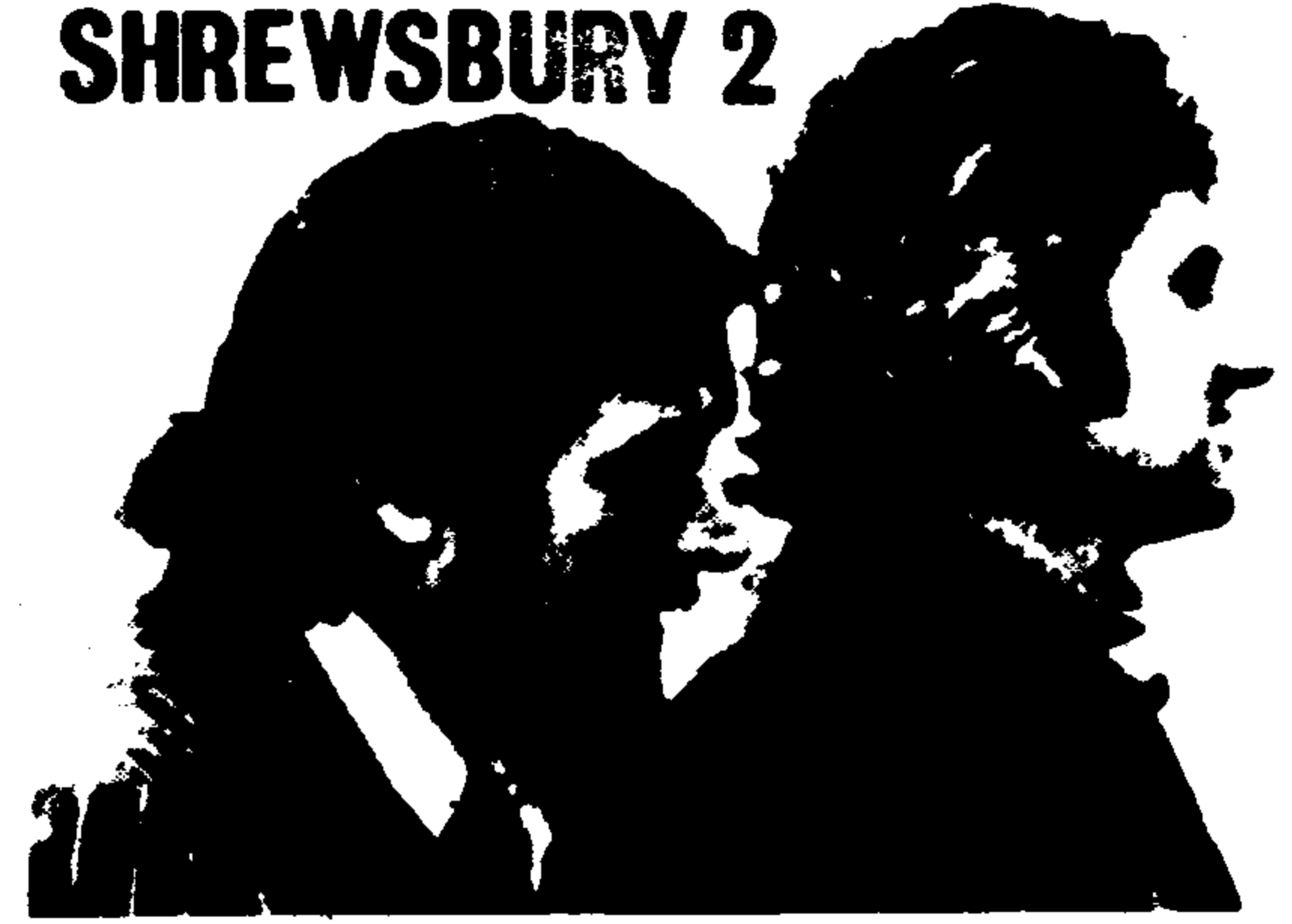


# Workers' fight

5p

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MAY 1st  
STRIKE TO FREE THE  
SHREWSBURY 2



# VICTORY IN CAMBODIA

As the people of Phnom Penh came out onto the streets on April 17th to welcome the conquering Khmer Rouge, a whole system of brute-force oppression, exploitation and lies sagged heavily at one corner.

For the rulers of the USA, Indochina was an example in what they called the struggle to defend the "free world". It was a test case. They poured millions of tons of bombs into Indochina, reducing whole areas like the Plain of Jars in Laos to charred deserts where life was possible only under ground, as a warning that any attempt to subvert the world domination of the US would be mercilessly smashed.

The freedom for US capital to penetrate, exploit and make profits in the "Third World" was to be guaranteed by the crushing, devastating military force aimed against any who dared fight to end that imperialist involvement.

The insurgent peoples of Indochina, without enormous military or industrial resources — half-starved, indeed, of equipment by their proclaimed allies in the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies — relying only on their own efforts, have turned the struggle into an example in the opposite sense: a simple of how the conscious, determined, persistent activity of people fighting for their freedom can defeat the most overwhelming economic and military odds.

## Liberated

With the military defeat of Lon Nol, and the decisive military setback delivered to Thieu in Vietnam, a whole structure of lies is blown sky high. The jubilation of the people of Cambodia drowns all the talk of 'communist aggression'.

American imperialism could offer the people of Indochina only a regime of gross inequality, corruption, oppression and police dictatorship. In Phnom Penh, something like one third of the rice available for distribution was being stolen by the authorities responsible for handing it out. In South Vietnam, a week ago, the NLF was selling rice in the liberated areas at one seventh of the price current in Saigon. Despite the massive inflow of US dollars, the standard of living of the bulk of the people under the Saigon regime has fallen consistently.

To read the press, you'd think the whole point of the war which has killed and maimed millions was to 'stop a massacre'. They must have been disgusted when a "middle aged business man" who had spent a week in Da Nang after its fall reported a peaceful and orderly reorganisation of the city, with large scale popular support: "...the city was being run on a day to day basis by workers' committees assigned to each district."

The last propaganda ploy of imperialism, the fuss about the refugees, is wearing a bit thin. The press tried to make up for the lack of any hint of murderous atrocities committed

by the liberation forces by reporting in such terms as "it appears that there have been no large scale massacres so far!"

Doubtless there will be some acts of vengeance carried out, and the press will make the most of them. But it is increasingly clear that the flood of refugees had little to do with "fleeing communism" and a great deal to do with fleeing the fighting. The real vengeance they fear is that of the US and South Vietnamese military machines, which they know from bitter experience respond to NLF victories by murderous bombing attacks on liberated areas. As one refugee said, when asked why he was going south "the Communists have no bombers, so it's safer to go to the Saigon side."

## Masters

The victories of the liberation forces in Cambodia and Vietnam are not just a promise of tremendous improvements for the peoples of those countries, they are a massive boost to revolutionary struggles all over the world. In Portugal, in Spain, in southern Africa, the lessons of those victories will not be lost.

Nothing could so badly play down the impact of these victories as the call, voiced by the British Communist Party, for the "implementation of the Paris Accords". This is a call for a return to the best compromise the Vietnam-



The men who led the victorious Khmer Rouge. Centre (left to right): Khieu Samphan (now Defence Minister and vice-Premier); Hou Youn; and Hu Nim

ese could get under pressure from the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies, and under the threat of destruction of the whole economy of North Vietnam by US bombing of their dyke system.

As soon as the Vietnamese felt strong enough to break the Accords, they had every right to do so. The USA had no right to be in Vietnam or to impose any conditions at all on the NLF. Our call should be, not "implement the Paris Accords" but Victory to the NLF!

That victory is in sight, but the struggle is not yet over — even in Cambodia.

The new government in Cambodia is officially called the GRUNK — Royal (!) Government of National Unity of Cambodia. The position of Prince Sihanouk, the nominal Head of State, was shrewdly summed up by Sihanouk himself two years ago. "The Khmer Rouge are masters of their part of Cambodia; Lon Nol has his part. Here I am, sitting in China in a borrowed villa".

Nevertheless, figures from the Sihanouk regime of before 1970 are in important positions in the GRUNK, including the ministries of Justice and

Foreign Affairs — and that regime was one which upheld capitalism and fought, at the time, against the Khmer Rouge. For its part the Khmer Rouge, (led by the Cambodian Communist Party) has a record of having supported the Sihanouk regime for ten years from the mid-1950s. Though we unconditionally welcome their present victory, we cannot place our confidence in the Khmer Rouge as a revolutionary Marxist force.

In Vietnam, the liberation of Saigon is not just a last minor detail in the struggle. The Saigon area must by now contain some-

thing like a third of the entire population of South Vietnam — in a situation of extreme chaos and deep social discontent, albeit degraded and demoralised. The fall of Saigon will almost certainly be bloody, and possibly could be accompanied by class struggles of some importance.

