



MINERS MUST PREPARE STRIKE

The decision of the National Union of Miners executive to reject the latest offer from the Coal Board sharply poses the need to prepare a national miners strike.

But the NUM executive failed to face up to this situation. Instead of calling a strike ballot, which would have given them the go-ahead to organise a strike for the beginning of the new year, they simply decided to continue the present overtime ban.

The Coal Board offer was an insult. It offered nothing of value to the average miner and his family, struggling to keep their heads above the flood of rising prices.

The suggested redistribution of Phase 3 rises was a crude attempt to split the miners. It would have taken cash away from those few who could get anything like a decent rise under Phase 3, but still leave the average miner with a miserly increase of only £3. But this is the best the NCB can offer under Phase 3.

To win their claim the miners will have to do much more than hit production at the pits. They must bust Phase 3 - and that means launching an all-out fight and sending out flying pickets to rally the entire working class for an onslaught on the Tories.

The only value of the overtime ban is as a lead-up to a national strike. But this must be understood by every rank-and-file miner and must shape how the ban is run. Coal stocks across the country must be run down - but the energies and savings of miners must be preserved for the struggle ahead.

There is one effective way to do this. Rank-and-file committees should be set up in every pit to run the

overtime ban. They should be clear that the ban is only a lead up to a national strike, and should enforce or relax the ban as is required to best prepare for this. Their rule of thumb must be: maximum damage to production - minimum damage to miners pay packets. These committees should make contact with other local unions - especially the transport unions - to get their cooperation in blacking coal movements.

The Coal Board has taken a tough line, refusing to pay men for any time lost because of the ban. They hope to provoke a series of localised confrontations which will exhaust the miners before any national strike can be launched. Already a number of such struggles have taken place.

The establishment of overtime-ban committees can help to avoid this danger, but the crucial thing is to channel the frustration and anger of the rank-and-file in the direction of a national strike. They must have a sense that such a strike is really on the cards, that work is being done to prepare for it, and feel that they are directly involved in these preparations.

The National Executive has failed to do this. So it becomes an especially

PREPARE STRIKE

urgent task for rank-and-file militants. Mass rallies, demonstrations and public meetings in support of a national strike must be held in every area, with the massive participation of local miners and the involvement of other workers - in particular groups like the engineers.

Local conferences and joint meetings with representatives of other workers about to go into struggle must be set up to work out practical plans for united action against the Tories.

Steps such as these will make it impossible for the executive to dither any longer, ensure massive rank-and-file support for a national strike, and can make the miners struggle the focus of a united working class offensive against the Tories - a general strike.

ENGINEERS

Leading engineering convenors have taken an important initiative in the struggle for the national engineering workers claim. They are calling for a national meeting of convenors to be held in Manchester on 14 December.

Such a move has already received support from the Sheffield District Committee of the AUEW, which passed the following motion at its meeting on 13 November:

'That contact be made with other Districts to weld District meetings into a national convenors' meeting through resolutions adopted at District meetings. That the aim of the national convenors meetings be to unify the strategy to prosecute the national engineering claim.'

This call must be taken up immediately by engineering militants everywhere. It should be discussed and supported at

all the upcoming mass meetings of Confederation shop stewards. It can be a major step towards forging rank-and-file leadership in the struggle for the claim, and overcoming the failure of the executive to act.

The campaign for this national convenors' meeting must go hand-in-hand with a campaign for a national strike, and it must not be just a one-off rally: it must establish a continuing body - a national strike coordinating committee - which can provide decisive leadership in the struggle for the claim, and would be accountable to the rank-and-file for its decisions.

Delegates from other groups of workers going into struggle - such as the miners - should be invited to participate in this meeting to discuss the coordination of action.

Such a move would ensure a serious fight for the claim, and allow the engineers to play a leading role in the fight against the Tory Government.

MASS STRUGGLES SHAKE GREECE



Photo: Chris Davies (Report)

Part of the 3,000 strong demonstration which marched to the Greek Embassy on Wednesday

Taking a leaf out of the Chilean junta's book, the colonels' regime in Greece is now using a major Athens stadium to house the hundreds of people arrested over the last week.

At the same time, a number of sources have confirmed that the death toll, officially put at eleven, is more like ten times that number. The severity of the repression, and its blanket nature, indicates just how

vulnerable the junta feels when confronted with the possibility of any mass opposition.

The most striking thing about last week's upsurge was precisely the rapid mass response which it evoked. Starting as a mere protest over purely student issues, it turned with incredible speed into a movement drawing in a wide variety of social layers and demanding nothing less than the

immediate overthrow of the regime. Nothing could have been more calculated to expose the 'liberalisation' farce recently launched by the junta.

The extent to which support mushroomed can be gauged from a report published in the French newspaper *Le Figaro*: 'On Friday morning, 200 students from the University (of Athens), still simply in solidarity with their comrades of the Poly-

technic, marched through the centre of the city ... an hour later, there were 3,000 of them ... by 3 o'clock in the afternoon there were not 3,000 but more than 20,000 people.' Workers, especially from the building trade, were particularly prominent in organising support - so much so that a junta statement on Saturday referred to 'building workers and other known anarchist elements at their head.'

Support also came from high school students, actors, and even peasants from Megara (about 20 miles from Athens) who drove in on their tractors. In the occupied Polytechnic, workers' and peasants' representatives met together with delegates from university and high school struggle

committees in a joint action committee to coordinate the struggle.

It is now clear that the first phase of the struggle is over. The repression unleashed by the regime has won it a temporary respite. But the events of the last week show the tremendous potential for mass struggle which now exists.

In this changing situation international solidarity will have an important role to play in determining the overall balance of forces. Wednesday's demonstration must be only the prelude to further activity around a situation which the British left has been regrettably slow to act upon in the past.

John Marston

No sooner had the prison doors of Chile silenced the screams of the tortured, than the streets of Athens echoed to hoarse shouts of defiance, and the harsh stammer of machine-gun fire.

Week by week this paper has been unmatched for its coverage of the Chilean events. We will provide the same kind of information about Greece. We report not just as an act of revolutionary solidarity, but as part of an international which is involved in resistance to both juntas.

But we need your help if we are to carry on this work, and expand our coverage. Our £200 fund drive target for November now stands at £207.70. This means that we have only had about £45 in the last week. We need a bigger effort to meet the target in November. Don't let us down, send a donation right away to: Red Weekly Fund Drive, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

Building workers explain class struggle to Shrewsbury jury

The trials of building workers' pickets taking place in Shrewsbury have so far run according to form. The prosecution of these militants on conspiracy charges demonstrates vividly the ability of the ruling class to use the law against any workers who organise effective picketing.

In the first leg of the trials, 6 of the Shrewsbury 24 are charged with 'conspiracy to intimidate workers to abstain from work', along with 'unlawful assembly' and 'fighting and making an affray'.

CONSPIRACY

In law a person can be convicted of conspiracy if he merely makes an agreement with someone to do an unlawful act—even if that act is never actually committed. The prosecution in the Shrewsbury cases is not, therefore, primarily concerned to prove that these six men actually committed any violent acts themselves. Their main allegation is that the six went to Shrewsbury with a 'common purpose, an agreement between them to intimidate blacklegs and damage property'. The mere fact that violence occurred and that these six men (all branch secretaries or chairmen) organised the flying pickets is enough to prove their guilt, according to the prosecution.

To show premeditation, the prosecution has had to portray the pickets as a band of hooligans who descended without provocation, beating up anybody and everybody in sight—a 'horde of Apaches', as the prosecutor put it. The defence has, therefore, not simply to rebut the specific charges of the prosecution, but also to show that the pickets were rational men. In doing so, they have had to draw a picture for the jury of what the class struggle is really like.

For example, a reporter for a local newspaper told the court that pickets had threatened to smash his camera and throw him in the river when he tried to photograph them. But, as the defence pointed out, if the men's pictures had appeared in newspapers they would be identified as 'troublemakers' and stand a good chance of being blacklisted throughout the

industry. (Ironically, an important part of police evidence in the case is in the form of photographs).

INSURRECTION

The prosecution has tried to paint a picture of the flying pickets as a kind of small scale insurrection. But this seems to have backfired, inspiring the imagination of some of the employers, and bringing out their true class instincts. One commented that he felt 'very annoyed that we didn't have four machine guns on the top of the site, because that was the only way we could have stopped them'.

The defence have tackled the charge of 'conspiracy' by trying to show that 'leadership' in a workers organisation 'is not the same thing as being a lieutenant or a sergeant issuing instructions'. It may be that in the organisations of the ruling class the commander or the boss determines the actions of those under him; but in a workers organisation, responsibility is collectively shared, with leaders representing the common will, not some power on high that can order people about willy-nilly.

The authorities claim that this is a simple criminal case. The hollowness of this claim is shown by the manoeuvres of the Government to ensure a conviction. For example, earlier this year trials of some of the Shrewsbury 24 in Mold led to acquittals. In part this was due to the defence's use of information about the occupations of proposed jurors to get a jury that had some trade unionists on it, and therefore understood the issues involved. In the Shrewsbury trial, however, the defence—at the instruction of the Government—was refused this information.

