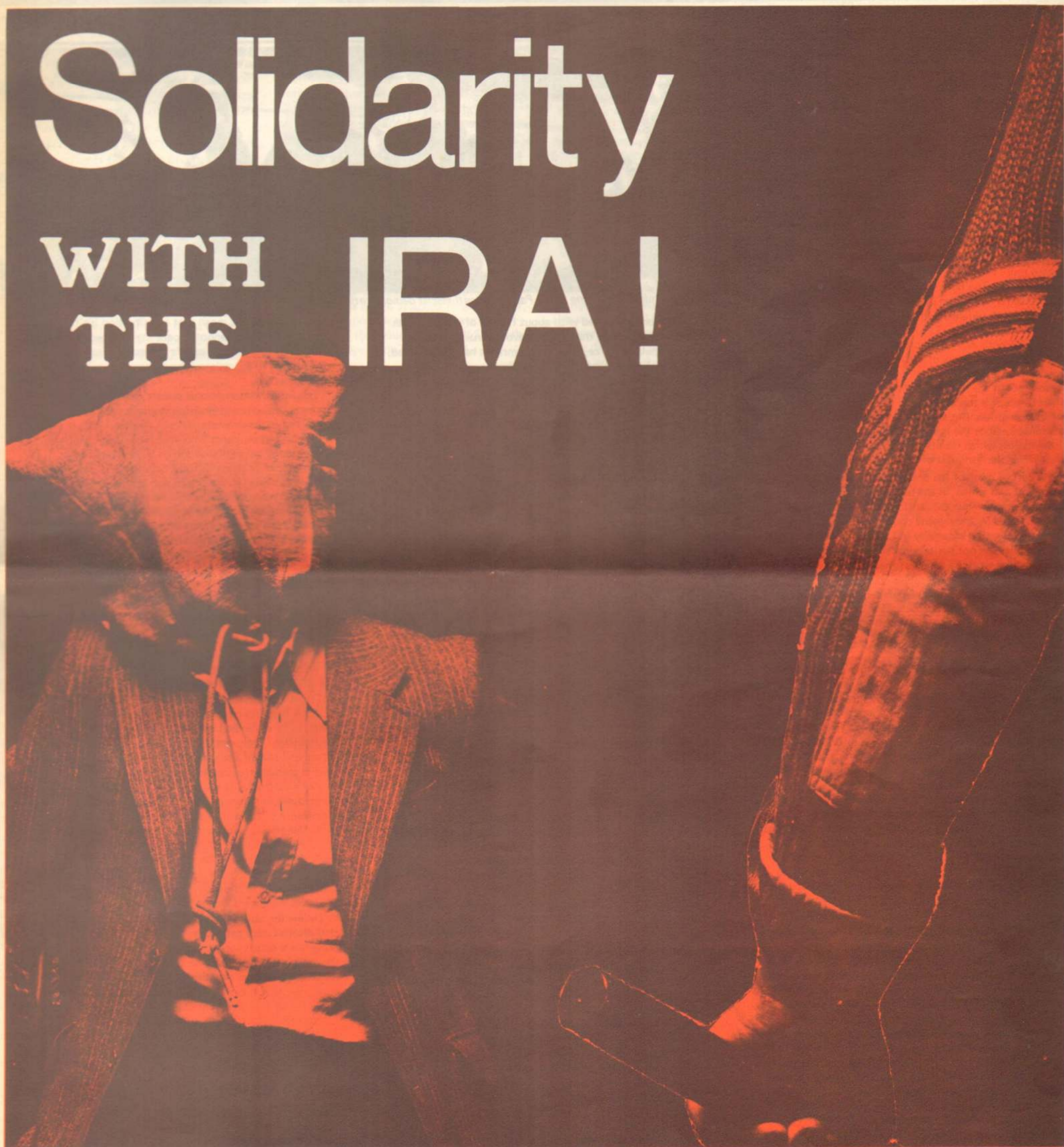


No. 30 20th October 1971 Price: 7½p

# The Red Mole

# Solidarity

# WITH THE IRA!



**Plessey—The Lump—Paraguay—Angela Davis—Bolivia**

**River Don Shop Stewards Interview**

**All Out For The Oct 31 Demo Against Internment.**



# The Red Mole

Number 30 20th October 1971

## U.S.F.I. DECLARATION ON THE WAR IN BOLIVIA

Several dozen militants of the POR (Bolivian section of the Fourth International) have been killed in the fighting against General Banzer's coup and the new military regime, others have been captured by the repressive forces and are in concentration camps. Other working class organisations have similarly met with harsh repression. The gorillas in power backed up by American imperialism and its agents in other Latin American countries are just about to launch an even more systematic and savage campaign of extermination. The Bolivian working class, which has experienced a long series of barbaric massacres in its history, is once more threatened and more than ever deserves international solidarity. The POR comrades realised that a show of strength was inevitable in the short term. Since they had a realistic view of the relationship of forces—especially on the military level—they were not under any illusions about the outcome. They made a considerable effort to prepare themselves and made important progress in every direction. But these efforts could not be sufficient to counterbalance the political and military inadequacies of the masses which resulted from the absence of a real strategy for the conquest of power and for armed struggle on the part of most of the organisations which claimed to be socialist and which, in the best of cases, did not go beyond a spontaneous conception of insurrection.

Confronted by the rightist coup d'état which provoked a mass mobilisation especially in La Paz and Santa Cruz, our comrades did not hesitate for an instant in participating in the fighting with the forces at their disposal. Thus they fought in the front line with their class brothers. In La Paz, Tomas Chambi, a leader of the independent peasant



Bolivian miners marching on La Paz for an anti-fascist demonstration. In their hands, sticks of dynamite.

organisation, was killed with about fifteen of his comrades. In Santa Cruz where the counter-revolutionary onslaught was particularly fierce, about 20 comrades have been killed. The fate of the militants who have disappeared or been wounded during the fight has not yet been verified. Comrades who have been arrested in La Paz, Santa Cruz and Oruro are now with other victims of the repression in the prisons and camps of the selva, among which is Madidi where conditions are particularly revolting. Finally, some leading comrades just managed to escape arrest by taking refuge in the Embassy of a Latin American country (after other Embassies had turned them away) and are now in exile, already beginning the task of reorganising the movement.

The POR comrades write to us:

"We are determined to continue our struggle and we are in a better condition to do it than in the past. Our forces have grown in the last period and new leading cadres have come forward and are already at work. What encourages us the most is the confidence that sectors of the vanguard have

in us. That does not mean that our situation isn't difficult; but revolutionaries cannot expect the bourgeoisie to clear the road for them. Now what's necessary is to struggle and we are going to struggle: we have prepared ourselves for this perspective.

The Fourth International salutes the hundreds of workers, peasants and Bolivian students who have been massacred in the dramatic days of August 1971. It salutes the Trotskyist militants who have fallen, to repeat their own words, *con el pensamiento fijo en su partido y en la Internacional*. It sends its fraternal solidarity to all those who are suffering in the prison and in the concentration camps and who must be wrenched from their executioners by an international campaign of denunciation.

*Long live the Bolivian working class! Long live the POR. Long live the Fourth International!*

26th September 1971: The United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

## ALL OUT FOR Oct 31st!

The rally and demonstration called by the Anti-Internment League for October 31st looks like being several times bigger than any previous demonstration in support of the Irish struggle. Internment seems finally to have brought home to many sections of the Left the fact that the struggle in Ireland is very much related to the class struggle in Britain itself. The possibility of building an effective mass solidarity campaign in support of the Irish struggle can now no longer be dismissed as wishful thinking.

For it to emerge as concrete reality, however, it is necessary to pull out all the stops between now and the demonstration. All individuals and organisations who accept the slogans of the demonstration—"No Internment" and "Immediate withdrawal of all British troops"—should be working to ensure the maximum possible turnout on October 31st. Public meetings should be regularly held to explain what is happening in Ireland and combat the vicious lies put out by the British press. Bodies like trade union branches and students unions should be approached to give financial assistance to the campaign.

Coaches will be going to the demonstration from all major towns and cities in Britain, but intensive work in the next ten days could come close to doubling the numbers. In particular, Ireland is the major issue among students at the moment, and every effort must be made to get motions supporting the demonstration through union meetings, etc. What must be emphasised above all is that this is not "just another demonstration"; on the contrary, it is vital that we show to the Irish that they are not alone in their struggle, but that we too are for the defeat of our own ruling class at a time when it is further raising the stakes in the North.

Details of local mobilisations can be obtained by phoning the Anti-Internment League at 01-603 3085 or the Spartacus League at 01-278 2616.

### CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE CAMPAIGN

Just under two weeks ago, Stormont passed emergency legislation with the immediate aim of smashing the civil disobedience campaign. One of the more astonishing things about it was the scant attention it received in the British press. For many papers, indeed, it was totally overshadowed both by the Heath-Faulkner talks and by the Labour Party Conference debate on Ireland. Yet this legislation, if it is implemented (as it surely must be), will undoubtedly provoke the biggest upsurge in the Irish struggle since the

days immediately following the introduction of internment.

Until this legislation was passed, the Stormont government was almost helpless in the face of the rent and rates strike initiated by the Civil Rights Association. The strike was estimated to be about 90 per cent effective in Catholic areas, and in its first month alone probably cost the government well over £2m. in lost revenue. But even more than its financial effect on Stormont, the civil disobedience campaign has played a vital role in uniting the Catholic working class in mass action against the state, and preventing any separation of the vanguard from the masses. Until the emergency legislation was passed, all Stormont could do was to withhold the rent allowance from those drawing Supplementary Benefits. Even where attempts were made by local authorities to close down facilities paid for out of the rates (e.g. the swimming pool in Newry) these were then taken over by local committees and paid for out of the money withheld in rents and rates.

### GOVERNMENT RAISES STAKES

But all this has changed with the passing of the emergency legislation, and with it the civil disobedience campaign faces a turning point. The new legislation now allows the Stormont government to withhold debts to public bodies from all kinds of social security payments. This will include family allowances, supplementary benefits, old age pensions, etc. and on top of this, a weekly payment will be taken to cover arrears. Further, the government will also be able to make attachment orders against wages—and if the employer fails to deduct the necessary sum from the wages of his employees, then he will have to pay himself. As a last step, the government will even try to distract on property.

Nor should this legislation be seen in isolation. The decisions, firstly to blow up many of the border roads, and secondly to increase four companies (including the infamous Argylls) to battalion strength in order to make more troops available for service in Ireland, are further indications that Westminster and Stormont have decided to raise the stakes once more and prepare for a fight to the finish.

### BREAK WITH REFORMISM ESSENTIAL

The problems this poses for the resistance in the North are of course immense. The first and most urgent necessity is that the civil disobedience campaign should be stripped of

the reformist illusions on which it has so far been based. The situation has quite clearly moved beyond a struggle for civil rights to one for national self-determination—yet still the CRA bases its campaign on the demand for democratic rights, to be embodied in a Bill of Rights legislated by Westminster. Their complete failure to understand the nature and role of British imperialism in Ireland (for that is what it amounts to) means quite simply that they are unable to lead a successful struggle against it. Above all, by limiting the struggle to democratic demands, they relegate the importance of the armed struggle to a dangerously low level—dangerous, because the British Army, the RUC and the UVF have no such illusions about democracy. The present policy of the CRA could unfortunately lead once again to an August '69 situation—where the mass of the people were left almost defenceless against the onslaughts of armed Protestant thugs.

Unless the armed struggle is rapidly integrated into the civil disobedience campaign, it is difficult to predict anything but a defeat for the resistance. The armed violence of the British Army can only be countered effectively by armed resistance (this is not to dismiss civil disobedience, merely to emphasise that it can be only a part of any strategy, not the whole). The only coherent policy can be to smash Stormont, not to peddle illusions about reforming it—apart from anything else, only by smashing the Orange state can large sections of the Protestant working class be broken from their present reactionary position.

### UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR ARMED STRUGGLE

The only policy for revolutionaries in Britain must be to support unconditionally the armed struggle which has this as its aim, and not to surround their support with so many equivocations about "sectarian violence" that it actually becomes totally meaningless. The escalation of the struggle by the Westminster and Stormont governments means that either the civil disobedience campaign must change its direction or the masses will suffer a crushing defeat. We as revolutionaries stand unequivocally for the armed overthrow of our own bourgeoisie in Ireland; that is why we call for the victory of the IRA against British imperialism. To call for anything less in this situation is only to spread illusions about the real nature of imperialism and to induce false hopes in the "peaceful road to socialism".



# Sold Down the River Don ?

## Interview with shop stewards.

*The situation at River Don arises out of a strategy laid down in the early 60s aimed at eliminating product duplication and greatly reducing the labour force. The strategy in this case goes a stage further and eliminates one product altogether, namely heavy forgings. At the same time, the policy of the unions has been one of inertia in the steel industry; a refusal to fight redundancies. Accepting the lessons of UCS, the workers are therefore taking the situation into their own hands—with verbal support from the AEWU.*

*Workers in both the private sector and the British Steel Corp. are attempting to combine to prevent plant from being hived off.*

*Thousands of Sheffield workers stand to lose their jobs following the Government's decision to hive off the River Don works of the British Steel Corporation to the privately-owned company of Firth-Brown Ltd. The first redundancy notices are due to go out this week. Red Mole reporters talked to two shop stewards from different sections of BSC, one a member of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (also referred to as AEF in the interview), the other a member of the British Iron and Steel and Kindred Trades Association.*

**—What is your position in Rotherham BSC?**

**AUEW Steward:** It's Rotherham works geographically, but our machine shop comes under the River Don management for all of our work and costings. It's the BSC Special Steels Division, but it is part of the River Don works.

**BISAKTA Steward:** This appears to be part of a deliberate policy from 1969 onwards. This policy was to group all geographical areas into product groups as against geographical groups. It was done after a lot of pressure to rationalise while steel was under the private sector. The general idea was to make product duplication obsolete.

**—What are the unions involved at BSC Rotherham?**

**AUEW S.:** There is only one union in our shop and that is AEF. We have BISAKTA members, but they are not really involved in the fight to halt these closures at River Don.

**BISAKTA S.:** Overwhelmingly in the steel industry, the main shop floor union is BISAKTA but in the particular department which A.S. is talking about, the process is more engineering than production, so therefore most members would be in AEF, or to a lesser extent the T&G or GMWU.

**A.S.:** As far as I can gather, BISAKTA officials have promised that if our shop was closed, the machinists in the shop will be transferred back to Rotherham works. This is complete nonsense when we look at the redundancies which have already occurred in the Rotherham works.

