bureaucracies for the Vietnamese people) but in full solidarity with the struggle of the Vietnamese people, demanding the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. forces and an end to British complicity.

BOOKS

BRIAN DAVEY on

'British Capitalism, Workers and the Profits Squeeze'

Sutcliffe and Glyn have written the book not for university lecturers but for militant workers in order to clarify the real issues facing the labour movement in Britain today. It is readily comprehensible to non-economists, and where technical terms are inevitable they have been explained in clear footnotes.

The centre of the argument is that the militancy of the British working class has combined with international competition to drastically reduce the profitability of British capital. The profit share in company net output has fallen drastically: in 1950-54 it was 25.2 per cent, by 1964 it had fallen to 21.2 per cent, and by 1970 it had plummeted to 12.1 per cent. The rate of profit on capital (the key ratio for the capitalist) has fallen in a similar way.

In effect the working class has, over the last few years, been bargaining about its share of the national product. But the implications of this fact are inadequately, if at all, understood. The authors point out that the working class movement has to have an awareness of what it has done: "Without this awareness, and the political conclusions to be drawn from it, the working class movement is weakened because it fails to understand the logic of its own strategy". Such a drastic cut in profitability has, in fact, put the very existence of British capitalism in question. Profits remain the lifeblood of the system and the capitalists will only be able to restore them if they can drastically hold back the growth of working class living standards for a number of years.

MILITANCY

Sutcliffe and Glyn argue that working class militancy has been a crucial contributory cause of British capitalism's crisis, but they

do not feel the need to be at all apologetic about this. Despite militancy pushing up money wages very rapidly over the last few years this has not led to rapid increases in real wages. They show in great detail that real incomes, after allowing for rising prices and the 'claw-back' of increased taxes etc. by the state, have not risen much. From 1964 to 1969 the average manual worker's income increased by a mere one percent per year, and even between 1969 and 1970 real wages only accelerated at a rate of 2.7 per cent. In addition there has been a massive increase in poverty since the late sixties (especially given the massive increase in unemployment) which is a part of the capitalist response to working class militancy. But most importantly, if the logic of working class struggle is to put the very existence of British capitalism at stake then that logic has to be followed through.

TUC AND LABOUR PARTY

What is only too obvious is that the TUC and the Labour Party have no such understanding. Sutcliffe and Glyn make a very valuable contribution in their criticisms of the TUC's approach to the crisis. The TUC does not, of course, want to admit that there is any fundamental conflict of interest between the working class and the capitalist class that cannot be solved with a 'reasonable compromise'. Because they accept the capitalist system, and seek to operate within its confines, they are obliged to deny that the working class is in any way a cause of the crisis. The TUC then proposes solutions that have no contact with the reality of the economic crisis - like that of deflation of the economy. (i.e. expanding output). "The TUC's concern about profits is not surprising, for they believe (correctly) that a healthy capitalism requires high profits. But they are wrong in suggest-

ing that profit margins could be restored painlessly for the workers by an expansion of output.

"Our estimate is that only about one sixth of the fall in the profit share since 1964 was the result of stagnation. Getting back to full employment, especially over an extended period of time, could do no more than stabilize the profit share, unless there was a drastic reduction in international competition or improvement in Britain's competitiveness. But merely maintaining the present profit share, even with higher output, is not sufficient. Given the state of international competition and the determination of the British workers to maintain and improve living standards, this means that British capitalists will have no remedy but to attack the working class".....

Thus the traditional leadership of the working class will obstruct the development of a strategy which meets the needs of the situation: for such a strategy requires a revolutionary perspective.

WORLD ECONOMY

The authors see the other cause of the profit squeeze as "increasing international competition". One interesting chapter is devoted to the slowing down of the world economy with its main emphasis being on the erosion of profitability in the other advanced capitalist countries. The main emphasis is again laid on working class militancy - perhaps too much so since there are other variables tending to make the long boom slow down and become more unstable.