If the Shrewsbury trials are simply an everyday criminal prosecution, why is it that the only person to threaten any really serious violence in Shrewsbury last year has been neither charged nor investigated? This is the man who threatened pickets with a shotgun. Yes, that's right—he's a witness for the prosecution.

Transport workers must fight to win passenger support

London commuters got a taste of things to come last Monday, when militant train drivers, members of ASLEF, staged an unofficial one-day stoppage over their negotiations with British Rail for a new pay structure.

Despite an appeal from ASLEF general secretary, Ray Buckton (one of the leading lights of the TUC 'left'), not to take any action, train drivers from nine Eastern and Southern region depots struck. As a result commuter services were badly hit, with a majority of the city's 300,000 commuters being affected in one way or another.

Further talks between the union and British Rail are scheduled to take place on 30 November, and there will be considerable pressure for all-out industrial action from the ASLEF membership if an improved offer is not forthcoming.

However, this is only half the picture. ASLEF train drivers on the London underground are involved in wage negotiations, as are London bus drivers. Already delegate conferences of the bus and tube drivers have called on their union executives to make plans for coordinated industrial action in support of their claims.

A joint tube-bus-rail strike in London would be a powerful blow against the Tory pay laws. Such an action, given the number of people in London who depend on public transport and the looming crisis in petrol supplies, could bring many of the functions of government, banking and commerce to a virtual standstill.

The fact that a transport strike affects so

many people will be used by the Tory Government to whip up 'public opinion' against transport workers: but this is a double-edged weapon. Many members of this so-called 'public' are white-collar workers—teachers, local government workers, civil servants, clerical workers—who are caught as much as anyone in the Tory pincers of wage control and inflation. Moreover, the drastic deterioration of public transport—due to the inability of successive capitalist Governments to provide adequate finance for such services—is of deep concern to them.

Far from rallying eagerly around to back up the Tories in the event of a strike, many passengers could be won to support the strikers. Students—most of whom depend on public transport and many of whom study in central London—could be an important force in organising such support.

It is important that close working links at the rank-and-file level be forged between all the unions involved in public transport in London. They can then start to lay plans for joint strike action, no matter what moves their respective union executives are prepared to consider. At the same time, they should seriously consider immediate steps to win support from passengers.

An all-out London transport strike would be a powerful weapon against the Tory Government. If it came at the same time as industrial action by the miners and engineers, it would be an almost certain guarantee that a general strike to drive the Tories from office was underway.

Brian Slocock



Scenes of law and order outside the court at Shrewsbury

Call for Coventry stoppage in support of Triumph

With the final breakdown of negotiations last Wednesday (14 November), and the official closure of Triumph Meriden on Friday, the fight at this Coventry motor cycle factory has reached a crucial stage. The occupation of the factory continues, and the 1,750 workers have locked away 2,500 completed motor cycles, worth two million dollars on the American market (which is at its peak).

Dennis Poore the managing director of Manganese Bronze, (which has taken over the Norton Villiers Triumph combine, owners of Triumph Meriden), ominously commented to the press that he 'hoped' that the dispute would not lead to the use of thugs to break the picket line, as at Chrysler.

On Monday a 400-strong mass picket was hurriedly organised. Delegates from most major factories in Coventry pledged support for as long as the struggle at Triumph continues.

Reports on the negotiations with the company were given by Leslie Huckfield, Labour MP for Nuneaton, and Bill Lapworth, T&GWU district official. All Huckfield could do was to denounce Poore as the 'butcher of the British motor cycle industry.' There was no mention of the plan to set up a workers' co-operative, in which they had placed such faith a few weeks ago.

The eight weeks of negotiations have shown clearly the reasons for the Triumph closure. Wage levels at

Meriden are a third higher than at BSA Small Heath, Birmingham, another member of the NVT group.

Sale of the Meriden site, worth £2 million, is almost complete. And a grant of £4.8 million from the Department of Trade and Industry will enable new tracks and machinery to be built at Small Heath, so that production can be transferred from Meriden.

There has never been any question of Poore selling the name Triumph, or the marketing network in the USA, to a workers co-operative. The only strategy that Huckfield and Lapworth can now offer is a petition demanding an enquiry into the British motor cycle industry and the use of the £4.8 million of taxpayers money.

On Monday only John Fisher, the ASTMS district official, offered any real way forward. He called for mass industrial action in Coventry, not simply financial assistance—a one day, or week long, stoppage would put pressure from Coventry employers on Poore.

The shop stewards committee needs money to finance the fight, and mass support in the event of police attempts to evict the workers. Donations and messages of solidarity should be sent to: Shop Stewards Committee, Triumph Motor Cycles, Meriden Works, Allesley, Coventry.

Chris Banner



Some of the 2,500 motor cycles held by the Triumph workers. Will they sell them?

15,000 Leeds engineers strike against NIRC

Last Monday 15,000 engineering workers in Leeds struck in protest against the NIRC fine on the AUEW. Several hundred marched through the city for an indoor meeting addressed by Len Edmondson of the national executive.

Edmondson received applause when he reiterated the Union's policy of refusing to recognise the Court. But he was corrected by a speaker from the floor when he congratulated the Leeds AUEW District Committee on organising the strike.

In fact the DC originally refused to back the one-day strike on 5 November, and called on the Union to take part in the NIRC proceedings. After being deluged with protests from branches and shop stewards committees, they were forced to call a mass meeting of all union members on 11 November, which took the decision to hold the strike. This

represented a big step forward for the AUEW in Leeds, and a defeat for the right-wing DC.

It was clear at the meeting that many workers wanted to discuss how to fight for the current wage claim. A resolution from the floor was passed unanimously, calling for a meeting of all Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions shop stewards in the district, to be held in working hours, as soon as the Engineering Employers Federation replies to the claim.

Gordon Astberg, of Leeds No. 3 Branch, moving the resolution, stressed the need for the engineering workers to link up with the miners. He said that a combined struggle could not only win their demands, but could threaten the existence of the Tory Government.

David Cameron

As they meet in conference this weekend Students must join the fight against the Tories!

Moves by students to step up the fight against the Tories' attacks on their living standards will be made this weekend at the Margate conference of the National Union of Students.

In particular, militants will be urging closer involvement with the struggles of the millions of working people also under attack, with a perspective of centralising the struggle towards a general strike to kick out the Tories.

UNPRECEDENTED

This term has already seen a wave of student occupations unprecedented for the time of year - Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds and Sussex have been among those colleges fighting for more and better accommodation, while at Oxford and North London Poly action has centred around the need for strong student unions to organise the struggle. Postgraduates, too, have taken strike action for the first time at Edinburgh University, demanding an end to their use as cheap teaching labour.

The Executive of the National Union of Students, however, have remained up to their eyebrows in the mock 'confrontation' with the Tories in talks about the grants situation.



Occupation of Hornsey precinct, Middlesex Poly

Action has been limited to protest demonstrations and 'mock weddings' to show the Tories that they have the support of students in the negotiations.

'WASTE OF TIME'

Several Area Committees of the NUS - notably Reading and Oxford - have recognised that these are a substitute for a real fight, and have refused to mobilise for what they consider to be a 'waste of time'. Another sign of discontent came at a recent NUS delegate rally, when a third of the 750 delegates walked out as the NUS President, John Randall, stood up to speak.

Another flop, though officially described as a success, was the joint meeting of students and trade unionists sponsored by the NUS and the Communist Party-dominated London Federation of Trades Councils and held at Congress House. Those who attended were greeted with the sight of an empty hall, which was eventually filled with a few dozen trade union bureaucrats after a hurried search round the building. This contrasts with the real solidarity and links built up between students and workers in many areas - the activity around the trial of the Shrewsbury building workers and the Footprints struggle in Sheffield, the various mobilisations against the National Front, and the £50 raised by Cowley workers for the Oxford student occupation are all examples of such *solidarity in action*.

WEARING THIN

The Communist Party will doubtless attempt once more to persuade delegates to endorse the Executive's line of 'Focus on the Triennial Review' (the name given to the talks with the Tories). Any criticism will be denounced as an 'attempt to split the student movement'.

Such rhetoric, however, is beginning to wear a little thin. The Executive's line completely failed to defend last year's rent strikes from the vicious attacks of the college authorities, and now all they can urge is an alliance with the very same people on the grounds that the 'real' fight is against the Government. Perhaps the miners should go for an alliance with the Coal Board instead of an overtime ban and strike!

The point is, of course, that while even such bodies as the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals are prepared to give nominal support to student demands on grants, they are basically and fundamentally united with the Tories on one, key question: *the need to run higher education as cheaply and smoothly as possible*. That is why their 'support' goes hand in hand with price and rent increases, a failure to provide sufficient accommodation to match the increase in student numbers, and finally a vicious crackdown on militants ranging from threats of expulsion to summonses and injunctions in the courts.