**B.S.:** What the officials say about assimilating BISAKTA workers back into the rest of Rotherham works is a lie because it would directly contradict the announcement made in 1970 that 1,300 people would be made redundant at Rotherham works at the end of 1972. The report further states that more redundancies would follow. Given this, how could the Rotherham works swallow up the redundant labour from the machine shop?

**—What are the possibilities for redundancies in your shop and in the works generally?**

**A.S.:** Well, if this River Don sell-out goes through, then obviously we are finished. Even if it doesn't go through and River Don is saved, our position is still very doubtful. About 90 of our (AEF) members and between 50 and 60 BISAKTA members will be affected.

**—The River Don closure would affect 4,500 workers, and if that happens your machine shop will be closed as well. Is there any sign of redundancies other than those which will result from River Don?**

**B.S.:** Yes. They have already been declared, as I said earlier. The Park Gate blastfurnaces are to close, and following them the melting pot which relies on the blastfurnaces for supply. There is

speculation, through management leaks, about the closure or hiving-off of one of the two primary mills in the Rotherham works. If this happens it could lead ultimately to the sacking of something like 6,000-7,000 workers out of 12,000 currently employed.

**—What are the official unions doing about it—the AEF and BISAKTA?**

**A.S.:** Well, the official policy of the AEF is not to accept redundancies. Their policy is one of worksharing but unfortunately management have been getting round this, and the unions have been losing out because workers have been accepting redundancies and the unions haven't been able to stop this.

**B.S.:** BISAKTA's policy is entirely different. The policy of worksharing was abandoned before nationalisation and the union is in fact actively acquiescing in the creation of redundancies. All one has to do is look at the "Green Book" productivity deal which agrees with the need for flexibility of labour, for streamlining, and the introduction of measured day work, time and motion, job evaluation ... These methods are all designed to shed labour, and 25,000 process workers will have been phased out of the industry since 1965 with the deliberate cooperation of BISAKTA.

**A.S.:** The results are probably not much different though between the different unions, because voluntary redundancy has been a way out. There has already in fact been a certain amount of voluntary reduction at the Rotherham works.

**B.S.:** But this difference of policy between the AEF and BISAKTA is disastrous because it creates a division between shop floor workers who have got everything in common and should fight together. It creates a lack of solidarity, sets workers against each other and plays into the hands of BSC's deliberate policy to do just this.

**—Could you tell us more about voluntary redundancies and what is involved because it appears to be quite important?**

**A.S.:** We had a shop stewards meeting in February. The management had said they were going to make thirty men redundant. Our official reaction was to reject redundancies completely, but about 29 workers volunteered to be made redundant. This completely cut the ground from under our feet because we couldn't stop them becoming redundant. But we did say that although these men were made redundant we were not going to lose their jobs. So what we have been trying to do is to keep job opportunities open.

**B.S.:** I agree with what you have said about redundancies. It is very difficult for shop stewards to fight redundancies when men of 63 and over stand to get up to £1,500 and actually want to be made redundant. But with regard to the other aspect of job loss, the attitude of BISAKTA is different from AEF because it actively agrees with the elimination of jobs. This can only be fought by unofficial action on the part of shop stewards within BISAKTA, because it is the policy of the union bureaucracy that jobs should be done away with.

**—Is there much work done together between AEF and BISAKTA?**

**A.S.:** I would say there is almost none. I think the only contact is at Works Council meetings where representatives do talk but I don't think there is joint official action anywhere along the line against management.

**B.S.:** There is no contact at all at local level, and the only contact at national level is that they happen to sit on the Joint Steel Committee of which Davies (Gen. Sec. BISAKTA) is chairman. Locally BISAKTA actively deny any link-up with AEF at shop floor level. At River Don, for instance, local Divisional Officers have been heard to say that we go this alone and don't want to be mixed up with AEF, or any of this silly business like UCS work-ins. This obviously means that they don't intend to fight the redundancies at River Don; the AEF do.

**A.S.:** In talking about the unions working together, I was referring to the Rotherham works set-up. At River Don, I believe BISAKTA, along with ASTMS and DATA, are fully involved in the fight to save River Don.

**B.S.:** If BISAKTA are involved at River Don in a joint effort with other unions, then to my knowledge it is completely unofficial.

**—From all accounts, BISAKTA and even AEF do not seem all that successful in fighting redundancies. Would you agree with this?**

**A.S.:** Yes. I would agree that they are not successful in fighting redundancies.

**B.S.:** The reason is, I think, that BISAKTA, the overwhelmingly powerful union in the steel industry, has a capitulationist policy and this really puts AEF in an extremely difficult position. AEF have got no mass support in fighting redundancies because the vast majority of steelworkers are in BISAKTA whose support can't be relied on.

**A.S.:** Yes, and even in other industries AEF haven't been successful in fighting redundancies. They have tried but even in engineering works they haven't been very successful.

**—What is the reaction of the men to this. Is there a lot of frustration?**

**B.S.:** Yes. People say—we can't fight alone, if we fight no one will support us, etc. It is linked also with the steel boom in the '50s and management concessions to the unions more or less on demand. These concessions ended by the middle '60s, but the legacy of the '50s still exists. This combined with a lack of support between different sections of workers creates a very exasperating situation for the men on the shopfloor who are fragmented and isolated. Their anger is not necessarily directed against the Steel Corporation but against the unions. Nationalisation is often blamed for this situation with the argument that this didn't happen under private enterprise. This is mistaken because nationalisation is in fact being used brutally to carry out the tasks of private industry before it, which in practice means going along with the Benson Report in sacking 100,000 out of a labour force of 300,000 in 1965.

**—How do you see the situation developing?**

**A.S.:** Well, I don't think the unions can settle this. The only way we can settle this, I think, although I don't like saying this, is by getting a Labour government back, with a real socialist policy in the Labour government—one which will really expand industries in Britain and get workers off the dole and into the factories. The unions aren't organised enough to do this. In our union for instance there are 1½ million members, but we'll let 100 workers in our shop get the sack. They are unions in name but not in policy.

**B.S.:** What I would like to see developing is mass solidarity action between different sections of workers. But to precede this there must be a fight for trade union democracy within the unions themselves, and rank and file committees must be set up nationally. I don't see the return of a Labour government with socialist policies as a viable alternative. We've had all this before, especially with Labour in opposition—the "left" rhetoric and calls for "nationalisation". Nationalisation is no use unless the workers actually control the means of production.

**—In what way do you see workers fighting redundancies?**

**A.S.:** I'm not really clear on this. At the moment there only seems to be one way—out of the factory and into the dole queue. There is some fight in the River Don workers. They have got their backs up because this sell-out has been a

big shock to them, but I'm doubtful about the extent of the solidarity.

**B.S.:** Because of the type of production at River Don, a work-in is out of the question. I imagine that the workers will take over the factory not as a work-in but as a stay-in, to stop any machinery going out of the factory to the private sector. But this means mass support, again from the rank and file, because the unions will not rubber-stamp such action. They may if the action is on a large enough scale pay lip-service to it, but they won't give it active support.

**A.S.:** There is already a policy about not moving the machinery but that is not really what Firth Brown's want. They are after the order book and the goodwill. There is also a policy in operation to black certain jobs, but how will the they know which jobs to black?

**—I understand that you are involved in the Rotherham Steel Committee. What is the role of this Steel Committee?**

**B.S.:** The need for a steel committee comes out of all that we have been saying. It is an attempt to create a rank and file alternative to the trade union and industrial structure in this area. And we see the need to link up nationally with other industries even at the basic level of coordinating information. This flow of information is non-existent in the steel industry at the moment. It is also important to act as a pressure group on the steel unions. For instance, in the case of BISAKTA it is necessary to exert pressure for a national conference as a first step to breaking its authoritarian structure. Interest in the committee is growing; at the moment only an autonomous rank and file steel committee can break through the barriers erected by the unions themselves and lay the basis for effective solidarity action in the struggle against redundancies.

**—What tactic is BSC using to calm down resistance to its measures?**

**B.S.:** The main tactic is very clever, one of mystification, which is carried out by means of their media *Steel News* which is given away on the shop floor in thousands. They play each section off against the next depending on which set of workers is most militant at any given time. The second tactic is the manipulation of internal costing procedures giving out spurious figures of profits and losses. These dividing tactics are very effective and get workers hoping that other departments will close down and put them on full time ...

**A.S.:** One of the tactics being employed at River Don is the promise that if unions cooperate with BSC, although some jobs will be lost, some jobs will actually be saved. Straight-away splits occur, as has happened at UCS where the same tactic has been applied.

**—Do you think a bulletin can help counter this?**

**B.S.:** Yes. I think this is extremely important. We are working towards the production of a bulletin and hope to have the first one out soon.

**Interviewers: Tom Mole and Paul Neville**

### MASS DEMONSTRATION IN SUPPORT OF THE IRISH STRUGGLE

—OCTOBER 31st—

**RELEASE ALL INTERNEES!  
WITHDRAW THE TROOPS!**

Rally Speakers Corner (Marble Arch) 3.30 pm, followed by march to Whitehall.  
Local marches to Speakers Corner leave Archway 1 pm  
"Crown", Cricklewood 1.30 pm  
Hammersmith Broadway 1.30 pm

March organised by Anti-Internment League. Phone 01-603 3085  
or 01-278 2616 for further details.



# SAU: Spartacus League Expelled

At the last National Committee meeting of the Schools Action Union a few weeks ago, the Spartacus League comrades, together with the IS and LPYS were expelled from the SAU as "Trotskyists". This came as no surprise to the Spartacus League members, who had been observing the development of ultra-left sectarian ideas within the organisation for some time. The meeting itself had more elements of farce than of tragedy; in the morning we were treated to a lengthy outburst on "social fascism" directed at the LPYS by the SAU London Chairman, in the afternoon the National Chairman read out a paper alleging that members of the Spartacus League, International Socialists and LPYS had behaved disloyally under the SAU's "democratic centralist constitution" (sic) and would therefore be expelled.

The Spartacus League has continually pointed out that the idea of a one-sector organisation being "democratic centralist" is a gross mistake which leads to big political errors, and to use this stupidity to expel genuine revolutionaries marks a further stage in the degeneration of the organisation under Maoist and Stalinist influence. The SL demands that the SAU lift the proscription on Trotskyist organisations and readmits the expelled comrades at once.

The days when the Times Educational Supplement could believe the SAU had 10,000 members are definitely over—even on paper it has less than 400. The big upsurges in the schools in recent months have largely bypassed the SAU and in the Christopher Searle case, the SAU were reduced to merely issuing a press statement, which hardly anyone bothered to print anyway.

At no time has the SAU been organisationally significant in the schools, and it is chiefly noteworthy for its ideas which in their confusion represented a certain primitive stage in the schools movement. The SAU comes from the same roots as RSSF and represents an English caricature of the types of political mass organisation of youth typified by the SDS in Germany, and the CALs in France which led tremendous movements. In Britain however the SAU, stimulated by the May events and the British student upsurge, lacked any kind of radicalised base in the schools. This lack of a base had a serious result for all the autonomous schools organisations, since it meant that upsurges in the schools were not generalised and continuous but isolated and episodic, therefore schools organisations either organised themselves on the crest of an upsurge and then collapsed—like many of the local unions—or to survive without a permanent base became bureaucratized with a self-perpetuating leadership and structure into which members could ebb and flow as struggles arose and died away. This last variant represents the SAU and it's easy to see that mere survival as an independent schools grouping needs a tightly centralised structure—which explains the SAU's seemingly irrational attachment to "democratic centralism".

As regards its political ideas, these are aptly summed up in the slogan "democratic schools in a democratic society", a slogan which is profound in its inanity and in addition means precisely nothing as the class nature of "democracy" is not specified. We intend to take up the question of "democracy in the schools" in a future article, since so many groups seem to find it enchanting

but for the moment it's interesting to examine how the SAU gets its distinctive political line. Single sector organisations arising out of the youth vanguard tend to see themselves initially as conducting an autonomous struggle, they are unable to understand the role of the working class for their own struggle, and even if understanding it intellectually, are often unable to draw organisational conclusions—which would necessarily liquidate the organisation into the revolutionary struggle.

These features are shown very clearly in the SAU. School students are not the working class, therefore school struggles cannot change the mode of production. Since the abolition of the bourgeois school is impossible without the abolition of bourgeois society, the revolutionary schools struggle has to take place in the context of social revolution under the leadership of the working class. Does it make sense to have an independent revolutionary bolshevik schools organisation? Only if you believe the schools are totally autonomous from bourgeois society. If you agree that the schools are linked with bourgeois society in a multitude of ways, and that you can't understand what is happening in the schools without an understanding of the processes at work in bourgeois society as a whole (which is by the way the Marxist position), then schools action has to be linked in with other struggles, not just in theory but in practice as well. From this basis we can then work out a strategy for the schools in the context of the struggles of the working class, the students, and other sectors.

The SAU is therefore stuck in a contradiction between the need for a total theory and the need for only a partial and fragmented practice. Of course, when a single sector organisation leads a mass movement, the logic of the movement can go beyond the limit of purely sectoral problems and large numbers of young militants then become politicised around the revolutionaries, but because of the peculiarities of the British educational system, the development of generalised struggle has been very much retarded, and the SAU has experienced this contradiction over a long period at two levels. In the membership, the lack of even a moderately sane political strategy (latest document gives the aim as "dual power in school") leads either to ultra-left adventures resulting in victimisation and expulsions, or more often in demoralisation and apathy leading to a lot of paper membership. In the leadership branches in London, however, this contradiction results in strong pressures to downgrade schools work and put much more emphasis on solidarity work, anti-racist work, etc. Thus, the London rump London leadership has only two alternatives to its present paralysis: either to continue to follow the logic of the expulsion—in which case it will have to define itself against all other tendencies on the revolutionary left and destroy its pretensions to being a mass organisation for school students; or, it will have to build itself as a school student organisation, in which case it will have to return to the policy of the *united front* with other political currents on the revolutionary left, thus destroying the validity of its past and present positions.

What then should be the attitude of revolutionaries to the SAU? If there was at the moment a tremendous upsurge in the schools which the SAU was leading,

it would be correct for revolutionaries to put a great deal of emphasis on work in the SAU, both in the local branches and nationally. Revolutionaries would be working for their ideas, and trying to broaden the movement and give it political direction. Very obviously this is not the situation today. There is no schools *movement*, and if a political mobilisation did develop amongst school students, it is most unlikely that the SAU would be in a position to lead it. The SAU is essentially an irrelevancy, formed during a brief upsurge in the schools, but quite unable, because of its structure as an independent schools organisation, to give a coherence to that upsurge and politically develop it. With no movement that would have developed the SAU itself, it degenerated into a mere structure without content—the same people discussing increasingly irrelevant topics quite divorced from what was—and is—happening in the schools.