COMMON MARKET

The book is weak in one respect: its treatment of Britain's entry into the Common Market. Since entry is so important for the prospects of British capitalism a fuller analysis would have been useful though it does not strictly fall within the terms of reference that the two authors have set themselves. Sutcliffe and Glyn appear to consider that British capital is pursuing an unwise policy in joining the Common Market: "The part

played by foreign competition in precipitating the present crisis makes it astonishing that British capitalists, clamouring for entry into the market, are in effect asking for more. In addition the initial adverse effects on real wages... will make it more difficult to achieve the redistribution from wages to profits necessary to restore profitability." But this misses out the fact that in the medium and long term there would be far more severe competition for British capital outside the Common Market than inside, particularly in view of the present slow-down in the world capitalist economy. Outside the Common Market, British big capital would get crushed in the growing triangular conflict between Europe, the US and Japan. Inside the Common Market it could strengthen itself through mergers with the European giant companies.

British capital has continued expanding by capital export and the establishment of productive units overseas far more than other countries. Entry into the Common Market would be a continuation of this trend and would be bound to speed up the outflow of capital. The British capitalist class may attempt to defeat militancy with the threat or the action of taking its capital somewhere else in Europe. A substantial volume of overseas investment has weakened British capitalism's home base and reduced the State's ability to take measures to protect its domestic economy - this might invite retaliation from foreign states against British capital abroad. With such gloomy prospects the British bourgeoisie is evidently prepared to sacrifice further political sovereignty and room for international manoeuvre in order to get into the relatively more exciting Common Market and take advantage of some of the opportunities for expansion there. Sutcliffe and Glyn's book is a valuable contribution to the revolutionary movement and deserves to be widely read by militants. It fulfills its aim of clarifying the desperate underlying economic situation which as the authors point out "is still not realized widely enough".

GEORGE WRIGHT on

'Police Power and Black People'

Compared to most other capitalist states, Britain has a relatively badly armed police force. The main pillar of law and order in Britain has traditionally been working class respect for the British bobby and "the best system of justice in the world". The growing militancy of British workers and the resulting growth of state repression has changed all this. And one factor above all has exposed the police force and courts for what they are: the systematic, brutal police aggression against black people.

Certain sections of the bourgeoisie, especially those in the media, whose job it is to preserve the impartial, benevolent image of the bourgeois state, are now beginning to worry that perhaps the police have been given too long a leash in dealing with black people. They see that the innate racism of the imperialist state and its agents can be counter-productive if it in turn generates a higher consciousness among blacks.

This is basically the viewpoint of *Police Power and Black People*, a paperback published by Granada in Panther Books, and written by a *Sunday Times* journalist, Derek Humphry. "I am critical of the police force in this book because I wish to respect it. I am critical of the law, lawyers and courts because of a desire to admire them."

The first part of the book uses case histories to document the standard repertoire of police tactics against black people; racist abuse, beatings, provoked assaults, fabricated evidence, planting (or 'agriculture' as the pigs would say), the use of dogs, agent provocateurs in black organisations, special branch and the notorious Special Patrol Groups - the nucleus of a European style para-military elite police force of the future.

WIDER AUDIENCE

It's good that these facts previously confined to the left and underground press, should be available to a wider audience, even if the cases analysed owe more to the Community Relations Council's files than to any attempt to choose the most politically significant. It seems strange, for example, that in a book written "in memory of David Oluwale", the Nigerian brutally murdered by the Leeds police, there is no analysis of his case while a whole chapter is given to the wrongful



arrest of a Nigerian diplomat. Perhaps the facts in Oluwale's case were just too damning?

Humphry's explanation of police racism is a little naive - for him the problem boils down to too much discretion being given to young overworked police men inadequately trained in "race relations". He emphasises continually how the police "needlessly provoke" young blacks. Of course this is the problem for liberals like Humphry - the police are not tactful enough. But by considering the police in isolation, he can ignore the real problem, that capitalism thrives on the super-exploitation of black workers and the only

way to maintain this exploitation is by using the full repressive power of the bourgeois state - one way or another.