The platform of the NLF confines itself within capitalist limits, and even offers a breathing space to 'patriotic' landlords. But it is certain that the NLF will go beyond that platform in practice, and in that process there will be serious conflicts within the liberation forces, or even between working class forces and the NLF.

We should not imagine everything is done already, or talk about the "victory of the socialist revolution" or the "creation of a new workers' state" as an already accomplished, unproblematic, unqualified fact.

But it is not necessary to add any false rose colours in order to support and rejoice in the victory of the liberation forces. Whatever happens after now, a great historic blow has been struck for the struggles of working people all over the world. We must campaign against any last minute US intervention (under any pretext) and for the immediate recognition by the Labour government of the GRUNK and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam.

## BUDGET: SOAKING THE POOR

ANY way you choose to look at it, last week's Budget is a clear worker-bashing exercise.

With increases in income tax and indirect taxation, with food and housing subsidies reduced, and with prices in the nationalised sector going up again after a £500m cut in subsidies there, the working class cost of living will rocket. We'll see the sort of huge increases in our quarterly bills for gas and electricity that have just hit us all over again. Fares, too, will be going up again.

And all this is supposed to be ... good for us!

Education, housing, health and other welfare services, already on the verge of breakdown as a result of previous cuts, are to be cut back even further. To-

gether with the damage these services will suffer from inflation, there could be a cut of more than 20% in real terms in the budgets of most local and national social services. It will mean more kids sent home from school; more hospital wards closed for lack of funds; longer waiting lists for treatment, and scrapping and saving in matters of life and death; and an ever growing section of the working class with no prospect of a home to live in.

All in all, it probably mounts up to something like a 10% cut in workers' standards.

Many more, too, will be thrown out of

contd. back page



"EITHER they give in completely or starve", the leader of Glasgow's Labour controlled council declared. And with these words echoing in their ears, the defiant but defeated 350 Corporation drivers were forced to abandon their 15 week long struggle for an interim parity award.

The strike had started after formal negotiations between the Council and drivers' leaders had been broken off by the Council. The drivers were mainly from the Cleansing department, but later they were joined by men from the Lighting and Highways departments, all fighting for a £2.50 interim payment that would have led to parity with the Scottish haulage drivers. After a short period the drivers joined hands with the Corporation electricians, out of official strike. But the drivers' strike remained unofficial.

## Scabbing

After 11 weeks, the Labour Councillors appealed to the Labour Government for troops to break the strike, "end the health hazard" and, above all, defend the Social Contract.

The Government, of course, obliged. Some troops came fresh from Ireland; others who'd been preparing for a stint in Belfast. "Our boys", as the Press is always telling us...

They occupied the incinerators, and cleared some thousands of tons of rubbish. But it would have been months before the strike could have been broken this way. Lack of effective support, and the constant witchhunting by Glasgow's Labour Council, undermined the drivers' ability to withstand the scabbing troops.

We should see it as ominous that these troops were used in such an extensive way. But it is not the first time: the 1945-51 Labour Government used troops

# THE GLASGOW GANG — troops, councillors and Labour tops

quite often against workers' struggle; in 1973 the Tories tried to use them against the Glasgow firemen's strike. But this time, instead of just putting on a show, the troops seriously attempted to break the strike by doing the work. The lessons they have learnt this time, and the ones they learnt in the so-called General Strike in Belfast last May, will be put to use in the future against the working class.

But the most effective 'scabs' were the leaders of the local labour movement, some in their Council seats relishing their bosses' role, some, their keenest allies, the official leadership of the West of Scotland labour movement from Glasgow Trades Council to the Scottish TUC.

It was the Labour councillors who organised the propaganda campaign against the drivers

which led to their isolation within Glasgow among housewives and tenants in the working class areas. And the propaganda had the added bonus for the Labour Party in that it diverted



Archie Hood, Chairman of the dustcart drivers strike committee.

attention from the chronically festering city that Labour has ruled for years, onto the garbage piled up over three short months. The areas worst affected by the pile-up of rubbish also happen to be the ones with Glasgow's highest concentration (out of a staggering total of 68,000) of sub-standard housing. The Labour Councillors sounding off about health hazards have supervised a housing programme which has seen 'progress' from 4,500 new houses in 1968 to the grand total of 357 in 1974!

Glasgow is a city that has seen rickets re-emerge in the 1970s, and which has topped the league table of major British cities with the highest infant mortality and TB.

But without their allies amongst the officials of the local and Scottish labour movement, the Glasgow councillors would have been defeated in this strike, troops or no troops. Escalating solidarity strikes and mass pickets could have made the work of the troops impossible and counter-productive for the Council, and could have turned the tide to win the strike and give heart to other struggles against the Social Contract. But all moves for serious action and mobilisation were blocked by the Glasgow Trades Council and its fraternal Trades Council in Edinburgh (both dominated by the Communist Party) and the Scottish TUC (headed by its Secretary, Communist Party member Jimmy Milne) threw in its weight against the strikers.

## Minimal

All that the powerful Communist Party would sanction was a march to protest the use of troops. A call for a West of Scotland stewards' committee meeting was blocked all the way. And anyone who went beyond the bounds laid down by the Communist Party

was 'fingered' to the police, as on the march of 'stewards only' on March 21st.

Given this powerful lobby for doing nothing, the actions of revolutionary socialists in raising the issue of solidarity and insisting on the principle of a strong response to the use of troops, was insufficient to meet the needs of the strikers, even for the most minimal cash support to help with food and rent.

The *Economist*, on April 12th, saw the defeat of the Glasgow drivers as important, and



Jimmy Milne, CP member and Secretary elect of the STUC who feared the presence of the strikebreaking troops would 'damage industrial relations'.

praised the Labour Councillors as acting in "the best traditions of Victorian mill owners". But for the *Economist* the unconditional surrender of the drivers is only of significance if "other public sector employers were to note what happened."

Certainly, all militants in the labour movement should note what happened. Solidarity against the actions of Labour bureaucrats and against the use of troops in strikebreaking is crucial if bosses are not to win out again.

## 25,000 FACE THE SACK AT VW

TRADE unionists who are thinking about the desirability of "workers' participation" through having trade union representatives on the boards of capitalist companies might consider what happened at West Germany's largest car company, Volkswagen, this week.

Volkswagen have announced a cut in their workforce of 25,000, involving the closure of two plants and a change to one-shift a day working in others. West German regional governments have a 40% holding in the company, and the Volkswagen board of 21 contains 7 trade union representatives. The latter voted against the proposals — but that is all they did. Indeed, their idea has been to accept the plan to reduce the labour force so long as the company could avoid making actual dismissals — i.e. not replacing retired workers, encouraging people to take other jobs, and so on.

It is true that at least 15,000 of the cutback in manpower will be achieved by such 'natural wastage' and early retirement, including people who have already left and not been replaced. But with over one million unemployed, these jobs will be lost to the working class as a whole. Already the Volkswagen workforce has been slashed from 160,000 in 1971 to 136,500 — and that's before the present cut.

Behind the redundancy plan is Volkswagen's loss of about £140 million last year. The Chairman of the company is reported as saying that he saw no possibility of a significant improvement in export conditions. This serious decline in exports was partly brought about by the very steep rise in the value of the Deutschmark abroad, at a time of world wide recession in the car industry.

The ability of trade union bureaucrats to collaborate in the plans of managements to lay the burden of their crisis on the back of the working class is in fact enhanced by the presence of union representatives on the board, who can now simply say they opposed the proposals but were outvoted, when in fact they have no intention of mobilising the rank and file in defence of jobs. Moreover, they are bound by the decision to stop any action by the workers.

Such 'representatives' are an integral part of the managements' plans to 'rationalise' their operations and discipline the labour force.

J.W.Harding

## THE CONVENTION — A LETTER FROM LONG KESH

Comrades - Election time is here again in the north of Ireland. Already the different groupings have commenced their feverish efforts to convince one and all that their destiny lies in voting for this party or that party. Each and every politician, however, in his frantic attempts to fight his own petty corner, seems to have overlooked the now all too familiar blot on the landscape — Long Kesh. Elections may come and elections may go, but Long Kesh, it seems, goes on forever.

We here in Long Kesh can watch all these activities, listen to all these hypocritical

speeches and statements, with a type of detached and remote amusement which would be of great benefit to the population as a whole. This ability of ours stems from a first hand knowledge of broken English promises and an experience of British guile in trying to dupe those she cannot defeat by sheer might. This knowledge and experience was not easily gained and it has taken three and a half years of suffering and even death in this, the last concentration camp in Western Europe, to acquire it.