If this was all, we could safely leave it to its sectarian gymnastics, but because of the lack of any revolutionary organisation doing serious schools work over the last period, the SAU—without any competition—has been a certain pole of attraction to school student militants. Revolutionaries should therefore continue to propagandize for their ideas inside the SAU, as part of of the task of winning militants in the schools. In preventing this, the present leadership of the SAU is objectively helping to prevent revolutionary activity in the schools, helping in its own small fashion to hinder the building of the revolutionary party and behaving in a bureaucratic and sectarian way. We demand that the SAU immediately reinstate the expelled organisations and comrades.

—Chris Caldwell

## RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE POLITICAL BUREAU OF THE SPARTACUS LEAGUE

The Political Bureau of the Spartacus League notes that the National Committee of the Schools Action Union decided at its last meeting to expel the comrades of the Spartacus League working in the SAU. The Political Bureau considers that these expulsions can only increase the isolation and impotence of the SAU and hasten its continuing decline as a viable mass schools organisation. The Political Bureau therefore calls upon the SAU to readmit immediately the expelled comrades and organisations in order to establish the SAU as a genuine united front of militants working in the schools.

## BANGLA DESH SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE DEMONSTRATION

Saturday 23rd OCTOBER 2 p.m.  
ALBERT SQUARE, MANCHESTER

## TUC UNEMPLOYMENT DEMONSTRATION

ISLINGTON SQUARE, LIVERPOOL  
2 P.M.—30th OCTOBER

## Meetings on Ireland

Meetings in support of the Irish struggle, featuring speakers from Ireland and the film *Urban Insurgency in Northern Ireland*, have been arranged by the Spartacus League for the following places. Further details should be available locally or can be obtained by phoning 01-278 2616.

### OCTOBER

20	lunchtime	London School of Economics
	"	University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology
	afternoon	Manchester University
	evening	Manchester (Moss Side)
	"	University of Kent, Canterbury
21	lunchtime	Aston University
	afternoon	North London Poly
	evening	Birmingham University
22	evening	Coventry
	"	Notting Hill
25	lunchtime	Ealing Technical College
	evening	Essex University, Colchester
	"	Rush Green Technical College, Dagenham
26	lunchtime	Goldsmiths College, London
	evening	Enfield College of Technology
	"	University of East Anglia, Norwich
27	lunchtime	University of Surrey, Guildford
	"	North-Eastern Polytechnic, London
	evening	University of Sussex, Brighton
	"	Cambridge University
28	lunchtime	Brunel University, Uxbridge
	"	Oxford Polytechnic
	evening	Oxford University
	"	Watford
29	evening	Oxford
	"	Brixton

Further meetings will also be held in London—details will be posted locally.

## Fascists Attack

### ISC March

The violence in the North of Ireland flowed over onto the streets of Glasgow on Saturday 16th October, when a mob of fascists led by Pastor Jack Glass, the local Paisleyite leader, attacked a 250-strong demonstration called by the Irish Solidarity Campaign to demand the withdrawal of British troops and the release of all internees.

As the demonstration, organised by the ISC, and supported by Clann na h'Eireann, the International Marxist Group, I.S., the Anti-Imperialist Solidarity Front, and the Spartacus League, formed up in Glasgow's Blythwood Square, the raising of the Irish flag proved to be the signal for the start of a series of attacks which continued for about an hour. In the incidents over 34 people were arrested, the bulk of them Paisleyites. The Glasgow police, although giving protection to the march, arrested a number of demonstrators, including 70-year-old Harry McShane, an associate of John MacLean and one of the last remaining leaders of Red Clydeside. McShane, who together with Seamus O'Taithail (former editor of the *United Irishman*) was due to address the rally, was released when the police realised who he was; but one member of IS who exclaimed "Good God" when he saw the arrest taking place was himself arrested.

Other demonstrators were arrested for calling out "Victory to the IRA" and police seized all anti-army recruitment posters carried by the demonstrators. Mark Steedman, an ISC supporter from Edinburgh, had his throat gashed by fascists using a meat cleaver. As we go to press, reports are now coming in that several of the ISC supporters arrested have been remanded in custody for eight days. Funds are urgently needed to conduct the defence. Send to: Bob Purdie, 97 Otago Street, Glasgow W2.

CHINA NEWS: Colour magazines airmailed direct. Yearly subscriptions (or pro-rata): weekly, "Peking Review" (£1). Monthly, "China Reconstructs" (50p), "China Pictorial" (75p). Also books, etc. Samples, catalogues. 4p stamp to: D.V., 16 Belmont Court, Holmleigh Road, London N.16.



# PLESSEY ARGYLE:

## "We've got to have solidarity"

*This interview with Eddie McLafferty, convenor, and Jack Gray, Chairman of the Shop Stewards Committee, at the Plessey Argyle works is an abridged version of an interview which originally appeared in the Glasgow local paper "The Word".*

*Press coverage of UCS has tended to overshadow the other great workers' struggle in the West of Scotland—the occupation of the Plessey Argyle works at Alexandria. Word reporters went to find out the facts—and very unsavoury facts they are. For Plessey's takeover and abandonment of the Argyle works within little more than a year has been one of the most blatant examples of capitalist confidence trickery in recent years.*

—How did Plessey come to take over here in the first place?

EMcL: It's been as we've quoted, they got £3m. to take over. They've denied this: they got money to take over Ferranti and Airmech, but they say it wasn't for the takeover of this factory. The Labour government was in when Plessey took over. They paid £650,000 for this plant, complete with all the stocks and everything; we feel they got quite enough for that. And they had work; they had all the manufacturing contract for the Mk24 torpedo through this takeover.

We feel Plessey took this place for two reasons: 1. to do away with a competitor in the torpedo field, and 2. to make a profit from selling the factory. They took over part of the factory in May 1970 and by January had taken over the whole plant. We cooperated with the management for some time. But from the time wasting and other things going on, it soon became clear to us in the union that they had no idea of carrying it on. For example, there was procedure agreement. We started negotiations; they took six months and the agreement was signed a week or two before the closure. We had a lot of arguments with the company: for instance they were bringing in machine buyers. We protested. They claimed they were going to modernise. But they were looking at stuff that wasn't obsolete. They wanted to sell the complete machinery, but they now say only five machines out. We haven't been letting metal out: they sold it to an American company. A man came round from it and gave us £5 for the fighting fund, and he told us we could levy every truck that went out, but he's not on.

—What are the aims of your occupation now?

EMcL: We've made it quite clear we believe they intend moving machinery out. We have information from Ilford, for example memos requesting information on whether machines can be got out to South Africa. We have full cooperation from Ilford: they're blacking all the stuff from here. We want a meeting of stewards from the whole Plessey combine to get the same throughout it.

—How come you've not done that sooner?

EMcL: It's taken time to organise. There was a coordinating committee but they fell through. Ilford is supposed to be organising it now, but if they don't we'll see about it.

JG: You see Plessey has 80,000 workers; it's been done through the rank and file, and it takes time to get addresses, etc. But we've had contact with Beeston in Nottingham.

—What's the most important thing right now?

JG: We've got to have solidarity. If the pledges from England come out, we can't lose. Ilford has blacked everything from this works. If we can get the general meeting, we'll back the company into a corner. Their ultimate intention is to move machinery to South Africa and Portugal. We've had AEU support. The District Organiser had a stoppage the other Thursday. We had support from Rootes, Babcox, Renfrew, and what's very encouraging, from the distilleries, UCS and Albion too. There were 7,000 on the demonstration: the biggest in this area since the '30s. This area has a left-wing past, you know. There were quite a few communists. This is the last big factory employing a pool of skilled engineers... there's no alternatives. There were 1,300 men employed here before Plessey took over. 700 have been laid off through Plessey. Our case is different from UCS, you know. We're no employees, we're trespassers. The Authorities are scared of coming in here, because under Scottish trespass laws we can't be caught unless

we do damage. And we let the factory security boys in to take care of security. One of the first things we got onto the District Council. They supported us. So did Dumbarton Council and MPs. That puts the police in a bit of a spot.

—How would the local police feel if they have to throw you out?

JG: They'd have to come over the fence. And they'll have to open the gate, they're not getting the key. We've taken a decision to have passive resistance, we'll all just lie out there and they'll have to carry us out. We think the police will come in. But we want it on our terms. If we're to be moved it's got to be—because we're stopping the factory being dismantled or stuff being moved out. Another thing is that this company always has somebody from the Ministry of Defence or high in the forces on the board. The last one was Sir John Harding. Now it's Sir Charles Elworthy, former Marshal of the RAF and on the Chief of Staff. He was responsible for going into N. Ireland. Mountbatten is supposed to be a big shareholder. And they're always doing stuff for S. Africa and Vietnam.

—What do you think of the press coverage you've had?

JG: Very poor nationally. An obvious attempt to play down this type of action.

EMcL: We're disappointed with the press. They've been playing it down. For instance, the Daily Record only 2-3 lines. There's something wrong, maybe it's a combined decision. The local press covered us, but wouldn't support. The Express covered us with a hostile editorial. The people who have given coverage are the Workers Press, Socialist Worker, The Red Mole, The Militant. But not The Morning Star, and we're pretty disappointed about that. A councillor here contacted them and told them we would talk to them, but they haven't been.

—What political lessons have you learnt from the occupation?

EMcL: All the socialist press have been asking this question. The left-wing movement felt we were politically motivated. But if they talk to the lads, they find not. The only political motive is a feeling that this government has to go. Whether it's over the Common Market or unemployment or the Industrial Relations Bill, it must be brought down. Its policies are totally against the working class.

But the majority of the men don't want politics. Just look at that Union Jack out there. Someone brought in a red flag and about 50 said they'd walk out if we put that up. It's their upbringing, through the Express, the Record, etc. that men get frightened off communism and nationalisation and things like that—of the words, I mean.

They're doing what the socialists say, but they don't want to be politically involved.

—How's morale?

JG: Pretty good. We think we've knocked it off. What's coming over is that there's no place else to go. They're enjoying themselves meeting their mates, etc. It's better than walking the streets.

EMcL: The company's idea is to wait us out, but we're satisfied with the numbers, 100-120 in every day. Now we're also going down to the Labour Exchange every day to canvass others. A lot say they'll come up. The management think they'll sicken us, but they won't. We could get more support if we let everybody in, but we're confining it to ex-workers.

The police have said to us, "Look, you want publicity. How about letting us come up and carry out?" But we say come and get us. We know the factory, we've got our plans. And local cops don't fancy the job. All the factories say they'll come out if we're evicted.

—What are your plans if you're thrown out?

EMcL: If we're thrown out we'll carry on the fight picketing outside the gate to stop lorries, etc. In that case we would accept outside support. We could get 7,000 outside the gate.

JG: We'll make them fight every inch from here to Dumbarton.

—What about the viability position?

EMcL: The company says the factory's not viable. This has been a complete confidence trick by the company. They've conned the press, government, local government and the TU's. They all put themselves out to get a new employer here. We feel the company never tried to make it viable. If they had and put their back in, they could have. Originally they claimed they could employ figures like 2,000 after 2 years, etc. This is precisely what Alexandria needs. But the management ran the factory like a crowd of Boy Scouts. There was no procedure or nothing.

—What promises did the company make?

EMcL: 1,000 employed in one year, in two years 2,000, expanding to 5,000 people. The company say the efficiency has been 25%. But for instance when you got a job you weren't getting the drawings, the tools, etc. And if you hit a snag, your superior would say just "Carry on, I'll be back." There was no organisation. They enticed toolmakers from other factories, using the trade unions, enticing them with promises of security for life. There were 60 toolmakers here, but no tooling programme. So there was no work for them.

—What about connections in UCS?

JG: Some factories round here have offered to give half the UCS money, but we said, no, keep UCS the focal point. We can get it from them if we need it.

Our decision to occupy wasn't a result of UCS: our closure was announced first. The idea was born around July. We thought that even a handful of men, 30-40, could take the gates and hold them. On September 3rd we asked all the men to support a takeover of the gates: they had all just received their ex gratia payments. We allowed all those who didn't want to, to leave. In fact everybody agreed to take part in the takeover of the gate, removing the management and the police and locking the gate, and then some left one by one. Then the following day many came back in. Especially men you wouldn't expect, older men or those who opposed the decision originally. We have

150-200 regulars now. It's through frustration and anger that the lads have taken this decision. What have we to lose? Just walking the streets. We feel it's time for all workers throughout Britain to take this action. We must show this Government we're not happy.

—Can occupation be generalised in this way?

JG: We've used the strike weapon for some time. Employers are learning how to handle it. Occupations and work-ins might well be more effective.

—What about labour relations?

EMcL: I bent over backwards with them. I felt they were trying to make us go on strike. We realised they wanted us all out on strike so they could say industrial relations were too bad to keep the factory running. They were constantly pushing cases to the brink. But we never took the bait.

—Anything else?

JG: All these closures, UCS, Plessey, Dundee, are making Scotland ready for revolution. They say they won't support lame ducks, but they're pouring money into Harland and Wolff's in Belfast just because of the political situation there. People won't go on taking it for ever.

EMcL: We had the tools, the personnel and the facilities to make the MK24 missile. We put the point to the government, to the minister for defence procurement, and he said it "would be improper" to tell Plessey what to do. The government are able to do things to keep this factory open.

We want them to do them.

**Bi-monthly theoretical journal of the International Marxist Group.**

**INTERNATIONAL is a 64-page journal which analyses in detail recent developments in Britain and other parts of the world. In Britain it represents the views of the Fourth International as well as its British section.**

**Latest INTERNATIONAL includes:**  
2 documents from Bolivia; The Dollar Crisis; The British Economy; Republicanism in Ireland.

*Subs: £1 per annum; £2 airmail to Africa, Asia, Latin America, North America.*

Name .....

Address .....

Occupation .....

*Send to INTERNATIONAL Subscriptions, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1. Single copy 15p + postage.*

George Wilkie





# KILL THE LUMP

# KILL THE



Gerry Kelly speaking to workers working the Lump at the ATV Centre.

Workers in the building industry have long suffered from low wages and appalling working conditions which would not be tolerated in most other industries. Every winter large numbers of building workers have traditionally been laid off as a matter of course, and this has been accepted as just a bitter fact of life. Safety provisions in the industry are criminally low—40% of fatal industrial accidents occur in the building trade.

