

the next step

review of the Revolutionary Communist Party 20p

WORLD WAR 3

The enemy is at home

Special feature on NATO & the new Cold War p9



Laurence Scott workers fight for jobs ~and against the AUEW leaders

Ireland : Prior's problems • Racism: Wreck the checks!

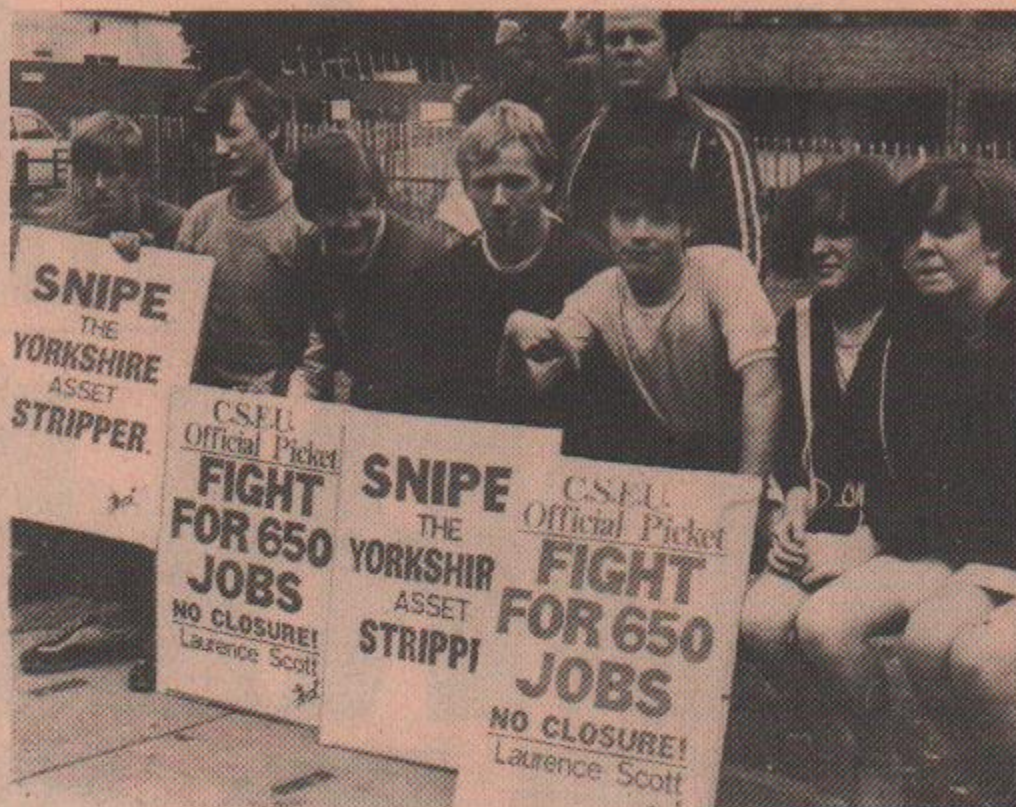
ON TUESDAY 16 February 400 police smashed through the long-standing Laurence Scott picket line and set 30 scabs to work with pneumatic drills and welding torches. They broke down the barricaded factory gates and loaded plant and products into lorries to be transported to another factory owned by Laurence Scott boss Arthur Snipe in Norwich. Pickets were beaten up by Manchester's equivalent of the Special Patrol Group and several were arrested in a day of bitter scuffles against vastly superior forces.

The February strike-breaking operation followed a long series of attacks on the Laurence Scott workers which began with the announcement of the factory's closure in April 1981. The workers' five-month long occupation was ended in August when a gang of specially-hired and heavily-equipped bailiffs broke into the factory and evicted the workers. Then began Snipe's attempts to remove machinery and electric motors from the Manchester site. When scabs were repulsed by pickets, Snipe resorted to using helicopters to airlift vital components from the factory. When all his attempts to break the strike failed, he called in the police. The team of scabs continued to ransack the factory under massive police protection for several days. At the end of the week, seven strike leaders received a bill for £5600 – to pay for the bailiffs who ended the occupation last August!

Who needs helicopters?

It's not surprising to find that an employer is prepared to go to any lengths to maintain his profits, or to find that he gets the solid backing of the courts and the police. Nor is it surprising that workers are ready to fight a long and hard struggle to save their jobs and livelihoods. What is perhaps surprising is that the leadership of the engineering workers' union should solidly support the employer against the Laurence Scott workers.

Ever since last July, when the AUEW national leaders agreed to a shameful betrayal of the LSE workers in negotiations with Snipe, they have gone all out to sabotage the struggle. When the rank and file workers rejected the AUEW sell-out by an enormous majority, the executive stopped strike pay. They then successfully urged the other smaller unions involved to follow suit. Next, the top officials circulated all AUEW branches advising them that the LSE dispute was now unofficial and should not be



KNOW YOUR ENEMY

The 11-month long fight for jobs at the Manchester engineering firm Laurence Scott & Electromotors has become known as 'a symbol' in the labour movement. It is a symbol of the inability of the current leadership of the AUEW – right and left – to defend its members' interests.

supported. They also pressed other unions, especially the mineworkers whose members had been blacking Snipe's products, to cease all solidarity action. And they instructed local officials of the union to stay away from the picket line and withdraw all support from the strikers.

Right-wing leaders of the AUEW launched an all-out offensive against the Laurence Scott workers. But the Broad Left opposition to John Boyd and Terry Duffy undermined the LSE struggle with its defeatist strategy. From the very beginning of the struggle, the left-wing local officials advised the LSE workers to adopt a moderate and reasonable approach: accept massive redundancies as an alternative to complete closure. At every stage in the dispute, and over every tactical question – from the use of flying

pickets to how to deal with the courts – they urged caution and compromise.

Now the Laurence Scott workers are fighting with their backs to the wall. The Broad Left in the AUEW – and in other unions – remains silent and inactive. The Broad Left dominates the works committee at the massive GEC factory at Trafford Park near the LSE works. Yet when the LSE workers appealed for support during the recent picket-busting assault, only a handful of sheepish shop stewards turned out during their lunch breaks. The response from Crossley Brothers, another engineering firm with a strong Broad Left trade union organisation, was similar. And at a national level, newly-elected Broad Left President of the NUM Arthur Scargill made sure that the miners stopped their solidarity action with the 'unofficial' LSE dispute.

Sack the bureaucrats!

Laurence Scott workers have launched a national campaign to turn out the leaders of the union who have done so much damage to their fight for jobs. Already more than 100 branches have sent in motions to headquarters demanding the re-election of the union's executive. When more than 250 branches demand a ballot, AUEW rules insist that it should be held. But Boyd and Duffy have already thrown out the union rule book in their strike-breaking campaign against the LSE workers. Now they are using the *Sunday Express* and *Daily Mail* to spread smears about communist conspiracies to overthrow the AUEW's moderate leadership.

AUEW workers should put the motion printed below to their branch meetings. But while they're getting rid of Boyd and Duffy, they should remember that their Broad Left opponents were just as useless to the LSE workers. The campaign to purge the AUEW must not focus on particular right-wing bureaucrats, but on the politics of compromise over redundancies and on other issues that the Broad Left has promoted among the rank and file of the union. The LSE workers have indeed provided the labour movement with a symbol of struggle; the setbacks they have suffered are a symbol, too, of the disastrous consequences of the politics that currently rule in the AUEW.

Nick Jenkins

Protest resolution for AUEW branches

'This branch believes Executive Council has seriously mishandled the Laurence Scott dispute. As this is an issue of concern to all AUEW members, the branch demands a ballot for removal of Executive Council in line with Rule 14 Para 5.

Rule 14 Para 5 states: 'The Executive Council, or any member thereof, may be removed from office by a ballot vote of the membership of the union provided that such a ballot is demanded by 10 per cent or more of the branches and that not less than two-thirds of the membership are in favour of such removal. The ballot shall be conducted by the General Secretary.'

Send copies of this motion, if passed, to AUEW General Office, 110 Peckham Road, London SE15 and to LSE Strike Committee, 20 Roundcroft, Romiley, Cheshire SL6 4LL.

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LOSING THE WAR

THE TRAIN DRIVERS' union ASLEF has won a battle against the British Rail Board, but it seems set to lose the war. Six weeks of selective industrial action finally forced BR to pay out the three per cent wage rise (the second instalment of last year's 11 per cent increase) it had been withholding, and to agree to pursue productivity negotiations through the industry's established procedures. However, ASLEF's long record of sacrificing its members' living standards to the cause of greater efficiency on the railways, and now its agreement to negotiate on flexible rostering, show that the union is on course for a major setback in the not too distant future.

ASLEF's stand

The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, one of Britain's oldest craft unions, is faced with annihilation. Its membership has been reduced from a first-war peak of 77 000 to a level today of little more than 20 000; BR's plans threaten to reduce that figure by almost a quarter in the next three years. At the end of the war ASLEF was well inside the TUC's top twenty unions — if present trends continue it will become so small that it will lose its seat on the General Council. ASLEF's decline has accelerated in recent years: in 1976 it was still sixth in the manual workers' pay league — today it is nineteenth. And now BR has set its sights on ASLEF's historic triumph: the achievement of the eight-hour day after years of struggle in the surge of militancy that followed the end of the First World War.

ASLEF has been forced to take a stand. Yet the union executive chose to fight BR, not on the issues of the declining living standards and deteriorating working conditions of its members, but over the small print of past agreements. The ASLEF leadership justified its call for strike action on the grounds that BR had made separate pay and productivity deals last year and could not therefore make payment of the agreed wage rise conditional upon specific concessions on productivity. Furthermore, on the productivity issue in question, the introduction of flexible seven to nine hour shifts in place of the traditional fixed eight-hour day, BR had forced the matter to a head without going through the customary channels of negotiation.

A suitable case for ACAS

ASLEF went on strike in defence of the elaborate machinery of collective bargaining and arbitration that has been built up between management and unions in the industry over decades. As the dispute has raged over the past eight months, the institutions for mediating class conflict in the railway industry have become more and more enmeshed with the institution that fulfils similar functions on a national scale, the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, ACAS. Labour Party leader Michael Foot has

been keeping his head down during the rail dispute, lest any of the hostility of the commuters towards the train drivers be extended to his already deeply unpopular party. Yet ACAS is his special contribution to the conflict: as Secretary of State for Employment under the last Labour Government he was responsible for setting it up. In his letter to former trade union bureaucrat (now Labour Party general secretary) James Mortimer, ACAS' first chairman, Foot outlined its guiding principles. It was 'vital for the Service to be, and be seen to be, impartial in carrying out its functions of conciliation and mediation'; it 'should be, and be seen to be, independent and so attract and retain the cooperation of all sectors of employment'. By 'all sectors of employment' Foot means, like BR chief Peter Parker when he speaks of 'the railway community', management on the one hand and the workers on the other. To maintain scrupulous British fair play, the Secretary of State appoints to the ACAS council, three representatives of capital (CBI officials), three representatives of labour (trade union bureaucrats) and three 'independents' (academic 'industrial relations' experts).

The function of ACAS is to act as a troubleshooter in industry. It follows a long tradition of state intervention in the class struggle at its most elementary level, to institutionalise and contain it. ACAS is a government agency with 700 workers and a dozen regional offices; it proclaims a spurious 'independence' and encourages workers and employers to come to 'voluntary' agreements.

ACAS is one of the many legacies of Labour's Social Contract that the Thatcher Government has been able to use to its advantage. Every year it is involved in hundreds of disputes, many in small companies, over union recognition and other issues. However, although the unions continue to accept ACAS as a neutral arbiter, many employers, their position strengthened by mass unemployment, are increasingly finding it a cumbersome nuisance. Grunwick's George Ward led the way. In 1977 he drove a coach and horses through its 'voluntary' framework by simply refusing to accept its recommendation that he recognise his employees' trade union and the courts backed him. In 1980 100 employers out of 158 concerned refused to comply with ACAS recommendations for union recognition. After the latest intervention of ACAS in the rail dispute — in the shape of an inquiry directed by Lord McCarthy — *The Daily Telegraph* expressed a desire 'to see ACAS and its stipendiary trade union peers sent into permanent retirement' (19 February).

RSJC, RSNC, RSNT, ACAS and the BRB

British Rail has long been dissatisfied with the drawn out procedures through which it is obliged to go to win union acquiescence to productivity improve-

ments on the railways. After running the gamut of the Railway Staffs Joint Council (loco), the Railway Staffs National Council and the Railways Staffs National Tribunal, and then having to go to ACAS to cobble together a deal on last year's wage claim, the BR Board had had enough. It decided at the end of the year to cut short the procedure and take a firm stand: no flexible rostering — no three per cent.

BR underestimated the forces with a stake in defending the institutions of the British system of industrial relations. To the wounded outrage of Peter Parker, his good friend Len Murray at the TUC came out in support of ASLEF. Murray found the BR Board 'at fault both in failing to pay the balance of the pay award and in failing to use the established machinery to find acceptable methods of improving productivity'. Labour's moderate transport spokesman Albert Booth was obliged to take a similar stand. Even the most right-wing trade union leaders, John Boyd and Frank Chapple, who publicly criticised ASLEF's intransigence, could not disagree that Ray Buckton was right on this point. The unkindest cut of all came when the ACAS inquiry, initially backed by BR but boycotted by ASLEF, came out in favour of the union on the procedural issue.

Parker should not have been surprised that Lord McCarthy upheld the rule book of class collaboration in British industrial relations: it is fair to say that to a large extent he wrote it. McCarthy drafted the famous 1968 Donovan Report on trade unions and employers' associations and he has sat on every industrial relations quango ever since. He seems to be the chairman of all the key mediating bodies in the rail dispute, both inside and outside the industry. The diverse institutions for containing the class struggle have given prominent positions, not to mention fat salaries, to many trade union bureaucrats and industrial relations academics. As most of the press had already acknowledged, Ray Buckton was right on the technicalities of ASLEF's 1981 deal with BR. ACAS has a vested interest in preserving proper constitutional procedures, so it found for ASLEF and 'the need to safeguard the continued acceptability of the established machinery'.

Sting in the tail

BR has paid the price for neglecting its byzantine industrial relations structures but ASLEF has won no victory. The *Financial Times* summed up the situation after the publication of the McCarthy Report:

'ASLEF may have won its point in pure Labour relations terms, but it has few if any supporters for its opposition to productivity changes. Continued resistance will inevitably raise the question of whether the UK needs a railway system at all.' (17 February)

Parker could not have his cake and eat it and neither can Buckton. BR could not make separate pay and productivity deals

and then make one conditional upon the other. ASLEF cannot have a rock firm commitment to the eight-hour day and agree to negotiate on flexible rostering.

ASLEF, noted McCarthy, 'has not wished to present its position as unremittingly negative and obstructive' to the introduction of flexible rostering. It has been prepared to discuss 'the limits of "a mutually acceptable definition of flexibility around the eight-hour day"'. This has now become the subject of rigorously scheduled negotiations, to be concluded by mid-March. Variable rostering means longer and more unsocial hours, harder work and inevitably lower wages. Any discussion between management and unions about 'flexibility around the eight-hour day' can only bring bad news for railway workers. Yet 'flexible rostering', along with a whole series of other measures for intensifying the exploitation of railway workers, is exactly what is at present under discussion between ASLEF and the BR Board.

Force decides

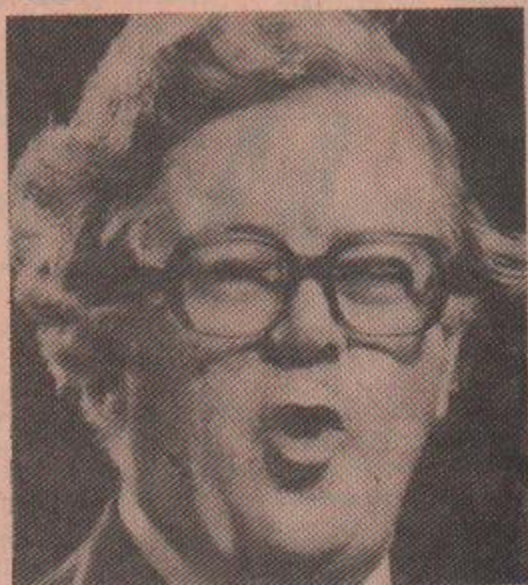
The rail workers have shown a real determination to fight. The *Financial Times* conceded that 'their support has been so solid that a generally hostile press could only find one driver, two weeks from retirement' out of the entire union membership who was prepared to scab on the strike.

'Between equal rights', wrote Marx, 'force decides'. The BR Board is ready to use strong arm tactics to make the railways viable. But while Parker is ready to throw out procedure and join battle, Buckton puts his faith in the machinery of mediation. His apparent victory in the McCarthy report in reality makes ASLEF's position even more vulnerable. It encourages workers to put their faith in the state's agencies of conciliation and arbitration at a time when employers are moving to abandon them and go straight into the attack.

The universal welcome of the radical left press for the McCarthy report as 'a vindication' of the railway workers' case simply endorses the strategy of the ASLEF leadership. The left reinforces workers' reliance on 'impartial' bodies like ACAS and the dead weight of bureaucratic trade union procedures.

To beat BR, rail workers need to inform their militant tactics with a strategy that puts their living standards and working conditions before any other consideration. This means changing their unions into organisations that fight ruthlessly for their members interests. Workers' interests in the nationalised industries demand unions that organise the whole industry: overcoming the divisions among the different rail unions is a top priority for railway workers. The way forward to a united fight against the BR Board, and the Government behind it, lies through the abandonment of any concern for the future of BR and all respect for the industrial relations procedures of the past.

REFLATE AND SURVIVE?



Sir Geoffrey Howe's 1982 Budget comes after two years of slump. Industrial output has fallen and unemployment has risen at record rates. Now the bourgeoisie dreams of an upturn and wants Howe's Budget to deliver the goods.

THE LAKER AIRWAYS crash in February brought 'Sir Freddie' sympathetic, if not sycophantic headlines. But Laker got no government cash. While 'Freddie fans' pledged their personal fortunes to help this buccaneer avoid bankruptcy, self-confessed Laker fan Margaret Thatcher refused to bail him out. Cecil Parkinson, Conservative Party chairman, explained why:

'The decision not to provide state funds for Sir Freddie was for the sake of the future of private enterprise. Far from helping the private sector thrive and flourish, a state handout would have been greatly damaging to the morale and spirit of entrepreneurs up and down the country.' (*The Times*, 11 February)

Laker's demise — rather, that of his 1700 employees, since he is fixing up another deal with 'Tiny' Rowland, top shark in Lorrho — illustrates the Tory Government's determination to press ahead with its economic strategy. Despite the pressure of public opinion, it took a hard line because sentimentality has no place in its plans to regenerate British capitalism. It might seem contradictory that capitalist morale would have been damaged by a Laker rescue. But the Government has to remember the 8607 companies which had already gone into liquidation in 1981, and its advice that only a leaner, more competitive industry could emerge from the recession in a fit state to take on its rivals.

Nevertheless, as Chancellor Howe was doing his sums in the weeks leading up to the 9 March Budget, he was considering how to give those beleaguered entrepreneurs a positive morale booster. And this very consideration was allowed by the results of the recession which are already helping to raise the spirits of the capitalists.

Profiting from unemployment

As the crisis hit, firms collapsed and redundancies multiplied. Throughout nearly every sector of industry, production plummeted, but the bosses made sure that jobs were cut back still faster. Since 1977 British Steel has cut nearly 100 000 jobs (48 per cent of its workforce), British Leyland has axed 68 000 (40 per cent), Courtaulds 35 000 (31 per cent), GKN 22 000 (30 per cent) and Lucas 14 000 (20 per cent). The process speeded up over the past two years so that official unemployment levels doubled to over three million in January 1982.

While some employers panicked as the recession accelerated, those who survived

can now reap some of the rewards. Record unemployment has weakened workers' resistance to attacks on living standards. In every month since April last year, increases in average earnings have dropped behind the Tories' Tax and Price Index. Recently the CBI claimed that wage rises had dropped to just 4-6 per cent, when inflation is running at more than 12 per cent. At the same time, the 'shake-out' of labour has raised productivity sharply. Now British capitalists boast that their labour costs per unit of production have risen less than those of their rivals in Japan, West Germany, France and the USA.

It's no surprise that profits are up too. Helped by a lower exchange rate, as well as the squeeze on workers, industrial profits rose 30 per cent in the second half of 1981. Stockbrokers Phillips and Drew hope for 20 per cent more this year (*The Economist*, 30 January 1982). Figures like these have encouraged some cautious, qualified bourgeois optimism recently.

Howe to do it

But do they really herald the 'recovery'? For its part, the CBI is uncertain. It welcomes the new mood of 'realism' in industry, allowing managers the 'right to manage', and is thankful for the higher profits. That's why Director General Sir Terence Beckett threatened no bare knuckle fights with the Government at last November's CBI conference as he did the previous year. But, failing to see any secure future for himself and his class — December's manufacturing output was the lowest for 15 years — he demands more help from Howe's Budget.

Cut business rates, reduce the employers' National Insurance surcharge and the duty on fuel oil, to lower industry's costs. Increase public sector investment to provide it with some orders. These are the CBI's proposals, to be paid for by cutting state expenditure — on wages and jobs — and by higher government borrowing. With this package, worth £3 billion, the CBI hopes to generate some growth in the economy and still control inflation.