Those of us who have been here for those three and a half years now fully realise the

implications and psychological motives that lie behind every decision taken by the civil servants who administer Long Kesh. In the early days of the camp we dismissed most incidents as the actions of bungling clerks who weren't too good at their jobs, but we were very naive then. Every move made here and every action taken is part of the overall effort to break the prisoners both mentally and physically. It was not bungling, or ineptitude, that caused a number of the now deceased inmates to be refused hospital treatment. It was a cold, calculated decision, made

on paper by a civil servant and is reminiscent of the detachment and callousness with which clerks and civil servants of the camps in Germany carried out their tasks.

So to us in Long Kesh the true function of the British Convention is obvious. We appeal to everyone to reject these latest attempts by Britain to strengthen her control over the Irish people. To vote is to keep Long Kesh open.

Fraternally, Derec Mc Thomais, PRO, Sentenced Republican Prisoner, Long Kesh Camp.

## 'Troops Out': a demonstration and an object lesson

The Troops Out Movement is keeping up its campaign for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and self determination for the Irish people. After its very successful mobilisation on February 1st, and while organising for a major conference on Ireland of delegates from the labour movement (see below) it mounted a further demonstration on April 6th.

Addressing the 1500 people John Glenn, from the Glasgow dustcart drivers' strike committee, told about the use of troops in Glasgow against the strikers. Army trucks had broken through picket lines, injuring several people. But the strikers had managed also to argue with the soldiers. The whole issue of troops, he said, should be taken into the factories and housing estates.

Alastair Renwick, for TOM, drew a comparison of Northern Ireland with South Vietnam. The latter was also a state established by outside military and economic force on the basis of partition, a state which disintegrated when the outside military involvement was brought to an end. In the US army, a crucial factor was the collapse of morale, and this was being faced by the British army too, which was having to disguise its casualty figures in Ireland.

British plans would be shattered by a mass movement on the question of getting the

troops out.

Other speakers pointed out that the 'peace' plans of British imperialism meant the submission of the Irish people, and that it was our duty to assist the Irish in dealing with British imperialism as the Vietnamese dealt with US

imperialism.

It is to be hoped that the May conference comes up with some clearer perspectives than these somewhat airy analogies with Vietnam. The TOM has always suffered from a glib tendency to hope for a mass movement comparable to

the anti-war feeling in the US, and this has led it to exclude from its programme any explicit solidarity with those fighting British imperialism — i.e. those in Ireland fighting for the self determination that TOM calls for.

Duncan Hallas, speaking for IS at the demonstration, gave an object lesson in the dangers of the present TOM demands when he bluntly said — probably causing some embarrassment to other TOM adherents — that although the majority of public opinion was in favour of withdrawal on a reactionary basis of 'let the Paddies fight it out', that didn't really matter, as it was the effect that counted.

IS, apparently, were in fact the main instigators of this demonstration. But having, characteristically, engaged in big talk beforehand about bring out all their membership and rank and file support in the unions, they mustered only about one fifth of their own members.

This is indicative of the opportunist attitude of the IS towards the TOM, which they basically use as a launching pad from which to promote themselves on demonstrations, while taking very little part in building the movement at branch level. Thus their formal instruction for all IS members to attend the demonstration was, not surprisingly, largely ignored.

## TOM CONFERENCE SOON

AT LEAST a dozen trades councils have already written in to the Troops Out Movement for credentials for next month's conference on Ireland. In the first two weeks after the Labour Movement Conference was announced, say TOM, they've also had some forty applications for delegates from trade union branches, and four from Constituency Labour Parties.

The Conference is sponsored by a number of Labour MPs, and is also being supported by Irish TDs and Senator Michael Mullens, General Secretary of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, who is being billed as the main guest speaker.

Other speakers include Eamonn McCann (author of "War and an Irish Town") who will report on the situation in the 6 Counties; Dr. Tim Shallice, a neurologist and executive member of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science, who will give an account of the role of the British Army in

Ireland and its projected role in Britain, and give the results of his detailed study of the Army's use of sensory deprivation torture techniques in the north.

Also on the platform will be Joan Maynard, MP, a consistent supporter of TOM; and Harry McShane, veteran of Red Clydeside and a close comrade of John Maclean in his attempt to build a mass anti-imperialist movement among the Scottish working class on the Irish question, after the First World War.

The conference organisers stress that the conference will only be open to delegates from Trades Councils, trade union branches, Labour Party and LPYS organisations, and branches of the NUS — which means bringing the conference to the attention of your organisations NOW.

Write for credentials to TOM at 103 Hammersmith Road, West Kensington, London W.14, of phone for more information: 01-602-1899



**THE DEFEAT** imposed by the people of Indochina on the most powerful imperialism the world has ever known is one of the most heroic episodes in the world revolutionary struggle of mankind.

No wonder, said the cynics, the cold, cautious, carping apologists, no wonder Allende was defeated in Chile — the CIA were interfering and conspiring against him. But the Indochinese revolutionaries have shown that determined action can defeat not just the back-door manoeuvrings of the CIA, but the full direct onslaught of US imperialism — which, in just eleven days around Christmas 1972, rained down on Vietnam more explosive than fell on Britain in the whole of World War 2.

## COLONIAL

How is it that this corner of South East Asia has become such a focus of the world class struggle?

French colonisation of Indochina was complete by about 1893; and, as in many other colonial countries, serious resistance began in the period after World War 1, and was fertilised by the Russian Revolution. The 'Association of Revolutionary Youth of Vietnam' was founded in 1925 by Nguyen Ai Quoc, who had been a founder member of the French Communist Party and a Comintern official in Moscow from 1923 to 1925. This nationalist movement was one of the elements which went to make up the Vietnamese Communist Party, which affiliated to the Communist International in 1931. Nguyen Ai Quoc was later better known as Ho Chi Minh.

As in China in the 1920s, the new-born Communist Party grew at tremendous speed. Trotskyist groupings, of which the first was founded in 1932, also gained influence rapidly. In 1939, when the Stalinists and the right wing joined their voices in favour of taxes for the 'national defence' of France, two Trotskyists, who of course opposed this policy — Ta Thu Thau and Tran Van Trach — were elected to the Colonial Council of Cochinchina (southern Vietnam) with 80% of the vote.

## AGRARIAN

Unlike China, however, there was no substantial bourgeois nationalist party of the type of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (against which the Chinese Communist Party fought, on and off, for twenty years). The most important party of that type, the UNQDD, never amounted to much. There was a simple reason: the Vietnamese capitalist class never amounted to much.

No native Vietnamese capitalist ever employed more than 200 workers. All the major industries were in the hands of foreign, usually French, capital. The French colonisation was not preceded by any gradual development of trade; it was imposed straight onto a primitive agrarian economy.

In May 1941 The Communist Party set up the Vietminh, to pursue the armed struggle against the Japanese and the 'Vichy French'. The Trotskyists also took part in the anti-imperialist struggle, but opposed Gaullist French imperialism as well as Vichyist French imperialism.

With the defeat of Japan in August 1945 power fell readily into the hands of the Vietminh — who, however, followed a totally naive policy, in line with the Stalinist view of "democratic" imperialism being better than "fascist" imperialism. They welcomed British troops into Vietnam, dissolved the Communist Party, and declared their aim was "independence within the French Union".

The British troops — under the direction of a Labour government — quickly reimposed the French administration in Saigon, and the Vietminh signed an Accord with the French in March 1946 — having cleared the way by a bloody campaign against the

# VIETNAM: TOTAL VICTORY IN SIGHT

Trotskyists and the UNQDD, who opposed it. The Trotskyist leader Ta Thu Thau was assassinated in February 1946.

The French responded by shelling Haiphong (November 1946) and retaking Vietminh-controlled Hanoi — all with the vociferous support of the French Communist Party, who were then in the government. War broke out between the Vietminh and the French.

## RADICAL

The Vietminh, fighting from the countryside, re-adopted a policy of radical land reform (from 1953) and built up a 'parallel hierarchy', supplanting the old colonial state structure. And they formed links with oppositionists in Laos and Cambodia.

In 1954 the Vietminh resoundingly defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu — only to be partly robbed of their victory later at the conference table in Geneva, under pressure from the USSR and China.

Vietnam was partitioned at the 17th parallel: elections due to take place throughout the country in 1956 never happened.

In the South, the USA, taking over from French, imposed the notoriously vicious and corrupt rule of Ngo Dinh Diem.

## GUERRILLA

Meanwhile in North Vietnam, all the major capitalist interests were expropriated between 1955 and 1957 (mostly without compensation) and agricultural co-operatives were introduced gradually from 1958, including some 88% of rural families by 1963.

a vast majority of dispossessed people, often rootless and with no set interest in the present order.