NATIONAL BASIS

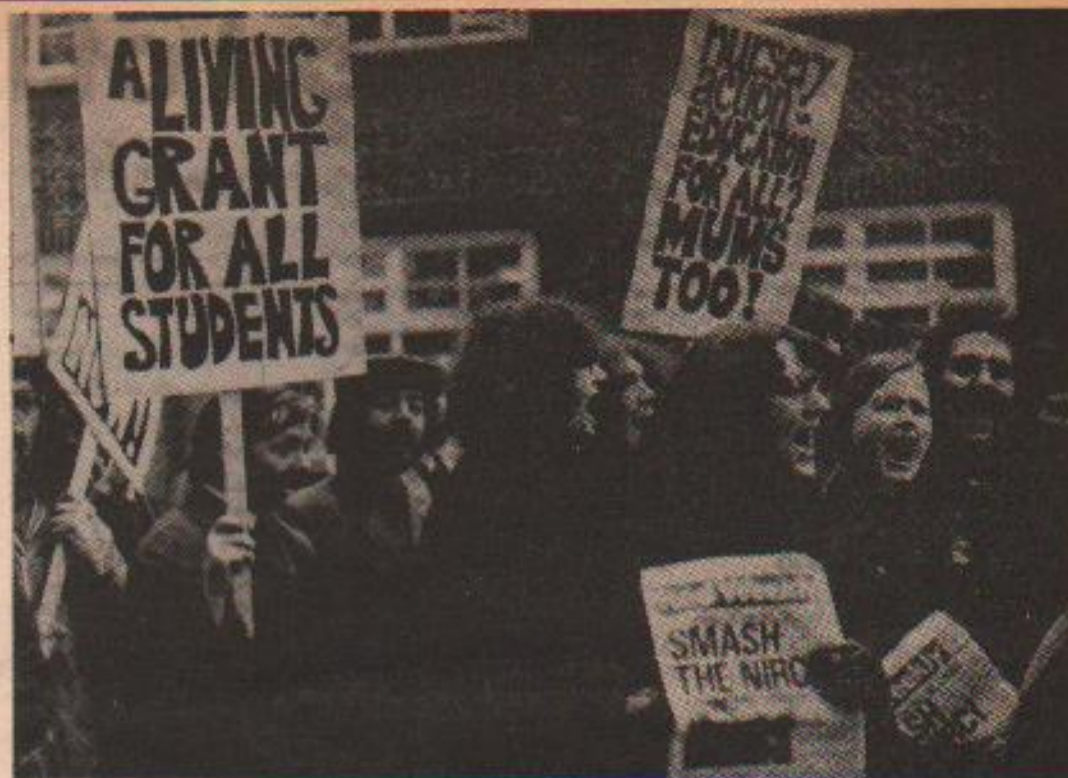
It is already clear that many college delegations at the conference will be opposing the Executive's handling of the grants campaign. Some are demanding that all actions should be carried out on a national basis, in contrast to the fragmented way in which it has so far been conducted this term.

Southampton University, for example, is proposing not only that there should be a nationally co-ordinated rent strike next term, but also that all money withheld should be kept in a National Rent Strikes Fund. The question of legal attempts to seize this money would thus be a matter for the whole student movement rather than just the isolated college. This proposal is a move in the right direction, and could greatly assist the effectiveness of the campaign - but only if a decisive break is made with the 'pressure politics' that have predominated so far.

effective mass picketing, occupation of the factory, and for an all-out district strike to win the struggle. The DC argues that an area mobilisation to win the strike would be a 'diversion' from the fight around the National Claim. This attitude, associated as it is with the DC's blanket endorsement of the National Executive's inactivity over the NIRC fines, is now wearing a bit thin. They are clearly afraid that any full-scale mobilisation will increasingly take the struggle as a whole out of their hands.

Despite all this, the strikers are still solid. No-one has gone back into the factory, and after many months only 17 of the 101 strikers have left for other jobs. They have agreed that if they lose the fight over Wilson's reinstatement they will look for other jobs, rather than go back into that factory.

The strikers have opposed the worst of the



Students on the march earlier this month

TWO MAJOR THRUSTS

Just such a break will be proposed by militants fresh from struggle at Leeds, Oxford, Sussex and elsewhere. These delegates will be arguing for two major thrusts.

First, the closest possible links must be forged between students and workers for the struggle against Phase 3. Students should work towards setting up support committees, which could contribute to picketing pools, collect money, and fight in the student body for the resources of students unions and colleges to be turned over to workers in struggle. There will also be a call for NUS to centralise the activities of these support committees, so that solidarity action is as effective as possible on a national scale.

Secondly, they will stress the need for students to make their own contribution to the struggle against the Tory Government, by making sure that the fight over the Grants Campaign really hits the Tories hard.

ALL-OUT CAMPAIGN

How can this be done? It is clear that the low level of the student grant is only one factor in their declining living standards, along with rising food prices, higher rents, worsening conditions, inadequate teaching facilities, shortage of space, etc. Any serious fight, therefore, must obviously be directed against all these attacks.

This means that the Grants Campaign must be seen as only *part* of the struggle against the ruling class's policy in higher education, and those who implement that policy, the college authorities. The NUS Conference should therefore mark the beginning of moves to prepare for an *all-out campaign*, including national rent strikes and occupations, in the spring term.

Militant tactics must be used to back up demands for an end to loan financing (where students pay once for the cost of accommodation and then again towards the cost of accommodation to be built in the future), subsidies for married women students and unmarried mothers to be provided jointly by college authorities and local councils, a freeze on prices in the colleges, no 'rationalisation' through redundancies, and so on. It is by winning these kinds of demands in the colleges that the fight is really taken home to the Tories, not by protest actions which can be dismissed as of little actual consequence.

NATIONAL DEMANDS

It is in this context of continuous activity, where the threat of disruption to the educational system is constantly present, that the national demands of the campaign can be most effectively raised. Instead of being sidetracked into depending on the 'pressure' exerted by such intermediaries as the Vice-Chancellors, we can by these means force the Tories to listen to our demands *directly*.

At the moment, the NUS Executive is not even discussing an offer with the Tories, but simply the extent to which students are going to lose out this time round. They must be forced to pull out of these talks. Similarly, the artificial distinctions between the issues of grants, housing, and Tory cutbacks in higher education, imposed as a smokescreen by the Executive to conceal their bankrupt pressure politics, must be decisively ended.

With this kind of orientation to the coming fight, students can both win the struggle for a higher grant and effectively play their part in finishing off the Tories.

RAY BURNS

ESSEX OCCUPATION

Students occupying the administration block at the University of Essex have found confidential files which contain information about the political activities of students on the campus.

The occupation was begun on Monday by 100 students, and subsequently was supported by a 500-strong Union General Meeting. The University has issued writs against nine of the 200 who are at present in the occupation.

The demands of the students are:

1. An immediate 15% reduction in catering prices,

with no staff redundancies.

2. Firm guarantees that catering and accommodation facilities will be expanded to cope with the expected increase in student numbers.

3. An immediate 55% cut in the rents charged at two houses owned by the University. They are also demanding that there should be a full discussion of the finances of the University.

The students are seeking support from Colchester Trades Council, from local tenants organisations and the trade union movement.

FOOTPRINT STRIKERS STILL UNDEFEATED

The six month old strike at Footprint Tools in Sheffield, which started over the sacking of a shop steward Pete Wilson, has brought into sharp relief the political problems facing the local working class movement.

The District Committee of the AUEW has consistently opposed the only tactics which could have ensured victory: it has refused demands by the stewards for continuous,

DC's moves. When, for example, the DC ordered them to end picketing altogether, on the pretext that continued picketing would prejudice the recommendations of an 'independent inquiry' for which the DC had campaigned, the Footprint stewards continued to picket transport.

For the moment, some strikers have illusions about the 'independent inquiry' but it cannot retain any credibility for long. The tenacity of the strikers, the effective blacking of goods, the strength of the union in the area which has prevented other skilled men from seizing the jobs of the strikers, and the extension by the District Committee of the district levy for a further period, all means that the Footprint workers are far from defeated. The one important weakness of the strikers all along has been that, despite their opposition and mistrust of the DC, they have never openly

campaigned in the stewards movement for their own positions. Overcoming this weakness is now more important than ever.

On 30 November, the last of the pickets who were arrested when the Special Patrol Group was brought in to smash a one-day area mass picket at Footprints, come up for trial. This should be made the focus for a massive solidarity action which will make clear to the employers that Footprint has not been forgotten. Footprint workers should begin a campaign now for a mass picket outside the courthouse, and for a commitment from shop stewards committees that if the inquiry is unfavourable mass picketing will be resumed. If the strikers are prepared to take this independent action they can take a big step towards winning reinstatement of Pete Wilson and victory for the Footprint workers.

JIM WILSON

THE DILEMMA OF POPULAR UNITY

Jean-Pierre Beauvais, member of the editorial board of our French sister paper *Rouge*, recently returned from Chile after being sent there immediately following the coup. During his stay, he had discussions not only with the comrades of the Fourth International in Chile, but also with militants of the various parties which made up Popular Unity, as well as with the leaderships of the organisations of the Chilean vanguard—in particular, the MIR. Here he looks at the parties of Popular Unity.