It is especially surprising that this should be allowed to happen when it is remembered that the building industry enjoyed consistently enormous profits during the post-war economic boom up to the late '60s. These conditions have been caused by the uneven and often total lack of unionisation in the industry, but in order to understand this we have to look at the structure of the industry which enables the boss to aggravate and capitalise on the fragmentation of the workers.

Building labour is naturally fragmented by the peculiar structure of the industry. Sites are too small to begin with, employing a relatively small number of workers during the period of construction. That is to say that different crafts are employed at different stages of production. Lastly, the different workers on a particular site are employed by different sub-contractors. Thus the labour force is divided by time and place of work and by separate employers. This situation makes the problems of organisation—particularly on non-union sites—very much more difficult. The bosses have not failed to take advantage of these difficulties, and have successfully introduced another of their own, which we will come to later, THE LUMP.

There have been some moves made over the last few years towards overcoming these divisions with the amalgamation of several existing unions culminating in July of this year. This new union, as yet unnamed, is presently making significant inroads in areas where union tradition is weak. It has just succeeded in winning the first closed shop in the Birmingham area at the Wimpey site in Birmingham New Town and Stevenage is now a closed shop throughout the town.

But the strengthening of the organised building workers and the successes that the new union has achieved serves to cover up the right-wing nature of the ASW leadership and that, in its attempt to reorganise the building workers, they are also attempting to oust the militants in various ways. This is one reason why they call for a closed shop as opposed to 100% union membership because any militant who is disciplined and thrown out of the union will also be thrown off the sites.

In order to understand the role of the ASW leadership, it is necessary to look into the background of the building workers organisations over the past few years:

In 1965, the labour force in the industry was 1,700,000 with a turnover of £3,851 million; by 1970, the labour force, which had been declining

steadily, was reduced to 1,251,000 while the turnover had increased to £4,971 million. The actual labour force which is organised amounts to only 400,000—one-third of the total. (Even this figure is deceptive, since local trade union officials receive money related to the number of members which they have on their books, regardless of the fact if members are in or out of benefit; for example, the AUBTW, before it amalgamated with the ASW in July of this year claimed to have 60,000 membership, but a conservative estimate would be nearer 40,000). As well as the organised labour force being relatively small, the whole history of the building trade has been one of fragmentation and competition for members between the main unions in the industry, namely the ASW and T&GWU.

The ASW has traditionally been the biggest union in the trade. Following on the TUC's call for unions to streamline their structure, the ASW began discussions with other unions. The first union which agreed to amalgamate was the NUPCM in 1964. Then talks began with the ASPD, the AUBTW and NAPO. The ASW had always recruited craftsmen; the AUBTW, bricklayers and T&GWU (together with the GMWU which had a few members) labourers. T&GWU wanted at this time to increase its influence and this meant in effect that it was necessary to cater for craftsmen as well. T&GWU offered NAPO a very fair deal and the two amalgamated. In 1969 the ASPD executive council were drafted onto the Executive Council of the ASW, which meant in effect that the two unions had amalgamated. For the ASPD, this was a very astute move. They were extremely short of money (their funds and assets were less than £6 per member and anything less than £20 per member indicates a very weak union). One of the main reasons for this financial situation was the fact that the ASPD had very bureaucratic machinery and therefore had enormous administrative costs. The ASW was financially in a strong position. It was probably this factor which helped persuade AUBTW and NUPCM to also amalgamate with the ASW and the new union finally emerged in July of this year. Just in passing, it is worthwhile mentioning that the two unions mainly concerned with woodcutting, the ASWCM and NUFTO, shied away from these negotiations, as they are wealthy unions and all the unions that had amalgamated with the ASW were extremely weak financially. The new amalgamated union, despite the fairly strong position of the ASW, is now financially in real trouble. Last year it had a deficit of £160,000. One reason for this is the number of fulltime officials it has and the wages they receive. There are nearly 200 fulltime officials, and the annual salary for them alone (not to mention the amount paid out for administrative staff, etc.) amounts to £¾million. Each fulltime official receives 200% of the highest nationally agreed rate in the industry which they cater for. Although only a small section of the industry, this is the exhibition industry which receives 80p an hour. So, not including expenses, perks, etc. a fulltime official receives over £3,000 a year. The problem in trying to reduce the number of fulltime officials is that any cut

would give the impression that the union had no intention of increasing in size, and it wants at all costs not to give this impression. If the union could double its membership, its financial problem would be solved, but the rank and file is extremely demoralised about the extreme right-wing leadership of the ASW.

The fight is on now for the ASW to attempt to take over completely the organised workers in the trade. At the National Federation of Construction Unions conference in June, where the ASW had 75% of the organised vote, it put a resolution to terminate the NFCU. As the NFCU had until then negotiated with the employers for the whole trade, this in effect resulted in the ASW now being the only visible negotiating body. This will make it extremely difficult for the T&GWU to operate in the building trade.

But the rightwing leadership of the ASW is not without opposition. April 1970 saw the formation of the Building Workers Charter, which goes some way in attempting to oppose the ASW leadership, albeit with the Communist Party the main force behind the Charter. The demands of the Charter can be divided into two categories: those which have the aim of improving the general conditions of building workers, and those which have the purpose of fighting the rightwing leadership of the ASW. In the first section the demands are quite straightforward and need no clarification:

- £1 an hour for a 35-hour week;
- 3 weeks holiday with full pay and the introduction of New Year's Day and May Day as paid holidays;
- A fully comprehensive pension scheme;
- Decasualisation of the building industry, including the registration of all building trade operatives;
- Adequate safety and welfare regulations;
- Establishing a 100% trade union membership;
- Total opposition to the lump;
- Full protection of shop stewards;
- Full nationalisation of the building industry (this latter demand is of course meaningless in its present form—one only has to look at the nationalised industries that we have today—this demand must be linked to workers' control of the industry).

The other demands are:

- Democratise the trade unions by making delegate conferences policy-making bodies;
- All trade union officials to submit themselves for election every three years and branch officials every year; the disbanding of selection bodies;
- The establishing of one fully democratic union for the building industry.

It is these demands which really take a swipe at the ASW. At present in the ASW, delegate conferences are a policy-making body and decisions taken there have to go to the Joint Committee, consisting of the Executive Council and the General Council, which will implement the decisions if they so wish. At present, regional secretaries are appointed by the bureaucracy for life (that is, until 65). Anyone wishing to stand in elections for the position of an official must first satisfy a selection committee as to his abilities and qualifications and this committee has absolute discretion in deciding who goes forward for election by the membership! In the

## The Bryants Strike: A

The following interview with Gerry Kelly, shop steward from Bryants (Woodgate Valley) speaking in his personal capacity, took place immediately after the demonstration in Birmingham on Tuesday 5th October, when 2,000 workers marched through Birmingham the first stage of a campaign to kill the lump.

The next day, Bryants (Woodgate Valley) came out in support of a claim for 20p an hour (non-productive) increase in their basic rate. The claim was dismissed by Bryants who refused even to negotiate and dismissed the men immediately they went on strike. That evening a joint shop stewards meeting of the site took the decision to recommend to the men that rather than moderate their demands they increase them to encompass the eight demands of the demonstration (see in interview below) so widening the base of the struggle. This was unanimously accepted by the workers at a meeting on Thursday.

The significance of this development is to make the present Bryants strike a test battle for the whole of Birmingham and probably the whole of the Midlands building industry. The employers certainly will not give in easily as demand would probably add 150% to their bill. However, because the dispute has such enormous significance for the rest of the building trade, the Woodgate Valley site can rely on really solid support from the rest of the industry. Immediately they took the decision the Mowlems workers on the same site elected to put a 50p levy per man per week while the men are on strike. The canteen is closed to lump labour and the Mowlem workers have barricaded their site against lorries using it as a backdoor to the Woodgate Valley site. The trade union branch has made the strike official and in a statement by building trade shop stewards in Birmingham, signed by federated steward and chairman Peter Carter and union official Bill Edwards, it condemns Bryants as being "among the worst offenders in employment lump labour". At the time of writing other are considering giving the same support as Mowlems and all the signs are that it will be forthcoming.

—Could you explain how exactly the "lump" operates?

The lump is labour only sub-contracting. A man goes onto the site and says: "I've got ten men, you give a price for the job" and he pays these men say £4 a day. Men on the lump have no guaranteed week, no overtime rate, they are not insured against accidents, receive no holiday pay, no sickness or unemployment benefit and most important of all, are not insured against the sack—because they are employed on a to-day basis, they can be sacked at any time of the day or week "according to the whim of the employer". Incidentally, the "lump" got its name because the basis for payment is a lump sum.

—Why are you against the "lump"?

Because it is cheap labour: men on the lump work





# E LUMP KILL THE LUMP

## Battle For The Midlands.

twice as hard for very little extra money. A man being paid £4 a day for a 5-day week would be getting £20 a week. Take away tax and insurance—that would leave about £15 and for that £15 he would work at least 60 hours. But the main problem with the lump is it is a block to trade union organisation on sites. It undermines trade union organisation and has been used to break strike. A classic example of this is the Minters dispute in South London where the men walked out over two months ago over victimisation of labourers by the employers. Minters have now brought in lump labour in an attempt to break the picket.

### —Why do workers go on the lump?

They can avoid paying tax and insurance stamps but this is not a gain for them but a gain for the employers because it is the employers who have to pay most towards the stamps and SET. Also if they were organised in trade unions they would get far more wages and would be in a position where they could fight to improve those wages.

### —How do you organise on a building site?

On my site, we have held three or four canteen meetings in which we've put forward the policies of the union and stressed the need for building workers to unite. At one of these meetings a call was put forward for a "Kill the Lump" demonstration and this was carried unanimously. On Bryants job at Woodgate Valley, the largest council site in Birmingham, the management made a move to smash the trade union organisation. The management representative entered the canteen at the end of the tea-break and informed the site committee that they were sacked. All 200 men downed tools, the management then sacked all the men and brought in the police to remove the site committee members from the site. But they refused to go and a strike meeting was held in the canteen. Resulting from this meeting was a demand for complete reinstatement of all the men with no loss of pay for the time they stopped work. Within two hours the management capitulated and the workers won hands down.

### —After the demonstration, what next in Birmingham?

To fight lay-offs in the winter. Although we've had the demonstration, it doesn't mean we've killed the lump—only convinced a lot of building workers of the need to do so. The chairman of the shop stewards committee has said that if and when the first employer lays men off because of inclement weather, we will assemble 1,000 men and march them down to his office. I don't think this will be sufficient to force the employer to reinstate those men he has laid off. I think we should fight to make "five days work or five days pay" the main demand to be taken up by the union, and it will be up to the shop stewards committee to ensure that this demand is fought for all the way by every member of the union. We must forward now to fight for:

- £1 an hour
- 35-hour week
- No lay-offs in the winter
- Full pension scheme
- A month's holiday with full pay
- Full pay during sickness and injury
- A closed shop in Birmingham

With regard to the last demand, we intend to disregard the Industrial Relations Act in order to achieve a closed shop.

Interviewed by Birmingham Moles

first instance, successful candidates are elected for five years. If the official is successful a second time, he is elected for life. Bearing these facts in mind, the Building Workers Charter is quite clearly an attack on the completely undemocratic practices of the rightwing ASW leadership.

And it is necessary that effective opposition does develop against the ASW leadership. Conditions in the trade are so bad that a union as bankrupt (not just financially but also politically) as the ASW is completely powerless to fight for the very basic demands that are necessary.

The lump is just one example of what building workers are up against. When a local authority (say) decides to build, it can either undertake to do the job itself, by direct labour, or as the more usual situation, give the job to a private contractor. The contractor in turn will sometimes let the job out to a smaller firm of sub-contractors, who will manage the labour side. They are paid by the main contractors, take their cut and then let the job out again to the workers who become the sub-sub-contractors on a "labour only" basis. The workers thus employed work for a set price for each individual job. They are regarded by the contractor and sub-contractor as self-employed, who therefore take no interest or responsibility in his health or welfare. As well as the fact that the individual worker on the lump has no security, this labour constitutes in effect scab labour and has often been brought in to defeat strikes, etc.

But the lump is just one aspect of the conditions that the building workers must and are beginning to fight against. The individual bonus scheme is another whereby a worker is not only pushed to the limit physically, but creates a situation where the workers are competing against one another and are thus divided. A worker is given a job to do in, say, 40 hours. If he completes this job in 20 hours, he will be paid at, say, 50p an hour, that is £10. It is then left to the management how much he will be paid per hour for the time that he has saved the Company. This is usually worked out at 50%, that is 25p an hour. So for the 20 hours he has worked, he will receive £15. If he finishes the job in 40 hours (the original time agreed), the worker not only gets no bonus, but he also probably gets the sack for not doing the job in a shorter time, thereby saving the firm's time. This system of bonus payment generally constitutes one-third of the basic wage. But because it is up to the employers to decide how much time should be allocated to each job, full advantage is taken by the management by cutting the hours allotted to each job. So if the hours for a job are cut from 40 to 30, the worker must finish the job in 15 hours to receive the same bonus of £5. But that only gives him a payment of £12.50 for the job.

It is clear that it is necessary to fight these, and other forms of blatant exploitation that exist on the building sites. The workers are divided by these means, and it is important now to organise to smash the lump and to unite all workers in the trade. But the fight against the employers cannot begin to succeed while the ASW has its present leadership. An example of



Workers demonstrating against the Lump in Birmingham

the class-collaboration of the ASW occurred at the St. Thomas's Hospital site in London. Negotiations between Laings, the main contractors, and the ASW had established in principle some kind of incentive scheme. The management refused to negotiate and so the men began a work-to-rule. The labour force was sacked and the management brought in Whelan & Grant, a lump firm. The dispute was made official by the ASW, but after three weeks the Executive called off the strike, thus allowing Whelan & Grant to operate on the site. It accepted Laing's assurances that Whelan & Grant was a member of the National Federation of Building Trade Employers (that is not labour only), although it came to light at that time that they were not in fact members. The terms of the sell-out were that Whelan and Grant should operate the National Working Rule Agreement and that they should at some later stage operate some kind of bonus scheme.