The CBI is not alone in its demands for a reflationary Budget. Nor are they confined to Tory 'wets' like Heath, Gilmour and St John Stevas. The CBI's proposals got widespread backing in the Conservative Party, which is now keen to alter its image as the party of chronic slump. As an editorial in *The Times*

put it, there is an 'underlying and widespread feeling in business that the Government ought to relax its fiscal stance in favour of reflation: if good businesses as well as bad are not to go to the wall, and if unemployment is not to grow to a point where it distorts and corrupts the outlook of an entire generation, then the Government must begin to ease the pressure' (11 February).

The pressure of recession is telling on the TUC as well. This year the TUC has really excelled itself in presenting Sir Geoffrey its Budget proposals. It has based its alternative Budget plans on the workings of the Treasury's own economic forecasting model! More than ever the TUC is tying the future of the working class to the health of British capitalism — all its demands are carefully formulated to be consistent with a viable capitalist economy. While noting that the real level of unemployment is around four million, the TUC's scheme envisages the creation of a mere 700 000 jobs. And, having the suspicion that something somewhere may go wrong in its £8.3 billion reflation plan, the TUC offers the Tories a 'new deal'. In return for the right Budget it would help control wages and strike action (*Programme for recovery*, February 1982). No wonder Howe conceded that this was a 'responsible' programme.

What separates these 'alternatives' is pounds, not politics. The CBI and the TUC respond to different influences but their objective is the same: to save British capitalism. But in the end, it will be Chancellor Howe who will decide what is best to do for Britain.

Time to change gear?

Technically, Howe can easily go ahead with some measure of reflation. Tax revenues this financial year have turned out higher than expected, so the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement — basically the deficit of expenditure over revenue — will be £1.2 billion lower than the £10.5 billion planned. The money saved could finance more spending, or tax cuts, and still keep the pressure of state borrowing on the money markets the same as before.

Economically, the improved conditions for making profits mean that a boost to demand is less likely to result in inflation. Investment could be stimulated and 'good businesses' saved if Howe dealt out some more money to industry. Politically, Howe would prefer a reflationary Budget to help push the Tories back up in the public opinion polls. However, these considerations are overshadowed by others more significant for the survival of British capitalism.

First, while profits are up, they are barely off the floor. Last year the average rate of profit in the non-oil sector of industry was around two per cent — an all-time low. This year it may rise to just

three per cent. As Beckett of the CBI has pointed out, this is lower in real terms than the rate of interest being charged on industry's loans. Any 'excessively' reflationary Budget — one which demanded a PSBR which forced up rates of interest in the money markets — would be a disaster for industrial profitability. In October last year *The Times* listed 28 major companies whose interest charges ranged from 48.3 per cent of operating profits in the case of British Oxygen, to 290.6 per cent of operating profits in the case of the Chloride Group. To resolve this situation the bourgeoisie needs both lower rates of interest and a firmer base of profitability. Given that slump conditions make profitable rationalisation that much easier to push onto the workforce, Howe will think twice before trying to reflate the economy.

Second, the competitiveness of British industry has improved. But as the *Financial Times* lamented, it is still 30-35 per cent less than in 1975. And competition in the world market is getting sharper each month: Tory ministers have recently been on the offensive against Japanese and French protectionism. They know that one way to avoid direct controls to protect domestic industry is to get it to cut costs. Again this is more easily done in a time of mass unemployment.

Who recovers?

Finally, it is a question of bourgeois confidence. Up to the present, Howe feels fairly sure that the economic conditions weigh against trade union militancy. The result of the miners' ballot — against strike action — gave a boost to this view. However, this remains another risk of reflation. Austerity policies forced on the working class have given the bourgeoisie a certain room to manoeuvre, but if the next move is misjudged, then 'all our hard work and sacrifice' could go to waste in a bout of inflation, financial panic and insolvency. This would occur not because workers had instigated the crisis, but merely because they had become obstacles to the bourgeoisie's attempts to solve their crisis at our expense.

In the not very long term, the British ruling class has had it. Over the past two years economic oblivion has stared it in the face and it has only survived through implementing austerity measures on the working class. This has given it some dreams of recovery, but nobody can believe that this can be more than temporary. Recovery, such as there is, will be to our cost, in terms of more unemployment, harsher conditions of work and lower living standards. Workers can only recover once we begin to deal the bourgeoisie blows from which it will not recover.

Tony Allen

Reflate the next step

The CBI wants £3 billion. Len Murray wants £8.3 billion. How much can you afford? Do a small business a big turn in 1982. Send all industry aid and cash injections to finance the recovery of revolutionary politics to:

RCT Association,
PO Box BM RCP,
London WC1N 3XX.

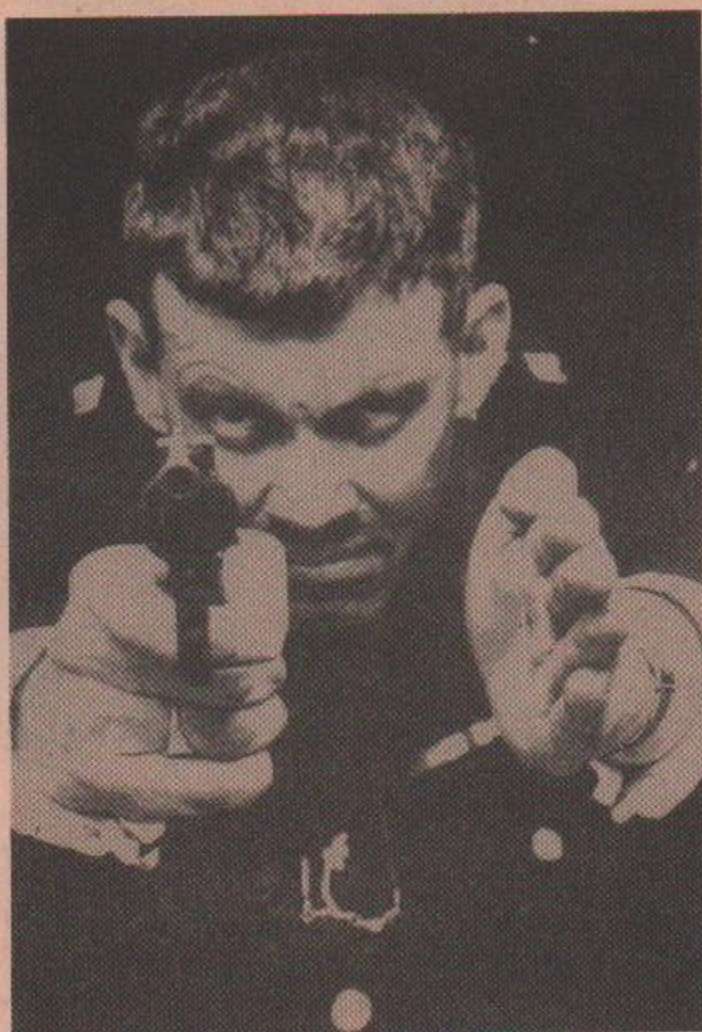
the next step

"The establishment gives every sign of being scared to rule. The police are effectively told to go out into the community in the name of that false god "Community" and bathe with ointment the feet of young thugs they should be arresting. Given such a comprehensive failure of will, is anybody surprised that last year's looters and arsonists are swaggering in the streets?" (*The Daily Telegraph*, 8 February)

TELEGRAPH EDITORIALS aren't noted for their moderate language. Their strident calls for 'law and order', coupled with derisory comments about the recent appointment of the wet Sir George Young as 'Junior Minister for Race Relations' — "one is reminded of the Soviet Minister for [unobtainable] Fruit and Vegetables" (*The Daily Telegraph*, 14 February) — have struck a sensitive nerve ending. *The Guardian* and the 'quality' Sunday press felt obliged to reprimand their Fleet Street colleagues for such unkind and intemperate remarks.

The liberals want to give Sir George a chance and are still droning on about racial harmony and good community relations. Meanwhile the writing is already on the wall. Violent street crime in general, and "muggings" in particular, are said to be up by at least 50 per cent in the inner city areas which were the scene of last year's riots — and by nearly 100 per cent in some London boroughs, like Lewisham. Black youths in St Paul's and Liverpool 8 have been demonstrating that their hatred of the police — 'community' variety or otherwise — is undiminished. The scene is already set for major confrontations with the police in 1982.

And the police are gearing up for it. In spite of reassurances that saturation policing is 'out', that the police have learnt their lesson since "Swamp '81" in Brixton, coercive police tactics are everywhere in evidence. In Brixton, Dalston and elsewhere police carried out saturation exercises on the week-end of the recent Bristol and Toxteth disturbances. For every community cop trying to walk nonchalantly down the Front Line there are van-loads of SPG waiting down the back-streets. In Coventry special armed police units have seen action over recent months. Many are trained as sharpshooters — though the local police spokesman assures us they 'only shoot when ordered' and then only 'mostly against animals — when you have a bear breaking out of a zoo' (*Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 3 February). Northumberland police are currently undergoing training in 'the stress consequences of street fighting', with a team of doctors



GETTING ROUGH

and psychologists on call to check their responses.

Itchy fingers

But of course the police aren't their own masters. They may 'run riot' occasionally, as they did in St Paul's recently. They beat up a 38 year old black woman, Mrs Agatha Royal, dragging her through the streets by the legs, punching and kicking her in the kidneys. Police chiefs may make pronouncements in *Police Review* on the need for more 'positive policing' as against the softly-softly approach. But it's the government of the day that calls the shots, provides the money and gives the hard-men the green light. And the Tory Government, elected on a law and order platform, can't be seen to be

'scared to rule'. With an eye to the next election, and suffering body-blows from within and without, the Party's got to shape up quickly.

The groundwork has already been done. The Great Rape Debate is being used to introduce harsher legislation and longer prison sentences for all crimes (the prison population has risen by 2300 in the last six weeks). The widespread publicity given to the "mugging" figures is building up a political climate to justify putting the boot in. The signals are coming across loud and clear. The Government's rejection of statutory police liaison committees, disciplinary measures against racist police or other measures which, as Whitelaw put it, might make 'police officers refrain from doing their

duty for fear of complaints' — and the general lukewarm response to Scarman — make it clear where matters stand.

Prominent advocates of community policing have all been given the push in recent months: Alderson, the gentlemanly police chief from Devon and Cornwall; Webb, the community policing pioneer from Handsworth; David Lane of the CRE — all have been forced out. Community policing isn't yet a dead duck. But what the *Telegraph* calls 'the negligentsia' — 'that alliance of the smart and the wrong who turned last summer's riots into an inquisition against the police' — is being firmly put in its place.

Still backing Brixton

The best place for them is of course on the Opposition benches, perpetuating the myth that in crisis-stricken Britain, policing can be anything other than racist. Down in Lambeth, the Labour Party's busy debating the pros and cons of statutory versus non-statutory police liaison committees (*Socialist Organiser* favours the latter). Up on Merseyside, Mrs Simey — the Labour Party chair of the local Police Committee who achieved notoriety last year when she said Toxteth's blacks 'would have been apathetic if they didn't riot' — has changed her tune. She is keen to push ahead with community policing, more street-lamps and landscape gardening in Liverpool 8: 'We want peace above all else. The economic programme must be dealt with, so I beg people to be patient with Mr Heseltine as I beg them to be patient with the police. I think the police have made a big effort and are trying' (*The Guardian*, 8 February). *Militant* too has been very helpful in recent months, pointing out that 'unless the underlying social conditions are changed, and the police made democratically accountable, there will inevitably be renewed conflict' (4 December).

We would put it a different way. Renewed conflict, on an ever larger scale, is inevitable. Unless and until we destroy the influence of those who, under the guise of 'Backing Brixton — Toxteth — St Paul's', are firmly backing the state, the police will win hands down. The Commission for Racial Equality recently quoted what the next step said about the riots last time round, that 'organised class violence is the only answer to the violence of the fascists and the state' (*New Community*, Autumn 1981). As the going gets even rougher in 1982, that statement, so objectionable to Whitelaw's liberal critics, rings truer every day.

Six Asian and West Indian families, all living within a few hundred yards of each other in Plaistow, are getting regularly harassed by racist thugs. ELWAR needs more volunteers to help patrol the area, sit in with the families and build support in the local area for a campaign to isolate those responsible for the attacks. So far over 100 anti-racists have joined in the work, local trade unionists are urging their branches to get involved and meetings are being held in Newham to help step up the action. Contact Keith Tompson on 01-274 3951 (24 hours) for details.

Plaistow: the catalogue of terror

The Saddique family moved into the area four weeks ago. The attacks began while they were moving their furniture into their home. Their windows have been broken, their van windows smashed, their front door kicked and they have been threatened with attack while they are asleep.

The Amin family have been under attack for three years. Windows have been regularly broken and the family threatened. Both Mr Amin and his wife have been arrested for attempting to defend their home from attackers. Three weeks ago Mr Amin's nose was broken, his face cut and bruised and his glasses smashed. He was also threatened by racists carrying a breadknife.

The N family have also had their windows broken regularly (Newham Council have refused to repair this damage until the family pays for it). In one such attack last year the attackers climbed up the side of the house and smashed

the second-floor windows. The police were called and although the family identified the attackers no arrests were made.

CA a West Indian woman (single parent, mother of three) works at night. While she was at work one night her windows were smashed and racist graffiti painted on her front door. Her nine year old son was forced to deal with the situation. Since then he has been attacked on the streets. Again, when the family defended the boy they were the ones to be arrested, not the racists.

Abdul R and his family have also been under attack since they moved into their new council

home a few months ago. He is a carpenter and a member of UCATT. Nearly every window in their house has been smashed at one time or another. The reinforced glass on the front door has a number of holes in it. Bricks and milk bottles have been hurled into the house while the family have been asleep. A large number of missiles have landed in the children's bedroom. Gangs of racists taunt the family from outside their house every few nights.

An Asian widow hasn't left home in over two months for fear of being attacked, something which has happened regularly in the past.

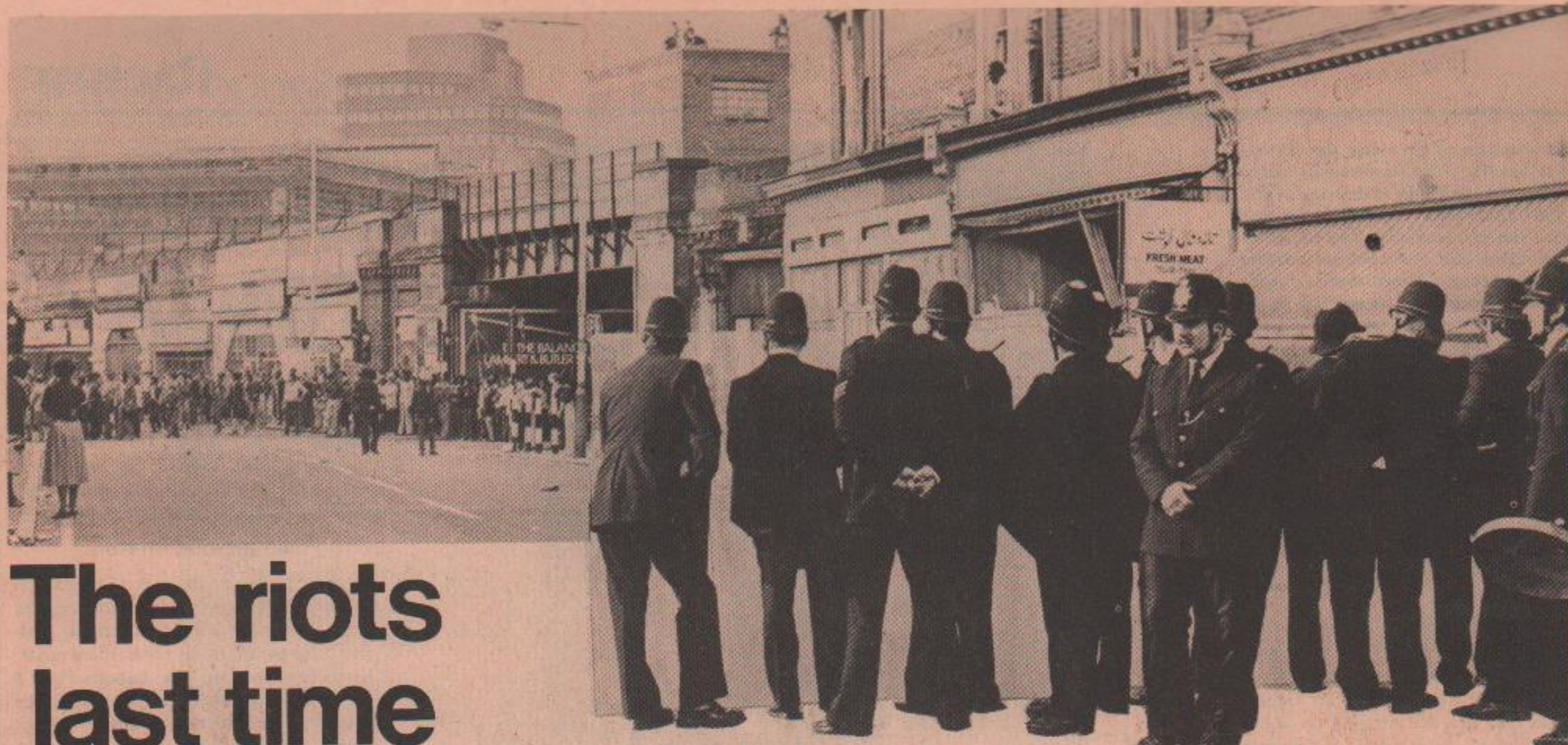
Question time

On 29 January Nicholas Winterton, Tory MP for Macclesfield, asked Whitelaw a Parliamentary question:

'Has he any evidence of vigilante groups operating in East London and other inner-city areas... will he seek to proscribe the East London Workers Against Racism vigilante group?' (*Hansard*, Vol 16, No 46, col 451)

Well, will he? The Home Secretary was evasive: 'The police will take appropriate action'. We need your money to fight back against non-stop police harassment. Rush donations to ELWAR, c/o Box 22, 136 Kingsland High St, E8.

East London Workers Against Racism



The riots last time

After last year's riots the battle-lines are already being drawn for large-scale confrontations between police and black youth again in 1982. In St Paul's and Liverpool 8 the black communities have been demonstrating what they think of the Labour left's answer to the riots of 1981 — community policing. Judith Harrison looks at *Rebellion and Repression*, a special double issue of the Institute of Race Relations journal *Race and Class*.

1952 WAS AN appropriate year for the establishment of an 'Institute of Race Relations'. The sun was setting on the British Empire, the colonial administrators were on their way home, and British imperialism was turning its attention to the problems of hanging on to the Commonwealth in the post-colonial era. The IRR was initially a department of the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House. In a speech to that venerable body, a former member of the Government of India Reforms Commission H V Hodson summed up the major preoccupations of the British ruling class in the post-war era:

'There are two problems in world politics today which transcend all others. They're the struggle between communism and liberal democracy, and the problem of race relations.' (*International Affairs*, 3 July 1950)

With this dual threat in mind, the IRR's governing board was staffed by colonial businessmen, administrators and academics. Its first Director was a veteran of the Indian Service.

Organising 'race relations'

Supposedly an autonomous, independent body, the IRR was financed from the outset by mining companies in central and southern Africa. Its first research grant was donated by the Rockefeller Foundation, and later it received generous subsidies from Shell, Ford and other multinational corporations. At first IRR money was directed into research on how to maintain stability in post-colonial Africa. However, after the 1958 race riots in Notting Hill and Nottingham, the IRR increasingly turned its attention to 'race relations' at home. By 1965 it was considered sufficiently important to receive a substantial grant from the Home Office. The IRR's chairman, Dr Leslie Farrer-Brown, ingeniously responded by saying that whereas previously the Institute's 'reputation for independence of outlook' would have been prejudiced by accepting government funds, by 1965 this was no longer a problem.

The conservative outlook of the IRR in a climate of increasing racial oppression inevitably led to conflicts among its staff. An internal revolt, which eventually came to a head in 1972, began in the Institute's library. At the

time, A Sivanandan, currently the Director of the IRR and editor of *Race and Class*, was the chief librarian and he played a central role in the power struggle. In his account of the affair (*Race and resistance: the IRR story*) Sivanandan describes how the growing numbers of black activists who visited the library helped to radicalise the staff, making them aware that in spite of all their research 'nowhere in that vast output was there a coherent picture of immediate black reality'. *Race Today*, one of the IRR's publications, became a vehicle for the dissidents' views. After a bitter and protracted fight, the old guard was ousted by an overwhelming majority (94 votes to eight) of the Institute's members and the new IRR was born.

What's new?

Thirty years after the foundation of the first IRR, and ten years after the creation of its more radical successor, *Race and Class* (the IRR's theoretical journal) has devoted a special double issue to analysing the inner-city revolts of 1981. Many of the old names are still there: Sivanandan himself; Tony Bunyan (of *State Research*); Louis Bridges (lecturer in Judicial Administration at Birmingham University) — they were all founding members of the new IRR. So were John La Rose, Peter Hain, Vishnu Sharma, Darcus Howe, Ann Dummett, John Rex and many other influential figures in the world of race relations. At the time of the left-wing takeover of the IRR Joe Rogaly wrote in the *Financial Times* that it had 'been infiltrated by would-be revolutionaries and radicals who have sought, with some success, to turn it into a machine for propaganda against the government and capitalism'. Have old Joe Rogaly's worst suspicions been realised?

At first sight we might be tempted to answer — yes. Certainly this latest issue of *Race and Class* adopts a very militant stance. Certain themes are emphasised throughout: the 'riots' were a response to racism (not the Tories or unemployment); the Labour Party and the TUC are as racist as the Tories; 'community policing' is just another name for intensifying repression whilst heading off black militancy. All these observations make a refreshing change from the apologetic writings of the British radical

left — the 'poverty of white Marxist philosophy' referred to in the *Race and Class* editorial. Where *Race and Class* falls short of Rogaly's expectations is not on the level of description and radical rhetoric, but on what to do to change the immediate black reality.