In the story of the last days of the Popular Unity government, there was one little-known but crucial development: a split between the various groups making up Popular Unity became more or less a reality on the evening of Saturday, 8 September.

That day the leaderships of the different parties met together under the chairmanship of Salvador Allende. It was not a moment for doubts or hesitation. The economic, social and political crisis brought on by the sabotaging activities of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists had reached such a stage that extremely urgent measures were required: in a few days time, for example, there would be no more bread in Santiago—stocks of flour were running out, the lorry-owners' strike was completely effective, and no currency was available to make any purchases from abroad. A few days more, and this totally paralysed country would be in the grip of famine.

Something had to be done—with the utmost speed, particularly as rumours of an impending military coup were gathering momentum. The Communist Party was the most aggressive... in these closed confines: it demanded the immediate opening of negotiations with the Christian Democrats and further, in the next few hours, that the Christian Democrats should be invited to join the Government.

As for the harsh conditions laid down by the Christian Democrats? 'We will have to accept them all, more or less. It is the only way to win back the confidence of the middle classes', said the general secretary of the Communist Party during the meeting.

END OF EXPERIMENT

In point of fact, acceptance of the conditions laid down by the Christian Democrats for entering any new coalition would clearly have meant the end of Popular Unity and the kind of reformist experiment which it represented. What were the main demands of the Christian Democrats? A return to 'order' was the first, ie an end to the workers' and peasants' mobilisations, using repression if necessary. Industry must be set moving again—the factory occupations must be ended, and a period of intensive production must be organised. Those factories whose nationalisation hadn't been formally agreed must be returned to their previous owners. There must be strict, guaranteed limits on the extent of the agrarian reform.

In the sector which would remain nationalised, he committees for the mobilisation and self-organisation of the workers must be dissolved and replaced with a kind of participation.

In fact, it would have meant a return to the

most moderate kind of bourgeois reformism, with the kind of measures proposed by Tomic, the Christian Democrat candidate against Allende in the presidential elections of 1970.

That is what the Chilean CP was fighting for on Saturday, 8 September—'to save what is most important', as Corvalan was to repeat several times during the meeting.

Furthermore, in relation to the lorry-owners' strike, the Communist Party insisted on a policy of clemency once order was restored and the middle classes reassured. No measures must be taken against the trouble makers!

In putting forward such an orientation, the Communist Party clearly defined itself as the right wing of Popular Unity—the right wing, inasmuch as it was ready to make any and every concession to win back the confidence of the bourgeoisie, big and small.

ARM THE WORKERS

Supporting it in such an orientation were the Radical Party (affiliated to the Socialist International), and the section of MAPU (Movement for United Popular Action) led by Gazmuri. Opposed to it was the Socialist Party, or rather its general secretary Altamirano, who relied for his position on the support of the left wing, the revolutionary sections inside the Socialist Party, as well as getting support from the MIR. For him, it was now or never. The next day he was to come out with it in a particularly belligerent speech at the National Stadium. It is out of the question, he said, to negotiate with the enemy and its representative, Christian Democracy. Only an increased mobilisation of the working class, arming them against the fascist attacks, together with a solemn appeal to the soldiers to line up with the workers, can throw back the military and reaction in general.

This general analysis was well-founded and correct. However, in some ways it was irresponsible. For Altamirano proposed no concrete steps to the workers, only brave words.

The mobilisation of the working class must be stepped up? But on what basis? With what central specific aims? The workers must be armed? But why only as a defensive measure? And how? What arms? Who would drill them?

To all these questions, basic to any such orientation, Altamirano gave no answers. He remained as vague and woolly as the party which he led, and which would in any case have prevented him from taking the lead in such a revolutionary process.

In relation to the lorry-owners, Altamirano defended the idea of a tough policy, with



Popular Unity rally: Altamirano with glasses, and Corvalan on his left

measures which would make an example of them. The government must in this way show its determination and its authority to deal with these reactionary petty bourgeois layers.

Between these two extremes, Allende tried to steer a middle course, borrowing elements from each. He was for a certain toughness with the lorry-owners, and for the opening of negotiations with the Christian Democrats, although he was in favour of driving a hard bargain with them. He proposed at the same time to negotiate once more for a military presence in the government. In this he was supported by the right wing of the Socialist Party and the section of MAPU led by Garretón (or at least its representatives at the meeting).

SEMBLANCE OF UNITY

It was not much, but he was in a strong position, for he alone could maintain a semblance of unity among a divided left, torn between opposing strategies. But this role, which he had played from one crisis to the next over the past few weeks and months, was losing its effect as the situation became more and more pressing.

On Saturday, 8 September, the leaderships of the different parties of the left went their separate ways without reaching any agreement. The split, though kept secret, had become a reality.

A further meeting was planned for 11 September, at 9.30 am at the Moneda Palace, to see if a compromise could be reached. It was never to take place...

The meeting on 8 September has an importance which extends beyond this single occasion. The positions put forward when the crisis was at its sharpest are an extraordinary microcosm of the whole of the Popular Unity experience—in particular the divisions which ran through it in the last few months of its existence, and the total paralysis to which it led. The split on the evening of 8 September—whose details were only too well known by the generals—led to the fixing of a definite date for the coup, for which detailed plans had already been drawn up.

This split, this crisis, was to totally absorb the attention of the party leaderships between 8 and 11 September. This, as well as their mistaken analyses, meant that they were completely taken by surprise when the coup was launched.

It is enough to give one example of this. In the ranks of the Socialist Party, preparations had been made for a kind of 'state of emergency'. In this 'state of emergency', the militants who were members of the 'special brigades', armed groups drawn from the ranks of the party, were supposed to be operational, gathered together and

THE PRICE OF 'RECONSTRUCTION'

In the first weeks after the coup, the junta succeeded in deceiving large sections of workers about its determination to make the working masses pay an extremely high price for the reconstruction of Chilean capitalism.

The official declarations of the first few days were taken rather more seriously than one would have expected, particularly those which talked about the generals' desire 'not to return to the past, to maintain social gains, to improve food supplies, to protect the rights of the workers', etc.

One week after the coup d'etat, when transport (80% strikebound for more than six weeks) was once more functioning normally, wages for the first fortnight in September were paid. At the same time, the junta published a list of officially approved prices for the main essential goods, announced that harsh measures would be taken against those who didn't stick to these prices, and put onto the market supplies of certain rare goods (Nestle products, cream, sugar, etc.) which the State organs of distribution had previously tried to control in order to ensure a fairer allocation for all.

Moreover, all the private producers, all the distributors, who themselves had stocks of these goods, were forced to put them on sale, in a fine 'display of patriotism'.

CRUCIAL PERIOD

Thus for two or three weeks, in most of the towns at least, large sections of the population were able to buy condensed milk, Nescafe, cream, meat (even beef), cigarettes (without having to queue for half an hour), rice, sugar, etc. In this crucial period for the junta, when in order to consolidate its position it had at least to neutralise the masses who had supported Popular Unity, the appearance in the shops of goods which were formerly rare or even non-existent played a very important role, as did the immediate and almost complete disappearance of the black market.

One should also remember that this gigantic operation was accompanied by a frenzied campaign of hate in which every captured militant was presented as a 'suicidal extremist', a 'corrupter of morals', a 'swindler', a 'criminal well known to the police'; each leader of Popular Unity was accused of stealing thousands of dollars of State money, of having hoarded tons of sugar, butter, etc, of having kept dozens of mistresses, of having maintained several luxurious country houses where 'innumerable orgies took place'; each Centre for Agrarian Reform became a 'guerrilla training area'; each factory canteen became a 'stockpile of provisions in preparation for the civil war which Popular Unity was about to launch'; an old sword hung on the wall became an 'arms depot'; a household first-aid box became an 'underground hospital'; and so on.

The daily denunciation, through every possible channel, of dozens of 'Popular Unity scandals' of all kinds (of which some, alas, were true), didn't fail to have an effect and ease the way for the most savage repression which has ever followed a Latin American coup.

For the junta, time hurries on. Their fundamental aim is obviously to rebuild Chilean capitalism. This

means, as quickly as possible, a massive increase in investment, particularly foreign investment, which in turn requires a certain climate of confidence together with a high rate of profit. Politically, this means the outlawing of all working class organisations (which has been done), the dissolution of the trade unions (also done), the liquidation of the leaders of these organisations at all levels (which is being energetically pursued by the armed forces); on the economic plane, it means the immediate reduction of the buying power of the masses through a major devaluation, a freeze on wages, sky-high price rises, an extension of working hours, the return of hundreds of factories to their former owners, and the sacking of thousands of workers.

The freeze on any kind of wage increase came first, before the rash of price rises, at a time when the mass of employees had just got their first September wage packet.

The second measure—devaluation—passed practically unnoticed. No-one in Chile talked of a devaluation. It was simply a question of an 'adjustment in the rate of exchange with the dollar'!