This kind of activity on the part of the present ASW leadership clearly shows that its interests do not lie with the rank and file building worker. The recent demonstration in Birmingham showed that some workers were aware of the true role of the ASW leadership. The Member of Parliament from Houghton-le-Spring was received very lukewarmly and even laughed at by some workers when he suggested that the only way to kill the lump was through legislation. The speaker from UCS, in contrast, was given a good reception and the workers clearly identified their struggle with that of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders. But it was Pete Carter, speaking on behalf of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, who made the best intervention and who obviously had the sympathy of most of the men on the site. He saw an integral part of the struggle in the building trade in the fight against redundancies and layoffs. Seven sites stopped in all and building workers from all over the country came on the demonstration. Students from both Aston and Birmingham universities pledged their solidarity in a concrete way by proposing to stop lump labour from working on the campuses, as was the situation at present. The demonstration itself was very militant, and the sight of 2,000 building workers chanting "Kill the Lump" marching through the streets of Birmingham must have been an unnerving one for the few workers who continued to work. But it was after the "official" demonstration that the real indication came of the workers' determination to get rid of the lump, regardless of what their leadership said or did. 300 workers took over the main roads in the centre of the City and marched to the ATV Centre site, which is riddled with lump labour. They demonstrated effectively both to Bryants, the main contractors, and the men working there, that they were not going to tolerate such a situation. It was noticeable that the ASW bureaucrats were absent from this demonstration.

What remains to be seen now, both in Birmingham and elsewhere, is how soon the building workers see the need of building a strong union while at the same time realising that this can only be achieved within a democratised trade union. Many more sell-outs on the part of the ASW, without active

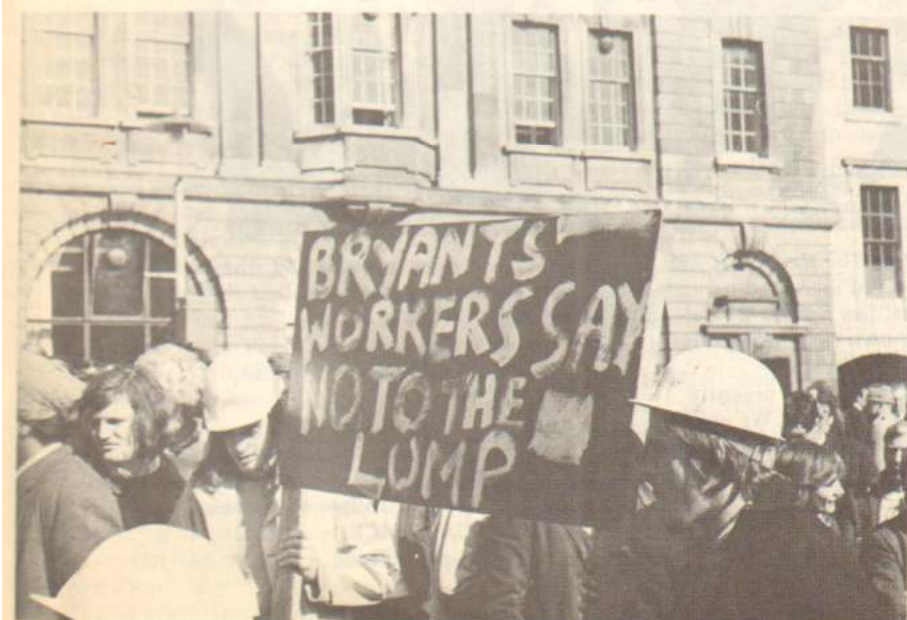
opposition from the membership, will only serve to demoralise the men. The Building Charter is perhaps a step in the right direction, but one should be clear about the role of the Communist Party in this Charter. It is interesting to note that in Birmingham, while a number of excellent rank and file militants have an allegiance to the CP, so also do a number of leading bureaucrats. And this ambiguous situation no doubt exists elsewhere. What is needed now is a clearly worked-out strategy to fight the ASW leadership, this to be seen as part of the fight against the lump, the appalling conditions, for better wages, etc. And in practice, in the day-to-day struggles that are likely to occur over the next period, the shop stewards committees must themselves take the initiative in democratising the union at site level.

T. van Gelderen  
P. Hampton  
J. Vickers

## GLOSSARY

- ABT: Association of Building Technicians
- ASPD: Amalgamated Society of Painters and Decorators
- ASW: Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers
- ASWCM: Amalgamated Society of Woodcutting Machinists
- AUBTW: Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers
- FTATU: Furniture Timber and Allied Trade Unions\*
- GMWU: General and Municipal Workers Union
- NAPO: National Association of Plaster Operatives
- NFBTE: National Federation of Building Trade Employers
- NFCU: National Federation of Construction Unions
- NJCBI: National Joint Council for the Building Industry†
- NUFTO: National Union of Furniture Trade Operatives
- NUPCM: National Union of Packing Case Makers
- T&GWU: Transport and General Workers Union
- TUC: Trades Union Congress
- SET: Selective Employment Tax

\*Formed by amalgamation of NUFTO and ASWCM, 1971  
†Made up of NFCU and NFBTE





## SOME MONOPOLIES EMPLOY AS MANY WORKERS AS WHOLE COUNTRIES

# GENERAL MOTORS:

## Portrait of a monopoly.



General Motors is the 18th largest country in the world in terms of economic power. Its gross national product (GNP) is larger than that of Argentina, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark or Venezuela.

In terms of gross receipts, GM is the fifth largest government in the world, larger than West Germany, Japan, or Canada.

GM's 794,000 employees are equivalent to just one-tenth of 1% of China's population, but GM's income equals a full third of China's GNP.

GM, directly and indirectly, accounts for nearly one out of 12 jobs in the United States through control of the auto industry and many of the industries which rely on the automobile for their existence.

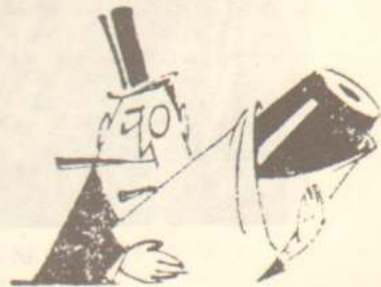
Yet this awesome power is in the hands of a small core of men (no women are on the Board or in top management) unrestrained by democratic control, elected internally by a small minority of GM stockholders. (11% of GM's stockholders control more than 50% of GM stock.)

The Board of Directors of General Motors is a small clique which controls \$27 billion (1969) worth of the world's GNP through sales of autos, consumer durables, and munitions. These same men are also directors of 14 different financial institutions (including Chase Manhattan, Morgan Guaranty, and the Mellon National Bank, as well as the Royal Bank of Canada), 77 different corporate bodies (including US Steel, Armco Steel, ALCOA, Bendix, AT&T, Proctor & Gamble, and Polaroid) and seven insurance companies (including John Hancock and Metropolitan Life).

GM is in private hands, uncontrolled by the public. It has been able to work its way around

### Top Ten International Manufacturing Concerns

	1969 Sales (million dollars)
General Motors (U.S.)	24,295
Ford (U.S.)	14,755
General Electric (U.S.)	8,448
International Business Machines (U.S.)	7,197
Chrysler (U.S.)	7,052
Unilever (Anglo-Dutch)	6,030
International Telephone and Telegraph (U.S.)	5,474
Philips (Dutch)	3,597
Volkswagen (West German)	3,536
Imperial Chemical Industries (British)	3,257



the anti-trust division, the Federal Trade Commission, and Securities and Exchange Commission. GM has been acquitted in only three of 17 anti-trust cases in the last 40 years. This has had no effect on GM—they control over 50% of auto industry sales.

### PROFIT MORE THAN DOUBLE NATIONAL AVERAGE

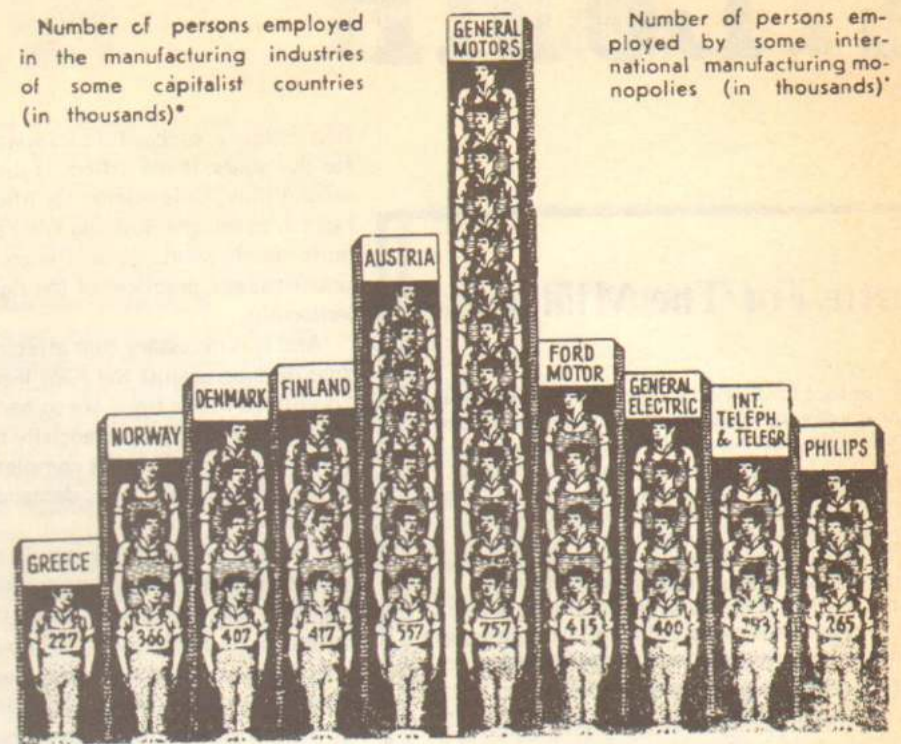
In controlling the prices of all automobiles in the US, GM consistently makes a profit more than double the national average.

In 1965, GM's prices were so high that it could have cut the price of each automobile it sold by \$428 and still after taxes make profits equal to the average profit rate in the whole economy.

GM spends nearly \$500 million (25% of the price of a new car) in style changes, and then spends a quarter of a billion dollars a year more (or \$50 per car) to convince the consumer that the newer model is better and worth the extra cost. In 1969 GM spent only \$12 million on pollution research and control.

GM's top executives see a continual expansion of car production in the '70s. Instead of contributing to a rational and balanced transportation system in the United States, GM insists on the dominance of the privately owned automobile, here and abroad.

Number of persons employed in the manufacturing industries of some capitalist countries (in thousands)\*



NEW TIMES \*

\* Data for 1966

GM ignores the results: the pollution of our urban spaces by cars themselves. Says GM Chairman Roche: "America's love affair with the automobile isn't over. Instead, it has matured into a marriage."

As early as 1963 GM had excess profits so great that it had accumulated \$2.3 billion dollars in surplus liquid assets, an amount larger than the assessed property valuation of 18 of the 50 states. The Wall Street Journal surmised that GM was "saving up to buy the federal government". With its immense economic and political power, it really does not need to.

Nixon's new economic policy promises to raise GM's profits even more. With federal excise tax on new cars eliminated and a new 10% import tax on foreign cars (as well as other goods) there will be a greater demand for American-made cars. GM's production will increase and profits will go up. These new profits will stay in the pockets of GM's elite because the wage-price freeze prevents the unions from bargaining for increased wages.

What does GM do with its great corporate power?

### MILITARISM AND RACIALISM

As a bastion of the military-industrial complex, GM produces M-16 rifles, launches for the anti-personnel 2.75 rocket, 105mm, 81mm,

20mm projectiles and bomb parts, self-propelled howitzers, parts for military vehicles, engines for helicopters (like the OH-58 performing the main observation role in Asia's jungle war) and for aircraft (like the A-7—one of the most effective planes performing the close air support role in S. E. Asia) and many other weapons for use in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and throughout the world.

GM's racial policy at home and abroad matches their record of militarism. Out of the 12,500 dealerships, GM has allowed only 12 to be owned by blacks. There are no blacks or women in top management positions. In apartheid South Africa, GM's employment policy is matched only by that government. The starting rate for Africans or Coloureds at the GM engine plant is 52¢ an hour or \$83 a month—\$1 below the South African Government's poverty datum line for an African family of five.

Perhaps the clearest expression of GM's attitude toward non-whites is R. J. Ironsides' (plant manager, GM South Africa) remark: "I wouldn't say these people don't have any reasoning power, but what they do have is very limited."

For further information contact: The Brain Mistrust, 507 Church Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan.  
LNS

# defend rouge!



### ROUGE TRIAL STARTS

The trial of *Rouge*, weekly paper of the Ligue Communiste, French section of the Fourth International, is now due to open on Tuesday 19th October. The editor, Charles Michaloux, is indicted on five counts for "injuries and defamation of the police and public administration"; the five articles concerned are all accounts of police brutality towards demonstrators or innocent bystanders, of police collusion with the fascist thugs of Ordre Nouveau, of false evidence given by police, etc.

As we pointed out in an earlier article (*Red Mole* 28), the *Rouge* trial is likely to develop

into a major political issue in France, for it represents a calculated attempt to silence the paper of the largest and most important revolutionary Marxist group in France. It is important that English militants do not regard the trial as "something which couldn't happen here"—the Industrial Relations Bill, the Oz trial, and the banning of the Little Red Schoolbook show only too clearly that the ruling class is quite prepared to withdraw such "freedoms" if the deteriorating political climate so demands. Already one of our own comrades in Colchester has been found guilty of "behaviour likely to cause a breach of the

peace" simply for selling *The Red Mole*, and many others have reported increased harassment by the police in the last few weeks. By defending *Rouge*, we defend our own right to continue publishing revolutionary literature.

Both publicity and money are urgently needed for the defence of *Rouge*. We urge all revolutionaries, as individuals or organisations, to send telegrams in support of *Rouge* to the following address:

Monsieur le President de la 17ieme Chambre Correctionnelle,  
PALAIS DE JUSTICE,  
75-Paris-1ier. FRANCE.

Please also send a copy of your message to the Ligue Communiste in order that they may publish it:

Henri Weber,  
95 rue du faubourg St. Martin,  
PARIS 10e,  
France.

Those comrades who are also willing to give money to help pay for the costs of the trial should contact the following address:

ROUGE DEFENCE,  
182 Pentonville Road,  
London N.1.



# PARAGUAY



The history of the Paraguayan people has been a constant struggle against foreign imperialism. The Comuneros Revolution (1721-35) marked the very first stirrings in the whole continent against the Spaniards by the national bourgeoisie. Following its independence in 1811, Dr. Francia was forced to isolate Paraguay completely for thirty years in the face of aggression from Buenos Aires, with plans to turn Paraguay into a province of Argentina. During the Presidency of Carlos Antonio Lopez (1844-62), Yankee warships were sent 1,000 miles up the River Paraguay and threatened to bombard Asuncion if indemnity was not granted to a US company thrown out of Paraguay. Under Carlos Antonio Lopez, Paraguay pursued an independent development policy. A state control on the export of primary products ensured the ability to hire British technical assistance without the need to launch foreign loans and the introduction of foreign capital. The first rail and telegraph systems on the continent were built. Paraguay had its own iron foundry and shipbuilding yards.