By 1958, guerilla resistance had restarted in South Vietnam — at first without any aid from the North. In September 1960 the North Vietnamese Communist Party declared for the liberation of the South, and in December of that year the National Liberation Front was formed.

In June 1961, Saigon and Washington signed an agreement on increasing the US presence (then 685 men) and US military aid. By the end of 1963, US forces had risen to 16,500.

The NLF meanwhile made rapid gains, controlling about two thirds of the population of the South by early 1965. The Saigon regime was extremely weak, a whole series of coups, attempted coups and changes of government following each other after Diem's removal in a US-backed operation in November 1963.

The US responded to the dwindling power of their puppets by starting their bombardment of the North, beginning in August 1964 after the 'Gulf of Tonkin' incident (a clash, probably engineered for the purpose of creating the pretext for

offensive cost the NLF heavy losses. But, together with one other factor, it cost the US their strategy.

That other factor was the international solidarity movement, which reached its height around 1968. Despite the preference of the Communist Parties for placid "Peace in Vietnam" lobbying, mass militant demonstrations in almost every major city of western Europe and, most importantly, in the USA itself, roundly condemned any imperialist intervention. Often, they flew the flag of the NLF and called



Ho Chi Minh



US marines take Vietcong prisoners of war away to be shot

The Diem regime had virtually no popular base. He had some support from the Catholic population (about 15% of the total); from the landowners whose interests he defended (in 1964, 6,000 landlords in the South, mostly absentees, owned 45% of the rice land; about 30% of the peasants in the south were tenants paying rents of up to 60% or more of their crops); and from bureaucrats who shared in the corruption of the regime. Apart from that he was universally hated.

Already in 1956 Diem was waging war against dissident religious sects and issuing a decree authorising the imprisonment of "anyone dangerous to national defence and public order". The Diem regime was propped up only by the open-handed support of the USA. And the artificial propping up encouraged the polarisation which has continued, to grotesque lengths, since the Americans' "Vietnamisation": between a small number of parasites and

escalating the war, between US and North Vietnamese naval forces off the coast of North Vietnam).

Systematic bombings began in February 1965, and in July 1965 President Johnson announced that US forces in Vietnam would be increased to 125,000. North Vietnamese aid to the South started to reach substantial levels too.

From this point on, people stopped thinking of the Korean War as 'the big one'. The war in Vietnam 'escalated' at an appalling rate, the US presence reaching 540,000 in early 1969.

The US government and military leaders staked their

## SOLIDARITY

whole policy on an outright defeat of the liberation forces.

In January 1968 that policy was broken by the NLF's Tet Offensive. Simultaneously, the NLF attacked more than half the South's provincial capitals, and even raised their banner in Saigon. The

movement spread into the US Army, bringing desertions, sabotage and general demoralisation. Returning veterans threw their medals back at the White House.

Almost everywhere, Trotskyist played a major part in this solidarity movement.

It was largely because of this international dimension to the struggle — on a scale unknown since the early years of the Communist International — that President Johnson had to declare a total halt to the bombing of North Vietnam in October 1968. Peace negotiations started in Paris in May 1968.

Then came Nixon. In November 1969, he announced the new American strategy of "Vietnamisation" — "the complete withdrawal of all US ground combat forces and their replacement by South Vietnamese forces on an orderly scheduled timetable".

Ground troops were reduced, to 36,000 in late 1972. But in return, the biggest bombing

WHETHER by encirclement and siege, or by a direct push through to Saigon, it is now certain that the final victory in this war will fall to the liberation forces of the NLF and the Provisional Revolutionary Government. However, the possibility of fresh, turbulent mass movements, or new radical demands outside the framework of a straight military overthrow of the regime; the speed and the precise direction in which events will move after the fall of Saigon; the extent of the boost the victory of the peoples of Indochina will give to other revolutionary movements world-wide — all these variables remain in the balance. PART TWO of this article, next week, will deal with developments since 1973, the history of the struggle in Cambodia, the political nature of the Liberation forces, and the place of the battles in Indochina within world politics.

What is already clear is that the offensive of the NLF and the North Vietnamese forces is a great blow struck against the most barbaric mass murder machine in history. It proves that self-reliant action and international solidarity can DEFEAT the strongest imperialist power. Right now, we must do all we can to make victory as rapid and as little costly as possible, by opposing any US interference and demanding the Labour government immediately recognise the PRG in Vietnam and the GRUNK in Cambodia as the only legitimate governments of those countries.

barrage in the history of warfare was unleashed on Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. The number of giant B-52 bombers operating in Indochina was quadrupled.

Up to the end of 1968, over 2.5 million tons of bombs had been dropped on Vietnam; from the beginning of 1969 to August 1972, 3.8 million tons were rained down. (In comparison, the total of Allied bombing against the Axis powers for the whole of World War Two was about 2 million tons.) In the four years 1969-72, some two million people were killed or maimed in Indochina, and one third of South Vietnam's population was uprooted.

The uprooting of the population was not just incidental to the bombing campaign. It was a deliberate part of US strategy. Already the US had copied from the British in Malaya the idea of "strategic hamlets" — herding the population together in what were, effectively, concentration camps. Under the "Vietnamisation" programme, a massive social transformation was carried out.

Traditionally, Vietnam's population had been about 90% rural. After "Vietnamisation" something like 50% of the population was in the urban centres. Pre-war Saigon had had about 500,000 inhabitants. In 1966 it was two million, and six years later, four million.

The social structure was massively distorted. Important 'occupational classifications' included one million in the armed forces, 1½ million in unproductive jobs on the government's payroll, over half a million in refugee camps, 200,000 political prisoners, and up to half a million prostitutes.

## BOMBING

The US strategists evidently believed that, having concentrated the population into the more secure cities and having beaten down the NLF by bombing, they could build up some sort of functioning regime while maintaining low level counter-insurgency operations in the countryside. Their more rosy hopes were dashed by the NLF offensive of April 1972. But the US responded by mining the ports of North Vietnam, attacking the overland supply routes from China, bombing the dykes of the North — and by intense negotiations with Moscow and Peking.

Finally, in January 1973, the combination of pressures from Washington, Moscow and Peking imposed the "Paris Accords" on the Vietnamese. The agreement left Thieu in power, controlling some 70% of the area of South Vietnam and 90% of the population. Given the massive military machine the US had built up for Thieu, with a special flood of munitions just before the signing of the Accords, and lavish US economic aid, the US no doubt hoped a precariously stable regime could be established to last for at least several years.

In the event it lasted just about two years.



"The British socialist philistines took over from their bourgeoisie an arrogant attitude towards the continent in a period when Britain's earlier advantages were turning into their opposite. ... The characteristics of conservatism, religiosity and national arrogance can be seen in varying degrees and combinations in all the official leaders of today, from the ultra-right Thomas to the 'left' Kirkwood. It would be the greatest error to underestimate the tenacity of these conservative 'peculiarities' of the top echelons of the British working class movement..."

FIFTY YEARS after Leon Trotsky wrote these words, the Labour Party in the debate on the Common Market shows how little it has changed. The 'left' with its internationalist pretences manages even to outdo the right in the virulence of its nationalism. But just as in the past, the Labour left has needed a formula within which to clothe its nationalism.

In the period of colonial expansion and just after, the Labour and trade union leaders reiterated the words of their bourgeois heroes — seeing in the Empire not an instrument of colonial oppression, a way of treading hundreds of millions underfoot and exploiting them, but a civilising and christianising instrument. From the oppressed races and nationalities, they expected not a struggle for liberation, but a rejoicing that their fate was tied to that of Britain itself.

## MISSION

It was like the common conjuror's trick where he pours a whole jug of milk into a small glass. In this case, the Labour and trade union leaders attempted to pour the world's fate into the tiny glass of Britain, and in so identifying the one with the other resolve — with no less trickery and sleight of hand than the conjuror — the contradiction between a deeply ingrained nationalism and a claimed belief in internationalism.

The Labour left has customarily indulged in one quite specific variant of this trick. With the quickness of the hand deceiving the eye, the Labour Party is presented as being 'socialist', and with a little more jiggery-pokery it is presented as the main hope for socialism in the world. Its future is therefore everybody else's future, its fate everybody else's fate.

Later, with Britain's imperial decline, the "world mission" bit was dressed up differently. Nye Bevan in the 1930s saw the future of the world depending on "the close alliance of a Britain controlled by a Socialist Government with the Soviet Union and with a France where Labour dominates".

With the elimination of France from this revolutionary pantheon during the years of the Second World War, such a view had to be changed again. Notwithstanding the fact that Labour was tied up into a national coalition with the Tories, in 1942 Tribune's columns were ringing with this 'left' brand of nationalism — as always, dressed up as internationalism: "An agreement in the near future" it predicted "between the only two surviving workers' parties with any influence in world affairs, namely, our own Labour Party ... and the Soviet Communist Party, would be a tremendous weapon in winning this war and a tremendous lever for overthrowing the old order and putting international socialism in its place."

