

# Red Weekly



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## BUREAUCRATS MANOEUVRE INSTEAD OF ORGANISING STRUGGLE

# GENERAL ELECTION— OR GENERAL STRIKE?

The strain of the approaching showdown between the Tory Government and the miners has obviously been too much for poor Joe Gormley—he's taken to standing on his head in public. The same Joe Gormley who a few weeks ago was warning that a miners strike might provoke a general election which the Tories would win, now has this to say about the prospect of an election: 'The sooner it comes the better. . . I am damn sure we could elect a government which would be committed to repealing the Industrial Relations Act and dealing with our economic problems in a different way.'

By CHRIS BALFOUR

Gormley's change of heart is just a bureaucratic stunt to avoid a showdown with the Tory Government. If the Tories did call a general election, Gormley and his right-wing cronies on the NUM executive would promptly use it as an excuse to put off the struggle and, whoever won the election, that would be used as an excuse to call it off altogether.

Harold Wilson, who doesn't have to worry about the wrath of the NUM membership, is more frank. He too is in favour of an election, but openly admits 'I do not support and will not support any action against the law'—by which he means a national miners' strike.

But these laws have been made by the ruling class to tie the hands of the workers' movement. A commitment to obey them is a commitment to give up the fight against the Tories. The Labour council at Clay Cross understood this, and were prepared to break law after law in the course of their fight. As a result they have done more for the working class than all the Labour MPs put together.

Labour Party militants must choose between the road of Clay Cross and the road of Harold Wilson. Are they going to join the fight against the Tories: committing local Labour Parties to the struggle, withdrawing the cooperation of Labour-controlled councils from the Government and offering their resources to workers' in struggle? Or will they join Wilson as 'parliamentary advisors' to the Tories in their efforts to defeat the working class?

The Tory Government must be brought down. But the way to do that is by organising the actual struggles that are on our doorstep. (Gormley has been so busy talking about the possibility of an election that he hasn't even got around to setting the date for a miners' strike ballot!)

Active preparations must be made for an all-out national strike by the miners and engineers and a fighting alliance organised between these two giants of the trade union movement at both the local and national level. Other groups of workers in struggle against Phase 3—dockers, train drivers, power engineers, ambulance men, journalists—should be drawn into this alliance. The entire working class movement must be involved in planning the struggle through local conferences and representative Councils

of Action. A general strike must be prepared to unite the working class and kick out the Tories.

If the Tories, frightened by the noose the working class is preparing for them, decide to call an election then, by all means, let's smash the Tories at the polls as well. But we should fight on our terms, not theirs. Rather than calling off industrial action at the issuing of an electoral writ, it should be stepped up. A general strike would show in practice that the Tories are unable to rule the country, and that only the working class can solve the problems facing the vast majority of people.

Moreover, the need for mass action would not cease the day after the Tories fell. No matter who was in Government, the working class would still have to fight for their interests against the ruling class, who would use every dirty trick in the book to defend their privileges.

Should workers just stroll back into the factories after smashing the Tories on the streets and at the polls and wait for a Labour Government to introduce socialism? Or should they seize the factories and demand that they are nationalised, elect committees to determine working conditions and oversee the management's business dealings and demand that the Government recognises their authority, organise workers' and housewives' committees to scrutinise prices and demand that the Government accepts their decisions on price rises?

Industrial action and mass struggle will be needed to carry out such measures in the face of determined ruling class opposition. This is the only way to defend the interests of the working class the road to workers' power and socialism.

## NIRC STRIKES AGAIN

The decision of the NIRC that the T&G must pay compensation (which might well amount to more than the £100,000 recently extracted from the AUEW) to General Aviation Services, because of the actions of T&G members at Heathrow Airport, confirms the worst fears of trade unionists about the Industrial Relations Act.

First with the Con-Mech case, and now over GAS, the most dangerous sections of the Act have been used to threaten the most basic right of trade unionists—the right to strike.

At Con-Mech trade unionists were told that they had failed to follow the procedures laid down by the Act and therefore had no right to strike. In this case the NIRC has ruled that because the GAS dispute was not according to the rules of the Act, the union involved must pay for all the losses sustained by the company.

The ability of every trade unionist in the country to defend their interests is threatened by this decision.

There has already been a response from some T&G members. The South

and East London Commercial Road Transport stewards have called on the executive to mobilise the full power of the membership against this attack. The Centrax branch in Newton Abbot, has called on the union to refuse to pay the compensation and to mount a national campaign against the Industrial Relations Act.

These initiatives must be taken up by T&G militants across the country. They should demand that their executive refuses to pay a penny in compensation and sets the date for a national stoppage if there is any attempt to seize union funds.

But T&G militants should not expect their executive to behave differently from the AUEW executive. They should immediately begin to organise protest meetings and demonstrations themselves, and make contact with local AUEW militants, and other workers, to plan a united campaign of action against the NIRC.

David Ferradoro

## INTERNATIONAL CHILE DEMO

An international demonstration in solidarity with the Chilean resistance is being planned for 8/9 December in Paris. It will coincide with the opening of negotiations between representatives of the Junta and the main international creditors of Chile. Organised at the initiative of the French solidarity committee, the proposal has the backing of solidarity organisations in Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Denmark and Sweden. The International Marxist Group will be arranging a coach from Britain and urges all organisations in solidarity with the Chilean resistance to send a delegation to Paris.

For details of the demonstration and travel arrangements contact: 01-278-2616 (between 3:30 and 5:30 pm weekdays) or write to 'Chile', c/o 97, Caledonia Road, London, N.1.

## WE MADE IT!

On 30 November 1923 John MacLean the great Red Clydesider died, his health being broken by his suffering in prison.

In the fifty years that have followed no organisation or individual has succeeded in winning such mass support for revolutionary ideas amongst workers in Britain. Red Weekly shares MacLean's belief in the power of the working class to change the world.

We think that our readers share that belief too, that is why we ask for your help each month. With four days to go, our £200 November fund drive has shot over the top at £339.90. This includes one donation of £100. Next month we expect even more from you, so that we can bring in the new year with definite plans for the development of the paper.



Photo: Chris Davies (Report)

Another group of workers go into action against Phase 3: London Transport workers' demonstration to back up their pay claim, held on Sunday



# Shrewsbury: Verdict before Christmas?

It now appears likely that the first leg of the Shrewsbury trials will be over by Christmas. The Judge has told the parties in the Court that he is anxious to gain a verdict on the first six building workers before 20 December.

This makes it urgent for the movement of opposition to the trials, built up over many months, to prepare to make an immediate response.

## CONSPIRACY

The six whose cases are being heard at the moment are all branch secretaries and chairmen in the T&GWU or UCATT. It was these men who organised the flying pickets in the Shrewsbury area during the building strike last year, when violent confrontations are alleged to have occurred. Charged with conspiracy to intimidate workers to abstain from work, their legal fate will decisively influence that of the remaining 18.

The movement to defend the Shrewsbury 24 must be crystal clear on one thing. It is not a question of whether these men are imprisoned or whether the ruling class can get away with treating picketing as a conspiracy, and those who organise it as conspirators. The ruling class want to find out at Shrewsbury what the response of the working class movement will be if trade unionists are convicted under the laws of criminal conspiracy rather than the movement must react vigorously to any conviction, irrespective of the sentence.

The Shrewsbury Defence Committees up and

down the country should now start pulling out all the stops to get action should the six be found guilty. Strike action in such a situation would be a warning to the ruling class not to proceed further with the trials, and would prepare the movement for a campaign of action to demand a pardon for the six.

## ATTACK ON PICKETING

The attempt by the ruling class to open up the road to jailing one worker after another under the conspiracy laws is part of a determined attack against picketing. As we run up to the struggle against Phase 3, the other preparations being made are clear for all to see: the attack on Sheffield journalists by the picket-busting thugs who made their debut at Chrysler, the creation of a special anti-picket intelligence service at Scotland Yard, the demands of groups like the coal merchants for police and army 'protection' against miners' pickets etc.

The Shrewsbury Defence Committees can play a leading role in preparing the working class movement to deal with these vital problems. Several are now involved in preparing local conferences to discuss not only measures to defend the 24, but also the practical steps needed now to defend pickets in the localities. For instance, Portsmouth Defence Committee, a sub-committee of the Portsmouth and Havant Trades Councils, is organising a conference on picketing and the law on 9 December, sponsored by several local shop stewards committees. One of the sessions will be on how to defend pickets during the struggle against Phase 3. Following the attacks by police on pickets



Police carry away picket during recent Tampax strike in Portsmouth

during the recent Tampax strike there, some local militants are hoping that a picketing pool on which all pickets under attack could draw will emerge from the conference. Trades councils and other union bodies throughout the South-East will be invited to attend the conference as observers.

This is the type of initiative which should be followed up and down the country. It will strengthen both the fight to defend the 24 and help to centralise the movement against the forces of the State, which the fight against Phase 3 must involve.

## NALGO and Clay Cross

PRESS STATEMENT ISSUED 24 NOVEMBER

The national Steering Committee of the Nalگو Action Group, on behalf of all supporters of the Group, declares its total solidarity with the Councillors of Clay Cross in their fight against the Tories' Housing Finance Act and Phase 3, a fight which is in the interests of NALGO members and all other trade unionists. We consider the actions of the NALGO members at Clay Cross to be detrimental to these interests, and we condemn the support given to their strike by NALGO's National Executive, who have also endorsed the dubious actions of the local full-time officers of the union.

The NALGO leadership's failure to fight adequately against the Housing Finance Act and the Government's incomes policy (despite successive Conference resolutions) has led to the present situation where the Clay Cross NALGO members, in something of a political vacuum, felt threatened by the actions of their employers. Had the NALGO leadership made it absolutely clear that, in the event of legal threats to the Clay Cross members, there would be financial and legal support and solidarity action, then this would have aided the fight against the Government's anti-working class policies. Instead those leaders stand condemned in the eyes of the rest of the trade union and labour movement.