The extension of working hours was accompanied by a big press campaign. At first, Chilean workers were asked to make a 'voluntary' effort in order to assist the 'rebuilding of the country'. After ten days or a fortnight of an intensive campaign on this question, the junta published a decree ending the five-day week, making it compulsory to work four hours on Saturday, and furthermore giving employers 'option' of 'proposing' to their workers two hours extra a day.

The return of the factories has not as yet been completed. The general principles have been worked out. In the near future, the process will unfold whereby hundreds of factories nationalised by the Allende government will be returned to the private sector, including some even whose shares were bought by the State!

PRICES OFFENSIVE

In the second week of October began the most 'delicate' phase of the 'urgent programme' of the junta: the prices offensive.

After previously announcing a freeze on all wage increases, the prices offensive was preceded by a short press campaign, shrill and confused, which announced that in view of the need to 'readjust the prices of some articles', the junta had decided that there should be five monthly wage packets in the three months from October to December, as well as a bonus, which together would mean a wage increase of 90%. This campaign was conducted under the dramatic slogan: 'You won't be able to find a wage anywhere below 12,000 escudos a month' (which is completely untrue, anyway).

To get this aspect of things in perspective, it is necessary to go back a little. From October 1972 to mid-September 1973, the increase in the cost of living came to a little under 300%. However, it should be remembered that the index by which it is calculated dates from the time of the Frei government, since Parliament always refused to up-date it. It is based on the consumption patterns of a middle class family, which don't bear much relation to those of a working class family.

Last April, a general wage increase of 60% was legally ratified. A further increase should have come into force in October, this time of 150% in order to allow workers to catch up with the increase in the cost of living. But at the end of September, despite the official increase in the cost of living of 300% since October 1972, wage levels were only at 160% of their October 1972 figure.

The purchasing power of the Chilean masses had therefore fallen, at least theoretically, by about 50%. However, the Allende government fixed the prices of the goods most in demand by the low-paid workers (more than 70% of the workforce) at a very low level, so that they did not suffer too much from the overall decline in purchasing power. In fact, nearly all the most essential food items escaped the general increase in prices during the year, except for some which were affected by the transport strike (eg potatoes).

CATASTROPHIC

Since the prices offensive unleashed by the junta in October ('a return to real prices'), the loss in the workers' purchasing power has reached catastrophic proportions, particularly as it is the most essential goods which have been most affected. To give a few examples: bread has risen by 207%, milk by 328%, sugar by 380%, tea by 600%, coffee by 1233%.

It is therefore impossible to make any accurate calculation of the increase in the cost of living in October, although it is probably 300 to 400% higher than in the previous month. The purchasing power of the workers in October amounted to only 10% of what it was at the start of the year. The wage increases decreed by the junta will only start to be paid towards the end of November, and they will only double the purchasing power in October, ie raise it from 10 to 20% of its previous level!

All these calculations are of course very rough. To give a concrete idea of the tragic situation in which the Chilean workers find themselves today, the following example is perhaps more useful.

The review *Alimentacion*, official journal of the ultra-reactionary National Agricultural Society, laid out in its August issue a series of menus for the week, providing the variety and quantity of food which would give an adult person the minimum necessary amount of calories and proteins. In following this plan, an adult person would spend—taking account of the new prices in force—between 7,500 and 8,500 escudos a month. With the fuel to cook these meals costing another 3,100 escudos, this person would spend in a month, just to feed his or her self, more than the income of 88% of Chilean workers!

Provided that this adult lived in the open air, naked, went to bed with the sun, didn't smoke, didn't drink, was never ill, moved only on foot (or didn't move at all), washed with water only, gave up the cinema and everything else... he or she could easily afford the calories and proteins necessary for survival, as long as they were cooked by the heat of the sun... and as long as he or she wasn't one of the 70% or so of workers who get less than 6,500 escudos!



Moves to co-ordinate Scottish solidarity action

On Saturday, 17 November, there was a meeting of all Scottish Chile Solidarity Committees, held in the Glasgow Trade Union Centre, to set up a Scottish Chile Defence Committee to co-ordinate action.

Representatives came from the Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Stirling and Cumbernauld Strathkelvin committees as well as from Glasgow. The Scottish organiser of the Communist Party attended, as did members of the International Marxist Group from Glasgow and Stirling and a Glasgow member of IS.

There were not as many members of the Scottish labour movement there as had been hoped, due to a clash with a meeting of the LCOU, but representatives of the Indian Workers Association and NATSOPA were among those who came. So also was Ed Kelly, a shop steward from Yarrow, which is currently building two ships for the Chilean Navy. He reported that the regional Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions had unanimously offered their support to any decision by the Yarrow workers to back the ships, and that Jimmy Milne and Jimmy Jack of the Scottish TUC were to visit the yards on Monday to offer the STUC's support.

The meeting decided to ask the STUC to call a conference for all trade union militants working on goods for Chile in mid-December, and to hold a second Scottish meeting beforehand of the different solidarity committees to prepare for it. This conference should not be seen as an end in itself, but as a spur to local militants to get motions from their branches put before the STUC conference next spring, calling for a general trade union boycott not only of all war materials going to Chile, but also of all trade with the junta of any kind.

ready to intervene. On the night of 10 September, there was no 'state of emergency' in the Socialist Party, either in the provinces or in Santiago.

TOTAL PARALYSIS

The same goes for the Communist Party and the militants of the other parties which made up Popular Unity. Not that the contrary would probably have altered the outcome of the coup for in a defeat of the scale which the Chilean working class has just suffered, the cause was obviously not a technical question. The cause must be found in the political and strategic orientation of the parties concerned.

But such preparation would probably at least have prevented the deaths of innumerable political militants, the deaths of innumerable worker militants who paid with their lives for the total paralysis of the parties of the left during the first hours of the coup. This was the actual situation on the morning of 11 September, even several hours before the fall of the Moneda Palace. These parties were paralysed and unable to function, with their leaders and militants all over the place in a town closely patrolled by the police.

The first to draw the lesson of events, but in what a way, were the leaders of the Communist Party, some of whom—a quorum of the Political Bureau—managed to get together before the morning was out. After a brief meeting, they gave the order for the party to go underground.

STRATEGIES FOR STRUGGLE

In opening the recent Socialist Worker Industrial Conference in Manchester, the chairman, Wally Preston, remarked that the presence of so many people made him feel as if 'a pretty girl had said yes'. However there were many things about this conference - in addition to the stupid sexism of this comment - that must have made any political trade unionist unwilling to give an unqualified 'yes' to the performance of the International Socialists.

The conference was viewed by IS as a key event. It was supposed to take them out of the 'ghetto' of the small revolutionary groups, and launch a new version of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions - only this time controlled by IS rather than the Communist Party.

CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP

Tony Cliff neatly summed up the problem facing the conference and the workers movement in the opening address: 'If this conference were to have a title it should be how we must deal with the crisis of leadership...' But big difficulties arose as soon as IS tried to come to grips with precisely that problem.

Of the 30 speeches at the conference, 26 were made by IS members. Most of the speakers talked about the need for a Rank and File organisation - and described what their own one was doing. But not one referred to the type of organisation which the working class movement must forge in the months ahead if the Tory Government is to be defeated: local conferences to plan the struggle, a miners-engineers alliance, picketing pools, strike committees, councils of action.

Cliff spoke about how times had changed - how the working class were faced with the problem of the Government and the bureaucrats because only big struggles could be successful any more. But not once did he touch on the key question facing working class militants at the present time - the need to prepare a general strike against the Tory Government. He went on to describe how the bureaucrats, both left and right, will manoeuvre with the Tories to split and divert the workers struggle. He said that we need to build a rank and file organisation to respond to these attempts to split the workers movement. But his opening address did not even refer to one of the most powerful weapons which the ruling class will use to split the working class - racism.

The resolution adopted by the conference gives us a clear indication of IS's present thinking about the important questions facing the working class movement. The resolution contains many worthy sentiments - 'This Conference pledges itself to defeat the Tory government and Phase Three.' It is to be hoped that at least a few who were not present at the conference will be allowed to get in on this praiseworthy task. But how precisely did the conference propose to carry out this commitment?

This point seems to have got left out of the resolution. The only practical proposal from the conference was one to... hold another conference! However it should not be thought that IS has failed to grasp the wide political significance of the present working class struggles. The final point of the resolution pinpointed their view on this: 'the Conference, recognising that the attack of the employers and their Tory government against the working class is a political one pledges itself to...' To what? Organise local conferences to plan united action against the Tories? Fight inside the NUM and the AUEW for a

2. International Socialists

miners-engineers' alliance at all levels? Launch a campaign to convince militants of the need to prepare a general strike against the Tories? Unfortunately, not quite: '... to extend the sale and influence of *Socialist Worker* to the maximum.'

A small step forward was the inclusion in the resolution of a reference to the need to fight racist ideas in the labour movement. However even this was absent from the original draft, and was hastily added only after a black militant attacked the resolution for its failure to take up this question.