This independent policy posed the only real obstacle to the expansion of British imperialism on the continent. The famous Treaty of the Triple Alliance was signed in 1865 in London and in English by Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, pledging them to the complete destruction of Paraguay with the backing of British finance. By 1870 Paraguay lay desolate. The male population was reduced to 28,000 from 200,000. Territory was ceded to Brazil and Argentina and the huge state farms were sold off to British capitalists at ridiculously low prices. Laissez-faire governments, the puppets of British and Argentinian interests, remained in power for the next seventy years.

In 1932 Paraguay was again at war over disputed oil lands of the Chaco. Standard Oil which backed Bolivia fought Royal Dutch Shell which backed Paraguay. Although Paraguay won the war and annexed the oil lands at the foothills of the Andes, they were returned to Bolivia and Standard Oil by Paraguay's corrupt negotiators at the US-engineered Peace Conference. Thirty thousand Paraguayans and twice as many Bolivians had lost their lives in the interests of foreign imperialism.

Since 1954 Stroessner has ruled Paraguay with an iron fist. A hundred and fifty long-term political prisoners rot in the police stations of Asuncion. None of them have ever been tried, and three of them—Antonio Maidana, Julio Rojas and Alfredo Alcorta, all members of the Central Committee of the Paraguayan Communist Party—have been in a cell measuring 4 x 4 metres for thirteen years. With a population of 2,400,000 inside the country, Paraguay also has another 800,000 living in exile. Rural liberation movements are suppressed by a half-crazy General called Patricio Colman who shows visitors jars containing the genitals of captured guerrillas which he preserves in formalin. Colman has the reputation of never taking prisoners alive and is the most feared man in Paraguay. In 1960-61 he ordered captured guerrillas to be thrown out of aeroplanes near Villarrica, to be hung by the throat on meat-hooks in Tava-i and to be drowned in the River and left to float downstream into Argentinian territory. Arbitrary arrest and torture is a daily occurrence in Paraguay. The system of internal repression is controlled by Dr. Antonio Campos Alum, a US-trained police officer who operates from the "Departamento Tecnico" of the Ministry of the Interior in the city centre. The most common torture used in Paraguay is called "la pileta" and consists of repeated submersion in water filled with

excrement and vomit.

Paraguay is strategically situated in relation to the US imperialist policy of containment of the struggle for Latin American liberation. Santiago, Buenos Aires, La Paz, Rio de Janeiro and Montevideo are all almost equidistant from Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay. In April 1970 a huge US-financed 11,000 foot runway was completed at "President Stroessner" Airport near Asuncion. On 13th May this year a Lockheed Galaxy C5 troop-carrier, the largest plane in the world, touched down there after a 10½ hour direct demonstration flight from Altis airbase in Oklahoma. Meanwhile, far away in the Paraguayan Chaco another giant runway is being built under US supervision. Over 1000 military personnel from Paraguay have been trained in US and Canal Zone military schools. Stroessner has signed the "Selden Resolution" which authorises the unilateral military intervention of US troops on Paraguayan soil in the event of US interests being endangered "in the general conflict between the Free World and Communism". US Air Force teams have finished mapping the whole country in minute detail.

Stroessner is the US's best friend in South America. He has publicly offered to send Paraguayan troops to Vietnam and was the first person to send support troops for the US invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1964. He considers the US Ambassador to be "another member of my cabinet". However there has recently taken place the first disagreement with the US since Stroessner came to power.

For ever since Stroessner came to power, Paraguay has become a world centre for contraband trade. The business is in the hands of top Army generals like Andres Rodriguez, who use planes originally donated by the US government to the Paraguayan Airforce to fly whisky and cigarettes over the border to Brazil and Argentina. In 1968 Paraguay replaced Hong Kong and Kuwait as the largest market for the export of US cigarettes. In the past few years, however, a similar trade has grown up in heroin smuggling—this time coming from France with the USA as the final destination. In October of last year five Paraguayans were arrested in Miami airport with 42 kilos of heroin valued at over 10 million dollars—the second largest drugs haul in US history at the time. Although placed in a Federal jail, within two months two of the five were back in Paraguay on a farm belonging to General Patricio Colman. Following pressure on Stroessner from the FBI, on 23rd March 1971 Auguste Ricord, the Mafia's top agent in Paraguay and a Frenchman, was arrested. A request for extradition by the US has so far been refused by Stroessner who fears that Ricord will reveal the complicity of the ruling military clique in the drugs smuggling. In retaliation the US cut Paraguay's sugar quota. For the first time since 1954 anti-American feeling was publicly expressed with the mild approval of the dictator.

The standard of living of the mass of the population is among the lowest in South America. Even government publications admit that the income per head in the agricultural sector fell 81 dollars per capita in 1970. Medical attention remains virtually non-existent outside the capital. Even today 2.6% of all land-owners own 75% of the land surface. There is still no income tax in Paraguay. Unemployment and prostitution are rife.

The contradictions in Stroessner's Batistalike Paraguay are becoming more and more evident as opposition within the exploited majority grows. Grass-roots organisations called

"Ligas Agrarias" are sprouting up amongst the campesinos as food prices rise and the price they receive from traditional crops falls. The relations between the Church and Stroessner are at their worst ever following the prolonged torturing of a Uruguayan priest called Padre Monzon, who was accused by Stroessner of being a "Tupamaro" but was really a pawn in his constant harassment of the Church's support of the "Ligas Agrarias".

With Presidential elections due in 1973, Stroessner has already been proposed as a candidate for the Colorado Party which he has converted into a political tool for the ruling military clique. But elections remain a farce in a Paraguay ruled by Stroessner and US imperialism.

## Draft Resistance In Israel

The following document, written by Israeli draft resisters, was sent to use from Jerusalem with the request to give it all publicity and support possible. The Israeli Revolutionary Action Committee Abroad (ISRACA) produced the following translation and is organising a campaign in support of Reuven Lassman, who has been arrested.

Tel-Aviv, August 2nd 1971

The Minister of Defence, Mr. M. Dayan,  
Ministry of Defence,  
Hakiryah,  
Tel-Aviv.

Sir,

We are a group of young people on the eve of being drafted into the army. After prolonged deliberations we came to the conclusion that we cannot serve in this army.

Young people are dying in this country because of internal politics and not for noble values (as a recent research by Dr. Shlomo Aronson and Mr. D. Horowitz shows). An Israeli journalist who served during the last three Israeli wars stated: "For each soldier who dies in Suez, there is someone who becomes rich in Tel-Aviv."

We refuse to serve in an army of occupation. It has been demonstrated in history that occupation means

foreign rule; foreign rule begets resistance; resistance begets oppression; oppression begets terror and counter-terror. WE WERE NOT BORN FREE IN ORDER TO BECOME OPPRESSORS. Oppression is not a good reason to die for. The cynical attitude of this government towards the lives of young people strengthened our refusal to become candidates for death notices. We do not want to be commemorated in some literary memorial volume. We have no intent to hurt the government but we do not want the government to put us in a state wherein nothing can hurt us any more.

We are determined to refuse to take part in the oppression of another people. WE REFUSE TO INFLICT UPON ANOTHER PEOPLE WHAT HAS BEEN INFLICTED UPON OUR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS.

We are fully aware that all mass-media in Israel are under government control and we are only four people who refuse to take orders from a regime that means nothing to them.

We herewith enclose our drafting orders:

NAME	No. of identity card	Drafting date
Reuven Lassman	5173790	15. 8.1971
Dov Gal	6452580	15. 8.1971
Giyora Neumann	6494474	15.11.1971
Irith Ya'acobi (Miss)	5173715	31.11.1971

Copies: Israeli Chief of Staff; Chief of Manpower, Israeli Army; State Ombudsman; Mr. A. Zichroni, Barrister; UN representatives in Israel. Members of the Knesset; the drafting offices; Mr. H. Tsadok, chairman of Defence and Foreign Affairs Committee of the Knesset; Foreign and Israeli press.

Tremendous pressures were exerted on the four draft-resisters. The Israeli weekly "Ha'olam Hazeh", like the rest of the Israeli press, denounced them as cowards and traitors.

As a result of this pressure all four had to run away from their homes. Dov Gal broke down and agreed to be drafted on the condition that he will be allowed to plead insanity in the army. Reuven Lassman was arrested, secretly, on 5.9.71 and taken to the notorious military prison no. 6 near Atlit. After a trial and prison sentence he will be drafted by force and imprisoned by the army.

Anyone who feels strongly about these issues or wants further information should contact: ISRACA, 219 Putney Bridge Road, London S.W.15.

## Irish Solidarity Demo in Melbourne Australia





Dear Editor,

There are remarks in Bob Purdie's article which are not instantly clear. He says that the SLL "ignore the fact that British workers are not yet prepared to force the withdrawal of imperialism." But no organisation which purports to be Trotskyist can begin and end with present consciousness. Consciousness may be changed by objective processes and, wait for it, subjective initiatives. "Protestant workers as yet, far from being ready to unite with their Catholic brothers are being more and more hegemonised by Paisley & Co. For the Catholic workers to submit to the level of these workers is to ask them to surrender and go back to their old situation." Truly it would be absurd to expect Catholic workers to become Paisleyite in the interests of class solidarity.

"They [should] press ahead with the struggle, topple the Stormont regime, and make it impossible for imperialism to keep a grip on the Six Counties [then] the mass of the Twenty-Six County working class will come with them, despite the attempts of Lynch to smash opposition." In other words the Irish Catholics are to subjugate the Irish Protestants, and thus complete what might be the first stage in one of Stalin's scenarios for national independence. In the second stage the Irish Protestants and the Irish Catholics open the way to the Irish workers, who are to "culminate" the struggle by taking power into their own hands.

What the quality of your support for the Provisional IRA? If you merge with them too closely you ought to take care, for not all these Irish terrorists are illiterate ruffians. Some of them will read your paper and know what to expect of you. "Leaders with greater revolutionary understanding than the present IRA leadership will have to emerge," but some of the people who lead or back the IRA may have a very sound conception of what a revolutionary struggle may entail.

And, given this support, what is the quality of its heroism? ("Ireland is the acid test for British socialists.") Certainly the IRA are themselves heroic. Does one go to Belfast to join them? Or does one stay in England and try to bomb military targets? In the latter case Fleet Street will represent these as attacks on civilian objectives, especially when some of them actually are. And you yourself say that terrorism is no good where the masses are against it (as most of them are against it in the Six Counties). It may require more spunk to sell copies of the *Red Mole* which boost the Provisionals than to sell *Workers Press* which—in headline terms—merely denounces British imperialism; but to call this superior courage is to presuppose that your line is correct. If it is incorrect, your sellers are merely foolhardy.

To get back to fundamentals; it is true that a Labour government can behave just as imperialistically as a Tory government. What I would like you to prove is that it must do so under any conditions, especially the conditions the SLL have in mind when they call for a general strike. Bureaucracies do not adhere to principles but they do respond to pressures and it is possible if rare for the pressure from below to exceed the pressures from above. You say that one should "be against any British government having anything to do with Ireland, as a matter of principle." What on earth does this mean? Are the SLL "being for" some government having something to do with Ireland? Perhaps you mean that the only good thing a British government can do for Ireland is to get out of it, and that only the Irish can get them out. Or perhaps you mean that popular opposition in Britain will affect a Tory government exactly as it will affect a Labour government which might replace it, and that "as a matter of principle" one ought not to expect anything from capitalist governments. It then becomes even less clear what an English trade unionist can do to oppose British imperialism in Ireland, apart of course from being against it.

Yours fraternally,  
George Brennan

I welcome the opportunity, in replying to cde. Brennan, to clarify some of the points I tried to make in my previous article. Cde. Brennan's letter rests on some misunderstandings and some important political disagreements; the misunderstandings arise from his attempt to interpret my article from a standpoint which takes his political disagreements for granted, but I will clear two of them up before going on to discuss the political questions.

#### COURAGE?

Cde Brennan disputes that the greater "courage" involved in selling a paper which supports the IRA is proof of political superiority. I could not agree more. Nowhere in my article did I accuse the SLL of physical cowardice, or boast about the bully boys selling the

# Reform & Revolution

## The SLL and Ireland

*Mole.* The real issue is that the difference in coverage between the *Workers Press* and the *Red Mole* is part of the different political approach of the two papers, and the organisations who produce them. *The Red Mole* seeks to clarify the facts of the situation in Ireland, giving background material unobtainable from the bourgeois press, within the framework of a political analysis which seeks to combat the bourgeois propaganda offensive at its sharpest point; for this reason it combats the impressionism on the left about the "terror" of the Provos., and seeks to balance the picture by defending the legitimate attacks of the Provos and the Officials against the British Army. The *Workers Press* not only fails to give any real reportage in depth, but from a "left" standpoint supplements the bourgeois press by attacking the Provisionals; this can only add to the confusion which the bourgeois press seeks to sow.

#### DIFFERENTIATION

The point about being "against a British government having anything to do with Ireland" was put forward as a necessary strategy for Irish revolutionaries. This is quite clear from the text; cde Brennan has simply not read it properly, or more likely he has not grasped that I was making a differentiation between the tasks of Irish and British revolutionaries.

#### PERMANENT REVOLUTION

If we compare my proposals and the SLL's, the difference is clear. The SLL proposes a series of steps which are counterposed to the present struggle; I propose the extension of the present struggle and its intensification as a preliminary to its qualitative change into a conscious struggle for a united socialist Ireland. Of course the SLL could be right, and I could be wrong, but cde Brennan does not prove this simply by labelling my strategy the "first stage" in one of Stalin's scenarios for national independence.

Cde Brennan here reflects a common distortion of the theory of Permanent Revolution. Instead of seeing the integration of the national and working class struggles in an oppressed nation, with the workers' struggle growing out of the struggle against imperialism, he counterposes the working class to the national struggle. The Stalinist theory sees the two revolutions as separate, and insists on suppressing the proletarian content of the struggle until the national struggle has been won. By simply inverting the Stalinist formulation, cde Brennan, the SLL and a host of other facile "Marxists" arrive at the same end, i.e. impotence before the reality of the struggle. If seeing the process of Permanent Revolution as having a beginning, a middle and an end is a "stages" theory, then I plead guilty, but I insist on having Trotsky in the dock along with me.