REFORMS

Humphry gives a long list of reforms needed to "liberalise" the police. But who is going to implement these reforms? He himself shows the complicity of both Tory and Labour Home Secretaries in condoning the worst excesses of their loyal servants and blocking any independent complaints procedure. While he earnestly prepares a manual for skinning a tiger claw by claw, Heath & Co.

are quietly adding new fangs in the shape of measures such as the Immigration Act and the Criminal Justice Act (hardly mentioned in this book), which are designed precisely to give the police more power over such things as "verbals", which Humphry sees as "abuses".

Of course some of his reforms will be implemented - the ones dealing with better public relations and a better informed police force but it's not hard to see who will benefit most from these. As Gus John adds in a commentary included to give the book credibility among blacks, "... an essential characteristic of this system is that those who exercise power need to co-erce, to co-opt and to hood-wink people into acquiescing in their own exploitation." As a black member of the Institute of Race Relations who has spent "considerable time contributing to police training courses and senior officers seminars", he should know!

ALLIANCE

The basis of all Humphry's reforms is an alliance between liberal policemen and moderate blacks. As the example of the army's tactics in Ulster show such an alliance is premised on the militants being smashed. And for that task racist police must be given full rein. Militants like Tony Soares, currently facing an incitement to murder charge, will continue to be rail-roaded. And there will be more black "moderates" wrongfully arrested.

ARMY

And if the police fail to keep black people in line, either through being too obviously racist, or too weak, the army is always waiting in the wings. As this book notes, one of the items on the agenda at this year's Senior Army Officers Course at Oxford University was "Racial Strife in the UK and the USA". The black ghettos are the obvious target for the theories of Brigadier Kitson, head of the Army's infantry school in Wilton. In fact, one opposite sentence from Kitson throws more light on the essence of the problem than Derek Humphry's entire book: "The law" says Kitson, "should be used as just another weapon in the government's arsenal, and in this case it becomes little more than a propaganda cover for the disposal of unwanted members of the public."

CHILEAN REVOLUTIONARIES CONFRONT ALLENDE



MIR peasants on land they seized

On 5 August, Chilean police raided one of the *campamentos* (squatters' shanty towns) organised by the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left - a revolutionary organisation in Chile) ostensibly looking for illegally-held arms.

They killed one youth and wounded many more. Barricades went up all round the *campamentos*, and tension between the revolutionary left and the Popular Unity government reached a new pitch.

Allende's attempts at conciliation - attending the funeral and suspending the police chiefs responsible - are hardly in accord with his recent denunciations of the activities of the revolutionary left. In a speech the same week he called the MIR 'totally irresponsible and ignorant' for setting up a Popular Assembly in Concepcion. Such organs of the masses, he baldly stated, could in no way be allowed to exercise power in the present period.

Yet the Popular Unity leaders are finding it difficult to restrain the militants of their own parties from participating in the building of such bodies, which with revolutionary leadership could become organs of dual

power. Allende and still more the Communist Party fear any move in this direction in the coming months before the elections of spring next year. This is why they are so fervent in their attacks on the Concepcion Assembly, which has the support of local units of the coalition parties from the Socialists to the Left Christians (the CP alone is staying out of it, and sticking to its "strategy" of winning the middle classes at the polling booths).

By JANE FRAZER

The Popular Unity leaders have good reason to worry whether they can contain the struggles of the masses and channel them into electoral support for the Government in March next year. Imperialist sabotage of the Chilean development programme (American loans have dropped to a tenth of their previous level) together with accelerating trade deficits and foreign indebtedness, have brought about rapid increases in unemployment and

inflation, and one symptom of the crisis is that the government is having to write off the cost of paying out for vast quantities of subsidised and imported foods, against the threat of growing unrest and even food riots.

The US authorities, meanwhile, are reportedly taking a tougher line, provoked in part by the continued refusal of the Chilean courts to pay out compensation for the copper mines, or to announce any compensation for the telephone company, a subsidiary of ITT (notorious for conspiring against the Popular Unity government). On this front it is extremely difficult for Allende to make any retreat. But US imperialism has become highly conscious of its wider interests in Latin America, and the ability of the government to contain the struggles of the masses is in the last analysis of more concern to it than compensation to Anaconda. It is likely that they will use the questions of compensation and the government debt to try to force rightward moves within the coalition, as the divisions within Popular Unity intensify.