## Anti-Fascist roundup



Sheffield meeting: (l to r) Bernard Panter, Richard Stojak, John O'Leary and Brian Heron

**DURHAM:** A teach-in on racism and fascism was held by the 'Stop Powell Ad Hoc Committee' at Durham University last Saturday to celebrate the achievement in getting Enoch Powell barred from the University. The occasion was used to consolidate the links built between anti-fascist students and workers in the North-East and parts of Yorkshire during the campaign.

Over 80 people, many of them trade unionists, attended the teach-in, at which the main speakers were Jack Grassby of the South Shields Trades Union Council, Robin Blackburn of the IMG, and anti-fascist organisers from Edinburgh and Manchester.

It was decided to issue a call from the teach-in to all trade union and student bodies in the North-East for the establishment of an anti-fascist/anti-racist committee in the New Year. A steering committee has been set up to mobilise for the founding meeting. As if to underline the necessity for such action, the National Front announced the same morning that it would be making the North-East a priority area in view of the disarray of the local Labour Party organisation (until now dominated by associates of John Poulson).

**NEWCASTLE:** A motion to support the Durham teach-in and refuse the use of facilities to racists like the Monday Club was narrowly defeated at a meeting of Newcastle University Students Union last week, after a member of the Monday Club denied that he supported the repatriation of immigrants and claimed that there were no links between the Monday Club and the National Front.

Two days later, this same student together with three others began distributing free copies of the National Front student paper, *Spark*, in a direct challenge to the Socialist Society, which had declared that it did not believe in allowing the fascists to distribute their propaganda. As a consequence, members of the Socialist Society rapidly removed and destroyed the papers. This was followed by vigorous selling of *Red Weekly* and *Socialist Worker* to emphasise the point that free

speech should be extended to all tendencies in the labour movement, but not to fascists.

**SHEFFIELD:** A meeting was held in the AUEW House on Wednesday 21 November to launch a trade union anti-fascist committee and also to mobilise for the Durham teach-in. Bernard Panter, Manchester AUEW District Secretary, stressed the essential link between the growth of fascist organisations and the capitalist crisis, while John O'Leary, the President of Sheffield University Students Union, took up the role students can play in the struggle against fascist organisations. A third speaker, Brian Heron of the IMG, dealt with the danger of Powellism. The use of racism and the lack of a militant struggle in the labour movement against it poses an immediate threat to working class unity. Powell, he pointed out, provides a 'respectable' front for organisations like the National Front

The chairman of the meeting, Richard Stojak (convenor at Firth Derion), stressed the importance of the issue and appealed to trade unionists, black and white, to go back to their organisations to take up ongoing anti-fascist and anti-racist work. An anti-fascist committee for the Sheffield area was set up to organise further activity.

**HOUNSLOW:** The Labour Council in the London borough of Hounslow has banned the National Front from using any of its facilities and premises on the grounds that the NF is a racist organisation.

In 1971 the Council refused the use of premises to the Front when they planned a march through the area. At its meeting on 20 November a further recommendation came from the Finance and General Purposes Committee. 'The Committee now recommend the Council to extend the theme of this specific resolution to a more general application.' This was carried despite the protests of the Tory minority.

Outside the Council meeting 25 people held a picket supporting the resolution as a concrete step towards depriving racists and fascists of a platform in the area.

## Millionaire behind red scare campaign

When socialists and trade unionists go out postering, the police are usually very quick to move on or even arrest them. But when scores of people descended on Barnsley late one Tuesday evening (20 November) and proceeded to plaster the walls with some 2,000 political posters, the police did no more than take a few personal details.

This change in attitude was perhaps not unconnected with what the posters said:

**DONT  
LET THE MARXIST  
COMMUNIST KREMLIN  
TRAITORS  
IN OUR MIDST DESTROY  
THE  
BRITISH  
WAY OF LIFE  
LONG LIVE  
DEMOCRACY**

CAMPAIGN FOR A MORE PROSPEROUS BRITAIN



The poster raid was organised by the 'Campaign for a More Prosperous Britain'. The founder of this body, a Mr Tom Keen of Oldham, is not exactly unprosperous himself. As he told the *Barnsley Chronicle*: 'I have made £1 million this year, and I plan to spend the lot on fighting strikes that could cripple the country'.

The raid on Barnsley, one of the most solid mining towns in Yorkshire, was apparently by way of a trial run. Mr Keen told the local press that 'people said we would be hounded off the streets of the town, but we haven't'. With one successful provocation under his belt, he now intends to repeat the raids throughout mining districts up and down the country.

Keen is one of those capitalists who does not trust the Tories and the state machine to do the necessary job on the working class without a little help on the side. As far as the miners are concerned, he clearly feels that the Government are not using all the weapons they could against the miners, and that efforts must be made to turn them against an 'internal enemy' - those leaders like Scargill and Daly who are supposedly in Moscow's hand.

Mr Keen should not be dismissed simply as a crank. His actions are a sign of growing panic felt by the capitalist class as they see a working class offensive getting under way this winter. If the Government itself panics and falls into a state of indecision, it will be Mr Keen and his like who will increasingly take individual steps to defend their interests.

His initiative in hiring bands of agitators to make vicious ideological attacks on the working class movement will be followed by others which will go much further. Not least prominent here will be the professional *fascist* of the National Front, for whom 'respectable' men like Mr Keen and Enoch Powell prepare the way. Mr Keen's little outings should be stopped now.

## Police hold IMG member

It is one of the most blatant instances of State harassment of the revolutionary left yet seen, a member of the IMG in Birmingham was arrested last Saturday and held in custody for more than two days before being released... on a charge of illegal possession of three library books?

It was 8.30 on Saturday morning when Bomb Squad detectives raided Kevin Crowe's flat for the second time in three months, claiming this time that they had been given his address as someone involved in the bombing campaign by an anonymous caller. After searching the flat for an hour they confiscated his address book and took him off to Summerfield Park police station, where he was interrogated all day about his connections with the revolutionary and Republican movements. On Saturday evening, he was transferred to Steelhouse

Lane police station, where he was locked up and refused facilities to contact a solicitor or anyone else. Not until 3.30 pm on Monday was he released, on a surety of £100, but without his address book.

This incident marks a clear escalation in the harassment of the revolutionary left. In the months to come, as the struggle develops towards a major confrontation, we can expect many more such instances, involving not just the revolutionary left but also an increasing number of trade union militants. If such police activity is not to be gradually regarded by an increasing number of people as 'normal' and even 'acceptable' - and there are already signs of this tendency - then the labour and socialist movement must see it as an urgent task to take up and expose the implications of every such case.



# MINERS

## Prospects

The following is an interview conducted recently by *Red Weekly* with a militant from Westoe Colliery in the North Durham Coalfield. This interview clearly shows the awareness of many rank-and-file miners that a practical, fighting unity with other groups of workers up against the Tories' Phase 3 is an essential weapon for the coming struggle.

In the weeks ahead the big job for these militants will be to step up the pressure on the NUM executive to make sure that a strike ballot gets held first thing in the new year, and to start organising the type of united struggle necessary to defeat the Tories.

An important opportunity to build rank-and-file unity between the miners and engineers will be the upcoming national meeting of engineering convenors, being planned for Manchester on 14 December. It is important that a big delegation of representatives from pits across the country is present at that meeting, so that practical coordination of the two struggles can begin.

Miners should also start to play a leading role in uniting the struggles of the whole working class for the coming showdown with the Tory Government. They could give such a lead by calling for conferences of the entire local labour movement which could work out a plan of united action against Phase 3 and the Tories. These conferences could make practical plans for the defence of pickets against police attack, launch a mass campaign to prepare the working class movement for the coming fight and undercut Tory propaganda, and create representative councils of action that could organise the necessary preparations for the struggle ahead.

**How can the struggle for the full claim be organised? What are the next steps that militants should be discussing and arguing for as the overtime ban begins to bite?**

The militants in the coalfields realise that the engineers have a claim in the pipeline also, and could be in dispute this winter. The militants will of course want to work with the engineers and want to liaise with them. This will be done through trades councils, and, where trades councils don't exist, through direct links with the engineers themselves. I don't think the miners—the rank-and-file miners, the militants in particular—will have recourse to Congress House. Because, although the TUC has rejected Phase 3, they have tended to be pedestrian in their movements when workers have been on strike in the past. So I think that the miners will try to forge direct links with the workers in industry. The engineers' position is crucial to the miners' position.

**Certain members of the NUM leadership have touched on this question—Lawrence Daly writing in the *Morning Star*, for example. Has this been discussed among the rank and file?**

I was surprised to learn that when Lawrence Daly wrote that article he wrote as National Secretary of the NUM, rather than in his personal capacity. This suggests that some discussions have taken place on the National Executive Committee. But the statement made by Lawrence Daly is rather obscure, it merely mentions the support that the miners have for the engineers. It suggests nothing about co-ordinating activity between miners and the engineering workers. It is merely a reference of Daly's brotherly support to fellow trade unionists who have a claim in the pipeline, that is as much as can be inferred from it at this stage. Hopefully the National Executive Committee will contact the AUEW in an endeavour to maximise the effectiveness of the NUM and engineers' stoppages.

**One of the features of the situation this winter will be short and bitter struggles fought by less well organised sections of the workers' movement. Can you see any possibility of links being forged between these groups—for example,**

**the ambulance-men—and the miners?**

Hopefully the miners will seize this opportunity to redeem themselves, as will the engineers. In recent struggles the miners and the engineers have watched the ancillary hospital workers without attempting to go to their assistance. There is an opportunity for the miners in particular to show some of the responsibility that should go with their industrial strength. This should not be the way in which any dispute amongst lower paid, less well organised, workers is approached. Not only should the mineworkers liaise with the engineering workers, but they should attach similar importance to coordination and consultation with other workers who may be involved in strike action this winter.