What next?

One of the most striking features of *Race and Class* is its scant treatment of racism in Britain. While it has published detailed articles about Third World struggles, most of its discussion of British racism tends to have a general academic flavour. The latest issue, *Rebellion and repression*, contains only a few paragraphs on last summer's revolt. Reading page after page, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that today's IRR is out of touch with what's going on in the streets.

Sivanandan's key-note article 'From resistance to rebellion: Asian and Afro-Caribbean struggles in Britain' illustrates the distance of the IRR from the struggle. The closer it gets to the present, the more general is the analysis. It appears that his discussion of the last two or three years is almost entirely drawn from leaflets and pamphlets. This leads to a one-sided approach. He seriously overestimates the influence of the black youth organisations and women's groups that emerged in the late 'seventies. In general, these organisations represented a momentary break with the older, more conservative sections of the black community and they have had great difficulty in sustaining any militant campaign in the face of massive state repression and co-optation. Their relationship to the inner-city uprisings of 1981 was about as 'organic' as that of the mythical outside agitators conjured up by the gutter press. Not surprisingly Sivanandan ignores the problem of isolation that many black activists experience today.

On the other hand, Sivanandan grossly underestimates the problems that radical black youth are up against. He does not mention the 3000 young blacks arrested in the aftermath of the 'riots'. Nor has he anything to say about the trials that are still going on and the many victims of the kangaroo courts who are fighting alone. In addition, the picture of growing unity among the Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities drawn by Sivanandan bears little relationship to reality. Whereas in 1968 large numbers of West Indians marched in solidarity with 'Ugandan Asians' under attack from the new Immigration Act, in 1981 Asians marched virtually alone against the Nationality Act as did West Indians after the New Cross Massacre.

Oblivious to day to day political

problems, Sivanandan simply cheers on black youth from the sidelines. Rather than analysing, he glorifies their struggle without even pretending to offer any solutions.

The Labour Party — a non-question?

Race and Class likes to dismiss the Labour Party as an important political issue. It's obvious that Labour governments have been even more racist than the Tories, so why bother discussing it? Yet the fact remains that most black people not only continue to vote Labour, but are profoundly influenced by the Labour Party's more radical spokesmen. The success of Brent Labour Party in recruiting blacks is based on its claim that Labour can be forced to take heed of black people's interests.

In fact *Race and Class*' pretensions to neutrality or even hostility towards the Labour Party don't ring true. For when it comes to the central feature of the Labour left's response to the riots, its demand for greater police 'accountability', the editorial staff give it their collective blessing. Whilst condemning community policing as merely a subtle form of repression, Lee Bridges, in his article, 'Urban social policy', is at pains to emphasise that community policing 'has nothing to do with the local democratic control of the police now being widely demanded'. On the contrary, he argues, 'community policing, fully developed, represents a means for circumventing democratic control of the police by local authorities'. Tony Bunyan, another co-author, is an enthusiastic champion of police accountability. And Sivanandan concludes his own article with doom-laden words about how 'the police have moved from accountability to legitimisation'. Indeed, in its evidence to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure in 1979 ('Police against black people'), the IRR went much further, calling for more bobbies on the beat.

The accommodation of *Race and Class* to the reformist solution to bad 'police/community relations' makes a mockery of its academic critique of state 'co-optation' and 'integrationism' elsewhere. The IRR seems unaware of the co-optation of defence committees and prominent black leaders by community relations councils and local government agencies.

The fatal combination of academic radicalism and political diffuseness that characterises the pages of *Race and Class* means that its analysis is easily reconciled with reformist race relations politics. At a time when the British state is preparing a new onslaught on black youth, 'Rebellion and repression' highlights only the irrelevance of the political approach of *Race and Class*.

Wrecking the race checks

Dirty tricks at the dole

ON MONDAY 15 FEBRUARY the Department of Employment launched its racist pilot scheme at 14 dole offices, to check the ethnic origin of claimants. And the DE has been using every dirty trick in the book to try and dissuade CPSA members at the Unemployment Benefit Offices from blocking the scheme.

Backfired

On Friday 12 February workers at Battersea dole tried to hold a workplace meeting to discuss what action to take on the following Monday. Management produced a DE circular stating that such meetings weren't allowed! The DE's plan backfired. By Monday Battersea was out on strike and the picket called by WAR over the race checks swelled to over 70 workers and claimants.

At Hendon dole CPSA members met with the same response from management, so they held their meeting in a nearby car park and voted to boycott the scheme. The DE promptly sent its race relations advisors down to explain to staff on the fresh claims desk that there's nothing racist about the checks — they're just 'collecting statistics to promote equal opportunities'.

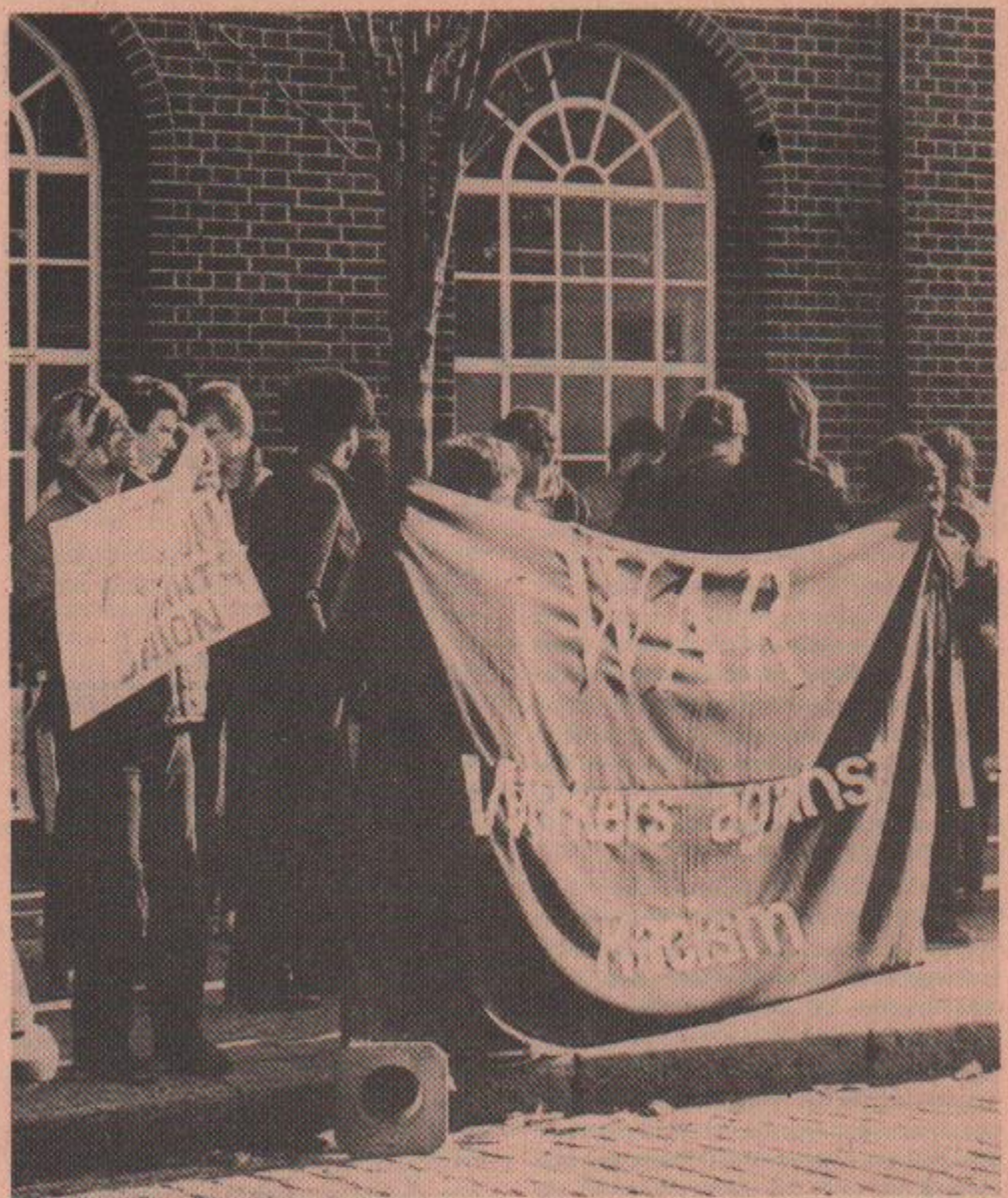
The DE is using a mixture of persuasion and outright intimidation to try and block the campaign against the checks in the unions. At South-East London UBOs CPSA members have been refused annual leave or 'flexi-time', to prevent them leafletting claimants at Deptford dole where

the 'card system' of ethnic monitoring is being tried out. Deptford staff have been warned against advising claimants not to cooperate. At Washwood Heath in Birmingham non-union members are being used to implement the checks. Meanwhile the DE continues to protest that ethnic monitoring is entirely non-racist.

Backing down

Unfortunately the CPSA leadership agrees. Although they're formally opposed to the current pilot scheme they neither reject ethnic monitoring on principle, nor have they given their local sub-branches any official backing. This means that workers at Hendon, Harrow, Battersea and other UBOs that have taken action face suspension from the union. It means that union representatives at weaker dole offices feel reluctant to call their members out. The CPSA is playing into the DE's hands.

With only another couple of weeks to go — the scheme is intended to run for four weeks — it's vital that action is stepped up at the UBOs. WAR has been organising regular pickets, leafletting claimants and holding public meetings around the country to build up the opposition. Our members in the civil service unions are putting pressure on to get official backing for a policy of total non-cooperation with the scheme. We're linking up with trade unionists at DHSS offices, and also in the hospitals, where parallel race checks are being enforced.



Divide and rule

At a time when the DE has just spat in the faces of civil servants, offering 65 000 clerical officers no pay increase at all this year — whilst trying to buy off computer staff and Nuclear Installations workers with 10-11 per cent rises — it's even more important to resist the race checks. The DE tries to divide and rule on every level; between different departments and grades

of workers; between one union and another — and now by singling out black claimants for attack. They are already referred to in an internal DE report (Rayner) as the most likely group of claimants to defraud. The next step is to deprive them of benefits, and get rid of thousands more jobs at the same time. Join WAR's campaign now. WRECK THE CHECKS!

Marcelle Reynolds

Smiths Gas Meters Police sniff out 'illegal' workers

IMMIGRATION POLICE have been out fishing again recently. Last year they pulled off a spectacular series of raids on workplaces, resulting in mass deportations of black workers. Edmonton's Main Gas plant was one. Gas seems to attract them. On 6 January they turned up at Smiths Gas Meters in Streatham Vale, South London, and announced to the security guards: 'We're taking over'. They had 18 warrants with them, for black workers suspected of being illegal immigrants. Four managed to get away by jumping over the factory wall. The rest were rounded up and taken away. Four have since been held at Ashford Remand Centre awaiting deportation.

As at Edmonton last year, most of the workers were Nigerian. And the response from the main union involved, the GMWU, has been very similar too. In both cases the shop-stewards and con-

venors felt that once the workers were shown to be 'illegal', there was nothing they could do. But there is! Smiths employs 700 workers, mainly black, a lot of them women. It used to have a workforce of 3000. The same fatalism about the immigration raid has also been displayed over the loss of nearly two and a half thousand jobs — and there are 200 more redundancies on the way. The working conditions are lousy too. One woman worker told us:

The biggest deal the unions seem to have negotiated for us is a reduction in our working week from 40 to 39 hours. That was back in 1979 and it's only just been implemented. But anyway our ten minute teabreak on Friday has been scrapped; we've lost one minute off our three minute wash break; two minutes off our half-hour lunch hour — and so it goes on. They've made up for 59 of the 60 minutes we're supposed to have got.

A young Asian worker complained about management demanding to check his passport when he came for the job. Most workers don't even know what union they're in. The list of grievances is endless, and it's clear that management could only get away with what they do — including setting up 18 workers they wanted to get rid of — because the union has let them.

WAR is fighting this case; organising defence for the workers involved; mobilising trade union support in South London and organising a meeting in the area. Many workers at Smiths believe similar raids have taken place in the area recently and these are being investigated. The GMWU has a well-publicised campaign on equal opportunities running at the moment. Let's see some action from their local and national officials!

Anita Lloyd

POLICE OFF OUR BACKS!

Friday 12 March

SOLWAR public meeting.
Room 119,
Lambeth Town Hall,
Acre Lane, Brixton SW2.
7.30pm.

CLEANSING OUR RANKS

Had enough of official declarations against racism which amount to nothing? Worried about nationality checks and colour bars at work? Want to fight them in your union? Then get **Cleansing our ranks** — a platform for anti-racist trade unionists! We believe the trade union movement can and must become an effective weapon in the anti-racist struggle. But we must put our own house in order first, we must **cleanse our ranks!** Send 35p (p+p incl) for one, or £2 for 10 copies (post free) to Junius Publications, BCM JPLTD, London WC1N 3XX. Cheques payable to Junius Publications.

Plus local WAR activities in your area.
See back page for details.

WAR IN ACTION

Defend overseas students!
Stop the hospital race checks.

Tuesday 2 March

● Central London Poly
Bolsover St, 12.30

Thursday 4 March

● Middlesex Poly Enfield site 6pm
● City of London Poly,
Calcutta House, 5pm.

Tuesday 16 March

WAR trade union sub-committee

To discuss work place action against racist checks in the public sector.
Club room, Conway Hall, Red Lion
Square WC1 (near Holborn tube).
7.00pm



Women for Communism

Abortion: Not the Church, not the state... Not the doctor either

The defence of abortion rights must not be restricted to protecting the control over access to abortion granted to the medical profession under the 1967 Act, argues Helen Swift.

ABORTION RIGHTS are under a two-pronged attack. First the wording of the notification form which doctors must fill out following an abortion has been altered, removing the social clause under which between 80 and 85 per cent of all abortions are carried out. This attempt to restrict the availability of abortion was introduced surreptitiously, through an obscure parliamentary manoeuvre in March 1981.

The second way in which access to abortion is being curtailed is through the steady reduction in NHS facilities as a consequence of public spending cuts. The transfer of more and more NHS functions into the sphere of private health care means an ever deteriorating service for the working class. The case of abortion provisions is an extreme example. In 1969 67 per cent of all abortions were carried out on the NHS; in 1980 the figure was 46 per cent. In the 'seventies' charities filled some of the gap, allowing some respite for women who could not afford full private fees. But the recession has hit the charities too: in 1977 they covered 29 per cent of all abortions, but three years later the proportion has sunk to 25 per cent. The private clinics however are booming – their share of the market grew from 20 per cent in 1977 to 29 per cent in 1980. As the private sector expands and the cost of

an abortion rises, they become increasingly difficult for working class women to obtain.

Doctor knows best?

The change in the abortion notification form is an important infringement on women's rights. No doubt it is true, as the President of the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology has remarked, that doctors can easily get around the precise wording of the form. But it is nevertheless a backdoor attempt to tighten up access to abortion and it must be fought all the way. However, for working class women with unwanted pregnancies, the biggest obstacle to getting an abortion is not the wording of the DHSS form, but shortage of money and available facilities. Yet the opposition to the current attack on abortion rights – from the National Abortion Campaign, the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign and the Abortion Law Reform Association – has focused almost exclusively on restoring the original wording of the notification form.

Today's abortion rights campaigners in the women's movement and in the labour movement take their lead from the medical profession. The leading figure the resistance to the alteration of the notification form is Professor Peter Huntingford, a prominent consultant

obstetrician and gynaecologist. Huntingford is an old-fashioned liberal. He believes in the rights of the individual, the proper processes of parliamentary democracy and in the independence and integrity of the medical profession. Doctors are staunch defenders of the 1967 Abortion Act – as a profession they have opposed all the restrictive amendments proposed over the last few years by White, Benyon and Corrie. Doctors like the 1967 Act because it enhances their social power by giving them full control over access to abortion.

The spirit of '67

The left is united with the doctors behind the 1967 Act. Feminist Labour MP Jo Richardson recently defended 'the spirit of the Act'. The Communist Party echoed:

'The spirit of the 1967 Act was decided in Parliament. That must be defended. A woman's right to choose must be defended. The Department of Health and Social Security should be told now to honour that spirit.' (*Morning Star*, 21 January)

And the Socialist Workers Party has taken the radical consultant obstetrician to its bosom: 'Dr Peter Huntingford is determined to defy the Tories' sudden twist in the abortion law – even if it means going to prison' (*Socialist Worker*, 6 February).

But what was 'the spirit' of the 1967 Act? The Act made abortion legal in a wider variety of circumstances than had been previously allowed. It was motivated by a combination of bourgeois concern to free women for the labour market, petit-bourgeois liberalism and traditional paternalism towards 'those least blessed in education or intelligence' who 'deserve our sympathy and help' (Dr Malcolm Potts, *Abortion: the NHS and the charities*, Birth Control Trust).

The 1967 Act does not give women any 'right to choose'. All the choices and all the decisions are in the hands of the doctors. Abortion is legal when two doctors agree to it, on medical or social grounds. If a woman is unlucky and has

a GP or a local consultant who chooses not to grant an abortion, then that's too bad. One result of the doctors' right to choose is enormous regional variations in the availability of abortions. In the North in 1980, 4915 abortions were done on the NHS, 39 in the private sector. In the West Midlands where Catholics rule the obstetric hierarchy, 3013 abortions were performed on the NHS, 10 256 privately.

Free abortion on demand!

The 1967 Act does not guarantee women free abortion on demand. The NHS has never provided adequate facilities to meet the demand for abortion; the cuts are making NHS provision more and more inadequate. If abortion is not to be reduced to an exclusive privilege of the wealthy, a major campaign against NHS cuts and the restrictive terms of the 1967 Act is urgently necessary. Invoking the spirit of '67 and defending the medical monopoly over abortion is no way to defend women's rights against the Tory onslaught.

The Women for Communism group in Manchester has circulated the following motion to be raised in workplaces and union branches:

This union notes the recent attack on the 'social clause' of the 1967 Abortion Act, under which more than 1 200 000 women have had abortions since the Act was introduced.

This attack occurs in the context of a more serious long-term attack on abortion rights, through the cuts and the privatisation of health care.

The branch should

- campaign against all cuts in facilities for women – nurseries, family planning and abortion facilities
- call for free abortion on demand
- affiliate to Women for Communism which is campaigning for these policies in the labour movement
- send £5 to Women for Communism, Box 33, 164-166, Corn Exchange Building, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M4 3BD.

Sexual harassment GET THE BOSSSES!

When Tameside NALGO voted at its Annual General Meeting last year to combat sexual harassment at work it provoked widespread comment in the press, a noxious mixture of chauvinist and anti-trade union prejudice. But, asks Kate Marshall, is this really the way to fight for women's rights at work?

'Sex is a dirty word down at the Town Hall. Even a saucy glance across the filing cabinet could land some office staff in trouble.' (*Daily Star*, 1 December 1981)

THE PRESS trivialises sexual harassment. The 'bottom-pinchers', the 'leerers' and the 'office Romeos' are accepted as a normal part of office life; those who object are dismissed as silly 'women's libbers', prudes who are unable to take a joke or receive a compliment. The press makes out that all is harmonious and equal between men and women at work. But it isn't. Women are created unequal by the capitalist class that controls their access to jobs. Women have lost jobs because they have rejected the lecherous advances of their 'superiors'. But this is of no concern to Fleet Street. Sex sells papers, so Tameside NALGO took its place alongside Page 3, prurient exposure stories and lurid court reports.

'Union seeks to outlaw "leering" at Town Hall', headlined the Tory/Church of England *Daily Telegraph* (3 December). It reported a councillor who had 'heard

one young man say that before he asks a girl for a date, he will check whether she is in NALGO'. A London newspaper scoffed at the prospect of industrial action: 'The thought of the cry "Out, brothers out!" every time Perkins makes a suggestive remark to one of the girls on the switchboard is ludicrous' (*Islington Gazette*, 20 November). The press uses any incident it can to whip up public hostility against the unions. But why did Tameside NALGO take up this issue?

NALGO has more full-time women officials than any other union – 17, including Mary Johnson, who proposed the motion at Tameside. The motion was not a response to any particular incident or the result of discussion among the rank and file – it arrived in the mail from head office. Sister Johnson explains:

'The issue is not in any way a personal one. It was raised in my capacity as Equal Opportunities representative of the Branch. NALGO nationally has accepted sexual harassment as an issue and issued guidelines on how to deal with cases should they arise.'

The NALGO national executive has agreed that women should have the right to complain about harassment. The full-time official is authorised to approach the employer – usually a borough council – and seek a formal procedure for dealing with the complaint of one employee against another.

Such procedures already exist to handle disputes among workers: they also allow employers to dismiss workers for disciplinary offences. They are often used against militants. It is unlikely that management would object to strengthening its disciplinary code by including an additional rule about sexual harassment. But what use would it be to women? The benefits are more for NALGO than its members.

First, NALGO has been seen to take up the cause of women's rights in a radical new way. But it has chosen to take up the peripheral issue of sexual harassment in a period of massive attacks on women workers, when the Tories are slashing the local government resources and enforcing large scale redundancies in the town halls. Many of these jobs are women's jobs and they are disappearing fast. At a time when services provided through local government are being decimated, NALGO has seized its moment to issue a leaflet, 'Sexual harassment is a trade union issue'. This radical departure is certainly a change from the days when bureaucrats stuttered if they had to say the word 'abortion', but it is no answer to the real oppression women face as a result of the crisis. In fact NALGO's sexual harassment policy is nothing but a cover-up for its inaction in defending jobs and services.