BAN ON TARIQ ALI LIFTED WITH CONDITIONS

The Pakistan government has lifted the ban imposed on Tariq Ali, but have placed certain bars on his activity. Comrade Ali can only return for a "personal visit to see his family", but is barred from holding press conferences, speaking at public meetings, taking part in demonstrations or engaging in political activity. Comrade Ali accordingly left for Karachi on 25 July for a brief visit.

Meanwhile many well-known intellectuals have sent an open letter to President Bhutto which we publish below:

To,
His Excellency Zulfikar Ali Bhutto
President of Pakistan,
President's House,
Islamabad,
Pakistan.

Dear Mr President,
We are writing to you to register our strong protest against the action of your government in expelling Tariq Ali from Pakistan. We feel that Ali's expulsion represents a serious violation of civil liberties in Pakistan and is more in keeping with a military dictatorship than an elected government.

We are given to understand that the orders used to bar Ali from entering Pakistan, were originally issued by the Yahya Khan military regime and were based on the former's opposition to the repression carried out in Bengal and on his book, *Pakistan: Military Rule or People's Power?* which was banned in Pakistan.

Bearing in mind what twelve years of military rule have done to Pakistan we would have thought that actions such as expelling Pakistani citizens with dissident views would have been equally repugnant to you, bearing in mind that you were also victimized during the last few years of Ayub's Martial Law. This coupled with the fact that Tariq Ali has been a consistent and vigorous critic of both the Ayub and Yahya military governments makes your decision to expel him from Pakistan somewhat inexplicable.

Tariq Ali has made no secret of his political beliefs. He regards himself as a revolutionary Marxist and is a leading member of the Fourth International. While most of us have, like him, been actively opposed to imperialism's war in Indo-China, nevertheless many of us do not agree with his political beliefs. What we do defend, however, is his right to hold these beliefs and believe that there is no basis for barring him from entering his own country.

We would therefore urge you to remove the ban on both Tariq Ali and his book and show that you are not opposed to a free and untrammelled confrontation of ideas which will help to create an atmosphere where all different political tendencies can exist and flourish.

David Aberle (Professor of Anthropology, University of British Columbia)
Hamza Alavi (Lecturer, University of Leeds)
Chinmoy Banerjee (Assistant Professor, Department of English, Simon Fraser University)
Robin Blackburn (*New Left Review*)
Noam Chomsky (Professor, M.I.T.)
Ken Coates (Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation)
Michael Egan (Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia)
Chris Farley (Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation)
Michael Foot, M.P.
Kathleen Gough (Anthropologist, University of British Columbia)
Dorothy Hodgkin (Nobel prize-winner)
Thomas Hodgkin (Emeritus Fellow, Balliol College, Oxford)
Ernest Mandel (Marxist economist)
Harry Magdoff (*Monthly Review*)
Ralph Miliband (Senior Lecturer in Politics, L.S.E.)
John Saville (Reader in Economic History, University of Hull)
Fred Scott (*Monthly Review*)

APPEAL TO THE PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN Through Mr. Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, Chief Minister for Sind

It has become necessary to make a direct personal appeal to the President in the matter of the current critical labour situation and lawlessness prevailing throughout the industrial sector of Pakistan. We do this with confidence in our President and belief that an immediate solution will be found so that the integrity of the national economy is saved from collapse.

Despite our desire to promote genuine trade union movement and implementation of the New Labour Policy, the militant elements within the trade union movement, individually and severally, have created conditions not only beyond the control of individual mills in the entire Landhi Industrial Area but have made the local administration ineffective and the workers almost run a parallel authority and are in complete control of some of the plants. It may be mentioned here that the local administration have been apprised by the individual units from time to time of the extreme critical situation.