**What this implies is that if the miners went into struggle, followed very quickly by the engineers we could well see something approaching a general strike movement this winter.**

I think the general level of feeling in the trade union movement has risen in the past few years. Recent opinion polls have suggested that a great many trade unionists think that the Government's pay policies are grossly unfair. Credence has been given to the notion that the trade union movement should commence a general strike to rid itself of the Tory Government. I feel sure that a lot of trade unionists would want to participate in a movement which was designed to smash the Tories' pay laws. This has been voiced in many branches up and down the country, but it hasn't taken a tangible form yet. Nevertheless the feeling exists within the trade union movement that the Tories should scrap the pay laws, return to a system of free collective bargaining to enable trade unionists to bargain with the employer unhampered by Tory wage policies. The only shadow over any such development is the attitude of the trade union leadership itself towards the Government's decision to invoke the Emergency Powers Act. This may scare the leadership who could abandon any militancy shown by the rank-and-file in the months to come.

# STRUGGLE

## Problems

The following section of the interview spells out some of the problems and dangers involved in the present overtime ban.

It is now clear that the NCB is using the ban to lay men off and provoke local walkouts and stoppages. Coming just before Christmas, and without a clear commitment to a national strike, or even a definite date for a strike ballot, such struggles could become demoralising and disorienting for many miners.

*Red Weekly* has already suggested measures which could be taken to avoid this danger: 1. a campaign in the NUM branches to demand that the next meeting of the National Executive sets a definite date for a strike ballot; 2. a campaign of mass meetings, rallies and demonstrations—drawing in other groups of workers—in every locality in support of a national strike; 3. the establishment of committees in every pit to run the overtime ban as a means of preparing for the national strike, following the rule 'maximum damage to production, minimum damage to miners' paypackets'; 4. these committees to contact local transport workers to prevent the movement of whatever coal is produced during the ban.

**You mentioned the possibility of 'provocation' from the coalboard management during a full overtime ban. What would this involve?**

The most likely one will be accusations from the management of restrictions of effort on the part of the men. This enables management to downgrade faceworkers in particular. The National Coal Board agreement is to some extent a measured daywork agreement, which enables management to stipulate what a face's potential is. If this target isn't being reached this gives management reason to downgrade men, if that's what management wants to do. If there are difficulties about onsetters, winding engines, not turning up for work, then this could also give management the excuse to send men home.

**What do you know about the debates which took place inside the National Executive on the pros and cons of a production ban, as there was in '72, versus a full overtime ban in the industry?**

There's been very little information released

on the mechanics of the discussion, but the actual content was that 7 left-wing members of the National Executive were opposed to the full overtime ban. Presumably they were suspicious of the right-wing's enthusiasm for it. They may have had a premonition of what was to come—that the miners' militancy, to some extent, could be lost as a result of upheavals over downgrading, and so on, while an overtime ban was being applied.

**Is the full overtime ban a mistake?**

It's a difficult question because it depends on a number of variables which aren't really known. For example, if it were known that it was the intention of the National Executive to ballot the membership of the NUM at a given date to find out whether they wished to go out on strike or not, then, like many others, I would support a complete overtime ban. But, as yet, no date for a ballot has been announced, and the miners' leaders are avoiding answering the question directly.



Police reinforcements move in to hold back mass of workers outside Saltley last year

## BIRMINGHAM 5: CRUCIAL TRIAL BEGINS

Early next month five Birmingham building workers will be appearing in the Crown Court as a result of their action earlier this year in occupying the offices of one of that city's most notorious 'lump' labour contractors.

This step was taken in order to obtain information about the extent of 'lump' operations in Birmingham, and was part of a city-wide anti-lump campaign organised by the building workers union, UCATT.

### CONSPIRACY TO TRESPASS

An important feature of this trial is the charge of 'conspiracy to trespass' which has been levelled against these militants. This represents a dangerous extension of the use of the conspiracy laws against trade unionists.

'Trespass' is not in itself a criminal offence: it is simply a civil wrong, for which someone could be sued for compensation if he actually caused damage or inconvenience in the course of trespassing. However, one of the little-known

features of the conspiracy laws is that it can be a criminal offence for two or more persons to conspire to do something which is not in itself a crime. The most notorious use of the conspiracy laws in this way in the past has been the persecution of the trade union movement throughout much of the 19th century for conspiring to commit the civil wrong of 'inducing breach of contract'.

In 1962 a very wide-ranging application of the conspiracy laws was opened up when the House of Lords recognised the offence of 'conspiracy to commit a public mischief' on this occasion in the form of publishing an address book of prostitutes, which was held to 'corrupt public morals'. But this aspect of the law could be used in political cases;

What is significant about the Birmingham case is that since 1811 the courts have held that 'conspiracy to trespass' was not a crime. This established view was overturned last year when first the Court of Appeal and then the House of Lords upheld a charge of 'conspiracy to

trespass' against a group of students from Sierra Leone who had occupied their country's embassy.

### IMMUNE

Workers who adopt occupation tactics in pursuit of industrial struggles should be immune from this use of the law: the 1875 Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act in addition to imposing strict restrictions on pickets, also stopped the persecution of ordinary trade union activity as 'conspiracies' by providing that nothing done by more than one person involved in a trade dispute would be criminal unless it was a crime in its own right.

However, students, squatters, and workers who take actions not directly connected with a dispute—such as the attempt of the Birmingham building workers to break the ring of secrecy which capitalism throws around many of its most oppressive operations—are all subject to this new extension of the law. Moreover the courts are quite capable of extending

the law further into trade union affairs by narrowing down the definition of 'industrial dispute,' thus withdrawing the protection of the 1875 Act from an even wider range of actions.

The National Council for Civil Liberties has taken up this case and is providing legal defence. In a recent circular to their trade union affiliates they say: 'The NCCL considers this case the most significant and probably the most dangerous of all the criminal cases which have recently been brought against workers participating in industrial action.'

UCATT militants in Birmingham have set a good example in responding to this attack. The editorial board of the UCATT Shop Stewards Committee bulletin has decided to bring out the bulletin on a weekly basis during the trial. A meeting of UCATT shop stewards last Wednesday called for a strike and demonstration when the trial opens on 3 December. So far six major sites in the city have voted to stop, and letters have been sent to trade union branches and shop stewards committees throughout Birmingham urging them to take part.

BRIAN SLOCOCK



# JOHN MACLEAN : FIFTY YEARS ON

## 'JOHN MACLEAN, M.A.,' - SOVIET CONSUL

John MacLean, the Scottish revolutionary who died fifty years ago today (30 November), was a giant in his day. During the struggles that are referred to as 'Red Clydeside', his name was on the lips of every Scottish worker. Behind the militancy of the workers' demands, and the ardour with which they fought, could be glimpsed the influence of MacLean's ideas.

MacLean can best be understood as a working class teacher, who was dedicated to assisting the workers to understand society and their situation within it through an understanding of Marxist economics. He was well fitted for this task. Despite the poverty of his background he educated himself, becoming a pupil teacher and studying part-time at Glasgow University, where he obtained a Master of Arts degree in economics. He considered this an important achievement, and thereafter signed his articles and pamphlets 'John MacLean M.A.'

The two other articles published here give a glimpse of the scope of MacLean's struggle. Ray Challinor's piece explains his challenge to those who have found it politically convenient to praise his name but to obscure the relevance of his ideas. Henry Webb's article outlines the significance of his educational work for the development of the militancy of the Scottish miners.

### IMMENSE SCOPE

The immense scope of MacLean's work cannot be explained simply from his super-abundant energy, although only a human dynamo like MacLean could have kept up the sheer physical effort involved in taking socialist propaganda to the most isolated parts of Scotland. He was involved in every aspect of the working class because he believed that his revolutionary message was appropriate to every aspect. Thus we see him associated with the trade unions, with tenants' struggles, with the unemployed, with the co-operative movement, and with the struggles of landless Highland crofters.

He opened the eyes of his class to the relevance of the international class struggle to its day-to-day problems: When the October Revolution in Russia fixed the attention of the world, MacLean was in the forefront of its defence. But he was distinguished from the others who took up this cause, in that the Revolution proclaimed *his* contribution. He was made an honorary president of the Petrograd Soviet, along with Karl Liebknecht and Victor Adler, for like them he had stood out for working class internationalism during the First World War. He was also appointed Soviet Consul for Glasgow, the first person to receive such an appointment.

At the same time, while British dockers refused to load arms for Poland during the Soviet-Polish war, they sent ship-load after ship-load of arms and troops to crush the Irish national struggle. The founding congress of the Communist Party of

Great Britain, although held at the pitch of the Black and Tan war, failed to discuss Ireland. MacLean, in contrast, agitated tirelessly against the British war in Ireland, despite the physical danger which protestant sectarianism in the west of Scotland represented for anyone who took such a stand.

### ABSORBED MARXISM

How are we to assess MacLean as a Marxist? A recent article in the *Sunday Times* (25 November) by Angus Calder, belittles MacLean's contribution to Marxism. 'He had never been a great creative theoretician', says Calder: 'he wrote nothing longer than a pamphlet and his Marxism was narrowly economic.' Calder misses the point. No-one could rank MacLean with Lenin or Luxemburg, or even with Daniel De Leon, as a Marxist theoretician. But the importance of his contribution is precisely that he transcended the narrow economic version of Marxism which was current in Britain at the time.