With Labour actually in power after the war with a parliamentary majority, this 'international socialism' looked substantially different. The Cold War and support for the US in Korea, just two of the ventures which the British Labour 'left' took into its stride, were hardly in conformity with the grand alliance with Stalin's Russia that

# LEFT IN THE SHADOW OF THE EMPIRE

was going to revolutionise the world.

A new change in the ideology was soon developed. The "great mission" of 'civilising' imperialism was gone; so too the Grand Alliance. Now the Labour left turned to the theme of Britain's powerful role as a mediator in world affairs. Tribune proclaimed that "the task of British socialists must be, wherever possible, to heal the breach between the USA and the USSR. But we cannot do this if we take sides with either a Communist bloc or an anti-Bolshevik axis."

At about this time, in the mid-1950s, a debate consumed the Labour Party which in many respects resembled the current Common Market debate. The issue was German re-armament.

The Labour right supported re-armament; the 'left' opposed it. Like today, some of the right wanted to dress up their position as a piece of internationalism: Germany, they said, needs to regain its sense of independence, and should not be made to suffer the indignities of another Versailles. Meanwhile the left wing claimed that it was world peace (always a favourite 'internationalist' hobby-horse of lefts who don't even bother to define what sort of a world should be left undisturbed) that would be endangered by German re-armament. And it was not difficult for them to unmask the shameless servility before American imperialism which the right was masking with their "be fair to Germany" internationalism.

But whereas the right was shamming internationalism to strengthen the US dominated Western bloc, the left (and leading the pack was the British Communist Party) was shamming internationalism whilst indulging in a frankly racist anti-German nationalism.

Instead of analysing the developments of the First and Second World Wars from a class standpoint, instead of seeing that the German working class were the most immediate victims of Fascist oppression, this 'left' resorted to a theory of the collective guilt of all

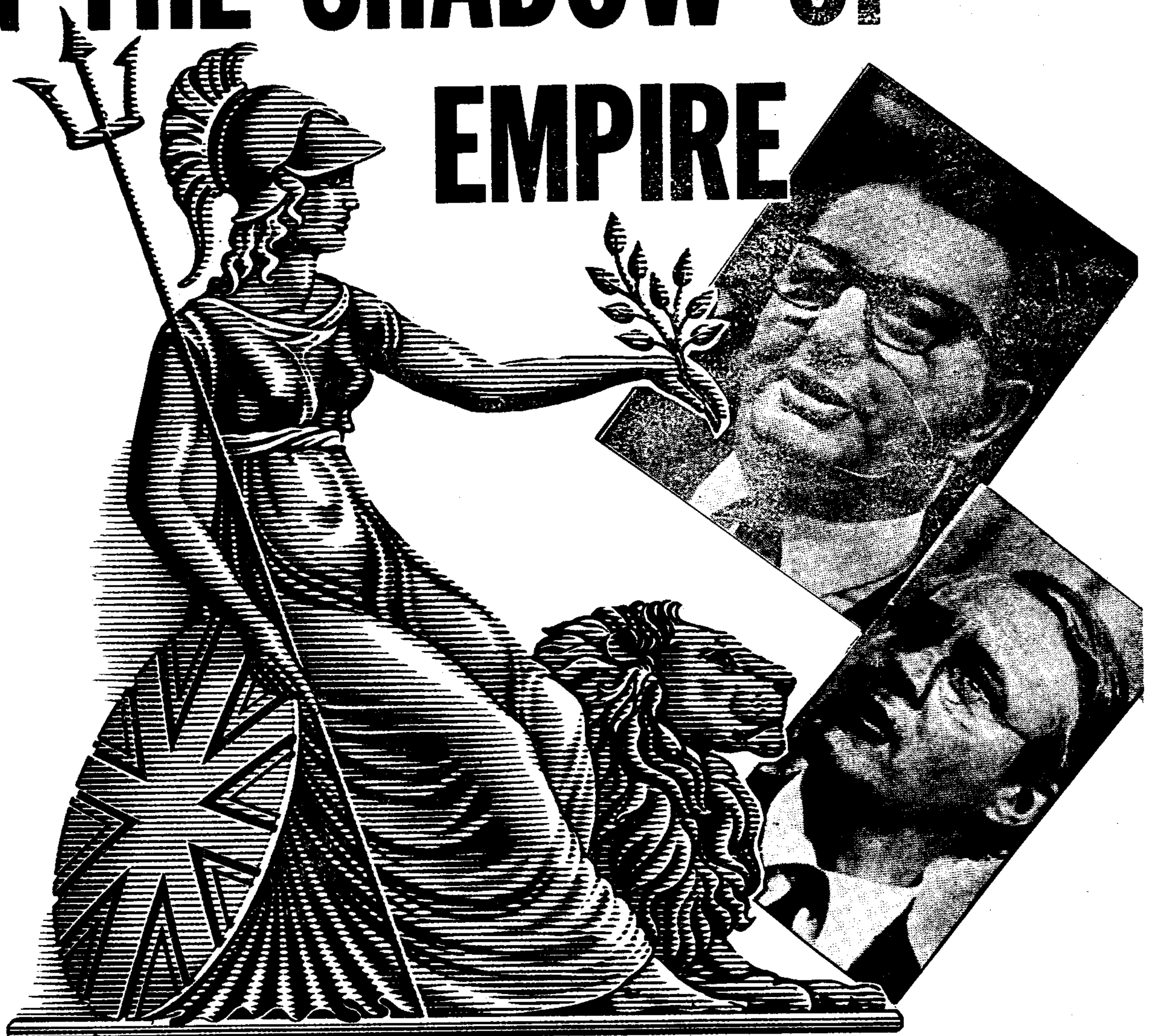


Aneurin Bevan

Germans for all the imperialist warmongering of half a century. Bevan supported a scheme for the subjugation of Germany that would have made the Versailles Treaty look like a scheme of national liberation.

The identification by a section of the Labour 'left' of Germany as a whole with fascism was a strong hallmark of Tribune well into the sixties. One could commonly find statements like "Bonn's aim is to recreate the Germany of 1937." And the Communist Party, of course, has never yet quite shed this line; not long ago the Morning Star carried a horrified banner headline: "Queen's plane buzzed by Luftwaffe!"

The Common Market debate is a re-enactment of all this, twenty years later. Now the "international power", the "inter-



WITHIN hours of being booted out of his ministry by Wilson, Eric Heffer was on the stage of the Free Trade Hall in Manchester to address a huge rally of the Get Britain Out campaign. As he walked onto the stage, the audience rose to its feet clapping and cheering.

It's a pity that the 'great stand' for which he was so rapturously applauded was taken over a 'struggle' so irrelevant to the working class as that on the EEC.

WORKERS FIGHT has consistently argued that the working class has no interest in either opposing or supporting this particular arrangement of the capitalist class, rather than its other arrangements. We should take no responsibility for the bosses' economy — in or out of the EEC.

Did Heffer leave the government over the

continued jailing of the Shrewsbury pickets? Did he show his mettle by resigning over the use of troops to break the dustcart drivers' strike in Glasgow, or over the hundreds of millions of pounds cut from the Social Services, or over Healey's viciously anti-working class budget? Did he so much as VOTE against the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the notorious 'Jenkins Law', which in a few short hours in the "sovereign British Parliament" wiped out more civil liberties than any the supposedly anti-democratic EEC would threaten? The answer in each case is NO. Instead, he has managed to win his 'left credentials' on an issue which has done nothing but divert workers' thoughts and energies from all these vital questions for the working class.

Which all goes to show, clearer than any words, that socialists should say: DON'T TAKE SIDES! IN OR OUT, THE STRUGGLE GOES ON!

national alliance" and the "international mediator" are all dead. So what remains? The "international" lone example, the beacon of "British socialism".

Even the tired old standby of the British ruling class, the "Commonwealth", has been invoked amid a welter of moral sentimentality. "We believe", Tribune's editor wrote in 1971 "that the consequences of entry into the EEC will be disastrous for Britain and damaging to the concept of a wider co-operation among all the nations of the world, both developed and underdeveloped."

What is clearest is that whether it is the Commonwealth that's being referred to or some unspecified loose association of nations, there is no question of applying any class criteria to them. After all, you might think that the people who can't mention the EEC without referring to the "capitalist club" or the "millionaires' market" would apply a little of this gutsy invective to organisations like the Commonwealth or, for that matter, Britain itself.

Railing against "phony internationalism", Frank Judd wrote in Tribune in the same year, warning against "the prevailing attitude of paternalistic Western European politics", he recommended "more meaningful international forums such as OECD, GATT and UNCTAD, or the multi-racial, intercontinental and realistically heterogeneous groupings of both the new Commonwealth and the United Nations itself."