MASSIVE CONFRONTATIONS

To understand exactly where the International Socialists are headed, we must first answer comrade Cliff's question for him: '... how we deal with the crisis of leadership.' At the present moment six million workers have wage claims in. Most of these claims cannot be met within Phase 3. Two of the traditionally most militant and most powerful groups of workers - the miners and the engineers - are in the leadership of this movement.

Even pits voted against strike action last time are now gearing up for a struggle. In the engineering industry, a recent conference organised by the rank-and-file paper *Engineering Voice* voted unanimously in favour of a national strike, despite a speech by Scanlon opposing this move. The Sheffield District Committee of the AUEW has issued a call for a national conference of engineering convenors to discuss the struggle. Very few workers are still confused by Heath's claim that wage controls will keep prices down. The ruling class is reeling under the impact of the economic blows it has received over the trade balance. All this adds up to one conclusion: massive class confrontations are on the agenda for 1974.

On top of all this, the trade union bureaucrats have no clothes left. They cannot agree to an open deal with the Tories, because the rank-and-file are too strong. They can only do what they are doing: hesitate, confuse, split up struggles, attempt to sabotage the smaller ones (Chryslers, Glasgow Firemen) and divert and defuse the large ones (Scanlon over the recent NIRC fines). As a result, every shop steward and rank-and-file militant is more aware than ever that they will have to fight the bureaucrats.

Some have even become aware that strong rank-and-file organisation really representing the mass of workers - like the National Port Shop Stewards Committee - are not enough to defeat these manoeuvres, as the dockers found out over the Jones-

Aldington agreement. Here we get to the crucial point - the 'crisis of leadership' cannot be met just by getting the rank-and-file together, because a basic part of that crisis is a crisis of political perspectives among the rank-and-file themselves. It is because the rank-and-file do not have a clear set of political objectives that they are threatened by the vastly weaker bureaucrats.

The central task facing that conference - and the International Socialists - was to hammer out a set of steps to be taken to prepare the working class for the confrontation to come. The bureaucrats will attempt to split up the coming struggles - but they will not do it with muscle, they will do it with ideas. When Gormley says that a miners strike is dangerous because it would upset the chance of Labour getting back into office how do we show that the working class, through struggle, can solve the problems of price rises, profiteering, the condition of the low paid and the pensioners? It was not lack of militancy that made the 'big battalions' stumble over Phase 2, it was the lack of an alternative set of political perspectives with which the workers could meet the challenge of the bureaucrats.

POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES

Since 1968, all over Europe the working class has launched massive struggles as the post-war boom peters out, and the capitalists put the squeeze on. In France in '68, Italy in '69, Britain in '72, Denmark and Germany in '73, massive actions by the working class opened up a whole period of big class struggle. Quite naturally workers turned to their traditional weapons to begin this fight. But in all cases these traditional weapons were not enough to smash the capitalist offensive and defeat the trade union bureaucrats.

Nevertheless, on the back of this upsurge a whole series of leftist groups grew. Where the Communist Parties were not for a fight, these groups (like IS in Britain, *Lutte Ouvriere* in France, *Avanguardia Operaia* in Italy) were for one - as were the militant rank-and-file. Their message was clear: by keeping up the trade union struggle and reinforcing the traditional weapons (in Britain the shop stewards movement) the workers would win. Unfortunately they did not. Certainly they held off the onslaught - even forced some retreats by the ruling class, e.g. the release of the Pentonville 5 from gaol. But in no country did they manage to use their muscle to win permanent gains for the working class.

Groups like IS, however, continue to base themselves on the traditional weapons and traditional thinking

of the rank-and-file militants. But many thousands of workers are now beginning to discuss how to turn temporary victories into more permanent ones, and are beginning to see that the crisis of leadership is not just about strengthening old weapons - but forging new ones. The failure of the LCDTU was that it was based on the CP's politics of alliance with the left bureaucrats. The failure of the IS conference - despite all the horror stories about Scanlon and Jones - was that it did not spell out a different brand of political perspectives. More militancy, yes; a different central thrust, no.

Nobody can disagree with the idea of a new national rank-and-file movement - a new Minority Movement. However such a movement can only be built on the basis of a clear political alternative to that put forward by the bureaucrats.

Such an alternative must centre on a campaign for a general strike to smash the Tory Government and, as a first step in that direction, the creation of a miners-engineers alliance. It would include a vigorous campaign to organise the defence of pickets, and a campaign inside the AUEW for a national strike and for the convening of mass meetings of engineering stewards and stewards' delegates to take the struggle out of the hands of the bureaucrats at all levels. And it would show how through mass working class struggle we can prevent price rises, rent rises and profiteering. Finally we need persistent explanation of the need for councils of action, drawing together all sections of the working class in each area, to prepare for a general strike and organise the working class to take over the running of local communities during the strike.

As a strategy for struggle, 'full support to the miners, build IS Rank and File organisations' does not even meet the needs of most sections of workers with claims in against Phase 3, much less challenge the hold of the bureaucrats. Only the work of preparing a general strike can unite the whole working class, who share a common interest in bringing this government down. IS's 'strategy' left them outside the growing campaign to defend the Shrewsbury 24, until they were forced to make a turn towards this important struggle very recently. It also left them outside the Chile solidarity demo which raised important questions of socialist strategy in the minds of tens of thousands of working class militants, and brought thousands of workers on to the streets. The IS industrial conference showed that, because of their lack of a revolutionary programme, IS are stuck with a recipe for missing the boat and leaving the politics of the workers movement in the hands of the bureaucrats.

Paul Smith

Tony Cliff addressing the conference



Photo: Chris Davies (Report)

'If only the blacks would join trade unions...'

On Saturday 17 November a Midlands regional trade union conference on how to combat racial discrimination was held in Birmingham. Some 80 delegates heard the key-note speaker, Moss Evans of the Transport and General Workers Union, introduce the conference which was mainly dominated by the Communist Party.

Evans correctly identified the Industrial Relations Act and the Immigration Act as part and parcel of the Tory strategy to attack the working class, but his solutions were less useful. Black workers should be unionised, it is true, but this does not answer the problem of racism; and to propose that delegates should set out on the knocker to prepare for the

return of a Labour government is even less of a solution.

The fundamental political problem was that most of the speakers saw racism being defeated merely by efficient trade unionism. If all blacks were members of trade unions, it seemed that the problem would disappear. Arguments that cut across this met with hostility, particularly when examples of racism in the unions were given.

Sid Atkins of Birmingham Trades Council was not against the blacks having 'their little social groups or cultural clubs,' but only the union would really defeat racism and the blacks had better become more

active there and stop counterposing the fight against racism to the class war.

It was left to delegates like Brother Singh, of Birmingham Qualcast, to point out that the struggle for better conditions of the Indian workers in his factory had taken place against the antagonism of sections of the white workers. Another black delegate pointed out that there was not even a black on the platform.

The conference was wound up by Bob Wright of the AUEW, who explained that the unions had to give special assistance to black members, and must see the fight against racism as part of the struggle against the government.

A resolution was then proposed and seconded. It called on the TUC to appoint a race relations officer, argued for the need to work out a method to identify and tackle areas of racial discrimination, encouraged trade union bodies to oppose racist ideology, and proposed to reconvene in six months. No organisation to carry out these decisions was proposed, and when some delegates tried to speak on the motion the chairman closed the conference without a vote.

Andrew Jenkins

WHAT'S ON

EXHIBITION of unofficial posters produced by community groups. Central School of Art, Southampton Row, London WC1 (Holborn tube). 22 November-6 December, Monday to Friday from 10 am to 8 pm.

FOUNDATION OF LEFT OPPOSITION: 50th anniversary commemoration meeting, Friday 7 December at 7.30 pm in Holborn Assembly Rooms. Leading speakers from the Fourth International plus film of interview with Trotsky in Copenhagen in 1934. Organised by IMG.

IMG RED FORUM: Series of introductory discussions for those in the London area on the politics of the Fourth International. Every Tuesday at 8 pm in the General Picton pub, Caledonian Road (5 mins Kings X tube).

JOHN MACLEAN: Commemoration meeting, Friday 30 November, 7.30 pm in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (Holborn tube). Speakers include Harry McShane (veteran of Red Clydeside/ associate of John MacLean), Walter Kendall (author of 'The British Revolutionary Movement 1900-21').

NOTTINGHAM RED CIRCLES: Wide ranging series of discussions based on the politics of the Fourth International. Every second and fourth Tuesday in the month, 8 pm at the Lion Hotel, Clumber Street.

LY VAN SAU, spokesman for the Provisional Revolutionary Government, will speak on 'South Vietnam - The Struggle Continues' at NUFTO Hall, 14 Jockey Fields, London WC1 (Holborn tube) on Friday 23 November at 7.30 pm. Discussion will include the relationship of the struggle in Indochina to those of other countries.

GREEK COLONELS FIGHT TO HANG ON

The reimposition of martial law in Greece should come as no surprise to anyone; as in 1967, it was a response to the rising threat posed by the struggles of the students and workers.