MacLean received his training in the Social Democratic Federation, which was dominated by Henry Hyndman's dogmatic version of Marxism. He had access only to those works of Marx and Engels which were available in English, and these dealt almost exclusively with the labour theory of value. But MacLean had *Capital*, in which is distilled the essential elements of Marx's thought.

Poring over it, he absorbed the Marxist method, and basing himself on the solid rock of Marx's economic theory he analysed the *political* problems which faced the workers. His writings consist of short articles and pamphlets, yes—but few Marxists have ever been able to write so succinctly, so profoundly, and so accessibly for a working class audience.

### REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

It was because he had transcended 'Hyndmanism' that he coalesced the opposition in the SDF to Hyndman's social chauvinism during the First World War. And, unlike Hyndman, he saw the need for the workers to be organised for every aspect of their struggle in organisations permeated with revolutionary ideas. He envisaged a network of working class organisations—the trade unions at the point of production, the co-operatives at the point of consumption, tenants' organisations, and organisations of the unemployed. The grip of bourgeois ideology on the worker would be broken by labour colleges, which would train working class leaders, and the class would be led in political action by a Marxist socialist party.

This is not Leninism. It has a great deal in common with the ideas of the De Leonite Socialist Labour Party and James Connolly. But it is a million miles ahead of the narrow dogmatic economism of Hyndman.

BOB PURDIE

### 'My Appeal is to the Working Class'

MacLean gave his most important lecture in 1918. His class room was the High Court in Edinburgh, and his podium was the dock. Accused of sedition for opposing the war, he turned the accusation round, and demonstrated from Marxist principles the real causes of the war.

He explained himself in words as bright and clear as his devotion to his class: 'I stand here not as the accused but as the accuser of capitalism, dripping with blood from head to foot ... I have squared my conduct with my intellect ... I act square and clean for my principles. I have nothing to retract. I have nothing to be ashamed of. Your class position is against my class position ... my appeal is to the working class. I appeal to them exclusively because they and only they can bring about a time when the whole world will be one brotherhood on a sound economic foundation.'

## MACLEAN AND THE SCOTTISH MINERS

Before the First World War the mining unions in Scotland and South Wales, which since the 1920s have been centres of left-wing activity, were extremely weak when compared to the wealthier English districts.

The period after the First World War saw an amazing rate of economic inflation and an aggressive response by organised labour. During this conflict durable unions were established in the Scottish and South Wales coal fields and socialists made an important contribution to this achievement.

### MARXIST EDUCATION

Socialist agitation in Scotland and South Wales was indissolubly associated with Marxist education. Amongst the Scottish miners this was carried out by John MacLean and a group of socialist teachers he had gathered round him.

MacLean had started Marxist economics classes in Glasgow in 1906. Some of the students at these classes were miners, and by the end of 1908, classes in economics and history had been established in the mining areas of Burnbank in Lanarkshire. By the end of 1910 Marxist classes were being held at least one night a week in the Fife mining towns of Bowhill, Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy, and Cowdenbeath.

The miners' strike of 1912 brought to a head the previous decade's Marxist activity. Before 1912 the Lanarkshire miners, especially the Irishmen amongst them, gave their political allegiance to Liberalism. Even miners leaders like Bob Smillie and John Robertson had been defeated at the polls by Liberals. This situation was transformed by the 1912 strike, and, from this point on, the political conflict amongst

Scottish miners was between the Labourites and Marxism.

### VOICE OF THE RANK-AND-FILE

J.D. MacDougall, MacLean's life-long political companion, suggests that mining conditions produced a form of 'social anarchy' which encouraged the solidarity of the rank and file miners and undermined the authority of the union agent. The defeat of the 1912 strike transformed this into a coherent political opposition to the Union bureaucracy. As MacDougall puts it: 'Several popular socialist propagandists began to criticise the action of the men's leaders and although they were not themselves miners, they were acclaimed at huge gatherings of the miners in Fife and Lanarkshire as the true voice of rank-and-file opinion'.

In 1913 for example, John MacLean intervened in an inter-union dispute at Coalburn, taking a stand opposed to that of miners' leader Bob Smillie. His speech was met with an 'immense shout of applause from the crowd', according to Nat Milton, who explained further that: 'Even the accumulated fame of such a veteran

as Smillie (the President of the Scottish Miners) could not stand up against the influence that John MacLean had won with this body of Scottish workers.'

### MINERS REFORM MOVEMENT

MacLean and MacDougall played the determining role in the extension of the Miners Reform activity to Scotland. This campaign for nationalisation was inspired by the establishment of Government control of the mines in 1917. The scarcity of coal put the miners in a strong bargaining position, and their militancy was not just wages militancy, but expressed a basic anti-capitalist outlook.

During the period when MacLean was building up the Reform Movement, the Clyde Workers Committee initiated the 'Forty Hours' strike in Glasgow in January 1917. This committee was dominated by the engineers, and was chaired by Willie Gallacher. MacLean advised them to wait for the miners to join in officially, but his advice was ignored.

The strength of the CWC flowed from its strategic position amongst the engineers at a time when the production of arms was impor-

tant. With the end of the war this changed. The miners on the other hand were in a militant mood. Not only was their nationalisation demand explicitly anti-capitalist, but the South Wales Reform Movement was discussing the physical take-over of collieries.

MacLean encouraged the miners to establish Reform Committees and attempted, along with MacDougall and others, to establish a national Reform Movement in the South Wales, Scottish and English districts as the left-wing within the Miners Federation of Great Britain.

John MacLean's association with the Scottish miners, which only ended with his death in November 1923, endured over eighteen years. His activity alongside the miners was based on his belief in the creativity of the working class, and the suffocating limitations of bourgeois education. His optimistic faith in the working class made him an enemy of the bourgeoisie, but it also made him an opponent of those who were less optimistic. To honour his deeds, and his struggle is to share in that optimism.

HENRY WEBB





One of his last public appearances: John MacLean addressing May Day meeting in Glasgow, 1923

# IN DEFENCE OF JOHN MACLEAN

John MacLean, who died fifty years ago, was the greatest revolutionary Britain has produced in this century. A superb orator, a clear exponent of Marxism, a fiery agitator, he more than anyone else personified the 'revolt on the Clyde.'

But the latter part of his life — the period during which the British Communist Party was formed — is not so well known.

Official CP historians have tended to explain Maclean's opposition to the formation of the Communist Party in psychological terms. Willie Gallacher, in his book *Revolt on the Clyde*, argues that because of his long imprisonment MacLean became mentally ill. While in gaol he thought his food was being doctored. When released he became obsessed with the menace of police spying and consequently distrusted everyone. This included the representative of the Comintern — Theodore Rothstein — whom he considered to be a Scotland Yard agent.

## BRUTALITY

It is impossible to say for sure what happened to MacLean in prison, but there is a mass of testimony that many of those imprisoned for opposing the First World War were treated with extreme brutality, and many had their health permanently damaged. David Boulton in his book *Objection Overruled* names seventy-three who died through their ordeal. Even the Labour Party conference protested about MacLean's treatment and Ramsey MacDonald wrote a letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland, on 5 September 1918, saying that MacLean was being made to suffer worse than other prisoners, including those jailed for their part in the Irish Rebellion.

As for MacLean's alleged obsession with police spying, let us quote the following: 'Until Sir Basil Thomson (head of MI5) and his gang are cleared out, we have an enemy in our midst who is a more deadly threat to the community than a foreign invader. Wherever two or three are gathered together, whether in a trade union or public meeting, something should be done to prepare for a vigorous fight against New Scotland Yard.' This quote comes from the Glasgow weekly paper *Forward*, of 11 June 1921; six similar quotations can be found in one eight month period. These are not the words of John MacLean, but of Ramsey MacDonald. He was a right-wing social democrat, yet he felt the unkindly gaze of the authorities. John MacLean was certain to be subjected to much more rigorous police attention.

## MACLEAN & ROTHSTEIN

Let us now consider the third part of the indictment of John MacLean — his failure to reach agreement with Theodore Rothstein, the Comintern representative. There are two accounts of this conflict. One is by Gallacher, the other by Harry McShane, a close political companion of John MacLean.

According to Gallacher, MacLean was asked by Rothstein to take a leading part in the formation of the new British party (*Last Memoirs*, p. 141). But McShane says that the proposal put to MacLean was only that he should become a prominent spokesman for the 'Hands off Russia' campaign. This would have meant dropping his other agitational work and his lectures in Marxism, which were attracting large audiences in Scotland. He therefore refused.

Neither account suggests that there was much love lost between MacLean and Rothstein. McShane writes: 'He was particularly hostile to Theodore Rothstein, who had worked as an interpreter for the War Office during the war. To be fair, it should be pointed out that Rothstein, while working for the War Office, continued to write for the BSP (British Socialist Party) under the name of John Bryan.' ('Remembering John MacLean', *New Edinburgh Review*, No. 19, 1972). Gallacher's version is rather different: 'When he (MacLean) returned to Glasgow he openly told of this meeting and said that the cunning agent Rothstein had tried to fool him with a lot of talk about representing the Bolsheviks when he, MacLean, knew full well that he was working for the British government.' McShane claims that this is untrue: MacLean never accused Rothstein of being a spy for the British government.

## PRaise FOR MENSHEVIKS

But serious criticism can be made of Rothstein on political grounds. When, in 1902, left-wingers in the Social Democratic Federation rebelled against the opportunist line of the Hyndman leadership, Rothstein aligned himself with the right-wing. During the Russian Revolution of 1917 he characterised what he considered to be the weakness of the Russian socialists — their jealousy, quarrelsomeness and predilection for theoretical niceties. He went on to praise the Mensheviks for joining the Provisional Government. They had gone 'into the government in spite of the violent opposition of the Leninites.' He regarded the move as 'a great step forward which marked the official triumph of the revolutionary proletariat.' (Emphasis added).