Second, the feminists in NALGO are happy because 'sexual politics' is on the agenda. Feminists who give priority to

the issues which affect only women rather than emphasise those issues which affect women and can unite the working class against the bosses, will see NALGO's policy as a step in the right direction. The feminist emphasis on 'sexism' shifts the problem from the realm of real attacks to the realm of ideology.

Women for Communism

It does not surprise us that textbooks and newspapers and men in powerful positions regard women with contempt. They have similar views about blacks, the Irish, gays and the working class in general. The problem is that these ideas permeate into the working class where they are an obstacle to a united fight against the capitalism which oppresses us all. This is the context in which we fight against the philistinism of male workers in their attitudes to women.

As communists we object to all expressions of chauvinism – from 'jokes' to physical intimidation. We challenge them in the same way that we challenge other ruling class prejudices in the working class – with political argument, counter-intimidation and collective action. But in doing this we should have as our end the involvement of male workers in the fight against the impact of the recession on women workers. Our right to work is at stake. We can fight the backward attitudes of the men we work with best if we fight to convince them that our interests coincide, and that there is work to be done beating off the assault we all face from capitalism in crisis. Trade union action against sexual harassment must be real action, not token gestures. And it must be complementary to the fight to defend living standards and working conditions, not an alternative to it.

Soviet expansionism,
European pacifism

Cold war illusions

A third world war is no longer unthinkable. An arms race of enormous proportions signals the emergence of a new phase of militarism. Strident anti-Soviet propaganda and economic conflicts among the Western powers reveal growing East-West and inter-imperialist tensions. In this 3-page feature on the drive towards another world war, Frank Richards examines the forces behind the growth of militarism and reviews E P Thompson's latest response, *Beyond the cold war*.

internal dynamic to accumulate and therefore the Soviet economy always faces the problem of stagnation. Nor does the Soviet Union export capital: not only does it not produce capital, but it has no resources to spare for export. Whilst the Soviet Union is not an imperialist country, it does seek foreign allies. Sometimes it uses political or military pressure and sometimes it provides military aid to cement alliances.

Imperialist countries are able to use their dominant position on the world market to impose an economic stranglehold on backward capitalist countries. However, because the Soviet Union is unable to dominate the economies of its allies, its hold over Third World countries is tenuous. It has been unable to compete effectively with imperialism in the Third World. While many on the left believe that the Soviet Union is imperialist, leading Western experts have no such illusions. A recent survey of Soviet influence abroad by the Washington-based Center for Defense Information concluded that outside Eastern Europe the Soviet Union lacked 'staying power'. The report observed that of the 155 countries in the world, Moscow has influence in 19. Moreover, it argued that marginal advances in minor countries have been dwarfed by Soviet setbacks in China, Indonesia, Egypt, India and Iraq. Temporary successes in backward capitalist countries have proved very costly for the Soviet Union to maintain ('Soviet geopolitical momentum: myth or menace

— trends of Soviet influence around the world from 1945 to 1980', *The Defence Monitor*, January 1980).

Whose arms race?

Public claims by the US Government about Soviet aggression are not taken too seriously outside Washington's foreign relations committee. In a recent issue of the State Department-funded *Problems of communism*, a former member of the US embassy in Ethiopia gave a realistic assessment of Soviet influence there:

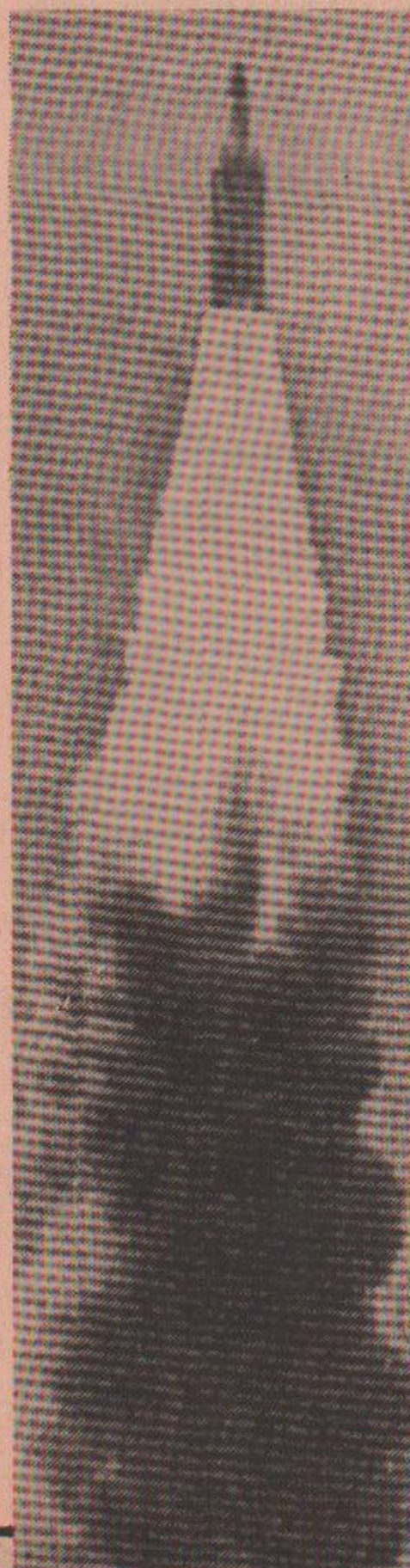
'As one assesses the prospects for the future of the Ethiopian revolution it is clear that the Soviet Union and its allies are of decreasing relevance to the solution of Mengistu's domestic and foreign problems.

'Consequently, the position of the Russians and Cubans in Ethiopia grows less comfortable with each month that passes.' (P B Henze, 'Communism in Ethiopia', *Problems of communism*, May/June 1981)

The case of El Salvador is even more transparent. In February 1981 the US State Department published a White Paper entitled 'Communist interference in El Salvador', presenting 'evidence' of Soviet and Cuban involvement. Within a month the White Paper was exposed as a tissue of lies. Former Defence Secretary Harold Brown criticised the Reagan Administration's 'simplistic view of all world problems as Soviet inspired' (*New York Times*, 20 September 1981).

Behind the rhetoric about Soviet expansionism, US foreign policy is based on a shrewd assessment of the paralysis of the Soviet economy. Leading experts in the State Department believe that economic pressure will accelerate the internal collapse of the Soviet Union. This is the calculation behind Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger's call for greater restrictions on trade, technology and credit to the USSR. The American journal *Business Week* recently reported that the 'pace is too slow for impatient US hardliners, inside and outside the Reagan Administration, who want to push the entire Soviet bloc into a financial crisis by forcing Poland to default on its \$26 billion debt to the West' (8 February). The increase in American defence expenditure fits into this aggressive strategy towards the Soviet Union. The \$43.7 billion increase in arms appropriations — the largest in US 'peacetime' history — is designed to increase the strain on the Soviet economy. The costs of trying to match US military power will plunge Soviet industry into even deeper chaos. American pundits talk about the 'arms race': but the growth of arms expenditure has been entirely precipitated by the American ruling class. Even *The Economist* was forced to concede that in the military sphere 'the United States has pioneered all major recent advances' (6 February 1982).

The myth of Soviet aggression justifies Washington's rearmament programme. But what is US imperialism really up to?



THE AMERICAN RULING class justifies its military build-up and its tough talking by pointing the finger at the expansionist objectives of the Soviet Union. NATO chiefs explained their decision in December 1979 to deploy new long-range nuclear missiles in Europe as a response to the threat of Soviet expansion.

The hawk's ascent

The USA opened its attack on the Soviet Union in the diplomatic sphere during the second half of the Carter Presidency. The Carter Administration blamed the invasion of the Shaba province in Zaïre by rebel guerrillas on Moscow and denounced the Soviet presence in Angola and Ethiopia. Carter ostentatiously strengthened Washington's links with China as part of his anti-Soviet crusade. Most important of all was Carter's attempt to attribute the crisis of the Middle East, especially after the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, to Soviet manoeuvres. The 'Carter doctrine' of January 1980 raised the spectre of a Soviet 'outside force' to assert the right of US troops to invade the Middle East: 'Any attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. It will be repelled by use of any means necessary, including military force' (*The Economist*, 26 January 1980).

During the remainder of his Presidency, Carter seized on every opportunity to intensify pressure on the Soviet Union. He used the invasion of Afghanistan as an excuse to boycott the Moscow Olympics and impose economic sanctions. Reagan has continued where Carter left off. The first major foreign policy statement of the Reagan Administration was the claim that Cuban and Soviet aggression were responsible for the revolts in El Salvador and the rest of Central America. Reagan stepped up arms spending and made the 'restoration' of American military strength a key feature of his foreign policy. The Polish events added a new dimension to US anti-Sovietism: cold war propaganda became more ferocious and more pervasive.

American propagandists explain the deterioration of East-West relations as a result of the growing threat to the NATO powers of Soviet expansion. In addition to the Poles, the peoples of Angola, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and even Nicaragua are depicted as the victims of Soviet aggression. The new cold war propaganda is so powerful that even many opponents of US imperialism subscribe to it. Many on the left believe that the Soviet Union is a superpower driven by forces similar to those that push the United States towards war. The Socialist Workers Party, for example, accepts the prevalent

bourgeois prejudice that the Soviet Union is an imperialist power. The Cold War is viewed by many socialists as a consequence of bitter competition between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Is the Soviet Union on the warpath? Far from being expansionist, the Soviet Union can barely keep itself together. The structural crisis of the Soviet Union threatens the very existence of the system (see 'The year the Soviet bloc began to break up', *the next step*, No 21, January 1982). Production is stagnant, productivity is falling and every year the Soviet Union faces an agrarian disaster. This winter meat and vegetables have virtually disappeared from the shelves of food shops. In desperation the Soviet bureaucracy is selling its precious reserves of gold, diamonds, oil and gas on the world market to raise the hard currency it requires to pay its debts. For the first time in the post-war period the Soviet Union has asked Western bankers to defer payment on its debts.

Bear without claws

The Soviet Union is incapable of financing the takeover of other countries: it is in serious difficulty paying out to keep up its existing sphere of influence. Eastern Europe, Cuba and the pro-Soviet regimes in Africa constitute a major drain on Moscow's resources. Afghanistan is another heavy burden. The Soviet Union invaded, not because it wanted to extend its frontiers, but because it feared that unrest in Afghanistan would spread to Moslem republics inside the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union cannot be characterised by Marxists as an imperialist country. Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism and its central feature is the export of capital. The Soviet economy is not based on capital accumulation but on the accumulation of use values. There is no



Faded eagle

America's aggressive foreign policy has nothing to do with Soviet expansion: it is a response to the decline of the USA as the dominant imperialist power. Since the middle 'sixties US imperialism has been losing ground to its competitors. Japan and the EEC countries have forced America to retreat. The US share of total OECD industrial output fell from 44.4 per cent in 1963 to 34.9 per cent in 1975. By 1975 the industrial output of the EEC exceeded that of the USA. Declining productivity undermined the ability of the US to sell on the world market. During the 'seventies it lost 23 per cent of its share of the world market.

The recession has speeded up the decline of the United States. Since 1973, productivity in manufacturing industry has remained stagnant. Indeed, the last quarter of 1981 saw the largest drop in output per worker in the entire post-war period.

The decline of US imperialism has stirred up conflicts in the Western camp. America now sees Europe and Japan as rivals in the battle to survive. Trade rivalries are particularly important as the crisis of US industry has forced America to rely more and more on the world market. As late as 1960 only five per cent of the US GNP was exported or imported; but today exports have risen to 13 per cent.

During the last decade Washington has attempted to compensate for its economic weakness by flexing its political and military muscle. The USA's drive to impose 'strategic consensus' on NATO means forcing its imperialist rivals to line up in defence of American capital. Cold war hysteria directed against the Soviet Union provides the best means of maintaining the dominant position of US imperialism. US ambassador to the United Nations Jean Kirkpatrick recently proclaimed that 'the restoration of the subjective conviction that American power is a necessary precondition for the survival of liberal democracy' was 'the most important development in US foreign policy in the past decade' (*Commentary*, November 1981).

Paradoxically the decline of US imperialism has unleashed more strident assertions of American supremacy. The heightening of international tensions allows Washington to push economic conflicts into the realm of politics. Trade with Iran and the Soviet bloc were the first victims of this process. As the leading military power, the USA can only benefit from the East-West conflict.

Europe vs America

Reagan cannot have everything his own way. The disunity of NATO countries over Poland shows the emergence of political conflict within the imperialist camp. After a joint meeting at the end of January, French Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy and German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt spoke out against launching an economic war against the Soviet Union. Schmidt went on to criticise Reagan's high interest rate policy because of its 'fatal consequences' for Europe. The implication of this statement was clear — for the two leading imperialist powers in Europe the problem was not martial law in Poland but US competition.

Disunity over Poland is only the tip of the iceberg. Reagan is also at odds with Europe over Central America. While the Americans denounced 'Cuban intervention', the French arranged an arms deal with Nicaragua. And the voice of the British bourgeoisie declared that 'US policy towards El Salvador and the rest of Central America is appearing increasingly questionable' (*Financial Times*, 8 February, 1982). Another expression of this conflict was Europe's response to Reagan's campaign against Libya: Reagan's claims that Libyan hit men were sent to assassinate

him were treated as a joke. In addition, the USA's economic war against Libya was criticised at last November's NATO meeting of foreign ministers.

The disintegration of NATO reflects the emerging economic war in the imperialist camp. This rivalry is the most important development in the present phase of international relations. It affects every corner of the world, for ultimately imperialist nations can only survive at each others' expense. One of the most barbaric features of this rivalry is the growth of the arms trade. Recently France has overtaken the US as the main arms dealer in the Third World. Recent sales of French arms to Egypt touched off panic in Washington. *Business Week* was concerned, partly because the French arms policy would draw off funds while the US pours in non-military aid as well as low-priced arms, but mainly because of the political implications: 'Down the road is the worry that the French connection may loosen Mubarak's ties to US policy, steering him towards radical Arab politics' (8 February 1982).

The economic rivalries have reached the dimensions of a trade war. The recent decision of the Reagan administration to keep out European steel is only the most publicised conflict. But a furious struggle has broken out over a wide front: interest rates, export credit, food prices and trade in cars, aeroplanes and textiles. All the imperialist powers claim to be fervent advocates of free trade — but they all discriminate against competitors. The US aerospace industry persuaded Washington Airport last November to prohibit the French-made Airbus from landing — for 'safety' reasons, of course.

'Little Europe'

European imperialism likes to play the injured partner. A survey in the February issue of the influential French monthly, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, entitled 'The long economic war against Europe' recited a long list of sins committed by US capital. Its call for European independence has a popular resonance throughout the continent.

The growth of economic rivalries has generated strong anti-American currents in Europe. Many on the left have joined with the right to denounce American hegemony. A senior editor of the German weekly *Die Zeit* has noted the convergence of left and right in defence of 'little Europe':

'In foreign policy then, the traditional ideological chasms between left and right are narrowing; the two camps are drawing together on the joint platform of "Little Europe" nationalism and resistance to American leadership.' (J Joffe, 'European-American relations: the enduring crisis', *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1981)

Anti-American sentiment provides a focus for European nationalism. Christian Democrats in West Germany join hands with the British Labour left against the American ogre. Spiritual leader of the West German peace movement Pastor Heinrich Albertz presented himself to a large rally in Bonn last October as 'a German patriot':

'Why should voicing our national interest always be left to reactionaries? Everyone knows that in the present state of armaments, the two halves of Germany are to be the killing ground of the Great Powers.' (*The Guardian*, 12 October 1981)

For the old pastor German nationalism is alright if it serves the cause of God and peace. The British fascists are more honest and straightforward. In its discussion of the Cruise missiles a leading National Front ideologue writes:

'These missiles are American-owned and operated... the US has said that the British government would be consulted before their use, this does not alter the fact that we will have on our soil weapons and therefore targets, which may well be used, and attacked, in

pursuit of a quarrel between foreign states, which has nothing to do with Britain or the British people.' (Nick Griffin, 'Keep Britain out of capitalist wars', *Nationalism Today*, November 1980)

The anti-American movement has rallied popular support under the banner of nuclear disarmament. This movement corresponds to the interests of the European imperialist powers. While Washington wants 'restoration of military strength' Europe talks of a 'military balance through arms reduction'. The first option implies the maintenance of US hegemony; the second means its erosion.

For West Germany 'peaceful' economic relations correspond to the extension of its power at the expense of the USA. Detente with the Soviet Union gives European imperialism the space necessary to loosen US domination over much of the world market. While the European ruling class has no illusions about disarmament, the existence of a dynamic peace movement legitimises its claim to 'independence'.

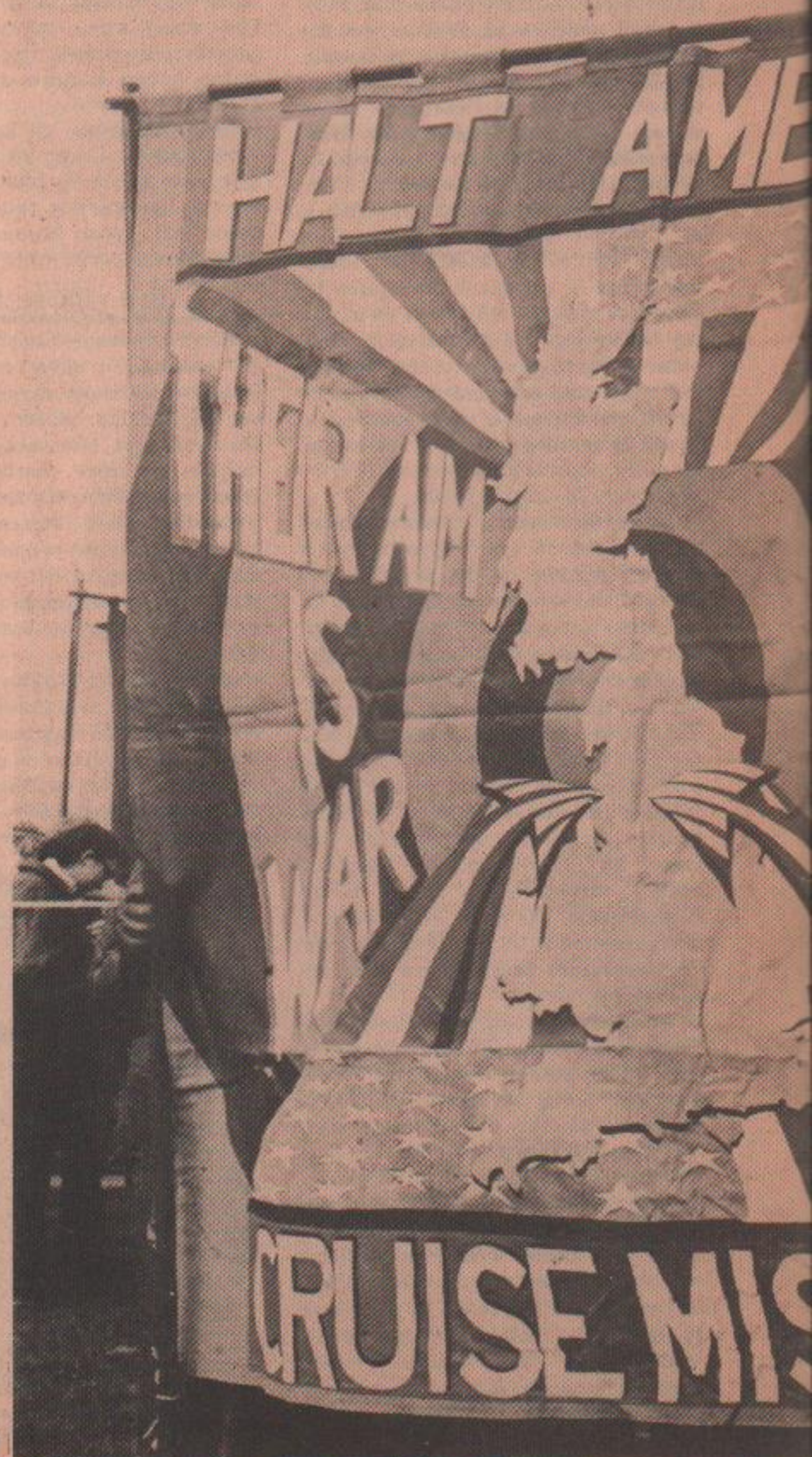
Of course the European imperialists are very selective about their commitment to peace. The socialist Mitterand Government has no inhibitions about organising military intervention in Chad. Peace-loving France has managed to peddle \$8.3 billion worth of arms to Third World customers. In the meantime, peaceful West Germany has become the paymaster of the Turkish military junta and the British army continues to keep the peace in Ireland.

Towards imperialist war

The Soviet Union has very little to do with the rise of militarism and the growth of imperialist rivalries. Under the banner of fighting Soviet aggression the imperialist powers are arming to the teeth. The arms race is the product of a decadent ruling class determined to postpone its demise. The decline of US imperialism coincides with the greatest crisis of the capitalist system in half a century. This crisis has unleashed a struggle amongst the imperialist powers which leads inevitably towards war.

The arms race is fuelled by capital's relentless drive to accumulate. All obstacles to accumulation must be destroyed by a system whose only allegiance is to profit. The fact that the US wants to raise tensions while Europe wants to ease them is incidental. It is simply a question of timing. The day after tomorrow West Germany or Japan or any combination of imperialist powers will launch a new arms race in the name of peace, justice and freedom. In this conflict there are no innocent parties.