At the time of the Army takeover on 21 April 1967, the face of bourgeois democracy had become extremely unstable. The old bourgeois parties had all in turn become discredited, starting with the ERE (right-wing royalist party) in 1963.

The ERE had then held office for nine years, pursuing a policy of total subordination to the interests of US imperialism, arming the forces of the right, and constantly attacking the living standards and organisation of the working class and peasantry. But the real nature of the regime was dramatically exposed in the investigations which followed the murder of Lambrakis, a left-wing MP, when leading figures in the army and police became clearly implicated (the film *Z* is based on this episode). Huge demonstrations were held against the government, elections were called, and the EK (Centre Union) party was swept into office. The ERE leader, Karamanlis, hastily retired into exile.

BOURGEOISIE SPLIT

The programme of the EK, whose leader George Papandreou became prime minister, was for a reorganisation of Greek capitalism. Using anti-American demagoguery to win mass support, their aim was to break the hold of US imperialism over the country and attempt to develop a national Greek economy, within the framework of the European Common Market. This was the first open appearance of a split between US- and European-oriented sections of the ruling class.

Along with the aim of developing an independent Greek economy went a policy of moderate reforms. The EK programme included promises to increase wages and to reform the educational system. But the popular mobilisations which developed round this rapidly moved out of the party's control with growing demands for the abolition of the monarchy, the nationalisation of the land, and the expropriation of foreign investments. It was this as much as anything which lay behind King Constantine's dismissal of the Papandreou government in 1965, but the series of coalitions which followed were unable to affect the situation, while the impact of the mass movement steadily extended to draw in ever wider forces.

Further elections were due to be held in May 1967, and the probability of a major swing to the left was very clear. Indeed George Papandreou's son, Andreas, had already formed

an alliance for precisely this purpose with the EDA party (largely a front for the illegal Communist Party, the KKE). But this alliance was based solely on electoral perspectives, with no real connection with the developing extra-parliamentary struggles. Although the prospect of a US-backed military coup was freely discussed, the KKE stuck rigidly to the 'peaceful road' scenario.

There was thus no organisation capable of taking up the leadership of a serious struggle against the junta after the colonels struck on 21 April; there was effectively no organised opposition to the coup. In his book *Democracy at Gunpoint* (recently published in paperback), Andreas Papandreou comments that he could never understand why there was no general strike at the time. But how could there be, without any preparation for one? How could the Greek workers, students and peasants be expected to come out onto the streets against the Army when no provisions had been made for clandestine organisation, when the question of armed defence had never once been raised? The KKE in particular bears a heavy load of responsibility for this situation.

AFTER THE COUP

On taking power, the junta banned all trade unions, effectively arrested all politicians (from royalists to Trotskyists), and smashed the organisations of the working class and peasantry. Thousands of people were arrested and interned, US aid to Greece doubled. Protests at the 'excessive' nature of the repression came of course from the political leaders of Western Europe, but recognition of the new regime was not withheld for long, least of all by the British Labour Government.

For about three years the junta was able to create the appearance of an economic 'boom' thanks largely to massive injections of US aid. But since 1970 there has been a dramatic rise in the cost of living, while wages have remained frozen. Moreover, the economic policies followed by the junta have led to a massive influx of peasants into the towns, particularly Athens and Salonica. The junta had hoped to use this petty bourgeois layer as a basis for building up their support, but the rampant inflation of the last few months (80% since January) has decisively put paid to this by threatening to squeeze them out of existence.

The first group to challenge the regime were the students. There has been no rise in government spending on education since the coup, with the result that students are having to work in increasingly difficult conditions. There is no academic freedom, no say for students in the courses they have to



attend, and expression of political views can lead to expulsion from the University and/or drafting into the Army. Moreover, there has been widespread opposition to the extremely clumsy intervention of the junta in the student union elections. This led to the demonstrations in the spring of this year, which were however marked by their isolation from the working class movement.

'LIBERALISATION'

At the same time, the junta has been trying to speed up the process of 'liberalisation'. The gradual lifting of martial law and the relaxation of censorship were followed in July by the referendum to abolish the monarchy and install Papadopoulos as President, using the abortive navy mutiny in June as an excuse. The vote in favour of this was not as high as the junta had hoped, particularly in Athens, although in the countryside, well away from any supervision by foreign journalists, it was almost unanimous.

Still the junta proceeded on its course, announcing the appointment of a 'civilian' prime minister Markezinis, and holding forth the promise of elections early next year. But the economic situation continued to worsen, while the evident US control over government policies continued to dent the 'true independent Greek' image of the colonels. The US Sixth Fleet is based on Athens, and in the Middle East war Greece for the first time supported Israel against the Arabs.

In this situation, the working class had also begun to stir, defying the government ban on strikes and in some cases winning substantial wage increases. These successes in turn in-

creased their self-confidence and combativity. At the same time, the first links were being forged with sections of the students, who had learnt the lesson of their isolation in the spring. Thus when the students pointed the way forward there was an overwhelming response from large sections of the masses.

THE WAY FORWARD

The events of the last week have demonstrated once again the nature of the tasks facing the revolutionary vanguard in Greece. As we have seen, the fight for the most elementary democratic rights and for even a modest standard of living comes very quickly into conflict with the very basis of the capitalist system over which the colonels preside.

The demands for free elections, legal trade unions and political parties, decent wages and conditions, etc, can only be waged successfully within the framework of a struggle for the establishment of a Socialist Workers Republic. This must be the aim of the fight in Greece, which cannot be subordinated to any alliance with the discredited bourgeois politicians in the elusive pursuit of bourgeois democracy.

Clearly, as the enormous casualties of the last week show only too tragically, this struggle demands the organisation of armed detachments of the working class and its student and peasant allies right from the start. The junta has shown that it has no hesitation in turning even the smallest mobilisation into a bloodbath. The lessons of this must be learnt and applied by the working class movement in preparing for future confrontations which can have a real perspective of overthrowing the regime and its imperialist backers.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

KENTUCKY: Miners, pensioners, women and children have been among those thrown in jail for picketing during a three-month fight by Brookside coal miners for the right to be covered by the national United Mine Workers contract. Previously they belonged to the Southern Labour Union, a local outfit run by the massive Duke Power Company, which owns a number of mines in the area.

Because it could set a precedent in an area which produces 50 million of the 135 million tons of non-UMW coal mined each year in the USA, the employers are using every method possible to crush the strike; state troopers have been brought in to back up the use of scabs, and 91 pickets have so far been arrested. However the miners are equally aware of the strike's significance, and are appealing for support throughout the area, especially from students on the local campuses.

GUINE-BISSAU: Luis Cabral, head of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau which was declared on 24 September, concluded a 10-day tour of the liberated areas last weekend. Together with a party of officials and foreign journalists, he visited health centres, schools, and training camps, thus disproving claims by the Portuguese colonial forces that they still retain control over the whole area.



Raul Sendic - faces execution


URUGUAY: Nine members of the Tupamaros, including their best-known leader, Raul Sendic, are now being held under sentence of death at military bases in the interior. All had previously been held for some time at the Libertad concentration camp, Sendic since his arrest in June 1972.

This new threat to their lives comes at a time when activity by the Tupamaros has revived and is once more beginning to worry the regime. A halt to any further operations is demanded as a condition for the release of Sendic and his comrades. But this danger can be nullified if sufficient international attention is focused on the case. Already defence committees are functioning in Buenos Aires and Paris.

PARIS: A new wave of attacks on leftists has been launched in recent weeks by the fascist bands in France. Particularly active have been militants of the 'New Order' group, which was dissolved along with the Communist League on 28 June but has now been reconstituted around the journal *Faite Front*. Among incidents so far reported have been an attack on newspaper sellers at the Rambuteau market in Paris on 4 November, as a result of which a seller of *Rouge* and a militant of the Workers Struggle group were hospitalised, and an attack on two faculties of the university on 9 November.

A further provocation planned by the fascists is a meeting at the Mutualite hall on 19 December in support of the Chilean junta and against illegal immigration. Our comrades of *Rouge* have welcomed the Communist Party's call for anti-fascist committees to be set up in the universities in response to these provocations, but stress the need to go beyond this to organise joint workers' defence groups. In particular, they emphasise that to allow the 19 December meeting to take place unchallenged would be a serious setback for the whole working class movement.

ISRAEL: Marius Schattner, an Israeli citizen and member of the Revolutionary Communist Alliance, has been in prison since 12 October and may be court-martialled at any moment for refusing to take up arms for Israel in what he describes as 'this unjust and criminal war.' His courageous action calls for international solidarity, and inside Israel support is also being organised - notably by the comrades of the Fourth International in Matzpen-Marxist, although they themselves have opted for revolutionary work inside the army.



International Marxist Group
(British Section of the Fourth International)
182 Pentonville Road,
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I would like more information about the IMG and its activities.

NAME

ADDRESS

Class justice at Winchester

The insurgent youth of Belfast have been on trial at Winchester.