John MacLean was right to be suspicious of Rothstein, who had no idea whatsoever how to build a revolutionary party in Britain.

In 1919 the Bolsheviks issued a manifesto to forty organisations asking them to help in the

formation of a new international. Of these five came from Britain. With the exception of the British Socialist Party (BSP), Rothstein cannot claim to have gained a majority of the membership of any of these organisations. That he acquired the allegiance of most of the BSP is significant. Essentially the BSP was a reformist party which contained a scattering of revolutionaries, mainly in Scotland.

## TRICKERY

The Bolsheviks had particularly mentioned the 'tendency (of the BSP) represented by MacLean'. How did they fare at the unity conference? 'I myself was automatically excluded,' writes John MacLean in his journal *Vanguard* (August 1920), 'through the trickery of the Cockney, Cant, who refused to recognise the old Tradeston branch of the BSP, of which I became a member on the death of the Pollokshaws branch.' Later, in an *Open Letter to Lenin*, MacLean explained this had been secretly engineered by Rothstein.

In MacLean's opinion, the British Communist Party had been formed on an unprincipled basis. The creation of what was tantamount to a non-communist Communist Party was based on an optimistic assumption: they-will-all-move-to-the-left-under-the-pressure-of-events theory. This not only meant that in the course of the struggle the Communist Party would develop in a more revolutionary direction, but that the left trade union leaders would do likewise. This proved to be quite useful for the TUC bureaucrats in the Anglo Russian Trade Union Committee, who were quite prepared to conceal right-wing practice with a few revolutionary phrases.

## ADHERENCE TO PRINCIPLES

John MacLean realised that it was especially important in a country like Britain, where the roots of reformism were so deeply embedded, for the Communist Party to be built on theoretical foundations of granite firmness: 'Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks were and are, very rigid Marxians. Because of their faithful adherence to principles they have won through and are holding out with tremendous success.' (*Vanguard*, August 1920).

For this reason John MacLean sought to create a genuine revolutionary organisation. Initially, he tried to accomplish this around the Socialist Labour Party (SLP), whose members had been very prominent in the industrial struggles on the Clyde. As Lenin had stated earlier,

comparing the SLP with the BSP and the Independent Labour Party: 'Of the three socialist parties in England, only one, the independent Socialist Labour Party, is openly becoming an ally of the Bolsheviks, while the Socialist Labour Party in Scotland declares itself to be an adherent of the Bolsheviks.' (*Lenin on Britain*, Lawrence & Wishart, p. 201).

In his efforts to build a unified revolutionary party, MacLean organised a conference, held in the SLP's national headquarters in Glasgow, on 25 December 1920. But Willie Gallacher and a group of his supporters — although not delegates — came along and wrecked the conference.

## TREMENDOUS ODDS

Despite such harassment, John MacLean continued his attempts to form a genuine socialist party, primarily in Scotland where there was greater militancy and he had more influence. But he failed. The tide of militancy had receded. Growing unemployment led to shop stewards being sacked. Union bureaucracy gained control again in the labour movement. The Communist Party, strengthened by large financial assistance, grew and eventually strangled the revolutionary left.

As for MacLean: his attempts to restore life to the dying revolutionary forces eventually killed him. He fought a bitter battle against tremendous odds. Repeatedly jailed by the authorities he also had to contend with abuse from Communist Party as well as Labour Party members. Indeed the way in which the CP slandered him, broke up his meetings, spread lies about him, is reminiscent of its behaviour to a number of small revolutionary groups that existed between the nineteen-thirties and sixties. In this sense, John MacLean was the first British Trotskyist.

## RAYMOND CHALLINOR

Just published — *The War After The War* by John MacLean MA, 20p from Socialist Reproduction, 57d James-town Road, London, NW1.

To be published before Xmas — *Ireland's Tragedy — Scotland's Disgrace* by John MacLean MA, 12p. Enquiries or orders to Red Books, 24 Boundary Road, NW8.

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# STRATEGIES FOR STRUGGLE

## 3. Workers Revolutionary Party

One of the feats of modern science was executed in London on 4 November – the transformation of the Socialist Labour League into the Revolutionary Party.

The Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), as the metamorphosed SLL is known, claims to offer the working class a unique product called 'revolutionary leadership'. It should not be unfair, then, to examine exactly where the Workers Revolutionary Party proposes to lead the working class at this time of struggle and upheaval.

### GENERAL STRIKE

The SLL long ago grasped the fact that the central problem facing the working class was the Tory Government, and that the most effective instrument to break this government was a general strike.

Trotsky's view was that a general strike posed the question of power, but the SLL/WRP have a rather different idea – the general strike poses the question of a general election. Thus, rather than campaigning to explain to working class militants that a general strike is the most effective means of unifying the working class for the struggle against the ruling class and its Government, they have stressed the need for a general election, and propose the general strike as simply the most direct route to the polling booth.

Such a position has a curious logic all its own. Elections are, of course, the principal means by which the ruling class maintains its political domination in a bourgeois democracy. The calling of an election is thus a classical ruling class device to head off a growing mass movement (e.g. in France in May '68, or Argentina this year). Far from it being necessary to call a general strike to force an election, the ruling class can be expected to make such a move at the mere scent of a decisive struggle.

Thus, as the pace of the class struggle mounts, the prominence of the general strike call in the SLL's propaganda declines, because it is increasingly obvious that a much smaller dose of industrial upheaval will do the job. Thus in June 1972 a series of articles in the then SLL's paper *Workers' Press* (printed as a pamphlet) – 'Why a Labour Government?' took up the question of the need to kick out the Tories and elect a Labour Government – without once proposing the general strike as a means of achieving this.

Instead of a clear call for the form of struggle to be adopted we get all sorts of woolly formulas like 'unite the organised working class' and 'working-class action' – formulas very like those used by the leaders of the Communist Party and the trade union 'lefts' who we criticised in the first article in this series.

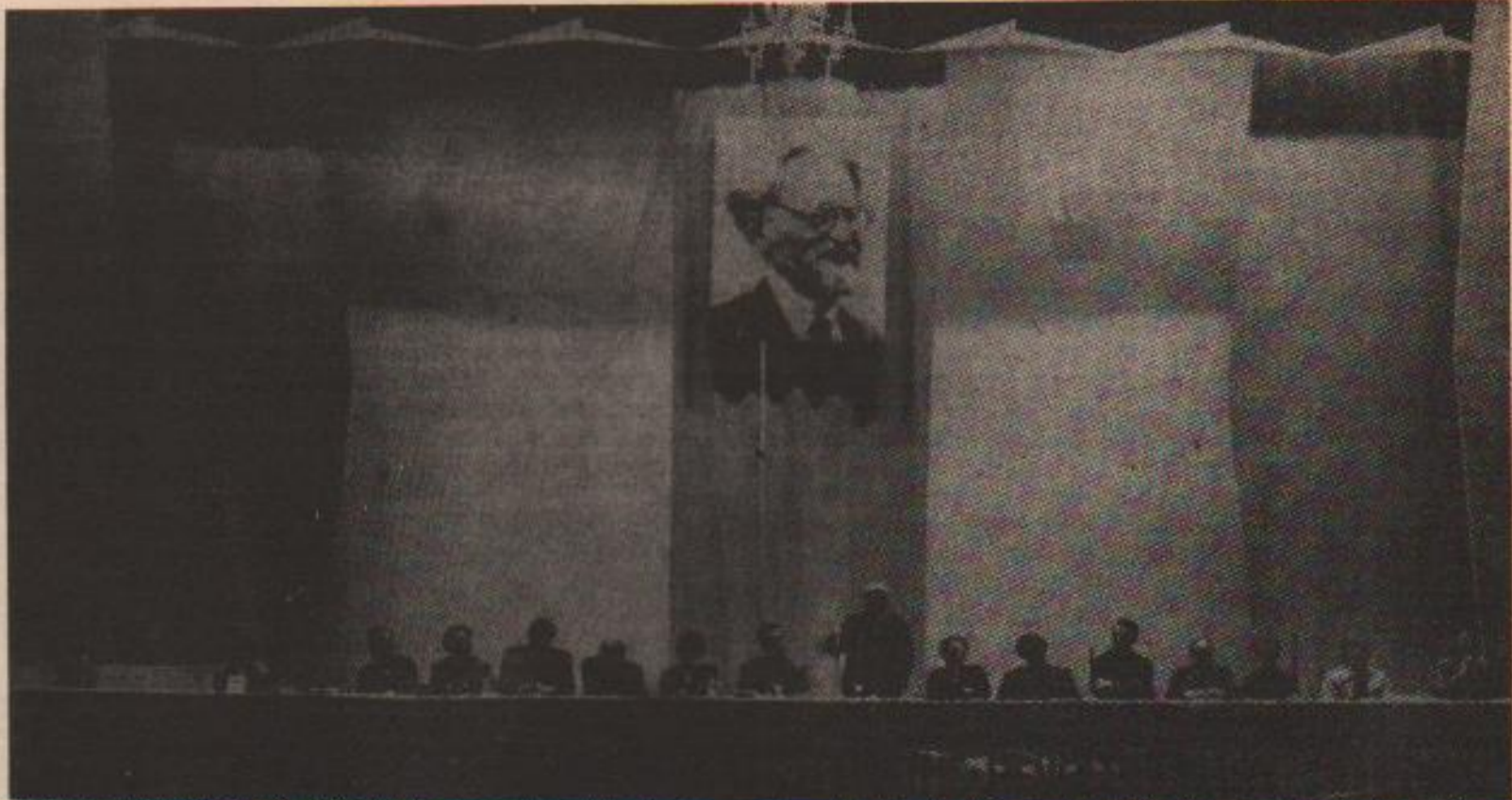
The draft resolution 'Perspectives for the Transformation of the SLL into a Revolutionary Party' adopted by the SLL central committee in February 1973 is in the same vein. Reference is made to the past record of the SLL: 'We campaigned from the very beginning for the TUC to call a General Strike to defeat the Industrial Relations Act and force the Tory Government to resign' – but no indication is given of the future significance of this form of struggle.