The drive towards militarism has thrown the European left into ever deeper confusion. Rather than fight the system that generates militarism, it has lined up on one side of the conflict, for Europe, against the USA. In reality this means, not some 'third road', but acquiescence to the policies of European imperialism. For genuine anti-militarists the alternative is clear. Fight militarism, fight the nationalism that masquerades as pacifist anti-Americanism! The enemy is at home!



The European disarmament campaign aims at peace, but mobilises Europeans to back their own

EP Thompson
against the Yanks

Fighting for Europe

E P Thompson, *Beyond the Cold War*, Merlin Press, 1982, pp36, pbk £0.60.

THE MYSTIQUE of war has fascinated many throughout the ages. *On War*, published a year after the death of its author Carl von Clausewitz in 1832, removed the veil that mystified many. For von Clausewitz there was nothing mysterious about war — on the contrary, 'under all circumstances war is to be

regarded not as an independent thing but as a political instrument. . . This is the only means of unlocking the great book and making it intelligible'. And, although the general public has been fed popular prejudices, the people that count — members of the Chief of Staff, politicians and diplomats — have always known that, as von Clausewitz put it, 'war is a mere continuation of policy by other means'.

E P Thompson's latest pamphlet,

Beyond the Cold War, cannot accept von Clausewitz's conclusions. It cannot face the harsh truth that today's arms race stems from the requirements of the capitalist system. The object of the pamphlet is to isolate war from its material foundations, to treat war as an 'independent thing', and reconcile the peace movement to the existing system

Thompson's fetish

Thompson's remarks about East-West rivalries are essentially correct: 'the first Cold War premise — of irreconcilable adversary posture between the blocs across the world — has become a fiction'. Unfortunately, however, Thompson goes on to draw the conclusion that this 'fiction' has acquired a momentum of its own — that it has become 'self-reproducing'. According to him, the Cold War 'has broken free from the occasions at its origin and has acquired an independent inertial thrust of its own'. How a 'fiction' acquires an independent existence is left to the imagination of the reader.

Of course, Thompson does identify evil individuals in each bloc — 'the military, industrial and research establishments of both sides, the security services and intelligence operations' — who benefit from the Cold War. But these are slaves of a monster that exists independently of social relations: the Cold War has become 'a habit, an addiction'.

Thompson ignores the contradictions within imperialism that have generated the drive towards militarism. Indeed in his view imperialism does not exist: instead we have an irrational 'addiction' to a 'fiction' that has a momentum of its own. Thompson not only tears contemporary militarism out of its context, he endows all wars with the same supernatural qualities. It appears that war is a response to a universal need to use the threat of a foreign enemy to achieve internal solidarity. Thompson is convinced that the 'fear or threat of the Other is grounded upon a profound and universal need. It is intrinsic to human bonding'.

Thompson converts the old prejudice that there have always been wars and that there always will be wars to the status of a universal law. For Thompson the USA only acquires its identity through its hatred of the Soviet Union and vice versa, and similar patterns run throughout history. Thus 'Rome required barbarians, Christendom required pagans, Protestant and Catholic Europe required each other'. But what is more to the point is, as we shall show, the fact that Thompson requires the USA.

The revelation

With all the erudition of a feudal monk Thompson reduces militarism to a problem of human nature. Instead of class conflict, exploitation and imperialist rivalries, we have a human flaw. If Thompson was simply a pedant devoted to the mystification of social issues there would be little value in reviewing his pamphlet. But his discourse on mankind's weaknesses has a clear political purpose. For Thompson the arms race is a humanitarian question. Salvation lies in improving human interaction between Moscow and Washington. Everyone is responsible and yet no one is to blame — least of all Europe, which is merely a victim in this conflict of superpowers. Discreetly, almost imperceptibly, imperialist Europe disappears in Thompson's world.

Thompson isn't merely preoccupied with human nature; he is vitally concerned with the future of Europe. Or rather as he sees it, the redemption of humanity lies with Europe's future. The riddle is solved: 'We can match this crisis only by a summoning of resources to a height like that of the greatest religious or political movement of Europe's past'.

Thompson's sermon on Europe's mission corresponds directly to the interests of European imperialism. Capitalists

throughout the Continent have more earthly considerations — lower US interest rates, less restrictions on exports to the US and a reduction of American influence in general. Thompson's preaching on European independence is in full accord with the concerns of European imperialism. Thompson voices these concerns with the sort of rhetoric that is taken for eloquence in British middle class circles.

His anger rising, Thompson can no longer restrain himself. Pointing towards Washington, he declares:

'It makes no sense at all for decisions as to the siting of missiles — and as to the ownership and operation of American missiles on European soil — to be taken in the Pentagon, when these decisions affect the very survival of Europe.'

Self-determination for Europe's 'decision makers', chants our man of letters.

Eurochauvinism

When the survival of Europe is at stake Thompson's fury knows no bounds. Our gentle historian lashes out at the primitive louts who inhabit North America. The American electorate is 'apathetic' and — presumably in contrast to the situation in Europe — political life in the USA over the past two decades has been 'vulgarised'. Worse still, the average American citizen 'learns nothing of European affairs in his local newspaper or on his local TV channels'. What an affront to European civilisation! Thompson ends his anti-American tirade on a note of pride:

'Atlanticism has outlived the rationale of its moment of formation: neither the socialist nor the European liberal tradition can consort easily any more with an overarching American hegemony, whose priorities are, more nakedly, determined by the reproductive needs of American capital.'

Delicately ignoring the naked 'reproductive needs' of European imperialism, Thompson gives three cheers for Europe. European chauvinism is barely concealed by the veneer of culture acquired by every public school snob.

Thompson's message is clear: to hell with everyone else, Europe must become a nuclear free zone. His pamphlet echoes the sentiments that prevail in a less hypocritical form in Whitehall, the Champs d'Elysee and the Chancellerie in Bonn. European imperialism needs peace to expand its influence.

Thompson's war

Thompson is not against militarism. He is against the militarism of foreign powers that threaten the survival of Britain and Europe. Thompson is proud of the record of British imperialism during the last imperialist world war. *Beyond the Cold War* continually exhorts us to follow the example of the European resistance during the Second World War. He recalls the 'aspiration for a democratic Europe' of the anti-fascist movement and concludes: 'I think once again of 1944 and the crest of the Resistance. There must be that kind of spirit abroad in Europe once more'.

Thompson fails to mention that aspirations for a democratic Europe fuelled the war drives of Britain and the USA. Millions of workers hated fascism, but it was the ideology of narrow anti-fascism which legitimised the war plans of the 'democratic' imperialists. Those who died fighting the German army won a victory not for the working class but for their own rulers. The 'spirit of resistance' Thompson likes so much endowed imperialist slaughter with respectability.

The Thompsons of the 'thirties manipulated popular hatred for fascism to prepare the masses for war. In 1982, Thompson repeats the performance — playing on widespread concern about impending nuclear war, he prepares his readers for the coming struggle between Europe and America.



THE RED BRIGADES were formed one year after the 'hot autumn' strikes of 1969. Some were workers from the Siemens factory, Milan; others, like BR chief Renato Curcio, were students with Christian Democrat (DC) backgrounds from the University of Trento. Inspired by the wage militancy of the early 'seventies and anxious to halt the rise of the far right, the BR began a succession of arson attacks and beatings directed against junior managers and fascists. After merging with a group of ex-Communist Party (PCI) members from Reggio Emilia, they went underground.

On 10 December 1973 the BR won a considerable publicity coup by kidnapping Ettore Amerio, head of personnel relations at Fiat, Turin. Soon, however, they went for bigger fish, kidnapping Mario Sossi, a public prosecutor based at Genoa, in the middle of the politically charged run-up to a national referendum on divorce (18 April 1974). Undaunted by the eventual capture of Curcio, they continued their policy of selectively bombing, shooting, robbing and abducting members of the ruling class. On 8 June 1976, two weeks before general elections were held, they killed Francesco Coco, Genoa's chief magistrate.

Brigades on the offensive

By this time the BR were several hundred strong. They had resisted infiltration by the security services and were clearly on the offensive. On 16 March 1978, the very day Italy's latest Cabinet was to ask for a vote of confidence in the Chamber of Deputies, they kidnapped Aldo Moro, president of the Christian Democrats and the man who had just persuaded his party to agree to communist participation in government. Fifty-five days later, in a gesture of hatred for the PCI's strategy of 'historic compromise' with the DC, they dumped his body midway between the Rome offices of the two parties.

Though the Moro affair caused a sensation, the BR began to run into trouble. The state, already able to detain suspected terrorists incommunicado for 48 hours after arrest and to delay trials up to 12 years, won the right to interrogate people in the absence of a defence lawyer. Telephone tapping became easier; sentences for kidnappings, longer. A wave of security service raids took place in 1979 and 1980, and, within the BR, dissension arose over the lack of political perspective behind its kidnappings.

Many *brigatisti* were now incarcerated in specially-built fortress jails. With 3000 of Italy's 35 000 prisoners demanding political status, the prisons issue became a symbol for state repression. On 12 December 1980, therefore, the BR kidnapped Giovanni D'Urso, the administrator responsible for all transfers between prisons, and demanded the closure of Asinara, a medieval dungeon sited on an island off Sardinia.

They got it. But the state hit back: prisoners in Trani jail, southern Italy, found themselves charged with complicity in the D'Urso kidnapping. Aware that the state was succeeding in criminalising them, the BR turned to more popular causes. On 27 April 1981 they kidnapped Ciriaco De Mita, CD housing supremo in Naples, and demanded — successfully — that empty private flats there be given over to victims of the 1980 earthquake. They also got Alfa Romeo to drop plans to make 5000 workers redundant, following their kidnapping of Alfa executive Renzo Sandrucci on 3 June 1981.

But internal tensions mounted. The BR's Rome column began to criticise the Venetian column, for being too fond of kidnappings. And BR reprisals against members who had 'repented' to the state (*pentiti*) and parted with information in the hopes of lighter sentences started to reach desperate and grisly levels.

The Dozier affair proved the BR's



Who are the Red Brigades?

Since the freeing of NATO general James Dozier on 28 January the Italian state has scored a series of victories against the Red Brigades. All five BR columns — Milan, Turin, Rome, Naples and Venice — have suffered dozens of arrests and some of those held are supplying the police with information on their former comrades. Nobody is safe: bourgeois hysteria about the size of the terrorist problem is such that the head of the international affairs department of the white collar union UIL has been charged with being a BR 'mole'. Meanwhile Toni Negri, a left-wing professor who has been framed as a leader of the BR, is due to be tried for armed insurrection after three years in custody.

undoing. While he was still held hostage, the police caught Rome BR leader Giovanni Senzani asleep in his bed and took away 3000 pages of internal documents. Then, in Padua, Dozier was freed and five BR members held. Within days it was announced that the police had taken out no less than 239 warrants to arrest people in connection with the old Moro case (*Corriere della Sera*, 5 February).

The BR have received a serious setback. But they were extremely well organised, and they may make a comeback yet. When Senzani was lifted plans were found for a bazooka attack on a DC conference due to be held in Rome the following week. But what kind of politics informs the BR's military tactics?

Little Italy

The BR's February 1978 'Resolution of the Strategic Direction' argues as follows:

- the imperialism Lenin described around the First World War has been superseded by 'the imperialism of the multinationals'. Italian workers are therefore up against their own bourgeoisie only to the extent that it is the local representative of world imperialism. Their main enemy is the USA, West Germany, the IMF, the EEC and NATO

- world imperialism can only maintain order in a country like Italy by centralising all political life in the hands of the state. Today political parties are only 'expressions of the state'

- because the workers are up against multinational imperialism and because state repression pervades all of society, the class struggle in the metropolitan countries must take the form of a protracted guerrilla war of national liberation. The task is to 'take the fight into the heart of the state'. For this, an armed, Fighting Communist Party — the 'reproduction of the substance of Leninist experience, and its developments through the Chinese revolution' — is needed.

Before we move on to the BR's terrorist practice, let's consider these points of theory.

The BR's 'imperialism of the multinationals' is a revision of Lenin. Though each major monopoly does now operate on an international division of labour, all its activities are backed up by its indigenous nation state. 'Multinationals' like Fiat, Olivetti, Montedison depend

enormously on state subsidies, public sector purchasing contracts and loans from the Bank of Italy. The current divisions within NATO confirm that imperialism today takes the form of rivalry between metropolitan nation states, not the subordination of these to global institutions. Thus the main enemy of the Italian workers must be *Italian imperialism*.

Italy is an imperialist power. It relies on capital exports to the Third World to boost profitability. Italian capitalism survives through a mixture of repression and the winning of political consent. In this respect the PCI and the Socialist Party (PSI) are not mere 'expressions of the state'. They, and the trade union bureaucracies they are connected with, perform a vital political and ideological role. By talking the language of reform, they make bourgeois policies palatable to the masses. Unlike the state, they will only be smashed politically rather than by violence.

The class struggle in Italy is not a war of national liberation. Italy is a weak but nevertheless rapacious imperialist power, not a nation oppressed in the same sense that, say, Palestine (one of the BR's main sources of inspiration) is.

The consequences of the BR's mistaken theories are tragic. In classical petit-bourgeois style, they substitute the armed action of the few for the political struggle of the many. They are unable to destroy the PCI and PSI politically and so find that even their most daring sorties against the ruling class meet with — at best — apathy among the masses. Cut off from the collective protection of the working class, they are, in the long run, easy prey for the forces of the state.

The origins of the BR

The political weaknesses of the BR have led to its near demise. But why did the BR come into being in the first place? And why — unlike, for instance, their West German co-thinkers Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof — do they command a certain amount of sympathy in the working class?

The BR phenomenon is a product of three factors: the weakness of Italian imperialism, the reactionary politics of the PCI, and the inability of those forces to the left of the PCI to go beyond simple

endorsements of working class militancy.

The retarded development of capitalism in Italy ensured that it was no match for other imperialist powers such as Britain and Germany. The weakness of the Italian bourgeoisie has meant that it has often had to resort to coercion to preserve its class rule. Italy was one of the first countries to experience fascism in the 'twenties. But even 20 years of Mussolini was not enough to revive Italian imperialism: only war, the betrayals of the PCI in government (1944-7) and Marshall Aid from the USA was sufficient to restore stability. Today a militant working class faces a feeble ruling class and an inefficient state apparatus which, though backed up by imperialist allies like the USA, is one of the most insecure bourgeois democracies in Europe. The size of the BR and the tactics they pursue reflect the characteristically open form of the class struggle in Italy.

The BR are also a product of the incapacity of the PCI, the dominant party of the Italian working class, to further the aspirations of its militants. Some Italian workers, disgusted with the cringing moderation of the PCI and its complicity in countless setbacks to the working class, have turned to vent their anger through the BR. Unfortunately the political stranglehold of Stalinism has yet to be broken in Italy. In the past even militant opposition to the PCI has been contained within the Stalinist tradition. From the Sino-Soviet split (1960) to the Cultural Revolution (1966), the Italian far left has generally looked to the Chinese Communist Party for new ideas. In this respect, the BR are little different from organisations like Avanguardia Operaia, Lotta Continua or Il Manifesto.

This brings us to the third factor. Because the Italian radical left failed to capitalise much on the 'hot autumn' of 1969, the BR were reinforced in their view that only the *armed struggle* could produce any results. At the same time the PCI, at first taken by surprise by the events of the late 'sixties, soon regained the initiative. PCI general secretary Enrico Berlinguer could come to his 'historic compromise' with the DC in September 1973 and still come away with a higher vote at the polls almost three years later. This convinced the BR that the only way to galvanise the proletariat into action was through more and more spectacular actions — thus the progression from Amerio to Moro, 1973-8.

Fight the PCI!

Since the Moro operation the Italian radical left has declined still further and the setbacks for the working class have multiplied. *Autonomia operaia*, a New Left, lifestyle-orientated movement of students, feminists and young unemployed workers which grew up in 1977 and which supplied the BR with a number of recruits, was effectively destroyed in a string of police raids beginning with the arrest of Toni Negri on 7 April 1979. And the occupation of Fiat of September 1980 ended in the unions agreeing to 24 000 'temporary' redundancies.

The standing of the PCI has also fallen. Berlinguer's call for 'austerity' (December 1976), the PCI's despatch of armoured cars against the *autonomia* in Bologna (February 1977), its participation in government (March 1978-January 1979), its fingering of Negri and its ruthless pursuit of the BR have all begun to erode its support in the working class. The coincidence of the Dozier affair with the Polish coup has driven it still further to the right. The time is ripe for the BR's followers to learn the lessons of their own defeat and to turn to dealing with the PCI. Only after that battle is won will the masses be ready to 'take the fight to the heart of the state'.

James Wood



PRIOR'S PROBLEMS

The extreme frailty of the Irish economy, north and south of the border, means problems for Tory Northern Ireland secretary James Prior as he prepares yet another 'political initiative' for the Six Counties. Phil Murphy reports.

THE TAKEOVER of the DeLorean Motor Company by the official receiver is the most publicised industrial disaster in Northern Ireland recently. The DeLorean fiasco highlights the futility of British measures to keep the Six Counties' economy afloat. After spending more than £80m, the Government now has a few thousand overpriced sports cars nobody wants to buy, and a plant with a rapidly shrinking workforce in West Belfast. However, in terms of job losses, the collapse of major industries in which the British government invested heavily in the 'sixties and 'seventies has been even more serious.

Industrial collapse

When the post-war boom ran out of steam, the British state stepped up its intervention in the Irish economy. It took on the tasks of restructuring traditional industry and promoting new investment, to equip the economy to meet the recession. But the job was beyond its capacity. For example, the government re-equipped Belfast's Harland and Wolff shipyard. But since the world oil-tanker market slumped in 1974, it has only survived through massive subsidies (£46m last year). Its workforce has shrunk to 7000 and another 1000 redundancies are expected this year.

The recession has savaged the other mainstay of the economy, textiles. Encouraged by generous government hand-outs in the 'sixties, Courtaulds, ICI, Hoechst, Du Pont, Monsanto and British Enkalon all expanded their Northern Ireland operations. But between 1979 and 1981 textile production in the Six Counties fell by almost a half. Out of a total workforce of 31 000, 7000 have been shed and 6000 put on short time. Two-thirds of the 9000 workers in synthetic fibre production have gone down the road. In the last two years state aid has proved insufficient to protect Ulster's industry from fierce competition on the world market: a series of modern, high productivity plants has been forced to close.

The disintegration of industry in the Six Counties exacerbates the political instability in Ireland that is a major concern

to Britain. For Catholics it means an unemployment level approaching 50 per cent and a deepening resentment against British occupation. Protestants have been hit hard by the recent spate of redundancies, stirring up tensions within the Loyalist alliance. Given that Protestant workers' control over access to jobs depends on the British connection, their response to deepening recession is more strident assertions of their loyalty to Britain and of their hostility to Catholic anti-imperialists. Hence the steady advance of Ian Paisley and his Democratic Unionist Party.

Because of its political problems in the Six Counties, the British Government has been obliged to modify its policy of public spending cuts. Apart from its indirect support, through subsidies and grants, for most employment in private industry in Northern Ireland, state services directly employ about 40 per cent of all workers (an increase of 10 per cent in 10 years). The British ruling class recognises that it would only compound its problems by itself boosting the unemployment figures. This is why Prior made a special package of £90m available for housing and youth training schemes in January. But in face of the enormous problems of the Six Counties' economy, this is no more than a token gesture.

The British Government might like to avoid conflict in Northern Ireland by boosting industry and services and creating jobs. But today's recession gives the Government very little room to manoeuvre in Ireland: when it cannot provide jobs in Britain, it has very little hope of bringing prosperity to Ireland. If Britain cannot afford concessions to preserve stability in the impoverished Six Counties it has only one alternative: force. This is the stark background to Prior's new initiative. His schemes for assemblies and councils, elections and officials provide a diplomatic cover for the single consistent theme in Britain's Irish policy over the past decade: support for Direct Rule and continuing military occupation.

The Irish election

Most British pundits reckon that Prior can take some comfort in these troubled

times from the fact that the North did not become an issue in the recent election in the south. In fact Prior has little cause for complacency. The Irish election was called as a result of the inability of the fragile FitzGerald coalition to get through the Dail an austerity budget to deal with the parlous state of the economy. It has returned another unstable government which now has to grapple with the same problems. As the *Financial Times* commented it was a vote for 'apocalypse now' or 'apocalypse very soon'. And while Northern Ireland figured little at the hustings, questions arising from Ireland's economic difficulties inevitably come back to their ultimate cause — the British division and domination of Ireland.

Since the 'sixties the Irish economy has survived through foreign investment attracted by massive state subsidies. Following Ireland's entry into the EEC in 1973, it became the ideal low-cost manufacturing base from which the USA and Japan could gain tariff-free access to the European market. Ireland broke its traditional link with sterling and, as long as sterling rose against European currencies which it did until last year, the competitiveness of Irish goods improved. Growing output, however, concealed low productivity and a vulnerability to fluctuations in the world economy. When export markets contracted last year Ireland was left with a record balance of payments deficit. The bubble has burst at last.

In an attempt to reduce its £1400m balance of payments deficit, the Irish Government has attempted to cut back on public spending. Ireland's foreign creditors have urged drastic steps on the Dublin Government. But in the Twenty-six Counties, as in the Six Counties, much of the economy is propped up by state expenditure. Political considerations have so far deterred governments from imposing the sort of austerity measures that capital requires. But now they have become inescapable.