#### CORRECT STRATEGY

My strategy is correct because it is based on an analysis of the processes at work within Ireland, it sees the most important contradiction in Irish politics as the unresolved national question. It saw the Civil Rights struggle as the way in which the national question would be brought back onto the stage of Irish politics, it sees the sharpening struggle against the British Army and the resistance to Stormont as the way in which the stability of the Northern Irish state is being challenged, and the smashing of this state as the way in which all of the contradictions within Irish society will be brought to crisis point. Thus the strategy for revolutionaries is to sharpen that struggle, and to combine it with the other strands of the struggle against capitalism, and imperialism in Ireland. This would mean that the struggle of the minority in the North against their repression would combine with the struggle of the Irish people as a whole for national reunification, and freedom from domination by British imperialism; this would combine with the struggle of the Irish working class for the expropriation of Irish and foreign capitalism; and the struggles of the poor farmers, the Gaelic-speaking communities, the youth, women, etc. The whole combined struggle constituting the Irish socialist revolution would be consummated by the winning of state power in all 32 Counties by the workers and their allies. This can be prevented by many factors; disparate consciousness amongst the different sections involved, causing an uneven development of the struggles; the physical defeat of one or more sections; or the diverting of one or more sections by political misleadership. This is why a correct revolutionary leadership is so necessary; but it will not be created outside the struggle outlined above, it can only win the leadership of the masses through involvement in the struggle.

#### UNREALISTIC

The SLL first of all misrepresents the struggle which is taking place ("neither terror nor civil disobedience"), and then puts forward a strategy which would mean the withdrawal of the masses from every aspect of the struggles in which they are now involved, and the substituting of a totally unrealistic strategy which cannot be achieved in the way which the SLL proposes "... the mobilisation of the British and Irish workers in a common struggle to set up the socialist dictatorship of the British and Irish workers." The SLL does not stop to ask *why* there is not at this time a "common struggle of Irish and British workers", it does not take

into account the different political situations in Ireland and Britain and the fact that Ireland suffers from national oppression imposed by British imperialism. This is why the SLL's advice to the Irish workers to concentrate on changing the British government is reformist, it proposes taking the masses out of the struggle in the North, and does not connect with any of their immediate experiences or needs. If such a demand did gain support, it would lead away from the development of a revolutionary situation.

#### INCOMPLETE STRATEGY?

Of course my strategy is incomplete; it does not project any concrete way in which the struggles of the British workers and the Protestant workers in the North of Ireland can be combined with the present struggle. This is no accident, in the immediate future there is little likelihood of either of these two sets of workers supporting the mainspring of the struggle, i.e. the national question. Now I am not complacent about this. I think that it would be a great step forward for the Irish, the British and the world revolution if they could be linked to that struggle. But there are very deep historical factors which stand in the way, namely the insularity of the British working class towards the struggles of oppressed nationalities, in particular towards the Irish struggle, and the mystification of the Protestant working class in the North by Orangeism, which means that at present they seek to solve their problems in terms of that mystification, i.e. support for Paisley and Craig. I think that it is both correct and necessary for the rest of the Irish people to make any concessions necessary to draw their Protestant fellow Irishmen to the struggle. This is why they should oppose Catholic sectarianism. But their concessions should not include the slightest let-up in the struggle against Stormont and British imperialism, or any demobilisation of the Catholic minority; that would simply give the initiative to imperialism and would set back the struggle for years. That is what I meant by the submission of the Catholics to the political level of the Protestant workers, i.e. waiting for the Protestants to break with their reactionary ideas would simply put the ball at the feet of Heath and Faulkner. Similarly for them to wait for the British workers to catch up would strengthen the counter-revolution.

But I also believe that the carrying through of the present struggle, along the lines I have indicated, is the best way to break the British, and Six County, Protestant workers from their present position. The creation of a tremendous political economic and social crisis within Ireland, and Britain, will make the integration of these workers with imperialism impossible, and create the possibility of their being open to revolutionary leadership, which would bring them into the struggle. There are a lot of "ifs" in this, but I insist that it is the only way in which revolutionaries can approach the question; the way of cde Brennan and the SLL is objectively reformist.

#### NOT ESSENTIAL

However, it is also necessary to understand that the involvement of these sections of the working class in the struggle is not essential to the achievement of a united Irish Workers Republic. The Irish working class and small farmers are a large enough proportion of the population to achieve victory even if the Six County Protestant workers fight on the side of imperialism. In this case they would need to ensure that the Protestant workers did not threaten the maintenance of their state, so that the "subjugation" of the Protestants is a theoretical possibility. But this is a question of revolutionary, not abstract morality; that subjugation would be an extension of the kind of measures it is now necessary to take if workers scab or cross picket lines.

#### BRITISH REVOLUTIONARIES

Now, how do Irish and British revolutionaries set about achieving a conscious revolutionary leadership for the Irish people? First of all by differentiating their separate tasks. British revolutionaries have to prove to the people engaged in the struggle that they are serious in their opposition to imperialist oppression of Ireland;

this means an attempt to give real aid to the Irish struggle. We can dismiss unserious arguments about bombs; our tasks are the mobilisation of support for the struggle, through demonstrations, pickets, etc. geared to a long-term struggle to explain the facts about Ireland to the British workers. If we make the main thrust of that support the demand for the resignation of the Tories, and the election of a Labour government we will fail to do this. We have to win the British workers to support for the right of the Irish to national independence. The previous Labour government was as determined as the Tories to maintain partition, indeed it was more subtle and successful than the Tories in undermining the national struggle. "But," says cde Brennan, "what if there is a general strike to force the Tories out and get a Labour government; after all, the bureaucracy can be pressurised." This starts from the wrong end; if the workers are to pressurise the Labour government into granting self-determination for Ireland (concretely, withdrawal of troops, ending of support for Stormont, and the ending of financial control over the Irish economy), they must first of all support these demands themselves. You cannot convince them of this by making the thrust of your demand the election of a Labour government. (In any case if we could get the British working class to carry out a general strike, we should give them more ambitious aims than another Labour government).

#### IRISH REVOLUTIONARIES

Irish revolutionaries must seek to get through to the masses by participating in their struggles, and seeking to clarify the issues involved for the present vanguard and the masses. Their relationships to the existing movements and leaderships are tactical problems, which only they can solve, and will be determined by the relationship of forces and the course of the struggle. But they cannot determine their strategy on the basis of the problems involved in working with the IRA; cde Brennan does himself no credit with his warnings about "merging too closely" with the Provisionals. Whatever the problems involved, revolutionaries have to try to get to the masses.

#### THE S.L.L. & OURSELVES

So the differences between the SLL and ourselves, cde Brennan, can be summed up very simply. We try to seriously analyse the struggle, and counter the bourgeois propaganda. The SLL fails to do this. We map out a strategy which connects up with the existing struggle, the SLL denounces the existing struggle. We seek to win the British workers to the side of the Irish struggle, the SLL seeks to use the pressure of the Irish struggle to win a change of government in Britain. These are the differences between reform and revolution.

—Bob Purdie

#### IRISH SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

CEILIDH

—come and meet—

FRANK "BUTCH" ROCHE

just released from 14 months imprisonment after giving the House of Commons a taste of its own C.S. Gas.

Music and entertainments

Roebuck pub, Tottenham Court Road, W.1.  
SATURDAY 30th OCT. — 7.30 p.m. 20p.

## THE SPARTACUS LEAGUE

revolutionary youth organisation in solidarity with Fourth International.

I am interested in getting more information about the Spartacus League.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

OCCUPATION .....

Send to: The Spartacus League, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.



## INTRODUCTION

For black people in the USA and increasingly so in Britain, Engel's description of the State as a "body of armed men" is a very meaningful reality. Black people are under daily attack from the front line of the State—namely police, courts, prison and (at least in the US), the Army. Thus in the US we see Attica, murder of George Jackson, frame-up of Angela Davis, etc. etc. Here we have constant harassment of blacks in Notting Hill, the Metro affair, the trial of the Mangrove Nine, etc. etc. This explains why all the recent writings of black militants have at their centre a description of police, prisons and the courts. As George Jackson says: "Black men born in the US and fortunate enough to live past the age of 18 are conditioned to accept the inevitability of prison." (*Letters from Prison*). And as Eldridge Cleaver says, "The police are the armed guardians of the social order" (*Soul on Ice*).

Of course the penal system is not the only way blacks are attacked. The Immigration Bill, for example, is a much more generalised measure. However, police and prison brutality and court frame-ups are for blacks the most immediate and most vicious weapons in the State's armoury. Moreover it is not just a coincidence or an accident that these weapons are being increasingly used. Instead, just as racism itself is intensified by capitalism in a period of economic crisis and decline with blacks being made the chief scapegoat, so likewise the basic repressive machinery of the state is intensified. It's true that it is not only blacks who are attacked by this machinery. White militants (and even liberals) feel the lash as well—hence the Chicago 7, hence deportation of Rudi Dutschke. However, blacks are doubly susceptible to the "body of armed men"—both because they are black and also because at the moment many of them are trying to fight back. Finally, just as capitalism is (outside of the workers' states) an international phenomenon, so likewise its decline is international and so likewise racism becomes intensified internationally. That is why it is fatally wrong to dismiss as hysterical or make-believe, allegations of police brutality in Britain. Matters are getting as vicious here as in the US.

Indeed, this last week has shown the similarity of prison, police and court brutality here and in the USA. This is revealed on the one hand by the publication of Angela Davis's book, *If they come in the Morning*, and on the other hand by the trial of the Mangrove Nine in London.

## "IF THEY COME IN THE MORNING"

This is issued here by the "Save Angela Davis Committee" and was compiled as part of the campaign for the release of herself and other political prisoners. It is a collection of writings by herself, other black militants (Eldridge Cleaver being a conspicuous absence) and a few white "radicals"—most of which has hitherto been unpublished. There are three basic remarks to make. Firstly the book is excellent. Secondly the various writers are by no means in agreement on every matter. Thirdly, the aim of this review is not to summarise every point made but to bring out what appear to be the most interesting and important political facts and ideas (some of which are arguable) contained in the various writings.

## 1. WIDTH OF STRUGGLE OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN USA

One of the facts that is constantly brought

home in this book is that the struggle of the blacks is not the only struggle by oppressed national minorities in the States. For instance in 1963 a mass land movement by the rural Chicano (US-Mexican) population in Northern Mexico began in Alianza Federale de Mercedes. This had a membership of over 14,000 families who in October 1966 took over Carson National Forest, renaming it the People's Republic of San Joaquin. The leader of the movement—Reies Tijerina—is now in prison. Unfortunately, no information is given about the subsequent history of this movement—but it is important not least because it shows that the recently published efforts of the Chicano grapepickers to form a union is not, as the bourgeois press would have us believe, an isolated incident to remove an isolated grievance. Again there are quoted examples of struggle by the native American "Indians" and by the Puerto Rican community and its recently formed revolutionary organisation, the Young Lords Party. In particular, there is the example of the Puerto Rican Lolita Lebron who is still in prison since leading a raid on the House of Representatives in Washington in 1954.

## 2. U.S. PRISONS—SCHOOLS FOR BLACK REVOLUTIONARIES

Interesting points emerge about what is happening in the prisons themselves. In particular it's quite apparent that the effect of prisons is to politicise many of the prisoners. This is the case with all the Soledad Brothers—George Jackson, John Clutchette and Fleeta Drumgo (who are being framed for the murder of a guard at Soledad, with Jackson himself being subsequently murdered by a guard). None of these comrades were politically active or politically conscious before being in prison. Similarly, this was the case also for example with Ruchell Magee (who is now on trial with Angela Davis) and Cleaver. However, these again are not isolated cases—literally hundreds of blacks are being politicised in US prisons. As Fleeta says, "There's a growing awareness behind the walls; we're seeing through the madness of capitalism, class interest, surplus value and imperialism..."

The reasons for this are probably many. One is the general politicisation of blacks outside as well as inside prison (as Huey Newton said, the only difference is one is maximum and the other minimum security). Secondly, the already politicised prisoners do extensive educational work and lead political struggles in the prisons (thus Malcolm X in his autobiography shows how he became political by coming into contact with Black Muslims in prison). Likewise there are now Panther and Chicano cells in various prisons. Thirdly, it seems that through the contradictions of American capitalism, in desperately attempting to preserve a liberal facade, it allows its prisoners almost unlimited reading material. Thus George Jackson read Lenin, Marx, Mao, Trotsky, when in Soledad.

It would seem that a comparison can be made here between the politicisation of black prisoners in the US and the politicisation of prisoners in Czarist jails in pre-revolutionary Russia—both breeding grounds for revolutionaries.

## 3. DEMANDS OF THE PRISONERS THEMSELVES—LIBERAL OR REVOLUTIONARY?

A relatively large proportion of the book is taken up with the struggle of prisoners (mainly black) within many prisons in the US and the demands they are putting forward. The most comprehensive list of such demands was made during a strike at Folsom prison last year. They ranged from the demand that all imprisoned revolutionaries should be allowed to go to the Workers States to better visiting conditions for the families of prisoners. Two other demands often raised are the end to the indeterminate sentence law whereby a prisoner can be sentenced "from one year to life" (thus ransoming his freedom for his "good behaviour") and the abolition of penal code 4500 under which an inmate facing a life sentence who is convicted of assaulting a non-inmate (i.e. a guard) must receive a mandatory death sentence. Both these provisions were

particularly highlighted in the case of George Jackson, who on an indeterminate sentence of "one to life" for stealing \$70, had already been in prison 12 years before his murder, which took place before his own framed-up case of murder of a guard got to trial (whereupon 4500 would have applied).

Angela Davis says of these demands, "It is the mark of an immature revolutionary to dismiss such 'actions' as 'reformist' or 'liberal'" and "Such a stand can too easily become a tool in the hands of our adversaries".

This raises the important question of how revolutionaries should treat "reformist" demands. Various points can be made.

Firstly, we do not support all demands merely because they are raised or followed by the masses (itself a relative term). To do so would be sheer populism. Many demands raised or followed by the masses are *reactionary* and must be actively fought against—e.g. Blacks Go Home.

Secondly, however, there is no excuse not to support the demands of the masses merely because they are reformist. In fact just the opposite—there is a duty of revolutionaries to support such demands. This is precisely why we support all demands made by workers for higher wages—which in themselves don't challenge the idea of capitalism (it is only anarchists and ultra-lefts who denounce such demands as "reformist"). Likewise it is quite imperative for revolutionaries to support the demands of the Attica, Folsom, Soledad prisoners, etc. Similarly it is important for revolutionaries in Britain to support the demand of the Mangrove Nine for an all-black jury—even though this in itself does not call into question the very idea of capitalism.