### GENERAL ELECTION

As the general strike call recedes into the background, so the general election slogan receives even greater prominence. Thus the 15 November *Workers' Press* bore the headline 'Force General Election Now' over a statement from the WRP Central Committee.

Nor are the WRP deterred by the fact that all kinds of miserable reformists and opportunists in the labour movement are seeking shelter under the rock of a general election. When Joe Gormley – right-wing leader of the NUM – raises the question of a general election as a means of avoiding a fight with the Tories, *Workers' Press* says 'Miners leader Joe Gormley is right to demand that the Heath Government calls an immediate General Election. He is acknowledging that the fight against the Phase Three pay laws is not simply about wages, but involves the question of power!'

Well, they are right about one thing – Gormley's



actions do 'acknowledge that the fight... involves the question of power' – and say quite clearly that he wants no part of such a fight. The 'question of power' is not posed by a general election (except in the mind of social-democratic muddleheads), but by the mobilisation and struggle of the masses. And it is that which Joe Gormley hopes to avoid by talking about an election instead of organising a miners strike.

Of course a mass mobilisation and struggle could take place around a General Election. But the SLL's slogan of 'Labour to Power on a Socialist Program' is hardly designed to do that – it simply backs up the attempts of 'left' social-democrats to convince the working class that the road to socialism lies through electing a Labour government with the right policies, rather than the development of the mass struggle of the working class.

Back in 1971, when the SLL was a bit more talkative about the general strike than at present, they had this to say about the danger that elections coupled with minor material concessions could defuse a general strike movement: 'The lessons for us are crucial: a General Strike to make the Tory government resign must remain in being until a General Election is held and until the programme of nationalisation without compensation under workers' control has been adopted by the Labour Party for implementation.'

But even this 'left' variant of their present positions is hopeless reformism. If a general strike poses the question of power then surely it should 'remain in being' until some answers to that question are forthcoming. And those answers will not come simply from the election of a Labour Government, not even one which has 'adopted' a left programme (unless we believe the reformists have suddenly become sincere, and will really keep their promises this time).

By all means, let's elect a Labour Government. But we must not deceive the working class that such a Government – no matter what its programme says – is God's answer to their problems. We must propose a concrete programme of action by which they can use the new conditions created by the election of such a Government to create and impose their own solutions by developing their own power – by the mass seizure of factories coupled with demands that they be nationalised, the establishment of a system of workers' control combined with the

demand that the Government recognises its authority, the assumption of direct control over prices by

workers and housewives committees, the establishment of workers defence forces coupled with the demand that the Government abolish the army and the police in their favour.

That is the way to move from the posing of the question of power towards its resolution in favour of the working class. But that involves an approach to the mass struggles of the working class that is totally alien to the Workers Revolutionary Party.

The source of the WRP's errors lie in their whole conception of 'revolutionary leadership.' They say the struggle cannot go forward under the present reformist leadership – and they are perfectly correct. They stress the need for a new leadership – a revolutionary party – and again they are right.

But they see this leadership as being simply a 'left' version of the present leadership: the TUC with Gerry Healy at the top instead of Len Murray, and they think that the way to get there is by 'exposing' the present leadership. Thus many of the demands they propose – such as the general strike – are not meant as serious proposals to guide the activity of working class militants, but simply as devices to highlight the treachery of the bureaucrats who fail to take them up. Thus we have the ironic situation that in a situation where a general strike becomes more likely every day, the WRP is more and more concerned with a general election – precisely because they think that they can more effectively 'expose' the bureaucrats with this demand.

In fact, their demand plays right into the hands of the bureaucracy, and they end up tailing right-wing trade unionists like Gormley. But that is not the main point. It is not enough simply to 'expose' the treachery of the present leadership (that can lead to demoralisation as well as revolutionary consciousness, as it did after the 1926 general strike) it is necessary to demonstrate concretely, and where possible in practice, that a revolutionary road actually exists. Such a task is an essential part of building a revolutionary party, because revolutionary leadership is not a left version of the TUC: it is based on a totally different relationship with the masses. Revolutionary leadership can only be exercised through the independent organisation of the masses. The creation of such organisation is, at one and the same time, the

way forward for the present struggle, the means by which the masses can break loose from the present bureaucratic leadership, and the process by which the revolutionary party will be built and will establish its leadership over the masses.

Militants who are concerned about the coming confrontation with the Tory Government and have seen through the present leadership of the labour movement are searching for a political alternative. It is no use telling them to 'build the revolutionary leadership' – i.e. join the WRP, because that will solve nothing over the next few months, unless you seriously think that the WRP is going to take over the TUC or the Labour Party in that space of time. What is needed is a concrete programme of action which militants can use to transform the way in which the masses over whom they have influence are struggling – to undercut the dependence of the masses on the reformists, strengthen the unity of the masses, and allow them to confront the ruling class on the most advantageous terms.

A revolutionary party is an organisation with at least a limited capacity to influence the course of the class struggle – to affect the outcome of at least some of the most important struggles in which the working class is involved. The WRP cannot do that, and therefore its claim to be 'the revolutionary party' is phony. No such party exists in Britain today.

The building of such a party can only be carried out by those who understand the central tasks facing revolutionaries: to give working class militants a

revolutionary political perspective, to show how that perspective can be translated into concrete forms of mass struggle, and to propose practical measures for the organisation of the rank-and-file independent from the reformist bureaucracies. These are, and will continue to be, the central concerns of the International Marxist Group's propaganda, agitation, and action in the present period. That is why the International Marxist Group will contribute to the resolution of the 'crisis of leadership' in the British working class movement, and the Workers' Revolutionary Party will not.

CHRIS BALFOUR

## WHAT'S ON

**TYNESIDE:** Anti-Internment League public meeting, 'The Irish Freedom Struggle,' Sunday 9 December at 8 p.m. in the Bridge Hotel, Newcastle. Irish, TU and AIL speakers. Also Grand Social Evening, Friday 7 December, 8 p.m. in the Bridge Hotel, Newcastle. John Doonan, the fabulous Beggarmen, Irish Dancers, etc. Admission at door 25p.

**'MEDICINE AND IMPERIALISM':** Meeting Wednesday 5 December, Room 2D, University of London Union, Malet St., WC1, Chair: Joshua Horne. Speakers: Malcolm Segall, Robin Scott, Basil Davidson. Organised by Guinea Angola Mozambique Medical Action (GAMMA). Further information: 734 9541.

**UKRAINE:** Public meeting 'In defence of political prisoners in Ukraine,' Monday 3 December at 7.30 pm in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (Holborn tube). Speakers from IS and IMG.

**ANTI-FASCIST SOCIAL:** Saturday, 1 December – all proceeds to cover expenses of those charged

after recent demonstrations. Starts 8 p.m. in Imperial College Students Union, Prince Consort Road, SW7 (South Kensington tube).

**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 Fiction 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.

## Books and pamphlets on the Middle East

**Class Nature of the Israeli State /** Machover et al 10p + 5p p&p

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**How Can the Jews Survive? A Socialist Answer to Zionism /** George Novack 10p + 5p p&p

**Documents of the Palestinian Resistance Movement /** Al Fatah, PDFLP, PFLP 17p + 5p p&p

**Roots of the Mideast War /** Selections from the ISR 25p + 6p p&p

**Israel and the Arabs /** Maxime Rodinson 40p + 7p p&p

**Israel: A Colonial-Settler State /** Maxime Rodinson 75p + 12p p&p

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# Economic crisis likely to force new Greek rulers to bring back parliamentarians

The latest 'coup' in Greece, carried out as in 1967 with the aid of a NATO plan designed to forestall a Communist seizure of power, should come as no real surprise. The Paris newspaper *Le Monde*, for instance, had two days earlier analysed the existence of at least three factions in the armed forces—of which that supporting Papadopoulos was reckoned to be the weakest.

The riots the previous weekend, and the gathering popular support which they had evoked, had exposed only too clearly the weakness and instability of the Papadopoulos regime. Last Sunday's move was primarily intended to halt the growing concentration of power in the sole hands of Papadopoulos: even had elections taken place, he would still as president have retained complete control over such matters as internal security until his term expired in 1981, and his puppet prime minister, Markezinis, talked of making him the 'Tito of Greece.'

It is unclear as yet what policies the new government will pursue. The main figure behind the coup, Brigadier Ioannides, is the head of the military police and a notorious torturer, while the new prime minister, Androutsopoulos, is a former Chicago lawyer who has a close working relationship with the CIA. The new president, General Gizikis, is believed to be a hardliner.

## NEED FOR STABILITY

The most likely course for the new regime is a

combination of 'liberalisation' measures (release of the old politicians and some of the students and workers recently arrested) together with a tightening up of security to try to prevent any repeat of the recent mass upsurge. It is possible also that moves may be made towards setting up the government of 'National Union' called for by the old politicians at the time of the riots. This would include representatives of all the old bourgeois parties, with Karamanlis (former leader of the right-wing ERE) as the likely prime minister.

But whatever measures are pursued, they will reflect the need for a new stable regime in the country. This is the more urgent for US imperialism following the inconclusive election results in neighbouring Turkey, which threaten to create a new weakness in NATO's southern flank. Furthermore, a move towards 'normalisation' with a civilian government and the reintegration of the old bourgeois parties into the political life of the country may be the only way to unite the capitalist forces to deal with the tremendous economic problems now besetting Greece (imports have doubled and inflation has soared by 80% since the beginning of the year.)