Apocalypse very soon

Two things can be said with certainty of the new Dail. The first is that it will pursue economic policies that will result

in falling living standards, lower wages, higher taxes and more factory closures. The second is that it will appeal to the national aspirations of the Irish people to win their acquiescence to these policies. This is how the Minister of Finance in the last government motivated an explicit call for a cut in wages:

"We in Ireland have been governed from outside for 150 years. We are still not independent. Over the next five to ten years we are going to have to wage another war of independence — on the economic front — to regain our freedom." (*The Irish Times*, 2 September 1981)

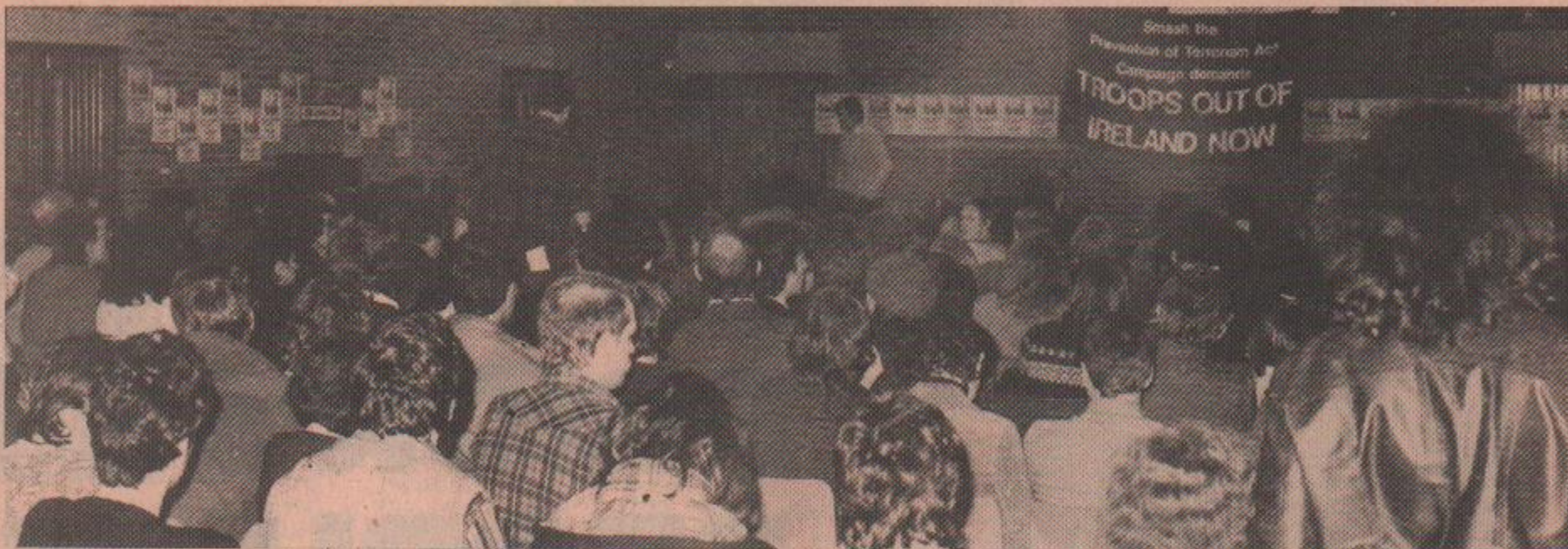
We can expect renewed appeals in similar terms in the coming months.

Britain the enemy

Playing 'the green card' is, however, a risky manoeuvre in Irish politics. The economic collapse of the Twenty-six Counties brings into the open Ireland's domination by foreign capital. And one foreign capitalist power above all others casts its long shadow over Ireland. Britain has lost out to the USA, Japan and Germany in Ireland in recent years, but it still keeps capitalist law and order there on behalf of world imperialism. The austerity measures imposed on the Irish people at the behest of the imperialist powers will inevitably provoke anti-British sentiment.

Unemployment south of the border is rapidly approaching the levels of the Six Counties. And the traditional escape route of emigration is now closed. Where can the Irish now go to find work? As *The Times* recently observed, a younger generation is emerging in Ireland which is no respecter of Church or state. The British ruling class fears that the recession in Ireland will stimulate anti-imperialist sentiments in a country with an 'underground culture of the gun'. This is the grim foreboding behind the wishful thinking that 'the national question' is a dead issue in Ireland. The paradox of the Irish election is that despite the poor performance of Sinn Féin and the success of the pro-imperialist Sinn Féin-The Workers Party, the national question remains at the centre of Irish politics. It requires only a working class anti-imperialist movement to prove it.

A TALE OF TWO CONFERENCES



MORE THAN 450 delegates voted to launch the Irish Freedom Movement at the Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act Campaign conference on 6 February. The launching of the Irish Freedom Movement is the culmination of two years of active campaigning by the Smash the PTA Campaign. During the past two years, the Smash the PTA Campaign has emerged as the leading force organising anti-imperialist workers in the trade unions. As IFM convenor Sabena Norton said after the conference, 'we don't just want to do what the Smash the PTA Campaign has been doing better, we want to expand our presence nationally and involve new layers of workers in the solidarity movement'.

On the same day that anti-imperialists were discussing plans to launch the IFM, the Labour Committee on Ireland was holding its annual general meeting in Birmingham. The contrast between the discussions that took place at these two events highlights two distinct approaches to solidarity work.

Action or pressure

The 80-strong LCI annual general meeting was preoccupied with its internal affairs — changing its organisational structure, constitution and electing its leadership. While the IFM conference discussed recent developments in Ireland, the present phase of imperialist strategy and the obstacles to anti-imperialist activity in the working class, the LCI was attempting to give itself a degree of organisational coherence. The difference in emphasis is not surprising.

The IFM has set itself the task of building a working class anti-imperialist movement. Success in this enterprise requires clarity of purpose and determination in fighting the prevailing attitudes of British workers on Ireland. The objective of the LCI is different. The LCI wants to establish a smooth-running pressure group in the Labour Party. They do not face the problem of winning the arguments on the shopfloor — their problem is to win the sympathetic ear of the labour bureaucracy. A well-coordinated machine capable of circulating model resolutions to constituency parties and extending the number of supportive prominent labour personalities is just what the LCI requires.

The difference between a liberal pressure group and an anti-imperialist movement was most striking in the discussion on the trade unions at the two events. The IFM conference devoted a special workshop to trade union work. The debate was not whether or not trade

union work should be pursued (on this there was virtual unanimity); the issue at stake was how to extend this work. The LCI did not discuss how to extend its activity in the working class for the simple reason that it has never done such work. At its meeting the LCI reaffirmed its commitment to radicalising the Labour Party by voting down a proposal to work in the unions. At one of its workshops, leading LCI spokesman Don Flynn noted that 'we have no well-known figures in the trade union movement who support the LCI'. And that was all there was to it.

Prominent people

Relying on 'well-known figures' has been the staple diet of a succession of solidarity movements during the past 13 years. The IFM on the other hand relies on the working class — the only force that has a direct interest in defeating British imperialism. The two approaches inevitably lead to a different political orientation. Well-known figures are not known for their hatred of British imperialism. The LCI therefore, like its liberal predecessors, puts forward policies that can be supported by its celebrities. Whether these policies are in the interest of the struggle against imperialism is another matter.

The mood and tenor of discussion at the two events was strikingly different. Contributions at the IFM conference tended to be self-critical and concerned about the obstacles to winning the anti-imperialist arguments. Speaker after speaker pointed out the sordid record of the British left during the hunger strike of the Irish prisoners last year and the failure of anti-imperialists to make the H-Block campaign a major issue in the working class. The LCI was oblivious to these difficulties. It measured its achievements according to the number of motions on Ireland that had appeared on the Labour Party conference agenda. The LCI report on its funddrive began with the amazing statement that the 'Labour Party conference of 1981 was a historic milestone in the breaking of bipartisan policy'. Resolution-mongering, endowed with the status of a 'historic milestone', summed up the inability of the LCI even to face what the real problems are.

A choice of direction

The two discussions on 6 February provided an indication of the two strands of Irish solidarity work in Britain. The LCI, a pressure group feeding off the crumbs thrown to it by left-wing labour bureaucrats, desperately addicted to

respectability, turns solidarity work into an appendage of the Labour Party. The IFM, breaking new ground, is determined to wage the battle for Irish freedom in

the working class. The LCI AGM is itself one of the most compelling arguments for spreading the work of the IFM.

Mike Wall

IFM YOUTH DELEGATION TO IRELAND

THE FIRST major initiative of the IFM is its youth delegation to visit Belfast and Derry for the commemoration of the Easter Rising in 1916. Young workers on the dole, on YOP schemes, still at work and students are joining together to exchange views and experiences with youth from the Catholic ghettos in the Six Counties. You don't have to be young to support this delegation! Get your trade union branch to sponsor the delegation — organise a meeting at your place of work or political organisation and invite a delegate to speak.

3 delegates you can sponsor

Ann Burden, Hastings

'We've got to take a stand on the Irish War, I want to find out how the army works in action. I want to know how the

people there are coping, living under an army of occupation for so long. I want to see everything so that I have all the information necessary to back up my work in the IFM.'

Charn Singh, Coventry

'I want to see what it's like. The media here covers up what's really going on. People here don't realise what life is like over there and they don't hear about the repression of the Catholics from the occupying forces.'

Brad Marks, East Ham

'Ten months on the dole taught me more than school. They always talk about freedom and democracy. But that's just words. They keep us down here and they keep them down there and then they tell us we're enemies. I am going over there to tell them that I am on their side!'

A well-known figure and the IFM

WHILE THE LCI was looking for 'well-known figures' in the labour bureaucracy, the leading star of the TUC was orchestrating another witchhunt against anti-imperialists. On 28 January, Lionel Murray wrote to Trades Councils throughout the country with clear instructions: Trades Councils 'must refuse to associate in any way' with the IFM labour movement conference. Eleven days later the TUC's Trades Council Joint Consultative Committee met and retrospectively endorsed Murray's circular.

Murray and his friends move fast when their loyalty to the British state is challenged. They correctly recognise that a proletarian anti-imperialist movement directly threatens their position and their cosy relationship with the British state. In the Trades Council movement, the Communist Party has been particularly energetic in executing Murray's instructions. When supporters of Leeds IFM applied to use the local Trades Club room for a public meeting, the Trades

Council secretary and prominent CP activist Beryl Huffingley replied: 'We've just had this circular saying that we must not in any way associate with you'.

Murray's proscription of the IFM must be fought all the way. Winning the arguments on Ireland in the labour movement is not just an academic debate. The labour bureaucracy uses bans, proscriptions and other organisational means to safeguard its position. TUC bans are the labour bureaucracy's equivalent of the British state's criminalisation policy. The British state tries to portray Irish freedom fighters as criminals. The TUC takes bureaucratic measures to ensure that anti-imperialists are seen as outsiders in the labour movement.

Help us to turn this witchhunt into an exposure of TUC collaboration with British imperialism. Join the fight in Leeds against the Trades Club's ban on Irish meetings! At Trades Council meetings, urge your colleagues to throw out the Murray circular!

Sudan and Morocco are two North African countries which seem to have little in common. Yet both nations dramatically illustrate the problems of an area of vital strategic importance for the Western Powers.

Both countries are reliant on one main export – cotton in Sudan, phosphates in Morocco. And both are being pushed into enforcing austerity measures on their people as part of the conditions of an IMF 'rescue package'. Both are ruled by autocratic dictators backed by the West and both have been shaken by urban riots in recent months. King Hassan of Morocco is pursuing a war against the Polisario guerrillas in Western Sahara, while Sudan's President Numeiri faces unrest among ethnic minorities in two regions of the country.

In both cases the USA has indicated that it will go to extreme lengths to protect the regimes controlled by its puppets. Military supplies have been stepped up. And President Reagan has authorized a major destabilisation programme against Libya – situated between Sudan and Morocco – which it considers to be a threat to imperialist ambitions in the region.

Neither Hassan nor Numeiri can be expected to survive for long. However it is unlikely that imperialism will allow these two rulers to be overthrown by a popular rebellion of the sort that ousted the Shah of Iran and upset the whole pattern of American dominance in the Middle East. Reagan's policy is far more interventionist than that of his predecessor, Carter. As the imperialist powers compete for influence in North Africa and struggle to contain the anti-imperialist sentiments of the masses, the people of Sudan and Morocco face hard times in the near future. Bob Radcliffe reports on the crisis in Sudan, while Tewfiq Saed outlines the situation in Morocco.

Sudan

Numeiri's last stand



PRESIDENT NUMEIRI is now threatened from all sides. Sudan's leader is a sick man and his country is bankrupt. His US backers have mounted a major operation to prevent the collapse of the regime in the face of growing internal strife. In recent weeks this has meant shootings of demonstrators in the streets of Khartoum, the indefinite closure of all universities and schools and the dismissal of the entire Cabinet.

The cupboard is bare

Despite its vast mineral reserves and agricultural potential, Sudan is one of the 25 poorest countries in the world. Deteriorating production standards, maladministration and the decline in the price of cotton on the world market are the factors underlying the present crisis. Sudan's GNP has been stagnant since 1979. The \$180 million in foreign exchange earned from its cotton exports this year fails even to meet the country's oil bill of \$480 million. The result is a soaring trade deficit – up from \$200 million in 1972-3 to \$500 million in 1981-2.

To cover its debts the government has simply printed more and more money, fuelling inflation rates of at least 50 per cent. It has also instigated a 'law and order' campaign to crack down on speculators and has deported up to 15 000 'vagrants' from Khartoum.

Yet Sudan remains an important country for the imperialist powers. The recession forces the Western countries on a relentless quest for new spheres of influence, for new sources of raw materials and investment outlets. Even unstable, starving Sudan holds out the promise of certain strategic minerals, and its position on the fringes of the oil-rich Gulf region gives it a key military significance. And in Numeiri, the West has an ally wholly committed to supporting imperialism and fully prepared to smash any resistance.

Sudan owes more than \$3 billion to foreign creditors and is unlikely to be able to pay off even the interest on this sum. In the mid 'seventies Numeiri's western creditors granted him a number of short-term concessions: debt rescheduling, standby credit and aid funds on special terms. But by the late 'seventies it was

becoming obvious that Sudan was incapable of paying back its debts. Renegotiation of loans began in 1979 when imperialist bankers formed a group ('the Club of Paris') to deal with the problem.

The terms of this rescheduling have meant nothing short of a vicious attack on the working class. In November Numeiri announced a three-year, 18-point programme of austerity, drawn up by the IMF and the World Bank. All food subsidies on cooking oil, wheat and sugar were removed, despite drastic shortages. Energy prices have also been raised to their 'market rate'. Further savings are to be made by requiring Sudan's 400 000 expatriate workers to pay 10 per cent and remit a further 10 per cent of their overseas earnings to the treasury. Workers who refuse to pay will not have their passports renewed.

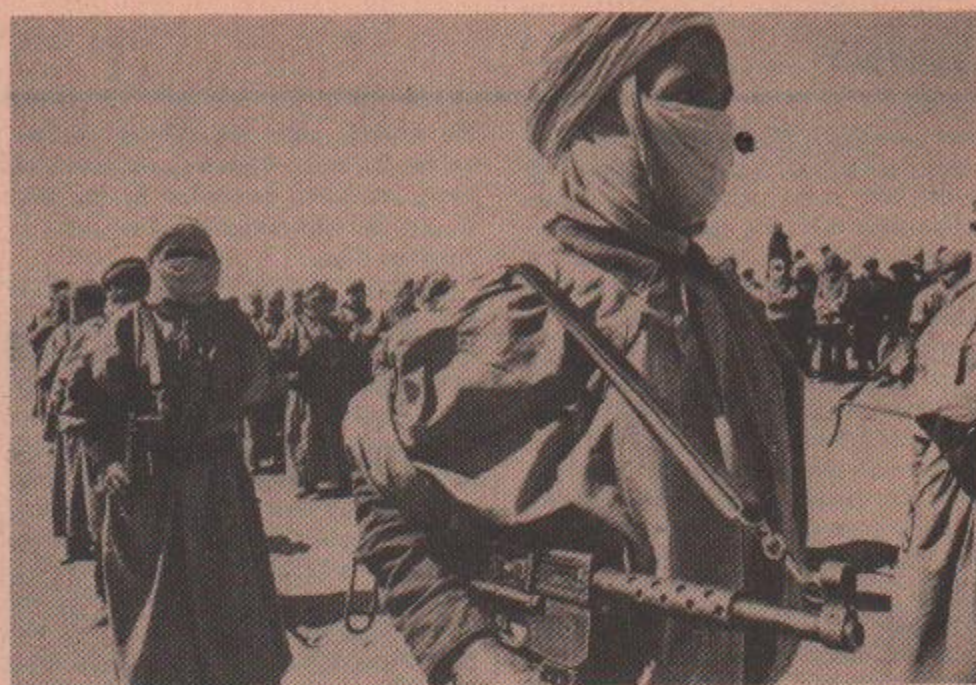
While the IMF concerns itself mainly with monitoring the austerity programme, the World Bank is attempting to rejuvenate existing agricultural schemes – particularly the Gezira project – through which it aims to raise productivity by capital investment. The World Bank's International Development Agency has also set aside large sums for major projects such as the White and Blue Niles' pump rehabilitation schemes.

Opposition forces

Opposition to Numeiri's rule has always been met with repression. After he came to power in a coup in 1969 he cracked down on the traditional Islamic political parties – the Mahdist movement and the Moslem Brotherhood. At the same time he moved against his former allies in the Sudanese Communist Party and other left-wing groups. Executions and detentions forced all opposition groups to go underground or into exile. Supporters of the Mahdists were massacred in March 1970.

The violent suppression by the state of all opposition movements has led to repeated attempted coups. The most significant was the Libyan-backed Mahdists-Moslem Brotherhood rising in Khartoum in 1976, which was crushed only after three days of fierce street battles. The

(continued, p16)



Morocco

The desert war

SINCE MOROCCO won its independence from France in 1956 it has been the scene of continual political unrest. In the early 'seventies King Hassan II narrowly escaped death in several assassination attempts. Today the north-west corner of the African continent is on the verge of chaos as a result of the combined effects of economic and political crisis. The major threat to the established order in the area is the struggle of the Polisario guerrillas for the liberation of Sequet el Hamra and Rio de Oro, the two regions that make up the former Spanish colony of Western Sahara, annexed by Morocco and Mauritania in 1975. The desert war between King Hassan's regime and the Polisario Front has raged for the past six years: it now consumes around 40 per cent of the Moroccan budget.

Morocco in turmoil

King Hassan is also under grave threat at home. Prolonged famine in the rural areas has provoked peasant revolts and the cities are seething with working class discontent. The Moroccan government has attempted to implement a series of reforms and concessions to allay popular discontent and stabilise the regime. It tried to reduce the impact of inflation on the turbulent urban poor by restricting price rises to five per cent. But, despite massive aid from Saudi Arabia, the regime could not afford to continue heavy subsidies on all basic foodstuffs. Last year the IMF stepped in and insisted on an austerity programme including price rises of the order of 40 per cent on wheat flour, 40-50 per cent on sugar and 28 per cent on vegetable oil. And the government's agrarian reforms – irrigation and land redistribution schemes – have led to the eviction of hundreds of thousands of peasants from their homes. The regime's attempts to contain rising social turmoil have neither placated the Moroccan people nor secured the position of the monarch.

Last year's summer riots in Morocco's major cities were the poor's response to the deteriorating economic situation. The riots began after the country's two largest trade unions called a general strike against food price rises. The regime met the riots with brutal repression: in Casablanca alone 500 people were killed and thousands wounded. Many more – including all the trade union leaders – were imprisoned. As King Hassan's regime has staggered into ever deeper troubles, its economic difficulties compounded by drought and setbacks from the Polisario Front, he has been obliged to turn to his

Western friends to bolster up his autocratic rule. Morocco – and the Western Sahara – has become a key concern of the imperialist powers.

Not just an empty desert

When the major European capitalist countries met in Berlin in 1884 to divide Africa amongst themselves, France got Morocco and Spain the Western Sahara. But Spain was not strong enough to develop this desert waste and it served merely as a base for Spanish troops guarding the Canary Islands – until the discovery of valuable phosphates at Bu Craa in 1947. The Spanish Government subsequently showed more interest in the area, but lacked the technical skills necessary for exploiting the deposits.

The Western Sahara's massive phosphate deposits affected the political forces operating in the region. Morocco was already one of the world's major phosphate producers: in 1974 it paid for 90 per cent of its imports out of phosphate revenues. The prospect of an immediate neighbour grabbing a sizeable slice of the market represented a serious threat.

While Morocco cast covetous looks on the Spanish colony, an independence movement began to grow amongst the Sahrawi people who live in the area. In 1960 the United Nations recognised the right of the Sahrawis to national self-determination. In 1967 Spain set up a form of autonomous government, the Yema'a, and under pressure from the independence movement, agreed later to hold a referendum to decide the future of the area. However, Spain had no intention of handing power over to the Yema'a and secretly arranged with Morocco and Mauritania to divide the territory between them. In 1976, after the Spanish withdrawal, King Hassan led thousands of Moroccans in the 'Green March' – a populist campaign in support of the annexation of the Western Sahara. The movement that had struggled for independence from Spain now began its war against Morocco.