In brief, we give below some of the problems that confront us today:-

- (i) The control of industrial units is not in the hands of Management. Due to lack of protection, it is spreading to an extent of complete take-over of the industrial units, one by one.
- (ii) Under such conditions, excessive and extortionist demands are made by workers, such as expulsion from plants of managerial, technical and supervisory personnel, excessive wage-rise demands and cessation of financial nature impossible to be met, breach of agreements and counter-demands, acts of violence, assault, restraint, wrongful confinement, expulsion, damage to property and production, go-down and other unfair practices, gross indiscipline within plants and conditions of lawlessness outside plants, hindrance to clearance transport and delivery of goods meant for local sale and export, loss in production, export decline, quality claims from foreign buyers and otherwise conditions of chaos as managements are rendered ineffective.
- (iii) The managements live under conditions of fear and terror and in consequence thereof, are not in a position to effectively implement the various labour laws or to restore industry to its feet and make its desired contribution to revive and reactivate national economy.
- (iv) It is a common practice that agreements are unilaterally torn up by workers and demands and fresh demands are made, in utter disregard of the provisions of law or principles of equity. The image of the nation and the building up of the country's economy is not a matter of concern to them, except fomenting and furthering disorder at every conceivable opportunity.

We make a fervent and earnest appeal to the President for immediate intervention. It is necessary, in the last fading moments of industry, to break through this immediately to avert complete break-down of the industrial sector, the backbone of our national economy. The past few months are replete with examples of law grave moments in the life of our nation have been turned into prospects of peace by your direct appeal to the people and here grave problems and perils met with acts of courage and determination and forces of lawlessness waned away and harnessed to peace.

We have faith in the stature of the President and consider him as the man of the moment who can reclaim and salvage and also believe that our appeal made in the national interest will not go in vain as it is made by us as Pakistanis and nationalists, and not as employers only.

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Huseln Industries Ltd.
Nagarla Textile Mills Ltd.
Olympia Spg. & Wvg. Mills Ltd.

This 'Appeal' is taken from the 30 July issue of *Dawn*, a daily paper in Pakistan, and is largely self-explanatory. Since the independence of Bangladesh all industry in Pakistan has been working at only 30 per cent of total capacity, resulting in massive unemployment, lay-offs, etc. In consequence many factories have been occupied by workers, some factory owners liquidated, etc. This has created a situation where the effects of the social crisis are felt by every strata of society. A three-day conference was recently held in Islamabad consisting of representatives of both labour and capital with the Government acting as an 'honest broker'. Despite the fact that most of the trade unionists represented declared that they were pro-Government, they also made it clear that they were in principle opposed to the capitalist system.

It is in this pre-revolutionary situation, where the entire structure of the Pakistani state seems to be collapsing, that Bhutto is now so anxious to re-establish trade links with both Bangladesh and India.

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP

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

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As the fight against redundancies spreads

OCCUPATION HITS BRITISH LEYLAND

Workers at Transport Equipment (Thornycroft) in Basingstoke, Hampshire, began an indefinite occupation of the factory last Tuesday (15 August). At a mass meeting of the 1200 workers held at 9.00a.m. inside the factory only 3 votes were cast against the recommendation of the shop stewards' committee, said Mr Pat Farrelly (District Secretary of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions) on Tuesday night. And immediately after the meeting, workers established complete control over the whole factory from the board room to the gates, ousting both Thornycroft management and representatives from Eaton Corporation, the firm that is due to take over the plant on 1 October.

REDUNDANCIES

The decision to seize the plant comes over two months after British Leylands' management at Thornycroft's first announced that the firm was to be sold off and 344 workers made redundant. As explained in the last issue of *The Red Mole*, British Leyland have sold the site to a property "developing" company called English & Continental for £2½ million. Eatons however, are only interested in operating the transmission section of the factory (making gear-boxes on contract to BLMC), with the result that 344 workers from the non-transmission section were told that they would be made redundant.

These moves by BLMC are clearly part of their plans to "rationalise" and "streamline" in preparation for entry into the Common Market. Thornycroft's is the sixth factory in the BLMC "empire" to be sold off in this way, and over the last two years BLMC have made thousands of workers redundant. The first response of Thornycroft workers was to vote overwhelmingly to reject the redundancies. But no perspectives for a struggle against the redundancies were put forward by the shop stewards committee at that time. In fact, the whole development of the struggle has been marked at every stage by the extreme caution (not to say pessimism) of the local rank-and-file leadership. For a period they clearly thought that the only thing they could possibly get support for was a fight for higher redundancy payments.