## NOTHING FOR WORKERS

One thing is clear: the new regime offers no more prospects for the workers, peasants and students of Greece than did the old. It is particularly obscene, therefore, to see the Greek Communist Party (the KKE) joining in the calls for a government of 'National Union' — the more so as Karamanlis instituted a vicious



General Phaedon Gizikis (left), the new Greek president who took part in Sunday's coup after the mass upsurge of students and workers (right) had shown the instability of the Papadopoulos regime



witch-hunt against the KKE while in office, and was not above rigging the elections to maintain his position until a mass, *extra-parliamentary* upsurge forced him into exile in 1963. Having been one step behind the masses throughout the upsurge of a fortnight ago, the KKE now seeks to subordinate the mass movement to manoeuvres within the capitalist class in a desperate attempt to get back on to the familiar ground of the 'peaceful road.'

In fact, it was the upsurge a fortnight ago, when the most advanced sections of the working class, students and peasantry came together under the leadership of an independent, elected struggle committee in Athens, which showed the real way forward for the mass movement in

Greece. The task now must be to develop these tendencies towards democratic mass organisation, to concretise the anti-capitalist slogans which have been raised, and to forge a revolutionary current capable of giving consistent leadership in the struggles ahead.

Drawing on the lessons of the bloodbath a fortnight ago, such leadership must also of necessity include continuous propaganda for the formation of armed detachments of the working class and its student and peasant allies right from the start. On this road, and this road alone, lies the final solution to the problems of the Greek working masses—the establishment of a Socialist Workers Republic.

John Marston

# Ukrainian socialist released after protests in Moscow

The release from prison of Ivan Dzyuba, the well-known Ukrainian Marxist intellectual, was announced on 9 November by the Ukrainian Writers Union.

Dzyuba was sentenced in March of this year to five years' imprisonment for 'carrying out anti-Soviet propaganda.' This was the culmination of several years of repressive measures against this avowed Leninist, whose book *Internationalism or Russification* had exposed the anti-Leninist line of the Soviet bureaucracy towards the national question in the Soviet Union.

The inability of the Soviet leadership to dismiss Dzyuba as a bourgeois nationalist forced them to publish a lengthy pamphlet for sale only in the West, attempting to refute his arguments. But within the Soviet Union itself, he and his co-thinkers were rounded up and sent to prison and labour camps.

At the World Peace Congress in Moscow last

month, some of the delegations protested against Dzyuba's imprisonment and the repression of hundreds of other dissident intellectuals and workers in the Ukraine and other parts of Eastern Europe (a letter from imprisoned socialists in Czechoslovakia was distributed at the congress, along with other material from the opposition there).

## PEACE CONGRESS

Following the Peace Congress, representatives of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union attended a meeting of the Praesidium of the Ukrainian CP. It was after this meeting that the announcement of Dzyuba's release was made. The Soviet leadership cannot have been unaware of the fact that defence committees for Dzyuba had been set up in North America and Europe, and that their repressive measures were meeting with growing protest from socialist and working class militants in the West.

The official explanation of Dzyuba's release,

however, can only heighten the outrage of socialists at the methods of the Soviet bureaucracy. It is claimed by the editors of *Literary Ukraine*, for instance, that he was freed because 'during the investigation and in court he admitted to his mistakes, and assisted in the investigation.' But in that case, why was he sentenced to five years for 'his mistakes'? And what were these 'mistakes', other than publicly declaring his opposition to official policies?

And if he was released following his 'assistance in the investigation,' why was he not released before the trial took place? Was it because 'the investigation' into his 'mistakes' had been going on between March, when his trial ended, and November, when he was released? The attempt to justify his release only confirms the fact that the Soviet bureaucracy is engaged in a desperate struggle to crush every voice of socialist and Leninist opposition through savage repressive measures.

The Soviet leadership undoubtedly hopes that such actions as the release of Dzyuba will help to smooth the path for its efforts at class collaboration with the imperialist countries. This may be so. But they will not halt the protests in the socialist and labour movement at the bureaucracy's continuing suppression of workers democracy, and its oppressive nationalities policy in the USSR. Hundreds of Ukrainians remain in prison or labour camps, and the very way in which Dzyuba has been released highlights the travesty of socialism in the USSR.

The Ukrainian Defence Committee in Britain will therefore be continuing its activity, campaigning for the release of Chornovil and other political prisoners in the Ukraine. It has just published a new pamphlet, *Ukraine: Unrest and Repression*, and will be holding a public meeting on 3 December at 7.30 p.m. in London's Conway Hall.

# INTERNATIONAL NOTES

PROLETÁRIOS DE TODOS OS PAÍSES, UNI-VOS!



*Ação Comunista*, a new journal published by militants of the Fourth International in Portugal

**PORTUGAL:** Along with the rising tide of struggle against Portuguese colonialism in Africa has come a marked change in the situation inside Portugal. This year has seen an unprecedented number of strikes — notably that of the TAP airport workers — as well as major student struggles in Lisbon, Oporto, and Coimbra. The most recent expression of this new discontent came on 28 October, the date of the carefully organised 'elections,' when even the official figures admitted a high abstention rate, rising to almost 50% in Lisbon and its suburbs.

This situation obviously opens up new possibilities for a revolutionary intervention, which makes the appearance of *Ação Comunista*, a new regular journal published by the Portuguese militants of the Fourth International, all the more timely. Apart from coverage of developments in Portugal and its colonies, the first issue focusses particularly on the leading role played by Portuguese workers in the recent immigrant workers' struggles in France.

**CEYLON:** Over 150 trade union militants as well as many students attended a public meeting on the Chilean events held recently by the LSSP(R), Ceylon section of the Fourth International, in Colombo. Among those in the audience were dissidents from the pro-Moscow Communist Party, which is now in a state of severe crisis.

The main speaker at the meeting was LSSP(R) leader Bala Tampoe, who compared the Chilean experience with the last three years of popular front rule in Ceylon, where the mass workers' parties of the LSSP (renegade Trotskyists) and CP have held ministerial posts in a coalition government dominated by the bourgeois Sri Lanka Freedom Party. This coalition has so effectively succeeded in defending the interests of the capitalist class that the prime minister, Mrs Bandaranaike, has even felt confident enough now to expel the Communist Party ministers from the government. This has

caused a major crisis within the ranks of the CP, with many militants now openly challenging the possibility of the 'peaceful road'.

**FRANCE:** A one-day general strike has been called for Thursday 16 December by the main trade union organisations and parties of the left in protest at the rising cost of living. The official price index registered a record rise of 1.2% last month, a rate which if maintained would amount to almost 15% over the next year.

The strike is intended simply as a gesture of protest by its sponsors—the Communist Party, for instance, sees it as a means of backing up the Union of the Left (its electoral coalition with the Socialist Party and Left Radicals) and its 'anti-monopoly' campaign. No demands have been put forward around which to organise, and the issue has been restricted to the cost of living, although it is clear that the Government will shortly use the question of inflation to launch a general offensive against the working class.

The revolutionary forces, therefore—and notably our comrades of *Rouge*—will be supporting the mobilisation with the aim of promoting general assemblies of all the workers involved to discuss further action around concrete demands. In particular they will point to the struggle at Lip—its lessons for the struggles of the whole working class; and the need to maintain continuing solidarity with the Lip workers despite the betrayal of the trade union bureaucrats. In this way the one-day general strike can be given a wider significance and used to prepare the working class for the major struggles which lie ahead.

**PERU:** The continuing detention of 30 teachers' leaders by the 'military reformist' Velasco regime (which seized power through a coup in 1968) has led to major clashes in which several people have died. Since the arrest of its leaders on 24 October

the teachers' union SUTEP has organised a series of strikes which are now rapidly escalating into a general confrontation between the regime and large sections of the working class.

Arequipa, Peru's second largest city with a population of 300,000, has been placed under direct military control in response to a virtual general strike. A state of emergency has also been declared in Puno and Cuzco, where as in Arequipa clashes on the streets have left several dead and many injured. Once again, the inherent instability of any 'national' solution to the fundamental clash of interests between imperialism and the working masses in Latin America is being demonstrated, repeating the lessons of Bolivia and Chile.

### International Marxist Group

(British Section of the Fourth International)