You'd think nothing could be more paternalistic than the Commonwealth — new or old!

In the same year again, Tribune editorialised: "In 1961 ... we wrote that to join the EEC would be to turn our backs on the Commonwealth, to abdicate

our independent role (!) in world affairs ... and to postpone the introduction of further measures of socialism... If Macmillan and the Conservatives had got Britain pinned down and immobilised into the capitalist-orientated EEC, their task in Britain would have been easier."

Notice how the moment the EEC is mentioned, adjectives like "capitalist orientated" spill out. But has the Commonwealth, so beloved of Tribune, suddenly become — without the Queen knowing, and without its ever being mentioned in her Christmas speech — suddenly socialist? And this "independent role"? How much of an "independent role" did British Labour and Tory governments play whilst supporting the USA in Vietnam? And wasn't it just a little bit "capitalist orientated"? And these further (!) measures of socialism — when did they start?

## WORRIED

Perhaps it is really all summed up in the word OUR — the popular reflex to the royal we: 'our backs' ... 'our role'.

Tribune's special EEC issue this year (and its whole current anti-EEC outpouring) is, if anything, even more crass than its special issue of 1971. In an article entitled "The Socialist alternative to the Common Market" by Michael Barratt Brown, one of the chief metaphysicians of the Institute for Workers' Control, a grand use is made of this same "our". 'The Arabs', he complains, this 'socialist', "buy up our property and fine London houses".

Mr. Barratt Brown is evidently worried about the sheikhs in Mayfair. Did they get a house he was after? Did they

have the audacity to gazump a Tribuneite in Belgravia?

The advocate of "socialist planning of the type ruled out by membership of the Common Market" is worried, too, for "it is still not clear what profits will be due to the foreign companies investing in the North Sea". Why is he worried? Has he got shares? Is his "fine London house" going to go to wrack and ruin for want of his cut of North Sea profits?

## RHETORIC

The most elementary distinction between what belongs to the capitalist class, what is their policy, their alliance, their role, their Britain and what is ours, the working class's, is entirely missing.

After all the "internationalist" disguises, then, comes the final conclusion: socialism is a British business; the foreigners would only much it up; their parliaments won't legislate revolution, 'ours' will.

From the old cupboard of nationalist rhetoric the "imperial theme" is given its last twist: Britain the great power is gone, the forger of alliances is dead, the mediator of superpowers has declined. Now is the hour for a Britain as the lone example, with its own 'socialist plan' and massive import controls.

That's the vision of the new Labour left internationalists!

With socialists like this....

## IN OR OUT — THE STRUGGLE GOES ON

A new pamphlet from Workers Fight, explaining in more detail why socialists are wrong to advocate voting NO

Price 5p plus postage, from 2 Saville Place, Bristol 8.



# Cutting back the fast growing 'fringe'

SOME weeks ago, a lobby mounted by nearly fifty 'fringe' theatre groups appealed to the Arts Council to stop cutbacks in the tiny grants that help them to keep ticking over.

Community theatre groups have evolved only in the last few years, since 1968 when Red Ladder, CAST, Combination and West London Theatre Workshop first emerged. Since then, groups have sprung up all over the country — there are now about 15 in London, with others in York, Bradford, Bristol — who are members of the Association of Community Theatres (TACT). The political identity of many of these groups has developed from a general belief in taking theatre to the 'community', to a more committed revolutionary perspective of using theatre to serve the interests of the working class.

## Ventures

Many groups began as part time ventures, or as lunchtime theatre, but have established themselves full time with the aid of grants from the Arts Council and local authorities.

Of course, the Arts Council is deeply suspicious of political 'bias', and of plays on the Lump, on fascism, pensioners and property speculation. It can't somehow fit groups with names like 'General Will', 'Recreation Ground' or 'Counteract' into its conception of 'art'.

The Arts Council's

'community arts' report recommends that local authorities should take most of the financial responsibility for such groups. A tiny proportion of the Arts Council's budget (about 2%) is spent on what they call the Fringe, whilst about 40% goes to subsidise opera and ballet alone. Thus the £445,000 currently available for community theatre is equivalent to just one or two productions at Covent Garden.

## Lavish

Who benefits from these policies? A survey of opera and ballet audiences revealed that in both cases, unskilled and skilled manual workers made up only 5% of the audience. The rest were professionals, office workers and management, or housewives or students. Yet in Britain, manual workers make up about half the working population. Community theatre groups are about the only form of live performing art to reach this sector of the population at all. Yet these theatre companies struggle to pay their members the Equity minimum of £30, whilst lavish sums are spent on new buildings and costly productions of Cossi Fan Tutti.

Would these art forms be

so popular with the cultured elite if they were tied to shoestring budgets and performed in local halls? Part of their appeal, at least, is in the class ritual of an evening out flaunting wealth and leisure in evening dress, with jewels and magnificent halls, velvet

by SUE

ASPINALL

seats, perfume, glossy programmes and a box for the dear Queen.

The Arts Council never examines its own assumptions about art. It is taken for granted that there are 'well written' texts, 'brilliant' performances, and that these things are at the centre of artistic 'excellence'. This view of art assumes that art is a product to be consumed, of varying degrees of quality. There is little awareness of art as a process, a means of communicating and exploring various dimensions of reality.

This is why music, opera and ballet enjoy such high status as cultural forms. They are primarily sensual (visual and aural) — you don't have to think, or relate to what is happening to real life. It is all a delightful fantasy world of graceful movement, soaring notes and orchestral grandeur.

The ideology of bourgeois art has made political and material reality taboo. Art should concern itself with the intangible, subtle perception and sensation, or it is immediately labelled 'crude'. Material hardship, political debate or industrial issues are not fit subjects for real art. Only the suffering of the individual conscience and the nuances or personal relationships are artistically valid.

Any kind of socialist theatre must try to re-integrate these two aspects of reality, especially emphasising the material basis of any relationship between people. Working people need a form of art which can develop and articulate their emotional and social experience better than the telly, on their own terms.

There is endless scope for every locality to have a resident theatre group, and for workers themselves to use theatres to fight issues. 'Broadside' is already working on a project with the Lucas Aerospace workers, who will themselves act and create the play. With a greater awareness of the possibilities of theatre, the links between the theatre groups and the Unions will no doubt develop.

Homelessness and unemployment don't just have a statistical reality — they are also very common



"Of course you couldn't hear what they said, dear—it was ballet."

and particular experiences, which can be expressed theatrically to more effect than a repetition of the facts in a speech. But community theatre, or socialist theatre, does not have to be purely didactic; it can use the resources of art to explore fantasy, myths and what things feel like as well as what they look like from a rational point of view.

The division of labour

under capitalism makes a division of knowledge and culture necessary. If working people can begin to use 'culture' for their own purposes, they are challenging their long-entrenched exclusion from higher education and high culture. Any artistic activity which encourages critical thought, feeling and action is essential; the labour movement needs to be conscious of the interaction of every sphere of life, not just of the economic struggle in isolation.

## Weapon

So how are these theatre groups going to get the cash to carry with this work? Small pressure groups like TACT and ITC cannot succeed on their own. First, the Fringe must be completely unionised, so that Equity itself can lead the campaign with the support of other unions. Pressure must be brought to bear on the government to supply the Arts Council with more funds for these new groups, given that the Arts Council is unlikely to re-assess its priorities with any great speed.

Most important, the campaign must be fought within the and as part of the labour movement, until theatre groups become an established weapon for revolutionary struggle.

RED LADDER Theatre Group brought their play 'A Woman's Work is Never Done' to Rochdale last Tuesday, and played to a packed and enthusiastic audience. The play is excellent as a vivid expression of the oppression women face in our society, as wives, mothers and workers, and should be shown widely to trade unionists and Labour Parties. The audience consisted of many women trade unionists from the Working Women's Charter campaign, and a lively discussion followed. A good and educational time was had by all.

SUE ARNALL

# Trotskyists still behind bars in Mao's China

Comrades - According to a recent Hsinhua News Agency dispatch, "war criminals just released by special amnesty numbered 293 in all, including 290 war criminals who originally belonged to the Chiang Kai-shek clique, two war criminals from the Japanese puppet regime in Manchuria and one war criminal from the puppet 'Inner Mongolian Autonomous Government'. This means that all war criminals held in jail have now been released." (19th March 1975, Peking.)

But no similar amnesty has ever been declared in the case of those revolutionaries, in particular Trotskyists, who were arrested in the course of a nationwide raid on the night of 23-24 December 1952. Altogether 200 persons were seized. No indictment was ever made public. No public trial was ever held. Those arrested were refused contact with their relatives and friends.