LCDTU INITIATIVE

In contrast, the local Liason Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions (whose political programme was published in *The Red Mole* 43) came out immediately with a clear stand on the issue. In their weekly bulletin (*The Spark*) which goes out to all the major factories in the town, they said: "In order to give real meaning to the Thornycroft workers' decision not to accept the redundancy notices, we suggest that the shop stewards committee needs to call on the BLMC combine committee to organise solidarity actions throughout the corporation, to call on the local labour and trade union movement to organise solidarity actions throughout Basingstoke, and to recommend an occupation of the factory by all Thornycroft workers (to prevent any further movement of plant by the management). This sort of approach is the only one that can prepare the ground for imposing upon the bosses a solution which is in the interests of the workers concerned: that is **WORK-SHARING WITH NO LOSS OF PAY**. If there isn't very much work the best thing workers can do is force the employers to share out what little there is so that our ranks are not divided into employed and unemployed. By maintaining our own unity in this way, we can also ensure that this work-



Occupation Committee hard at work in Thornycroft's boardroom

sharing does not result in any loss of pay as well".

Momentum began to gather for a fight against the redundancies themselves. The following week a meeting of local trade unionists and Labour Party members came out in favour of calling on the local Labour controlled council to support "any action that may be taken by Thornycroft workers to protect their jobs".

WORK TO RULE

Encouraged by this kind of support, but still tending to be pessimistic about the outcome of the struggle, the shop stewards committee put a recommendation to a mass meeting on 7 July (that is one month after the redundancies were announced by BLMC) that Thornycroft workers should start operating a work-to-rule in support of the following demands:

- 1) That Thornycroft's remain part of BLMC;
- 2) That there be no redundancies except for volunteers, who must be kept on full pay by BLMC until they find alternative employment.

This recommendation was accepted by the meeting, but not without some workers calling for an immediate occupation. So the fight began with a work-to-rule — a weapon which in any other kind of struggle would have been extremely effective at Thornycroft's (since it has the effect of reducing production to about 10 per cent) but which in a fight against the closure of the factory was clearly inadequate from the start. The local leadership undoubtedly saw it as the only basis on which they could maintain the unity of the workers involved. And we should note that there were good tactical reasons why it would probably have been a mistake to have recommended an immediate occupation. The annual two-week holiday was just coming up, and the BLMC Combine shop stewards committee had not, as yet, shown what it would do to help in a practical way in the event of an occupation.

At this point, the LCDTU ran an article explaining the different possible tactics in the struggle — work-to-rule, strike and occupation — and why the tactic of occupation was the only one with any real chance of success. To the best of our knowledge no one had made any

attempt to do this up until this time, and even now, when local trade union officials like Pat Farrelly claim it was their plan all along to try to get an occupation, they explain their "tactics" in purely mechanical terms: with the work-to-rule, work would run out and then workers would be "forced" to consider occupying the factory, etc.

NATIONAL STRIKE

Support for the idea of an occupation was growing, but the decisive factor which finally encouraged the Thornycroft shop stewards to recommend an occupation was the response from the Combine shop stewards committee. Early on in the struggle, motions of support had been passed and all Thornycroft work had been blacked throughout the Combine. But now came the decision to organise a mass picket outside Thornycroft's on 14 August and a one day strike throughout the Combine on 28 August (although a Bank holiday, BLMC work this day). The Combine Committee had decided that Thornycroft's was the place where they would try to call a halt to BLMC's policy of rationalisation.

Delegations came from 21 factories for this picket — all the major local factories, as well as factories in the BLMC combine. Speakers at a mass meeting of the picket held on waste ground near the factory gate stressed the organised strength of the workers in the Combine, and that it was now the time to say of BLMC's rationalisation, "Enough's enough" — there must be no more factory closures, Thornycroft's was where it must stop. It was not just a question of 344 redundant workers, they said, but of the effect that allowing BLMC to get away with such a blatant breach of agreement would have on all future relations between workers and management, both in BLMC and in Basingstoke.