Once the war started the Polisario received support from Algeria which opposed Hassan's pro-Western policy in Africa. Mauritania, faced with mounting costs, quickly withdrew from the conflict in 1978 after a military coup removed Moktar Ould Daddah from power. It made peace with the Polisario's provisional Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). Algeria's support for the SADR has been influenced by a long-standing border dispute with Morocco over its Western region. (continued, p 16)

near success of this rebellion led to a backing of the Western powers, particularly the USA. At the same time he sought a compromise with the right-wing Islamic fundamentalists, placing a number of their leaders in government posts. And he promoted a populist 'national reconciliation' policy in an attempt to curb radical opposition to his alignment with US foreign policy and his backing for first Sadat, and latterly Mubarak, in Egypt.

Numeiri's biggest challenge comes from the south, from the region granted autonomy in 1972 after a bitter 17-year civil war. The 4½ million southerners (out of a total population of 18 million) are composed of diverse, predominantly Christian, ethnic groupings. In October last year Numeiri ended the south's autonomy and decentralised power into three provinces. The southern regional assembly was dissolved and its executive council replaced by a military-dominated government. In addition to securing big oilfields in the region, Numeiri wants to break the power of the Dinka tribe, the main opposition force. This move was popular with the Islamic fundamentalists in the north.

The imposition of the Islamic faith on the south, the building of several new mosques and plans to introduce Islamic law in a traditionally Christian area have led to enormous resentment. In response to widespread hostility to the Numeiri regime, remnants of the southern guerrilla army, the Anyana, may be revived.

Numeiri's policy of National Reconciliation rests on encouraging nationalism by highlighting the threat of a Libyan invasion. While this is very remote — a fact which the Western press now admits — Numeiri has used the Libyan bombing of Sudanese territory occupied by Chadian rebels in the south to appeal to the United States for immediate military assistance. But Numeiri is less concerned about the threat from Gaddafi and more haunted by the spectre of Sadat: he fears his own people more than a foreign invasion.

Trouble in the cities

Numeiri has also had to cope with opposition from the most organised section of

the working class, the railway workers' union. Declining wages and the attack on living standards demanded by the IMF forced the railworkers to go on strike in June last year.

Numeiri proclaimed that the strikers were guilty of high treason and announced that they would lose state benefits — such as housing — if they did not return to work immediately. Eighty-six strike leaders were arrested and a committee was set up to look into the possibility of selling off the entire railway system to the private sector. As this would have destroyed the union, the workers returned to work within a few days. Before the union leaders were freed Numeiri outlawed all strikes and threatened life imprisonment, and even the death sentence, for future strike organisers.

In his struggle to survive Numeiri has been forced to use more and more overtly coercive measures and to rely increasingly on massive military and financial backing from imperialism. US military aid has tripled in recent months. And Sudan joined with Egypt, Somalia and Oman in operation Bright Star, an enormous display of American military might in the Middle East. Numeiri has used his enhanced military strength to make his dictatorship absolute: in November he finally dismissed his seldom consulted government, the last vestige of democracy in Sudan.

Yet none of Sudan's problems have been solved. Protests continue on the streets despite police tactics of opening fire on youthful rioters. And unrest rages in the south even though 22 000 people have been imprisoned in the past six months. The country's deepening crisis exacerbates social tensions and brings direct imperialist intervention closer. The Western powers may be in conflict for control over North Africa and the Middle East, but they are united in supporting Numeiri's tyranny over the Sudanese people. The immediate consequence of any direct American interference would be to intensify the oppression of the masses.



Polisario guerrillas have recently inflicted heavy casualties on Hassan's forces in the Sahara.

Playing the diplomats' game

The military successes of the Polisario guerrillas over Moroccan troops have brought fear and dismay not only to the Moroccan rulers, but also to their imperialist masters. Despite tactical differences, the rival imperialist powers all agree on one thing: keeping this area in the hands of a pro-Western ruler.

Britain is one of the imperialist powers which has an interest in North Africa. Former Prime Minister Edward Heath considers that the EEC 'can be of crucial importance as a mediator and as a source of ideas for a settlement' of the Western Sahara conflict. Heath's aim is to consolidate Britain's position in North Africa and at the same time to weaken US influence in the region.

Meanwhile American diplomats have been courting Morocco. Over the past 12 months, top US officials have made both open and secret visits to Morocco and CIA activity there has been stepped up. The USA has provided a substantial increase in military assistance, including advanced surveillance and offensive weapons to the Moroccan Air Force. In

February Secretary of State Haig indicated to his receptive hosts in Marrakesh that Washington wanted access to the four US Air Force bases built in Morocco before independence. He also indicated that the US Navy would like port facilities for the Sixth Fleet, including the nuclear-powered aircraft carriers Nimitz and Eisenhower. The US Government has two objectives in the Western Sahara. First, Reagan wants to make sure Hassan wins his desert war. Second, he is planning to use Morocco as a base for subversive activities in Libya and Angola, and to consolidate American influence in the Mediterranean.

No diplomatic solution, European or American, can bring stability to north-west Africa without defeating the Polisario national liberation struggle and crushing popular resistance to imperialism and its local puppets. Workers in Rabat and Casablanca, peasants in the countryside and the ethnic minorities of the Western Sahara can only realise their aspirations through the struggle against imperialism. Just like their rulers, they cannot afford to compromise.

Iran Labour's gunboat diplomacy

The post-war Labour Government has a reputation for radicalism in domestic and foreign affairs. The recently released Cabinet Minutes for 1951 reveal Labour's response to the nationalisation in Iran of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now British Petroleum), another sordid episode in its pro-imperialist record.

IN 1933 REZA SHAH, father of the late Shah of Iran, gave a 92-year petroleum concession to the British Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. This allowed Britain to plunder Iran's natural resources: between 1913 and 1951 oil profits totalled \$3 billion — only \$624 million went to the Iranian government. In the five post-war years AIOC's profits increased tenfold; government revenues only quadrupled. As Iranian resentment at British exploitation mounted, the Labour Government in 1949 proposed a new deal, the Supplemental Agreement, raising the revenues to the Iranian government. But it was too little, too late. The Iranians had seen Saudi Arabia and Kuwait

negotiate 50/50 deals on the sale of oil — and they had seen the nationalisation of major industries in Britain. By 1950 strikes and demonstrations calling for the nationalisation of AIOC became widespread.

Buying time

The Labour Cabinet's first concern was to block nationalisation proposals in the Majlis, the Iranian Parliament. Labour Foreign Secretary Herbert Morrison picked out Prime Minister Razmara as the man to use:

'It would appear that no better Prime Minister than Razmara is in view, and he should therefore be supported; and he must be given

some financial assistance if the Seven Year Plan is to be restarted and the danger of another resurgence of communism averted.'

The Cabinet arranged for Razmara to receive £25 million in royalty advances, and signalled AIOC's willingness to negotiate a 50/50 agreement. But Morrison's scheme came unstuck. Only weeks later Razmara was assassinated by a Moslem sect, for his complicity with the British. The radical populist leader Mohammed Mossadegh became Prime Minister and the Majlis voted to nationalise the oil industry and seize all AIOC's assets — a very popular measure in Iran.

The Cabinet was divided on how to deal with Mossadegh. Backed by the Services, Morrison and Emmanuel Shinwell called for an immediate show of force. Prime Minister Clem Attlee and Chancellor Hugh Gaitskell preferred to negotiate a settlement, but did not rule out force as a last resort. The Cabinet instructed the armed forces to draw up two plans. 'Operation Midget' was for the evacuation of all British personnel from Abadan Island, the main oil terminal and refinery. 'Operation Buccaneer' was for a full-scale invasion of Abadan. Meanwhile diplomatic and economic sanctions went ahead, under Gaitskell's direction.

Midget or buccaneer?

In the event the government proceeded cautiously with Operation Midget. It assembled forces in Egypt and persuaded King Idris of Iraq to allow his territory to be used to launch the operation. The Cabinet went as far as it could without 'commissioning a number of amphibious

warfare craft and the passage of legislation authorising the selective retention of national servicemen'. The full details of the military operation remain secret until 2002. However by the middle of 1951 the Labour leaders were obliged to shelve their warplans — unless there was some new emergency 'such as the fall of the present government and the establishment of a communist regime'.

The obstacle to Labour's gunboat diplomacy was not its socialist conscience, but the American government, which 'had indicated that it would not be prepared to support such action'. In fact, the USA had discreetly supported Mossadegh's nationalisation measures to break the British monopoly over Iranian oil. American strategy was to use Mossadegh to undermine British influence in Iran, play along with British economic sanctions to weaken Mossadegh's position and finally to break him and install a pro-American dictator. By 1953 Britain's blockade had reduced Iran's oil output from 243 million barrels in 1950 to eight million barrels. A near-bankrupt Mossadegh approached US President Eisenhower for aid and was rebuffed. In August 1953 a CIA-backed coup overturned Mossadegh's nationalist government and put the Shah in power. A new oil agreement gave AIOC 40 per cent, another 40 per cent to US companies and the rest to smaller companies. As soon as oil began to flow again it was followed by massive American loans as the USA replaced Britain as the dominant power in the Middle East.

Nick Jenkins

Positive collaboration



V L Allen, *The militancy of British miners*, The Moor Press, Shipley, 1981, pp 387, £5.00.

FOR BRITISH MINERS 1 January 1947 was a historic day. The inauguration of public ownership of the coal mining industry was the culmination of more than half a century of struggle against one of the most reactionary sections of the British capitalist class, the coal owners. However, although nationalisation was celebrated by the miners, it was no socialist measure; the Government had already been obliged to take over the inefficient and under-capitalised industry during the Second World War and if adequate energy supplies for Britain's post-war industrial recovery were to be guaranteed there could be no going back. Yet the myths and confusions generated by the way in which the post-war Labour Government presented its measures of capitalist rationalisation as bold strides towards socialism survive to this day. Vic Allen's book is a good example.

'Human capital'

He accuses the National Coal Board of pursuing the goals of profitability and efficiency and neglecting the 'ethical intentions' and 'social objectives' of nationalisation. He sees the socialist rhetoric which made public ownership popular among miners as the 'true purpose' of nationalisation; in reality the sole purpose of nationalisation was to produce coal more efficiently for the needs of British industry. Allen's confusion regarding the capitalist character of the coal industry is compounded by his idiosyncratic notions about the capitalist economy in general. According to him, the problem with the pre-war industry was that 'the coal owners did not identify labour power as human capital, let alone equate it with finance capital'. 'Human capital',

a new category of academic Marxology, is presumably what a truly socialist nationalised industry would invest in. For the present it serves to disguise a commitment to a more familiar sort of capital. The problem with post-war mining is that 'nationalisation did not result in enhancing the value attached to human capital'. Indeed Allen's major grievance against the National Coal Board is the way its programme of closures has degraded this valuable asset of British industry. Contraction, he notes, has 'destroyed mining families' to such an extent that 'it is impossible to assess the full extent of damage to the future supply of human capital for mining'. Allen's discussion of the way that coal mining has callously created a particular sort of family, to sustain the present generation of miners and rear the next, ends up bemoaning the fact that 'the focus of many families has ceased to be on the pit' as both women and men have drifted into other employment. In his central concern for the welfare of the British coal industry, Allen's outlook closely reflects that of the National Union of Mineworkers, the main focus of his study.

There are two traditions of class collaboration in the NUM since nationalisation – a right-wing one and a left-wing one. 'After 1947', writes Allen, 'the union took its class and national responsibilities seriously and embarked on a policy of almost complete collaboration with the government and the NCB'. The right simply followed a long history of loyalty to the coal owners. The left acted out of 'political conviction', determined that 'nationalisation should be made to succeed through a Labour Government'. Allen describes how the Communist Party bureaucrats led the way, endorsing the suspension of the newly-won five-day week in the cause of higher productivity, campaigning

against absenteeism and unofficial strikes, winning acceptance of closures and defusing protests. When it comes to the modern representatives of these traditions – Joe Gormley on the right and Arthur Scargill on the left – Allen emerges as an ardent supporter of radical class collaboration.

King coal

The right-wing leadership that ruled the NUM until Scargill's election as President last December stands accused of 'negative collaboration'. It cooperated in the steady rundown of the industry in the 'fifties and 'sixties. However, for Allen, its biggest crime was not that it sacrificed miners' livelihoods to the cause of modernising the industry, but its fatalism about the future of British mining, which fostered disillusionment and pessimism in miners. The Broad Left grouping of Communist Party and Labour left officials that formed in the late 'sixties in Scotland, Yorkshire and South Wales took a different view. Its strategy was based on an optimistic assessment of the future of the industry. Just like the right, the Broad Left tied miners' welfare to the state of the industry, but its positive approach to collaboration envisaged improvements in miners' living standards as coal acquired a greater importance as a national energy source.

'Negative collaboration' prevailed in the 'fifties and 'sixties because the prospects for British mining, an inefficient industry faced with competition from both oil and coal imports, seemed bleak. Positive collaboration in the 'seventies corresponded to the brighter outlook of the coal industry as a result of oil price rises and the enormous increases in productivity. But what of the 'eighties? The long-term future of the British coal industry lies in even higher productivity, fewer miners in fewer pits, harsher working conditions and lower wages. Scargill's commitment to British mining will ensure that the NUM will play an important role in reconciling miners to more intense exploitation.

Allen accuses the right-wing leaders of the 'fifties of 'depoliticising' miners. Now Scargill and the rest have, to a certain extent, 'politicised' them – with politics that put the British coal industry before its workers. Allen claims a sympathy with the miners, but his book is an apology for the radical trade union bureaucrats whose policies spell disaster for miners and their families.

Keith Tompson

THE DESTRUCTION OF HERR VOGT

K Marx & F Engels, *Collected Works*, Vols 16, 17, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1980, £8.50 each.

THE TWO NEWLY-PUBLISHED volumes of Marx and Engels' *Collected Works* cover the period August 1858 to December 1860 – a busy period in the lives of the founders of scientific socialism. Marx and Engels were preoccupied by the economic crisis of 1857, the renewed activity of the workers' movement and the political tensions among the European powers. Economic hardship forced Marx to eke out a meagre existence by writing for the *New York Daily Tribune*. However, his intellectual energies were above all devoted to his critique of political economy. In 1859 Marx published his first scientific study of capital: *A contribution to the critique of political economy*. However, this work is excluded from these two volumes and will be published at a later stage. Volume 16 does, however, include Engels' famous review of *A contribution to the critique of political economy*. This article retains its importance because of its succinct summary of Marx's historical method, his 'historical-logical' approach. Marx broke with the narrow historical representation of capitalist development and arranged his critique of political economy in terms of logical sequence. But this was not formal logic isolated from history, but 'is indeed nothing but the historical method, only stripped of the historical form and interfering contingencies'.

Class politics

Most of the articles published in these volumes deal with the unsettled character of European politics. The delicate balance of power was constantly threatened by unresolved conflicts of national identity. Large sections of Northern Italy were held by Austria. There was considerable dissension within Germany over Prussia's attempt to unify the region under its domination. In France class tension simmered under the surface as opposition built up to the regime of Napoleon III.

Napoleon sought to divert attention from internal problems by pursuing an aggressive foreign policy. Assuming the mantle of European liberation, Napoleon launched a propaganda campaign for a free and united Italy. In reality Napoleon wasn't interested in Italian unity (as shown by his later annexation of Savoy and Nice); his real purpose was to win domestic support for his regime and to isolate Austria.

Marx and Engels analysed these events from the point of view of the interest of the working class. Then, as today, many socialists simply took sides in the conflicts among bourgeois powers. Many socialists and radicals took Napoleon's rhetoric at face value and supported his 'liberation' policy. Others argued that Napoleon's adventures in Italy would undermine the integrity of Germany and supported Prussia or Austria. Marx and Engels rejected this approach. They attacked Napoleon and reaction in Austria and Germany with equal ferocity, and argued for turning these wars into struggles against the ruling class. They supported the unification of Italy and Germany – but not a unification that was imposed by an external force.

Marx and Engels clearly separated the policy of the proletariat from that of the bourgeoisie. In a sense, their discussion anticipates the debate in the international socialist movement over the First World War in 1914, and the attitude formulated by the Bolsheviks. Today, when the left regularly lines up behind one bourgeois foreign policy or another, the articles on Europe in these volumes provide a timely reminder of the need to formulate a proletarian policy on all questions.

Marx the polemicist

Karl Vogt was a well-known emigre German democrat who strongly supported Napoleon. Although long suspected of being a French agent, it was only in 1870, when the state archives were opened by the Paris communards, that this suspicion was confirmed. In 1859 Vogt published a slanderous pamphlet directed against Marx with the aim of discrediting the proletarian movement. The pamphlet, which claimed that Marx was living in luxury from money stolen from the working class, was enthusiastically greeted by the bourgeois press. Many socialists and friends told Marx to ignore these slanders. Marx replied that the honour of the workers' movement was at stake and that a reply was necessary. His answer – *Herr Vogt* – is a remarkable work. It is not only a reply to Vogt, but also a critique of the shallow outlook of liberal democrats.

Herr Vogt is a model of revolutionary polemics. Page by page Marx takes apart Vogt, pours scorn on him and exposes his vulgar politics. By the end of the book Vogt is completely crushed and discredited. Indeed, Vogt never recovered his reputation after this assault. But the polemic is not just directed at one man. Through a critique of Vogt's work Marx provides a devastating attack on bourgeois politics of his time.

The left, especially in Britain, will find *Herr Vogt* nit-picking and nasty, too heavy and too hard. Today, when phrases like 'nobody has a monopoly on truth' are the small change of the radical left, *Herr Vogt* will be seen as an aberration of a great German economist. But that's all the more reason to read it. Diplomatic gestures and honeyed phrases were alien to Marx. The class struggle is also a struggle for ideological clarity. Like any struggle where the interest of the proletariat is at stake, it has to be pursued ruthlessly without fear of giving offence to parlour socialists.

Pat Roberts

Reviews

FASCISM IN THE COLOURS OF FRANCE

D Pryce-Jones, *Paris in the Third Reich: a history of the German occupation, 1940-1944*, Collins, pp294, hbk £12.50.

DAVID PRYCE-JONES has done a hatchet job on the conduct of France's petit-bourgeois intelligentsia under Nazi rule. However, *Paris in the Third Reich* is little more than a hatchet job. Pryce-Jones makes two major errors: he fails to see why French bourgeois democracy had to give way to fascism; and, caring only about the behaviour of his peers, he restricts his study of fascist rule to a survey of its impact on the middle class.

Heavy Pétain

As the author notes, nearly every intellectual based in Paris made his peace with Hitler's representatives in one way or another: painters Marc Chagall and Henri Matisse and writer André Malraux, for instance, were disgusted only with German fascists, not French ones, so they decamped to unoccupied Vichy. While novelists Vladimir Nabokov and André Gide did leave the country, collaboration permeated French society, from fellow-travellers of Stalinism (Sartre, de Beauvoir) to bosses of all persuasions. The indigenous fascist organisation Parti Populaire Français was also strong, with a tradition stretching back to the early 'thirties. It had an able ex-Stalinist - Jacques Doriot as its leader and about 100 000 members (many of whom were also ex-Stalinists) on its rolls in Paris alone. And anti-semitism was widespread enough for more than 70 000 Jews to be deported to their deaths at Auschwitz with barely a murmur of protest.

All this isn't just shocking, as the author clearly feels: it is instructive too. It reminds us how weak the French economy of the earlier part of this century was - so weak that the French bourgeoisie had to resort to a prolonged terrorist attack on the working class to raise its profit rates. But it also reminds us that, when the chips are down, there are no 'progressive capitalists' around to ally with in the struggle against fascist reaction. For the ruling class fascism is, like bourgeois democracy, but a means to an end.

We should, however, note that the French Communist Party bears the main responsibility for the triumph of fascism in France. The PCF was already so mired in French chauvinism that it was utterly unable to defend oppressed minorities like the Jews. Pryce-Jones hints at this, but his critique of the PCF's behaviour in the war rests more on muckraking than on political analysis.

The Liberation lives on

The author's focus on the hypocrisy of the intellectuals makes him neglect the class-consciousness of the workers. The fact that about as many fascists lost their lives after the Liberation of August 1944 as did anti-fascists and Jews in the previous four years isn't as surprising as he suggests. France in the war wasn't all prostituted intellectuals, it was also workers who - despite the confusion caused by the PCF - were very clear who their enemies were.

Of course, the French bourgeoisie would rather muddle over the Liberation episode. Severely compromised by its involvement with fascism, it doesn't like admitting that the eventual seizure of the factories by the Partisans and their supporters amounted to a working class insurrection. On the other hand, the PCF would also like to obscure the real significance of the Liberation. Not to do so would be to concede that its three years of post-war governmental office marked the snatching of defeat out of the jaws of victory.

Pryce-Jones does not believe that many people manned the barricades in Paris. But the working class remembers the street fighting better than he can, for the simple reason that it was there and he was not. In fact the Liber-



French fascists apply to join the Nazi Army

ation had a lasting effect on the whole political outlook of the French labour movement. Because the struggle against wartime fascism took the form of a struggle against 'unpatriotic' native capitalists (Vichy) and against Germany, a foreign power that had invaded France twice before, the struggle against post-war reaction in France has always taken on nationalistic overtones. The theme of 'national' liberation was part of the general strikes of 1953 and 1956, and even had its influence on the events of May 1968. The PCF has for many years vied with Gaullism for the right to lead anti-German hysteria in France.

Pryce-Jones is full of hatred for those who were 'soft' on fascism. But it is not enough not to be 'soft': so long as fascism is combatted with nationalist politics, it will live to fight another day. Nearly 40 years after the Liberation fascism is, indeed, alive and well in the more lumpen suburbs of Paris.

James Bloch

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

Jenny Pearce, *Under the eagle: US intervention in Central America and the Caribbean*, Latin America Bureau, January 1982, pp273, pbk £2.50.