Confronted by all the power of a state which has at its disposal vast forces of coercion, and a court steeped in the tradition of centuries of oppression, the defendants in the London bombings case displayed courage, defiance and confidence of eventual victory.

'EVERY SAFEGUARD'

Paul Holmes explained, before being sentenced, that: 'We took every safeguard that no injury was done to any person. There was always a very minimal risk. It was the fault of the police force in London ... What we meant was harm to property and to the Government's pride.' This fell on deaf ears, they were not being tried for damage to persons or property, but for refusing to permit the British imperialist state to have a monopoly on violence.

Marian Price, like the other defendants, demanded to be sent back to serve her sentence in Ireland, and announced that she would go on hunger strike until this demand, and political status, were granted to her. Dolours Price forecast that the Assembly in the North of Ireland was doomed to failure, and said: 'It remains to be seen whether the SDLP prove themselves to be greater traitors than the men of 1921.'

A QUESTION OF CLASS

Mr. 'Justice' Sebag Shaw revealed his vindictiveness when he sentenced Dolours Price and Hugh Feeney, both militant socialists, politically trained in the Peoples Democracy, to 30 years, and Marian Price to 25 years, on the conspiracy charges. This was in addition to the life sentences imposed on them, along with five of the other defendants. He later had to reduce these when he was told that the limit for conspiracy was 20 years.

Sebag Shaw cynically told Roisin McNeary, who had been broken down by the police, and was acquit-

ted: 'I don't know what dangers will confront you when you leave this court ... If you have friends in Ireland still, you tell them about your experiences here, so that they may know what to expect if they follow your example.'

Eamonn McCann made the most apt comment on the trial, when in *Hibernia* of 2 November he wrote: 'In the end it is like everything else a question of class. Sir Peter Rawlinson, Sir Joseph Maloney, Mr. Justice Sebag Shaw, the press corps, the solid burghers of the town ... only by a preternatural leap of imagination could they ever understand Paul Holmes of Butler Street in Ardoyne. And in the absence of understanding wherein lies the basis for judgement?'

CAMPAIGN

It is to be hoped that the blatant class injustice of the Winchester trial will spur into action those on the 'left' who have quailed before 'public opinion,' while the Republican Movement has fought on the streets of the Six Counties, and in the courts, prisons, and internment camps of Britain and Ireland.

Sinn Fein in Britain is launching a campaign on behalf of the Winchester prisoners, and other Irish Republican prisoners, demanding political status and the right for them to serve their sentences with their comrades in Ireland. Within the context of a long term campaign to obtain the release of Irish political prisoners, these demands are important and pressing; there must be the broadest and most active support for them.

If the struggle against increasing legal repression in Britain can catch fire from the spirit of the Winchester defendants, then this will benefit not only Irish prisoners, but the building workers involved in another class trial at Shrewsbury, and other militants - Irish and British, black and white - whom the British state is trying to entrap in the web of its conspiracy laws.

Powell barred from Durham

Victory has been won at Durham University, where students have been campaigning to stop Enoch Powell from speaking. Because of pressure from the students the University Council decided to bar him from the premises - probably the first time that an MP has been denied speaking facilities by a British University. New Powell has written to the right-wing Debating Society, declining their invitation, despite the fact that they had arranged an alternative venue in the town. He has been frightened off 'because of the opposition in the area'.

The 'Stop Powell Committee' at Durham had achieved a response throughout the North-East and parts of Yorkshire. Students and trade union militants from as far away as Sheffield were planning to join the demonstration against Powell's meeting, and several Trades Councils in the area were giving support.

The victory at Durham has been a defeat not just for the University right, but for National Front which has made the North East a priority area, and hoped to win support for their racist ideas behind Powell's 'respectable' front.

Following this victory the 'Stop Powell Committee' plans to hold a teach-in on the afternoon of Saturday 24 November where the nature of Powellism, and the future struggle against fascism and racism will be discussed.

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Troops out call by Camden councillor

'The British Army is in Ireland to support a desperate attempt by a Unionist clique to hold on to power against the wishes of the great majority of the Irish people.'

These were the words of Councillor 'Paddy' O'Connor, former mayor of Camden and the Labour Deputy Chief Whip on Camden Council addressing a public meeting called by the North London Troops Out Movement on Monday.

Councillor O'Connor went on to condemn the failure of the British Labour Movement to act on the

Irish question: 'What we want is a massive campaign to demand that the troops get out and allow the Irish people to face up to their own problems.'

Jim Kemp, T&GWU building workers convener and a member of the IMG, spoke of the necessity to raise the issue of Ireland within the Labour Movement, and the close relationship between the repression in Ireland and the growing repression in Britain.

Bob Purdie, also of the IMG, described the current situation in Ireland. He stressed the need to campaign against legal repression (with the conspiracy laws as the central point) and Army

recruitment (linking it with unemployment), and for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the British Army from Ireland, and self-determination for the Irish people.

The meeting was part of the build up to the national Troops Out demonstration, which takes place on Saturday, 1 December. The demonstration assemblies at Shepherd's Bush Green at 1.30 p.m. and will march to a rally in Hammersmith Town Hall, where the main speakers will be Jim Kemp, Frank McManus MP, Althea Jones (a leading black militant), a Belfast housewife, and Dave Bolton (Vice President of the Scottish NUM).



A sit-in by 200 printworkers at the IPC-owned Baynard Press in Clerkenwell came to a rapid end last week when management agreed to withdraw redundancy notices pending further negotiations. Plans to sell off the site to property developers were rapidly changed after solidarity action disrupted the *Mirror*.

Meanwhile, Brier's (now Binart), previously the scene of a protracted work-in, has been closed down again by its new owners. Locked out by security patrols, the workers' only hope is for solidarity action which hits the printing bosses where it hurts them most - on the big papers.

Journalists up against Chrysler strikebreaker

Striking journalists on two Sheffield newspapers came up hard against the realities of the class struggle last week when management used professional strike-breaker Tony Bilton to bring in newsprint across picket lines.

Bilton first came to prominence over the summer when he organised a convoy of lorries to break through picket lines at Chrysler in Coventry. At that time his action was condemned by the *Sheffield Morning Telegraph*, but by Saturday morning, when his lorry caused £100 worth of damage to a picket's car, management had obviously had a change of heart.

The strike at Sheffield is only one of a number of disputes which have arisen as a result of official action over the national claim for provincial journalists lodged with the Newspaper Society. In Middlesbrough for instance, journalists on the *Evening Gazette* began an indefinite stoppage on Monday after management cut their wages by £15. On the same day, journalists working on

papers published by the Essex and East London Newspapers group walked out after their editor-in-chief told them that they must come to work 'properly washed'. However, management at Southend, who had locked out not only journalists but also printers who supported NUJ action over the claim, were forced to climb down and reinstate the whole workforce without conditions.

This week the NUJ has launched a further round of selective action to persuade the NS to lift its ban on house agreements, which the union has made a precondition for negotiations on the main claim. But such tactics, and the inevitable ragged skirmishes which they produce at a local level, threaten more and more to lead simply to demoralisation in the absence of any further perspective for struggle. The need for journalists to forge links with other trade unionists for a joint fight to break through Phase 3 becomes ever more imperative.

Martin Moore

Police attack abortion demo

Police behaved viciously towards a group of 300 demonstrators who were protesting against the lobby organised by the anti-abortion group, SPUC (Society for the Protection of Unborn Children) at Central Hall on Tuesday. The demonstrators were prevented from holding a meeting outside the Hall, and after the demonstration broke up, police waded in, kicking and punching people leaving the scene.

The slogans of the counter-demonstration, organised by Ad Hoc Committee against SPUC, included 'Free abortion on demand - smash reaction, take a stand,' and 'Women must decide their fate - not the church, not the state.' Several organisations, including IMG, five London LPYS branches, ASTMS Central Hospital Group, several women's liberation groups, and the Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign, are affiliated to the ad hoc Committee.

SPUC is the most dangerous of all those groups busily defending the sanctity of the family, the sanctity of lives yet unborn, and demanding sex be kept where it belongs. Unlike most other groups who peddle repression and aim to keep women chained to the kitchen sink, SPUC has made a serious attempt to develop support among women workers and working class housewives. But despite raising large funds to compensate women for the day away from work, the SPUC lobby attracted only 3,000 people, not the 100,000 they had hoped to get.

The Ad Hoc Committee held a meeting later in the evening at Friends Meeting House. Speakers included Linda Smith (IMG), Islay Richards (LPYS - speaking in a personal capacity), Helen Gordon from Coventry Women's Liberation, and Dodie Weppier (IMG). The last speaker emphasised that the Tory Government was taking up various demands from both liberal and reactionary quarters concerning women and the family, such as the tax-credit system and obscenity, in an effort to win support from women in its fight against the trade unions. One blatant example of this is that the proposed anti-discrimination bill encourages women to fight job discrimination through the NIRC.

Would anyone who witnessed the arrest of a demonstrator near the top of Whitehall at the end of the anti-SPUC demonstration on Tuesday please contact Red Weekly: 182 Pentonville Road, London, N1, tel. 278-2616.