WORKERS' VETO

But what really makes the occupation at Thornycroft's so important is that the seizure of the plant is designed to throw a spanner in the works of capitalist rationalisation. It is not a question merely of a novel tactic for pushing up wages, but of the seizure of a capitalist property in order to prevent it being disposed of in a way which is harmful to the interests of the workers involved.

It is, in other words, the beginning of an attempt to impose a workers' veto on one of the most fundamental processes of capitalism — the tendency to rationalise. As such it can become a focal point for the whole struggle against unemployment.

As Dick Wolfe (local TASS official) put it at the mass picket the day before the occupation began: "We have to make a stand against the so-called economic argument that profits are good and that more profits mean more jobs. In fact, the continuous search for more profits today merely means more unemployment".

Paul Hunter
All donations should be sent to: Thornycroft Shop Stewards Fund, c/o A.U.E.W. 2 New Street, Andover, Hants.

IRELAND (From page 1)

The decision to end Internment within the next few weeks has been part of the same propaganda campaign. Far from this flowing directly out of the present situation it is designed to help Whitelaw keep control of this situation. Internment was one of the worst failures which British Imperialism has suffered in Ireland. The internees could have been released long ago, and internment thrown into the dustbin of history along with the gun-boat and Colonel Blimp. Two factors delayed this: the likely effects on the Protestant extremists; and the usefulness of the internees as political hostages, who could be traded off in an effort to buy good will from the Catholic population. As Whitelaw is now playing the card of an end to internment it is because he has very few cards left to play, and has staked a lot on a very risky gamble.

CONFERENCE AND COMPROMISE

Whitelaw plans for a conference in September that will come out with some kind of compromise solution to the crisis in the North, which will then be used to try and fragment the support for the IRA in the Catholic ghettos, isolating the IRA and permitting the British army to get on top of the 'terrorists'. The eagerness with which the SDLP has accepted his plans means that this solution will be pushed forward with great vigour in the next weeks. But already problems are developing for Whitelaw. Since he desires to strengthen the middle class centre of Northern Irish politics he is calling a conference of those parties which were represented at Stormont; but Stormont at the time of direct rule was completely unrepresentative of the political changes which have swept the North since the last Six County general election. Completely new political formations have been thrown up since then: the Unionist Party has been irretrievably shattered; the SDLP has been stitched together out of a group of individual Catholic politicians; and the Provisional Republican movement has gained mass support from the minority.



SDLP's Hume with friend: almost arm in arm

Already the pressure is on to extend the basis of the conference. Ian Paisley took advantage of the cancellation of the Apprentice Boys of Derry Walk to call an "unofficial" walk which he then addressed with a call for a united loyalist voice to be heard at the talks. The Loyalist Association of Workers has been making noises about the unrepresentative nature of a conference which does not include the new and powerful Protestant organisations which have sprung up in the last few months. On the other flank, Paddy Kennedy, the Republican Labour Party Stormont MP, has demanded a seat at the table for both sections of the Republican movement.

PROTESTANT PRESSURE

Whitelaw's plans to swing a section of the Catholic minority behind the SDLP through ending internment might conceivably succeed, provided he can maintain stability. But by his own actions he has ensured that an important factor of instability will continue. The invasion of the free areas has eased off pressure from the Protestant right, but the incident which led to that invasion — the clash in Lenadoon Avenue — merely ensured that similar pressure would be re-exerted if the conference should propose any real erosion of the Protestant ascendancy. And if Whitelaw yield to pressure from the representatives of the mass of the Protestants then he will ensure that the conference will be unable to propose any solution which will break up the unity of the minority. On top of the threat from the Orange ultras, the Provisionals could escalate their military struggle to a level which would exacerbate the crisis, and make the holding of the conference very difficult.

It is because the basic contradictions within the Six County state continue that we can forecast the likelihood of continuing crisis and struggle. And despite the propaganda from the British press it is necessary not to permit the de-escalation of the solidarity movement in Britain. It is precisely at times like the present that continuous, patient activity is needed.



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