It is therefore impossible to say with any certainty what happened to those Trotskyist militants since. We do not know what "crimes" they were charged with. We do not know how many of them are still alive. What little information we have indicates that most of the younger ones are now living under supervision after 5 years or more of imprisonment, and are barred from employment. The older comrades continue to rot behind bars.

Who are these Chinese Trotskyists that Mao judges to be more dangerous to his regime than Kuomintang counter revolutionaries? The include:

1. Cheng Ch'ao-lin: a founding member of the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese Trotskyist movement, a leader of the 1925-27 revolution. A prominent writer and theorist.

Cheng will be 74 years old. He will have spent 30 years in jail — seven under Chiang Kai-shek, 23 under Mao.

2. Chiang Tseng-tung: a leading activist in the Shanghai labour movement and a participant in the Shanghai general strike and uprising of 1927. If still alive, he would now be about 65.

3. Ho Chi-shen: a student leader in Peking in the early 'twenties, who joined the CCP shortly after its formation. Together with Mao, he played a leading role both in the 1925-27 revolution and in the revolutionary movement in Hunan Province after its defeat. Like Cheng Ch'ao-lin, Ho will have spent seven years in jail under Chiang and 23 under Mao — his old comrade-in-arms. If alive, he will now be 79 years old.

4. Ying Kwan: a student in France with Chou En-lai in the early 1920s, an intimate friend of Marshall Ch'en Yi and a leading activist in the CCP in Anhwei Province during the 1925-27 revolution. Ying Kwan was also a founding member of the Chinese Trotskyist movement. As a Trotskyist, he was jailed twice by the Kuomintang police during the 1930s. If still alive, he would be about 75 years old.

5. Lin Huan-hua: a revolutionary leader of the younger generation. He worked underground in the anti-Japanese resistance from 1938-45, and was a member of the Executive of the Canton Printworkers' Union when arrested by the Maoists. He is now a little over fifty years old.

All workers' organisations in this country should take up this issue throughout the labour movement and campaign for the immediate release of all Chinese Trotskyists and other revolutionaries still in jail. Fraternally, Gregor Benton, Chinese Dept. University of Leeds.

## The finger points to the Fascist Front

IT SEEMS likely that the National Front has been involved in more violence recently in Wandsworth, in south west London. (We reported in February how the NF had attempted to break up a meeting against racism and fascism organised by the local Trades Council in Battersea

Town Hall.)

Around midnight on April 6th, an oil lamp was thrown through one of the windows of the People's Aid and Action Centre in Wandsworth, a local centre for immigrant and squatters' groups and the left generally and the offices of PAVEMENT, a local

community newspaper. Fortunately, the lamp went out when it hit the stone floor inside.

There are several factors that point to the Front's involvement. Firstly, the lamp was thrown through the window which displayed a front page picture and story in PAVEMENT of the violence at the Town Hall. Secondly, a vehicle was heard to drive away seconds after the incident, with what sounded like the shutting of a sliding door. The following day a Bedford van with a sliding door was seen a few streets away from the centre, with several NF stickers on the windows, in a street with a number of Wandsworth corporation lamps in it, exactly like the one that was thrown through the window.

The incident is not the only example of hooliganism against the left in the area. The week before, the flat used as headquarters by a local Maoist group had its windows smashed in.

The police displayed their usual zeal to investigate such matters when they arrived at the centre and left again after a few minutes. It was probably

## NF organise in textile towns

THE National Front was able to hold a meeting in Acerrington Public Library on Friday last, with Kingsley Read, their Chairman, as the guest speaker. The Labour council had voted to allow the meeting to be held there, in spite of complaints from Party members. So Anti-Fascist committees in the region decided to picket the meeting.

As it happened, the Tribune Group rally on the Common Market was being held that night in the Free Trade Hall in Manchester, and many anti-fascists deemed it to be a more important event in their political priorities. With the Anti-Fascist picket depleted to around 40, the only tactic possible was a peaceful

an important textile town in Lancashire.

It now looks as if the Fascists are making a concerted effort to drum up support in the small textile towns around Manchester, all of which are facing contraction of their major industry and heavy redundancies.

The obvious danger is that the NF will gain in support and confidence, whilst the trade unions and Labour Party pander to them by banging the nationalist drum in their campaign to get Britain out of the EEC.

Our slogan is NO PLATFORM FOR FASCISTS. This can only be a reality if we oppose them, in steadily growing numbers, wherever



**THIS YEAR'S** Labour Party Young Socialists annual conference, held in Blackpool over Easter, held out greater promise than any recent similar conference. There were more delegates this time (250 rather than 200); there were more visitors (2,000 rather than 1500); and there was a greater range of political opinion expressed in the over 150 resolutions and even more numerous amendments.

But given that the dominant political tendency within the LPYS this year, as last, was at pains to take the bite out of debate in favour of a seemingly endless re-iteration of the same cure-all in each section, the Conference rarely rose above the level of last year. The paper *Militant* reported the character of the contributions of its own supporters with un-self-conscious candour: "This theme, for nationalisation of the economy under workers' control and management, as the only solution to working people's problems, was echoed again and again at the Conference". Too right!

### EXPOSES

Only the resolution from Eston LPYS, proposed by Lol Duffy, attempted to expose the essential parliamentarism of *Militant's* conception. It pointed out that far from it being the "Labour Government" that would take power, political power could only be conquered in a revolution by the working class itself. The resolution went on to counterpose to the arid parliamentarism of an "enabling act" followed by "the nationalisation of the 250 monopolies", the nascent organs of workers' power revealed in such events as those of France in May 1968.

Unfortunately, it is not *Militant's* habit to make use of such a disagreement fruitfully. The challenge was side-stepped and the faithful flock of *Militant* supporters turned their minds to the next subject that raised the issue of "the nationalisation of the 250 monopolies".

That, of course, was also the dominant theme of the majority resolutions on wages. By contrast, the resolution from Northampton South LPYS was not content simply to bemoan the Social Contract: it expressed "support for

groups of workers, rank and file committees, councils of action etc." It understood that a struggle needs to be taken up within the Labour Party — and no less its youth section — to relate directly and positively to the shop floor struggle, rather than this mighty stream only being acknowledged when a trickle of militants raised it within the Party organs themselves.

In the debate on racism, fascism and trade union rights, LPYS NC member Alex Wood was at pains to reduce everything to a single cause (capitalism) and therefore solve it by a single solution "the unity of the mass of workers for a socialist programme." The simple-minded moralism of this approach is again revealed by the ingenuousness of *Militant's* own report. "One or two other speakers", it says, referring to the supporters of *Workers Fight*, "learned their lessons not from the Ford and busmen's strikes when white workers stopped in support of black victims of racialism, but from Imperial Typewriters in Leicester where white workers scabbed. They claimed that in those situations, the LPYS had to support separate black organisations — thus revealing a faint heartedness and lack of confidence in the working class."

### ISOLATED

Such a comment speaks volumes about *Militant* and the all-*Militant* NC of the LPYS. Apparently one can pick and choose which struggles one will learn from, instead of seeing

# LPYS to support Women's Charter

all struggles as making up a total picture with all sorts of unevenness a variation. Apparently Imperial Typewriters was an isolated example! It would appear that *Militant* hasn't even heard of Mansfield Hosiery, of Art Castings, of STC, of Jaffe's and hundreds more places where black workers had to fight alone.

### RECORD

But the most glaring aspect of this comment, so often heard in the debate on racism, is that it refuses to say where the LPYS stands when — whether they like it or not, whether it's like Fords or not — the black workers are in a separate struggle or separate organisation because the white workers will not join the black workers in a common struggle. The answer can be seen from the action of *Militant* supporters in the LPYS in Leicester during the Imperial Typewriters strike. They supported the scabs, the racists, and implicitly the employers, against the black workers. That is their record!

Naturally, then, when it came to the struggle against fascism, doing anything while the mass of the Labour movement has still not awoken to the threat that fascism poses, was denounced by the LPYS majority.

When *Militant* supporters from Brighton drew the logic of this miserable passivity in a motion on South Africa which denounced the independent action of the blacks and deplored the present armed struggle, even the LPYS NC had to manoeuvre to get the motion withdrawn. Not

only was it too embarrassing because it was an honest representation of what *Militant* stands for, but its being dropped allowed the platform to scotch discussion on a really revolutionary amendment to it proposed by Siu Ming Cheung from Wokingham LPYS.

When it came to the Irish debate, *Militant* was faced with a number

### WORKERS FIGHT LPYS CONFERENCE MEETING SUCCESS

BY CONTRAST with the evasion of real debate at the LPYS conference, the *WORKERS FIGHT* public meeting at Blackpool brought a number of political issues into the open.