182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

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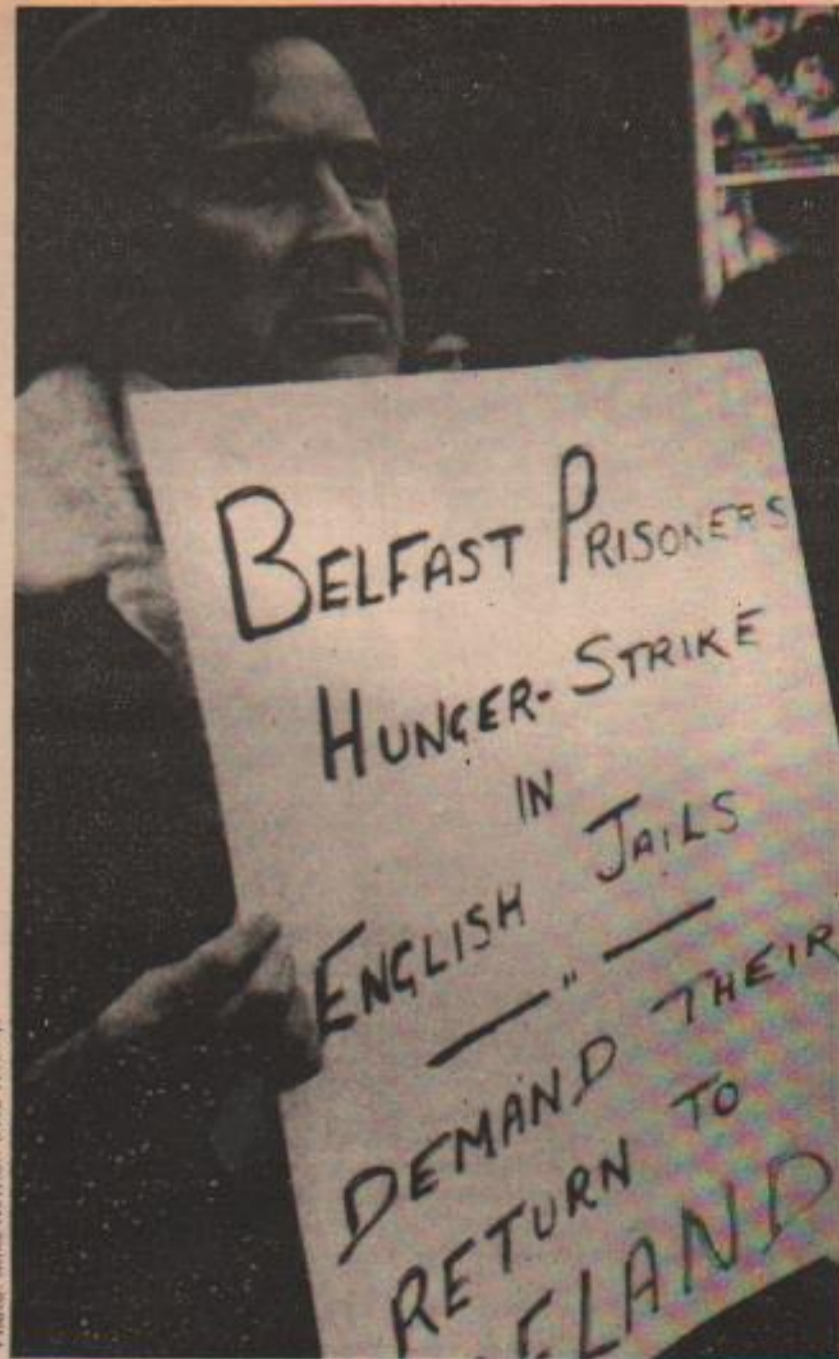


Photo: Mike Newton (Red Weekly)

Picket outside Brixton (where Price sisters are held) last Sunday

## OPPORTUNIST S.D.L.P. ENTERS EXECUTIVE

Faced with deadlock in the negotiations for the formation of an executive for the Northern Ireland Assembly, Mr. Whitelaw has taken another dip into the gravy bucket, and come up with a ladleful of extra, non-voting, Administration posts.

Nothing could reveal more clearly the opportunism of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, and the intended role of the new Executive. Together with the Alliance Party, the SDLP had opposed Brian Faulkner's demand for a majority in the Executive, insisting on proportional representation.

Then, last week, Faulkner won support for his policy of participation in the Executive from the Ulster Unionist Council by a majority of only 10 votes. It was clear that if an Executive were not speedily set up, he would not be able to scrape together the necessary taxi-load of votes to get a majority on the next occasion.

The SDLP had to give in. They are the party of compromise. Once the

basis for a compromise has been removed they will go under, and after them the catholic minority has no alternative except the Provos. Whitelaw was desperate to have the deal settled, so that he could get back to a cooler seat in London. Faulkner, weak as he is, had the strongest hand. So the deal is a rotten deal; Whitelaw's vague promises about freeing some detainees for Christmas should fool no-one.

The behaviour of the Parliamentary Labour Party on this issue was a scandal. After expressing support for Whitelaw's achievement, the Labour Party pulled out of the debate. Labour's acquiescence in the Whitelaw deal, the demand for the repatriation of Irish political prisoners in British jails and the growing movement for the withdrawal of British troops from the North of Ireland all find a common focus in the struggle to smash the bi-partisan policy.

That is why the Troops Out demonstration this Saturday (1 December) takes on added importance with the setting up of the Executive.

# Red Weekly

## New campaign for Irish prisoners

An enthusiastic audience in London's Conway Hall last Friday (23 November) heard Frank McManus MP and Maire Drumm (Vice-President of Sinn Fein) demand the repatriation to Ireland of the defendants in the London car-bombing 'trial' and other Republican prisoners in British jails. Other speakers at the meetings included Bernadette O'Hagan, wife of Joe O'Hagan (one of the successful helicopter escapees), and Brendan Magill of London Sinn Fein, the organisation which had called the meeting.

Maire Drumm told the meeting that the prisoners must receive the right to serve their sentences, with political status, in the North of Ireland, where they would be amongst their comrades, and where their relatives would be able to visit them. She appealed for action to save the Price sisters who are on hunger strike. Frank McManus pointed out that the

Irish exiles in Britain had a powerful weapon in their vote, and if they used the threat to withhold it to press for political status, and the right for the prisoners to serve their sentences in Ireland, they would be able to win a victory.

Brendan Magill called for the unity of all organisations working on the Irish issue in Britain. He said that Sinn Fein hoped to see a broadly representative committee, on a non-exclusive basis, being set up to support the campaign, which was to be called the Irish Political Hostages Campaign.

All organisations on the British left ought to fight for the demands of the campaign. While the demand for repatriation is not the same as the demand for release, it does not contradict it. Inevitably the struggle for the release of Irish political prisoners will be a long term one,

and in the meantime there is nothing wrong with fighting for an immediate improvement in their conditions.

If the defendants in the recent Republican trials are returned to the North of Ireland they will automatically get political status, which establishes that they cannot be treated like ordinary criminals, and they will be included in any major amnesty which is won for Republican prisoners by the mass struggle in Ireland.

The demands are capable of gaining broad support, and so will cut across the hysteria of the press. The campaign will establish that the prisoners have rights, and will draw attention to the discriminatory treatment they are receiving when compared with loyalist prisoners, and British soldiers convicted of crimes in the North of Ireland, who have been returned to Britain to serve their sentences.

## NUS Conference calls for national rent strike

The NUS conference at Margate last weekend was the last chance for students to discuss and organise themselves on a national level before the major struggles against the Tories in the new year.

The turning point of the conference was the passing of an amendment to the wishy-washy policy of the Executive. This called for national rent strikes next term and direct action in support of the demands of the Grants Campaign and the grievances of students against college authorities.

Unfortunately the passing of this policy was the result of general discontent with the Executive's running of the Grants Campaign rather than with the *politics* of that campaign. This was revealed by a motion of censure which heavily condemned the Executive, but did not offer any alternative. As a result students are still represented by a leadership which

continues to talk with the Tories over how much students are to lose out of the settlement with the Department of Education and Science.

The speech made at the end of the conference by Randall, the opportunist President of the NUS, was a sharp change from the one he made at the beginning, which turned on the necessity to avoid 'adventurist actions and confrontation.'

Randall is isolated on the NUS Executive, which is dominated by the Communist Party and their 'broad left' allies. Randall is trying to jump on the left bandwagon, in an attempt to gain a base for re-election at the next conference. For this reason his closing speech centred on the necessity of recognising who our allies in the fight for higher grants really were, coming out strongly against the Vice-Chancellors and the Press—precisely the people stated by the CP to

be our potential allies in the campaign.

Randall also made great play of the need to avoid being intimidated by the use of the law and victimisation by the college authorities, pledging full support from the NUS, on a national basis, for all mobilisations in defence of the Grants Campaign. Many delegates realised that Randall and the NUS Executive cannot be relied on to carry out these promises, and that they need to organise themselves independently from the NUS Executive. However the policy that was passed does enable militants to go back to their colleges to prepare for national direct action next term, with the mandate of the conference. The conference also accepted an IMG proposed emergency motion on Phase Three which advocated that support committees should be set up in the colleges to participate in joint picketing pools, collection of money, and to fight for the resources of both student unions and college buildings to be put at the disposal of workers in struggle.

## New occupations back Essex students

The Administration at the University of Essex in Colchester has threatened to close the University down unless the current occupation of the administration block is ended. Already the bar and launderette have been closed in an attempt to turn workers on the campus against the students. However, the occupation, which began on 19 November, continues to have solid support.

The students are demanding cuts in catering and accommodation charges, and guarantees of the expansion of facilities to meet the expected increase in student numbers. After the University issued writs against nine students, the further demand of no victimisation was added.

A systematic examination of the files in the occupied administration block has revealed some interesting facts. For example, a Barclay's Bank loan for student housing involves an annual interest payment of £10,000. The students are demanding discussions on this kind of financing.

The emphasis of the occupation is on mass action and democratic control. A General Meeting on Thursday 22 November took issue with the secretary of the Students Union, a CP member, and other Union bureaucrats who had been negotiating in secret with the Administration. The meeting decided that the Administration, who knew their demands, should put any proposals to a General Meeting, where they could be discussed and decided on by a mass vote. There was no place for negotiations by small, self-appointed delegations. The secretary has since resigned.

The students are anxious to win the support of the local labour movement, and an informal meeting between students and local workers on Tuesday discussed Tory cuts in education. A similar meeting next week will discuss the occupation.

The students are trying to encourage other universities to follow their example. Their occupation followed a local mo-

bilisation for the NUS Grants Campaign Day of Action, and it is hoped that students elsewhere will take up the question of housing and prices in their colleges, going beyond the official NUS 'protest' campaign. Students at the University of East Anglia occupied on Wednesday (28 November) in solidarity with the Essex struggle, and in support of the NUS Grants Campaign.

### STOP PRESS

Manchester University Administration offices have been occupied in solidarity with the struggle at Essex University.

The occupation is to be maintained for at least 24 hours, after which an occupation assembly will decide future action. The students are demanding that their Vice-Chancellor write to the Essex Vice-Chancellor calling on him to withdraw the writs which have been issued against students there.

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