Thirdly, though, not only is it the duty of revolutionaries to support reformist demands, it is also the duty of revolutionaries to try and raise these demands to a level which actually does challenge the *idea* of capitalism. As John Clutchette says, this means "Changing the picture itself, not just the frame on the wall." In other words, what revolutionaries should be doing is attacking the whole concept of prisons and the court system as such in capitalist society. On our own initiative we should demand the release of the Mangrove Nine on the grounds that we don't accept bourgeois justice. Incidentally it's one of the main criticisms of the Angela Davis Committee—which is essentially the creation of the CP—that in campaigning for the release of Angela Davis and all political prisoners, it itself tends to conceal politics behind the demand (the committee in most of its propaganda merely speaks of *bail* for Angela). For instance, when Louise Patterson spoke in Manchester, she played down the fact that Angela is a Communist and emphasised that in New York the Angela Davis Committee has churchmen and other "respectables" on it. Again, the whole impression she gave was that Angela was an unfortunate woman who just "happened" to be in prison. Similarly, in the USA one of the main activities of the Angela Davis Committee is the circulation of a petition for one million signatures. Petitions of course are a typical CP tactic to evade politics in that in themselves they don't raise anyone's consciousness and commit anyone to do anything.

Fourthly, though revolutionaries must support reformist demands already raised in the mass movement, it is hardly the duty of revolutionaries to *initiate* such demands themselves. All demands raised by revolutionaries should challenge the system itself and be "transitional" in content. This is what's so criminal about International Socialism's raising of the demand here of a "fair trial" for Irish political prisoners. In point of fact this demand of IS is actually *below* that of the mass movement in Ireland led by the IRA which is for immediate release of all political prisoners.

## 4. ROLE OF THE BLACK "LUMPEN-PROLETARIAT"

We come now to some more contentious points. Thus Angela emphasises what she considers the vital role of the black lumpenproletariat in the revolutionary struggle. She says, "There is an

urgent need to organise the lumpenproletariat as the Black Panther Party as well as activists in prison have already begun to do." Now Marx dismissed the revolutionary character of the lumpenproletariat—i.e. that section of the working class which is virtually declassé by being semi-permanently jobless and therefore divorced from the productive forces. He did this on the grounds of their consequent political demoralisation and therefore inability to organise consistently. In arguing for the revolutionary vitality of the *black* lumpenproletariat Angela makes a point which is made by many black militants in Britain as well as the US.

Now it is true that a large section of the black community is through racism semi-permanently unemployed and thus "lumpen". Again it is true that the Black Panthers are very much based on this section. However, what is equally true is that with the murder and imprisonment of the Panther leaders, this movement has shown itself too volatile and disorganised to continue in anything but a spasmodic way. Compared with this is the continued steady growth of revolutionary black organisations in the US who are doing political work not only in the "community" but also in the factories—in particular the League of Revolutionary Black Workers which now plays a significant role in the black community of Detroit and in certain of the essential car plants there. Again in Britain it is the case that those black groups who have organised "in the community"—e.g. Black Panthers and the Black Unity and Freedom Party—have not attracted the support that groups here who are also organised around the workplaces—e.g. Indian Workers Association.

The conclusions one can draw from all this seem to be (a) Angela is correct in arguing that the black "lumpen" do have a vital revolutionary potential quite unlike their white counterparts; and (b) this potential however will only be realised if it is part of a wider black revolutionary movement which is also doing habitual work round the points of production.

Finally another contentious point which is raised in Angela's book is the question of the nature of fascism. Clarification of this question is of absolutely key importance for revolutionaries, and it merits a separate article. *Red Mole* will be publishing material on fascism (how we define it, the idea of "creeping" or "galloping" fascism, etc.) in a forthcoming issue.

—S.C.





# READING: Not so Ideal at Ideal Casements.

A recent strike over the sacking of 13 workers at the Ideal Casements (Reading) Ltd. factory, which employs some 500 workers in all, has important if basic lessons for trade unionists, especially in view of the new legislation now at the disposal of the bosses, namely the Tories' Industrial Relations Act. Significantly, Mr. J. Wallace, the managing director of the firm, has gone on record as welcoming this blatantly anti-working class law, and stating his intention of using it.

The strike began in the afternoon of Friday 17th September, when 13 workers at Ideal Tubes, a subsidiary company of Ideal Casements, were sacked at only 4½ hours notice for absolutely no reason whatever. This followed a breakdown in negotiations for a 15% cost of living pay rise, but was almost certainly a deliberate attempt to provoke a strike over the question of reinstatement (i.e. a return to the status quo) in order to divert attention away from other issues such as poor toilet, washing and heating facilities, and the men's demand for protective industrial gloves to be provided by the firm for those who work with acids.

As soon as the 13 were sacked, the other 50-60 workers of Ideal Tubes came out in support of their reinstatement, and on Monday morning the sympathy strike spread throughout the works. The initial strike in the Tubes division had been made official by the Transport and General Workers Union (the only manual workers' union in the factory) straight away on the Friday afternoon, and the rest of the strike was recognised on Tuesday.

A strong and militant picket of the factory gates was organised, and production inside, mainly of metal window frames, was rapidly being brought to a complete standstill. As time went on, in addition to merely the reinstatement of the 13, other demands which had to be satisfied before they would return to work were raised by the men at the picket. Not only were the demands for improvements in working conditions revived, but the slogan "Wallace Must Go" appeared painted on the nearby railway bridge and on placards and was quickly taken up by the picket as a whole.

Thus, towards the end of the week the management of Ideal realised that they had badly miscalculated the solidity and determination of the strikers—even despite the fact that there were still some scabs working—and were under considerable pressure to open negotiations for a return to work. On the Wednesday they had refused to talk to the shop stewards, and would only have dealings with the Transport and General officials, in particular the local district officer, Tom Hibberd, and Chapman from the regional office at Southampton. (Hibberd has a certain reputation locally for militancy as a trade union official). But by Friday the strike was obviously biting hard, and the stewards were invited in to talk—though only two at a time.

(This "divide and rule" approach to the shop

stewards relates to the internal organisation of Ideal Casements, whereby there are nine companies all in one factory. This is advantageous to the management on two counts: firstly, for taxation purposes, and secondly in trying to divide the workers. Wallace, the chairman of the board of directors, who was installed in that post by the banking financiers of the firm in 1968 to oversee their interests, uses this device of company law to pretend that each of the "companies" has to negotiate separately with its workers, thus attempting to play off one section against another. In fact, they have had some success in this, in that workers in different shops are often paid at considerably different rates, and in one case this happens even within one company.

## THE SELL-OUT

On the Friday of the first full week of the strike, therefore, the first two stewards went in with the T&G officials to talk with Wallace, and an "offer" of a 50p per week pay-rise plus reinstatement of the 13 was made. This derisory offer was turned down by the stewards and their men, and no more went in.

By Monday the management was in even more trouble, because the picket had succeeded in preventing crucial supplies of oil from getting through, and the following day Hibberd, the local T&G official, announced that he'd another offer from the management. This turned out to be 50p plus reinstatement—the same as the one rejected by the stewards on the previous Friday. However, backed up with a threat of no more strike pay if the strike were continued, Hibberd pushed through a recommendation to accept the offer and call off the strike at a mass meeting with practically no discussion, and got a vote for a return to work on Thursday.

This vote was noticeably greeted with murmurings of discontent, not surprising since many of the workers remembered a previous sell-out at the hands of Hibberd last April, when he "secured" the reinstatement of only 10 out of 16 sacked workers and persuaded the men not to take the planned strike action on the basis of this "victory".

## SUPPORT FOR THE STRIKE

During the course of the strike the Social Security office dutifully played its role of strike breaking by not paying out the supplementary benefits that the strikers were entitled to for their wives and children. The intervention of the Reading Claimants Union early on in the strike, to inform the strikers of their rights, to organise "mass visits" to the Social Security, and to lodge appeals against decisions, gave considerable potential economic strength to the strike (T&G pay is only £4 a week), but unfortunately the strike was sold out and over before this had its full effect, though appeals are still going ahead and will be fought.

A recurring theme of the trade union situation at Ideal is disillusionment with "the



Union" for its continual backing down and playing into the hands of the bosses. But this time, hopefully, things will be different, for in conjunction with some of the shop stewards, the Reading Socialist Trade Unionists Group (S.T.U.G.) is now producing a regular factory bulletin. This has already analysed the lessons of the strike—especially concerning the part played by the union officials, the role of the local press whose coverage of the strike gave support to the management, the need for a shop stewards committee to be organised on a functioning basis throughout the firm so as to strengthen the hand of the stewards, and the question of the Industrial Relations Act.

This latter point is very important, because a sympathy strike such as this is actually outlawed by this piece of legislation as an "unfair industrial practice". In this respect the strike at Ideal was, locally at least, something of a "test-case", in showing not only the necessity for militancy and solidarity on the picket line but also the crucial need for trade union democracy and political understanding in the fight against the Act.

## POSTSCRIPT

The day after the first S.T.U.G. factory bulletin was distributed in the factory, Mr. Tom Hibberd, the local T&G district officer, felt obliged to publish an official Transport and General Workers Union Statement, addressed to all the workers at Ideal Casements, attacking the bulletin, in particular the Lessons of the Strike part. He said: "These people are mainly communist inspired and they are trying to create Disputes in Industry for their own ends and the Statements they have made to you are in many cases very far removed from the truth." He tried to prove that "we have achieved reasonable results" and suggested that "it might be the Communist Job to close your Firm down in order to obtain Ultimate Power through Disruption and the breakdown of Law and order."

This anti-communist rubbish was pushed out by Hibberd in company time with prior management permission. This shows how far Hibberd is prepared to go on collaborating with the bosses in order to thwart the very purposes for which trade unions were founded and fought for—namely, the defence of the interests of their members. It also shows how much he fears those who simply tell the truth about the treacherous role of class-collaborationist trade union officials like himself in workers' struggles.

—Nigel Brown  
—Lawrie White

## Bristol Claimants Union Sit-in.

### BRISTOL CLAIMANTS UNION SIT-IN

On the 24th September some 40 members of the Bristol Claimants and Unemployed Workers Union occupied St. Catherine's House—one of the main Social Security Offices in Bristol—for about three hours.

The Union was staging a protest against the slowness and inefficiency shown by the Dept. of Health and Social Security in dealing with claims. This complaint is, in fact, no more than the tip of an iceberg of abuses of claimants' rights by the Dept., but it was a complaint which could be substantiated with documented evidence and one which was causing immediate hardship to many people.

A statement was prepared and distributed to the press and public, whilst a worried manager made unsuccessful attempts to intimidate members into leaving the office. Eventually the manager, suitably and predictably baffled by a Union that refused to nominate a spokesman to negotiate its surrender, called in members of that other noble institution noted for its abuse of people's rights—the police.

Having already achieved the publicity we wanted—coverage was given by BBC television and radio, *The Bristol Evening Post* and *The Western Daily Press*—and faced with the probability of jail for the weekend, and a fine no members, as claimants, could afford, we decided to vacate the office—almost two hours after it was officially closed.

We are now looking to see some improvement in the service offered by the Dept. If there is none, as seems likely, then we'll be back, but next time we won't be walking out.

In the long run we would hope to see such action escalating into the fulfilment of one of the points of our Charter:

—A Free Welfare State for all, with its services controlled by the people who use it.

The other points of the Claimants Union Charter are as follows:

- The right to an adequate income, without means test, for all people;
- No secrets and the right to full information;
- No distinguishing between so-called "deserving" and "undeserving".

—A Bristol C.U. member

EDITORIAL BOARD: Tariq Ali, Dave Bailey, Robin Blackburn, J. R. Clynes, Peter Gowan, Teresa Hayter, Alan Jones, Pat Jordan, Branka Magas, Martin Meteyard, Neil Middleton, Bob Purdie, Daniel Rose.

DESIGN: Dave Edmunds

DISTRIBUTION: Debbie Dodge

Published by Relgocrest for *The Red Mole*,  
182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.  
01-837 6954, 01-278 2616.

Printed by F.I. Litho Ltd. (T.U.),  
182 Pentonville Road, London N.1. 01-837 9987

PLEASE SEND ME *THE RED MOLE* FOR THE NEXT 6/12 MONTHS. I ENCLOSE CHEQUE/P.O./CASH FOR £1/£2.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

THE RED MOLE, 182 PENTONVILLE ROAD,  
LONDON N.1. 01-837 6954, 01-278 2616.

FOREIGN SUBS: Asia/Africa/Australia/N & S America:  
£5 per year (airmail); £3 per year (ordinary).  
West Europe: £3 per year.

## Fortnight's Notice of 300 Redundancies.

Two days before the implementation of a £2 pay rise for all workers at the Standard Bottle Company, Bounds Green, in North London, the factory is to be closed down and demolished. Two hundred and fifty men will be made immediately redundant as from 22nd October, and the final 50, retained as skeleton staff, will be out of work by the New Year.

The men were only told of the redundancies at a meeting with management on 6th October, a bare two weeks before they were due to be paid off. The managing director of the company justified this by saying that "an earlier announcement of the closure would have disrupted production and brought forward the shutdown." A printed company statement handed to employees says: "Although during the last year the substantial trading losses of the Company have been stemmed and the Company is now trading profitably, the return on capital employed does not justify the continuing operation of the plant." In other words,

although they're making a profit, it's still not large enough for the investors, and so the workers will have to go. The factory will be replaced by warehouses.

The response of the union (the GMWU, which is leading the way in registering under the Industrial Relations Act) has been pathetic. All they have asked for is a £10 handshake for all redundant staff who have worked for the firm less than two years, and slightly higher payoffs for those with longer service. As there is a very high turnover of unskilled and, for the most part, immigrant labour in the factory, 190 of the 250 made immediately redundant fall into the first category. Once again, the struggle against redundancies has been shown to be as much a struggle against the class-collaborationist policies of the trade union bureaucracy as it is against the employers and the government. The fight to democratise the trade unions is an essential part of the struggle against redundancies, as the case of the Standard Bottle Company shows only too clearly.

## Hunterston Development.

The Tory government is soon going to have to decide whether it can scrape up £1,000 million and whether it wants to invest this in a 10 million ton steel works (annual output) at Hunterston on the Ayrshire coast. The site has already been chosen but the Scottish bourgeoisie are still very nervous, according to the *Sunday Times Business News*, that the government will back out having more profitable areas in mind for investment (e.g. petrochemicals). The site has the advantage of flat land next to deep water. But the scheme's key advantage lies in the boss of the joint public and private corporation to develop Hunterston ... none other than Mr. Stenhouse, ex-Scottish Tory Party Treasurer and present boss of the new Govan Linthouse division of UCS. No doubt Mr. Stenhouse will be urging the Tory government to pump the money into Hunterston on such "humanitarian" grounds as the high unemployment levels on the Clyde and in the West of Scotland generally!