Andrew Hornung, speaking for *Workers Fight*, stressed in his introduction that the task of revolutionaries in the Labour Party and the LPYS was to pose the sharpest political opposition to the essentially bourgeois left Labourism. This, he said, could not be done by resorting to ritual incantations about a "socialist programme". It necessitated forging a link between the direct action of the working class and the elements within the Labour Party who are prepared to orientate first and foremost towards direct class action.

### FORCE

In the discussion, in which every political tendency present was heard (and *Militant* several times!) Comrade Hornung attacked those conceptions put forward in different forms by several tendencies, that the Labour Party is the sole reflection of the working class. The Labour Party, he pointed out, did not simply reflect workers' aspirations; it influenced them, and in practice often repressed them.

In any case, all sorts of action by workers — in particular by those traditionally neglected and even insulted by the Labour Party (blacks, women etc) — express more immediately workers' aspirations. He dismissed too the idea that it was the Labour leaders alone who politics were bourgeois. On the contrary, he explained, the problem was that the working class is still ideologically dominated by bourgeois ideas from top to bottom, although all sorts of struggles are in the process of undermining that domination.

This meeting, which attracted nearly 100 LPYS members, showed something the stage-managed Conference couldn't: that, given the conditions of a proper debate, the supporters of *Militant* are unable to answer an attack on their ideas.

This was the only meeting held by a political tendency other than the majority during the Conference time, and it clearly revealed *Workers Fight's* emergence as a force within the LPYS.

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of resolutions (from *Workers Fight* supporters, from supporters of *The Chartist*, and from Southall LPYS) which could have brought out into the open the NC's Little Englandism. It responded by taking refuge in bureaucratism.

First, the NC threatened to forcibly composite all the motions it disagreed with. Then it backed down but said that "seconders" would not be called; and it was well known that no non-*Militant* delegates would be called to speak unless they were proposers or seconders of motions. Then it was said that time was too short to discuss all the resolutions, and the platform complained that the opposition wanted "two bites of the cherry" (as if two bites makes a meal!).

### FICTIONS

Instead of being a significant debate, this section turned into a messy brawl, confused further by a pack of outright lies from Bob Labi, editor of the LPYS paper *Left*, about *Workers Fight's* past positions. (Later, in Irish discussion at the rally after the conference proper, Alex Wood of the NC concocted further fictions, claiming that we had supported British troops being in Ireland; coming from *Militant*, which has never called for unconditional withdrawal of troops from Ireland, this was just a plain bloody nerve!)

The brightest spot of the Conference came in the passing of resolution 148 which "welcomes the campaign being launched around the Working Women's Charter. It instructs the NC to do all in its power to ensure the maximum participation of LPYS members..." Whether the NC will be moved to do anything depends in large measure on the amount of pressure put on them. In the past, they have done almost nothing even on campaigns they themselves initiated.

### RIGHTS

The LPYS members who want to see the organisation grow and want to see it relating to the progressive struggles taking place outside the ranks of the Party itself, should get together to plan this campaign on women's rights, and demand that the NC recognises it — or does better.

The enthusiastic reception for *YOUNG SOCIALIST* and *Workers Fight's* ideas among a growing number of delegates has encouraged *YOUNG SOCIALIST* to call a day school for supporters and sympathisers in Coventry on April 26.

'Young Socialist' day school. Saturday April 26th, 11am to 6pm, at Sidney Stringer School, Cox Street, Coventry (near bus station). Topics include The history of the left in the Labour Party; The Working Women's Charter; Ireland and the Troops Out Movement; the Common Market; and Building the Young Socialists.

### Strangest of bed fellows?

ZIONIST thugs have appeared so far at two showings of the film *TO LIVE IN FREEDOM*, which is about the driving out of the Palestinians from their homeland. Twice they have disrupted the film with violence.

The film was shown again at Middlesex Polytechnic, Enfield on Thursday April 17th. Before the showing, a 'message' was conveyed to the Middle East Research and Action Group — not, this time, from Zionists, but from National Front fascists who had, appropriately, taken up the Zionists' dubious cause. The message, which was obscene and abusive, assured MERAG that they would never be showing the film again.

When it came to it, MERAG and the Enfield students were well prepared, and neither brand of thugs dared to show their faces.

AN impressive array of twelve speakers has been lined up for the meeting on May 3rd to campaign for the defence of the 14 people charged with conspiracy and incitement to disaffection for giving out leaflets to British troops. The charges carry very heavy penalties, and the laws under which they are brought are ones which seriously undermine such 'accepted rights' as the right to communicate 'non-secret' information.

The implications of the case — which is perhaps to civil liberties what the Shrewsbury 24 trials were to picketing rights — will no doubt be drawn out by the speakers who include Labour MPs Joan Maynard and Maureen Colquhoun, trade unionists Ernie Roberts and Pat Hickey, Alastair Renwick from the Troops Out Movement, and pacifists Bill Hetherington, Jo Gerson and David Harding.

The meeting starts at 2pm, and is at the NUFTO hall, Jockeys Fields, Holborn, London W.C.1

Rochdale Trades Council, Working Women's Charter Committee: Open meeting with a speaker on the Anti Discrimination Bill. Sunday April 20th at 14 Smith Street, 2.30pm.

End military repression in Nigeria Now! Protest meeting Sunday April 20th, 5pm at Oval House, near Oval Tube, south London.

People Democracy forum: The Jenkins Law and How to Fight It. Wednesday April 23rd at 8pm, Mother Redcap pub opp. Camden Town tube, north London.

### PORTUGAL

Sunday April 20th: Rally, organised by various Portuguese organisations in London. Leaves Speakers' Corner 2.30pm; march through Park Lane to Portuguese Embassy.

Friday April 25th: Portugal, One Year After — meeting of the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class. 7pm, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London. Speakers: Oscar Figueiredo (PWCC), Sacuntala Miranda (TGWU International branch), Jack Collins (Kent Area NUM).

Tuesday 6th May: Red Ladder performs 'A Woman's Work is Never Done', a benefit performance for the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class. 7pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square. Admission 50p, refreshments available. A woman worker from Portugal will be speaking on the current situation. Organised by PWCC.

London Workers Fight public meeting on: The prison system in Society Today. Speaker Ted Ward (PROP). Sunday 27th April at 8.30pm at The George, Liverpool Road, N.1.

### LIVERPOOL BUILDERS FIGHT UNEMPLOYMENT

9,516 building and construction workers are unemployed within just a ten-mile radius of Liverpool, and the numbers are increasing, a meeting of builders was told in Liverpool on 10th April. The meeting was called to discuss unemployment in the building industry. Unfortunately, very little came of it. The main

emphasis was on yet another lobby of Parliament. No decision was made to take up more positive suggestions, including one for an effective overtime ban and for a shorter working week.

Building workers and others must support those already taking action against unemployment, such as the TGWU and

UCATT members still occupying their site at Cammell Laird.

Also, support should be gained for the local TGWU and UCATT call for a stoppage on May 1st.

Messages of support and donations to the Cammell Laird workers should be sent to: A. Abbott, 6/533 branch, TGWU, Islington, Liverpool 3. STAN CLARE

## BUDGET: from p 1

work. Healey glibly acknowledged the effect the Budget will have in accelerating the rise in unemployment, anticipating at least one million on the dole by the end of this year.

This vicious attack was covered, but not in the least concealed, by a sickly patriotic syrup. "No Chancellor of the Exchequer", Healey said "who puts his country first could act otherwise than I have done."

In reality, as the bosses' economy goes deeper into crisis, both private and Government bodies have borrowed enormous sums abroad, running into thousands of millions of pounds. And the price that is being demanded as a condition of further loans is a determined offensive against the working class.

But the talk of "national interest" is not just nonsensical because the plans of British capitalism depend heavily on international finance capital, but

because the interests of British capitalism and the working class are different and opposite to each other.

As the *Financial Times* editorial commented "the Government has lost faith in the efficacy of the Social Contract and is relying on high unemployment to keep wage claims down..."

While workers were still wincing from Healey's blows, 'the City' gave the Budget its vote of confidence, and in a day of delighted speculation put £1,700 million on the price of shares. Ralph Bateman, head of the CBI, saw the budget as having "the right shape", while the *Financial Times* said City and 'industry' — i.e. bosses — did well to win "several welcome concessions from a Chancellor with little to give away."

This "little" in fact amounted to about £2,000 million in tax relief, investment grants, and relaxation of the already loose price controls.

For many workers, this latest attack will bring back bitter memories of the '64-'70 Labour Government which pushed up unemployment to over half a million, brought out 'In Place of Strife', and initiated the whole Productivity deals period. This year, the Labour Government's attack on the working class is backed up by slump conditions throughout whole industries, making more or less organisation and working conditions more