Bernard Diederich, *Somoza and the legacy of US involvement in Central America*, Junction Books, pp352, hbk £14.50, pbk £6.95.

Henri Weber, *Nicaragua: the Sandinist revolution*, Verso Editions, 1981, pp154, pbk £2.95.

SINCE THE FMLN blew up the key Puente de Oro bridge over the Lempa river last October, the fortunes of the Salvadorean resistance have taken a turn for the better. In January, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of Martí's original rising with a series of military successes. All the signs are that the 'elections' Christian Democrat President José Napoleón Duarte has called for 28 March will be widely boycotted.

The American bourgeoisie is in trouble in El Salvador and it knows it. American soldiers complete with automatic rifles have been photographed in the area - much to Reagan's embarrassment. While the USA has sent \$55m of emergency military aid to the Duarte regime and has promised another \$100m, foreign direct investment in El Salvador has dropped by 50 per cent and \$700m-worth of capital has left the country. Here and there, senators and congressmen have criticised the US Administration's strategy in El Salvador and have tried to mediate between the junta and the guerrillas. Canada has come out against the elections and has attempted mediation too.

Reagan's recent speech to the Organisation of American States outlined yet another

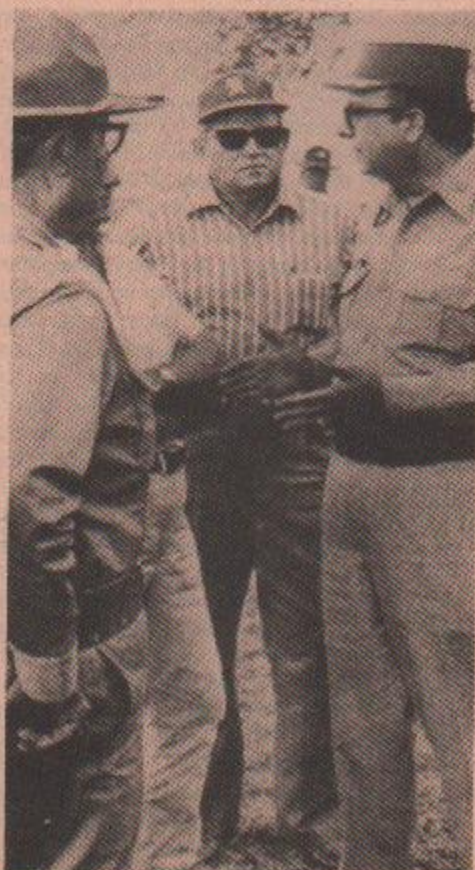
imperialist package of aid and trade/investment incentives. But it changes nothing. As *Newsweek* has pointed out, the White House is in a jam: the Salvadorean left won't buy elections, the forces to the right of Duarte won't buy a negotiated settlement, and the state of the American economy and of American public opinion make US military intervention a dangerous enterprise ('America is out of options', 22 February). Yet intervention is likely. Washington has repeatedly stressed that a victory for the insurgents in El Salvador would have a 'domino' effect throughout Central America and greatly assist the spread of Cuban and Russian influence there.

Castro doesn't count

The domino effect is one thing, but what about Cuban/Soviet influence? One of the merits of Jenny Pearce's informative history of US involvement in Central America is that she convincingly dismisses the Soviet menace as specious US State Department propaganda. The Department's February 1981 white paper, *Communist interference in El Salvador*, is exposed as bogus from start to finish. Its main purpose was to whip Western Europe into line on the need to suppress the national liberation struggle.

Despite the adoption of a slightly liberal, pro-European tone at times, *Under the eagle* is particularly welcome for the emphasis it places on inter-imperialist conflicts in Central America.

Diederich also dismisses East/West tensions. He notes that 'Cuba paid little actual attention



Somoza plus spotless hands

to the Sandinistas beyond giving some of them training and safe haven and allowing Radio Havana to beam anti-Somoza propaganda to Central America'. Apart from titbits like this, however, his book has little to offer: it's just an American journalist's fascinated account of the decadence that was the Somoza regime.

At least Diederich gets it right about Cuba. This is more than can be said for Henri Weber. 'Unlike the Soviet bureaucracy', he tells us, 'the Castroist leadership discreetly but firmly supported the Nicaraguan revolution'. Indeed we learn that 'it is impossible to overemphasise the decisive character of Cuban aid to the Sandinist and Central American revolutions'.

Weber, a leading member of Ernest Mandel's Fourth International, produces no evidence for these statements. His book is designed to reconcile the early 'seventies guerrillaist trends of the European wing of the FI with the US Socialist Workers Party's renewed infatuation with Castro. And he has also brought to the fore something both sides of the FI have in common - anti-Leninism.

Uncle Max's nephew

The blurb to Weber's *Nicaragua* says that it unites solidarity with the Sandinistas with 'critical candour'. Unfortunately, most of Weber's criticisms of the FSLN regime are those of the candid bourgeois sociologist. For Weber the main problem with the FSLN is that it doesn't allow pluralism to flourish enough. 'Who', he asks, 'will decide that the content of government policy is in accord with the workers' interests, if the workers do not give their own verdict in a free and secret ballot?'. Again, though the Christian Democrat oppositional daily *La Prensa* is 'undoubtedly a formidable weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie', it 'contains information and a point of view not to be found anywhere else'.

For Weber Lenin's definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat as rule based directly on force and unrestricted by laws was 'wrong'. Everybody favours pluralism these days, from aging Eurocommunists to State Department specialists on Nicaragua. Both wings of the FI want to cultivate such people.

Lenin was right

Weber's big achievement is to represent today's FSLN regime as a 'revolutionary democracy' on the road to socialism. He argues that, because the Sandinistas forced out or killed Somoza's soldiers, police and upper-level functionaries, they smashed the state. His analysis, however, is Eurocommunist claptrap about the state as 'the terrain of the class struggle' mediating among competing classes and 'class fractions'. Weber reduces the state to 'positions' in the Managua Post Office. For him smashing the state involves not overthrowing capital as a social relation, but putting the right people in the right positions.

Today Nicaragua's foreign debt stands at \$3bn, twice the level it did under Somoza. Production of cotton, the main export crop, has fallen by a half. The conquests of the Nicaraguan people are in jeopardy. This is not just because of *La Prensa*, nor even because most of agriculture and industry remain in private hands. The decisive factors are that Western commodities come cheaper than Nicaraguan ones and that Nicaragua has no state monopoly of foreign trade. Capital still rules the land: indeed, its grip is tightening daily.

In 1959, at the peak of the imperialist world's post-war boom, Castro enjoyed certain room to manoeuvre against the major capitalist powers. But in 1982, in the middle of a recession, the FSLN is no match for the law of value. The USA may only have \$3bn invested in Central America, but every dollar counts these days.

In Central America only the dictatorship of the proletariat will keep the USA at bay. Only genuine workers' democracy will ensure that productivity reaches the levels it has achieved in North America. Only internationalism, not petit-bourgeois nationalism, will secure consistent allies against intervention. These are lessons which Weber rejects, but which we must hope that the freedom fighters of El Salvador take on board in the weeks and months ahead.

James Wood

LT: ACTION & REACTION

I WORK ON London's Underground as a guard. I'm an NUR shop steward. At the moment most of the men and women on my line are preparing to fight the cuts and fare increases. For the first time workers on London Transport are facing the prospect of compulsory redundancy and everybody is edgy.

The union leadership has formed a Joint Trades Union London Transport Defence Committee to supposedly fight the attacks. However, at its first mass meeting at Congress House on 17 February the officials refused to tell the shop stewards the actual date of our proposed one-day strike. The first people to get to know of our one-day strike must be the press, argued Andy Dodds, Assistant General Secretary of NUR. Most of the 600 delegates were shocked and disgusted that the anti-union media would know our business before us. The motion calling the one-day strike on the unknown date, won overwhelming support but calls to be even more militant were ignored by the entire platform.

It was Ken Livingstone's obsession with rate increases as a means of implementing the cuts that got us into this situation of being open to central government attack. Now our union leadership proposes that we support the GLC campaign designed to cover up its miserable blunders. The whole idea is to blame everything on the Tories. The "Don't blame Labour" cry seems to be the motivation for the whole campaign. The issue of rate increases is being played down.

The union leaders don't want things getting out of hand, with workers deciding dates of strikes or the politics behind them. What they want is a good clean fight to strengthen the Labour Party. The only action they want is the odd day's strike and lobbies of Parliament and pleas to change the law. We've got a real fight on our hands, not just against London Transport and the Tories, but also against our own trade union leaders.

Paul
NUR, Leytonstone Depot

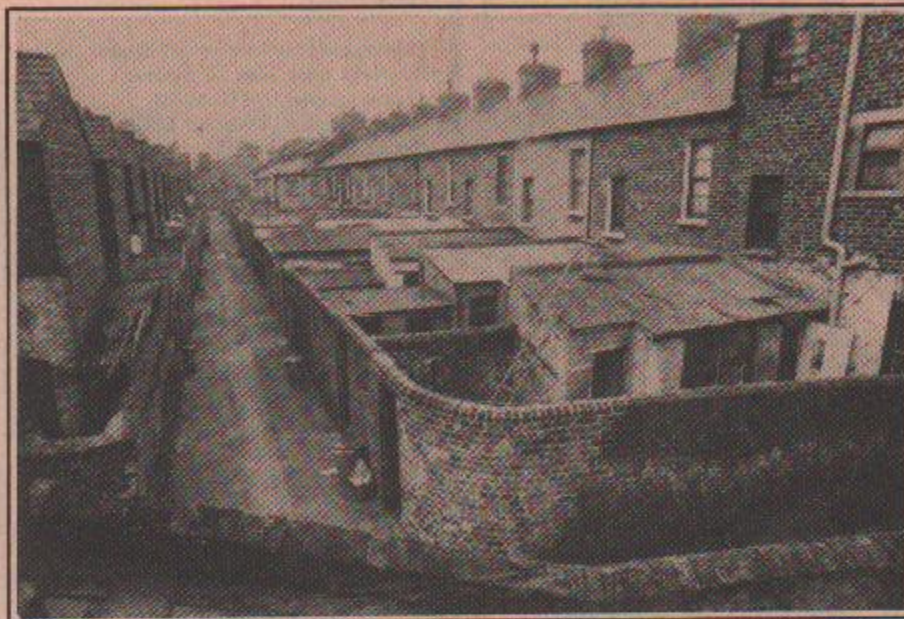
OVERSEAS STUDENTS

AFTER THREE YEARS of pretending to have a campaign on overseas students, the NUS has finally given up the ghost. On 13 February they were meant to hold a national conference on the question. The issue of DHSS race checks in hospitals, and the way they'll stop overseas students from getting free treatment, was on the agenda. Then, a week beforehand, they called the whole thing off on the grounds of 'apathy'. How cynical can you get? At our college no attempt was made to publicise the conference. When I asked our union President about getting delegated, he said 'myself and the Vice-President will be attending!' More seriously, every day we're hearing about more and more overseas students getting kicked out of their colleges for not paying the massive fee increases (£1000 last year), being forced to show their passports (as at Hackney College) and eventually deported. I know of at least a dozen cases of that happening, at North-East London Poly, at Kitson College in Leeds, at St John's FE College in Manchester to name just a few.

The NUS say they've got 'other priorities', and at the moment it's the grants campaign. In fact they're doing nothing about grants, cuts or anything else. Students who've occupied recently, at the Polytechnic of Central London and elsewhere, have been kicked in the teeth by NUS President Dave Aaronovitch.

I agreed with what the next step said last month, about the NUS being as bad as its big brother the TUC. They're just as hypocritical about fighting racism, and just as useless at defending their members against the Government's cuts. At our college we're trying to censure NUS for calling off the 13 February conference and we're organising a local campaign to get things moving on the overseas students issue. Your readers in other colleges should do the same, and should tell the rest of the left to stop treating racism in colleges as a side issue.

John G
City of London Polytechnic



BEFORE THE STORM

Some personal recollections of Derry in the years before the civil rights movement began.

THE BOGSIDE of the middle 'fifties knew little or nothing about television, and its dimly-lighted streets were filled with children, myself included, playing all manner of games until around nine o'clock when our mothers would come to the door and call us, or our father would whistle us in like sheep dogs. A good scrubbing in front of the fire in a tin bath, then up the stairs, with occasional reminders during the pillow fights to 'keep quiet' or your Da would be up with the strap.

Steeped in history

In many ways we were no different from working class children in other ghettos, except we experienced constant poverty brought about by the Unionist system, which in those days we didn't fully understand. Some people in our street kept pigs and we'd earn a few bob gathering food scraps, at three pence a bucket and three shillings and sixpence a bin. The older lads who stayed out longer would gather at the All Cash Stores and sing songs or recite verse, and in this way many of us learnt our country's history at an early age. The whole district was steeped in history. Roger Casement had spoken to the Irish Volunteers in the back gardens behind our homes which was wasteland between the Bogside and Wellington Street. The Shamrock Hall, some of which was still standing, had been a regular meeting place for the IRB and IRA. Old men in the area had been excommunicated for belonging to a 'subversive organisation' or for fighting in Spain against Franco, and the more conservative Catholics considered them to be outcasts.

The power of the Church was stronger then, and when a priest came into the house it was as if the Pope himself had decided to grant us poor unfortunates a special audience. To our house they came quite frequently, because we were in need of special graces, being a family of tearaways steeped in Bolshevism and Republican politics. The clerics did all in their power to point out that Republican involvement equalled buying a passage to hell's very hot climate from which there was no return. My mother used to crack a joke after the priest had gone (of course!) that we should all buy a stock of sun hats from Paddy Bannon (a local firm) which we were going to need when we reached those hotter climates. We weren't a religious family in the strict sense of the word, although we went to Chapel every Sunday. But having any choice was out of the question because of the close-knit community and the cultural pressures that surrounded the area. The conflict between nationality and religion was much more obvious in those days to the up-and-coming Irish revolutionary, and the speeches against the IRA from the pulpits were only too frequent.

Graduation

From playing non-subversive games, some of us graduated to other games which included writing slogans calling for the release of the prisoners in large three foot high letters, or crawling into the yard of the RUC barracks in broad daylight

and cutting down the Union Jack which flew on special occasions a few streets away. By the time we reached our teens other issues began to appear on the horizon - would there be a job after leaving school or would we be forced to emigrate at the tender age of 15 or 16?

Unemployment in the Bogside was extremely high. Among men it was over 33 per cent and on average 25 per cent, and in many ways things have changed little since then. Emigration in the Derry area amounted to 10 per cent of the Six County total annually. When young people growing up began to realise what type of 'future' they were facing, the choice became one of fighting back or emigrating. When faced with the stark realities of life in the Bogside we grew up very quickly indeed, but only a small percentage joined secret movements such as the banned Fianna Eireann, Sinn Féin or other groupings. The first step was always to reach out towards Irish culture, usually playing gaelic games or joining an Irish language class. As early as the age of 13, I enlisted in the Young Republican Volunteer Organisation which had no links whatever with the Republican movement proper, but gradually linked itself to Sinn Féin and so we began to collect funds for the political prisoners and internees. The Young Oaks Gaelic Club sprang from the YRVO and by the time most of us had reached the age of 15 or 16 we were well grounded in Irish history. The Young Oaks gradually fell under the influence of the Republican boy scouts, Fianna Eireann, which drew most of its members from the ranks of the unemployed. Some of its members were employed in the Birmingham Sound Reproducers which made tape-recorders and record changers, owned by the millionaire Dr McDonald, and all of them were active trade unionists.

Fianna members were the militants and were involved in almost every dispute. Some held positions as shop stewards or on the branch committee. Connolly gradually became the hero of the young left wingers, and by the close of the 1956-62 Resistance Campaign many of us were publicly declaring ourselves to be socialists. This was the background to what was to happen in the middle 'sixties. The unique economic and social plight of Derry's Bogside was to be the centre of rising discontent, in which the kids who once played games on its streets would eventually build barricades and shed their blood on its tarmac and alley-ways.

Early agitations

Derry could best be summed up in three words - defeat, despair and the dole - in the years leading up to the city's first civil rights march in October 1968. At no time since the inception of the Six County artificial statelet was unemployment lower than 12 per cent and even a casual observer of social and economic affairs could not fail to see the blatant disparity between the areas, east and west of the River Bann. In the 'sixties it received a series of body blows which were to have an important influence in subsequent events.

First, the Great Northern rail link which traversed the western region was axed, leaving Fermanagh, Tyrone and practically all of County Derry with no rail link whatsoever. The other three counties had two separate systems, one running north from Belfast and the other south. Second, in February 1965 Stormont accepted the Lockwood Report, which rejected the second city (Derry) as the site for "Ulster's" second university, in spite of Magee University College, a century-old institution, seeming the best location. Third, in the same month the government accepted the Wilson Plan, which outlined four centres for rapid industrial development - all within the 'magic' 30 mile radius of Belfast, and none in the western counties which were suffering most from high unemployment. In order to strengthen further the relatively prosperous east, the Unionists included plans to build a new city - Craigavon - in County Armagh.

The reaction to these three measures in early 1965 marked a turning point for the people of Derry. It became obvious to many people that if they were not prepared to fight back against the government they had no future whatsoever. For the first time many sections of the community were beginning to stir: academics and students, workers and the unemployed, even many professional people and small businessmen found themselves in conflict with the Stormont regime.

The unemployed were among the first into action. On 22 January 1965, Quigley's Hotel in Foyle Street became the birthplace of the Derry Unemployed Action Committee (DUAC) which gradually expanded with each successive protest. Public buildings were picketed, council meetings disrupted, teach-ins held in the Labour Exchange at Bishop Street. An unemployed workers club opened up above a dance hall near Derry's Diamond inside the famous walls, and the late Brian Faulkner, then Minister of Commerce, received many a stormy reception. On one occasion he was besieged in the Guildhall by 600 demonstrators blocking all exits and demanding that he meet a delegation. The main officials of the DUAC, belonging to the Republican movement and local Labour Party, were met on the steps by the Unionist Mayor who told them to go home and to stop "making fools of themselves". When he was booed by the large crowd he swore that only over his dead body would they be permitted to meet "the Minister". At the time of writing, Alderman Anderson (then Mayor) is still alive (although he has emigrated) but the unemployed did meet Faulkner, after some bright spark sent him a telegram via the GPO some fifty yards away. Alderman Anderson in a furious mood withdrew from the meeting, retreating into the Mayor's parlour which stocked a good supply of fine wines and cigars, which the unemployed sampled themselves when they occupied at a later date.

In the next few months the students marched side by side with the unemployed at demonstrations, and the University for Derry Campaign gained widespread local support. Meetings held in the Guildhall were packed and a cavalcade of cars made their way from the city to the steps of Stormont to demand that the second University be built in Derry. Many of the militants in the city were highly annoyed that the University for Derry Campaign committee closed its doors to greater working class participation, and its leaders mounted the public platform wearing dress suits and dicky bows, mainly middle class elite with academic backgrounds. If the radicals had been able to gain control of the university campaign, the lid might very well have blown off earlier in Derry, as many middle class academics actually feared at that time. It was as part of the campaign that John Hume first came to prominence, then a school teacher at St. Columba's College.

Some of the battles joined in 1965 are still being fought today: some by those survivors of the early agitations who have not since been buried in the local cemetery or locked up in numerous institutions for incarceration. Many of the early agitators are today involved in other aspects of struggle, but all of them would see the period, from early 1965 as being the roots of the later and current conflicts.

Finn O'Foyle

YOUTH DELEGATION

Ireland Easter 1982 9-12 April



The Irish Freedom Movement is organising a youth delegation to Belfast and Derry for the commemoration of the Easter Rising in 1916. We want to show that many young people in Britain support the fight to get Britain out of Ireland. Delegates will be able to meet the anti-imperialist youth of the Six Counties, to learn about their struggle and discuss our work in Britain.

If you support the fight for Irish freedom, if you want to get involved in the anti-imperialist movement in Britain, and if you're under 25 — join us! If you can't join us, help us build the delegation — raise it in your union or college, send us money and sponsorship.

write!

I/we would like to join the Youth Delegation to Ireland.

I/we would like to sponsor the Delegation.

Name(s)

Tel no

Trade union branch/Trades Council

I/we enclose delegates fees of £30 per delegate.

I/we enclose £ to sponsor delegate(s).

I/we would like to have:

☐ leaflets

☐ sponsorship forms

☐ delegation programmes

Send to BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX.

Write to us for further details or ring 01-274 3951.



RCP in action

COVENTRY

Thursday 4 March 7.30pm
No NHS pass laws — defend overseas students. COVWAR public meeting. *Students Union, University of Warwick.*

COVWAR—IWA(GB). April '82 is the first anniversary of the racist murders of Satnam Singh Gill and Dr Dharry. COVWAR and the IWA(GB) will be commemorating these murders and mobilising against the racist violence of 1982. Details: 01-274 3951.

LEEDS

Thursday 11 March 7.30pm
Friday 12 March 1.00pm
Rosie the Riveter. Film and discussion. 11 March: *Swarthmore Centre, Woodhouse Square, Leeds 3.* 12 March: *University of Leeds, Roger Stevens Buildings, LT 21.*

Thursday 25 March 7.30pm
No to NHS apartheid! WAR public meeting. Speakers: Terry Wood (NE Leeds COHSE) and WAR representative. See *Leeds Other Paper* for details.

MANCHESTER

Friday 5 March 7.30pm
Jobs not YOPSI! Speaker: Alan Harding. *Britons Protection, Great Bridgewater St.*

Saturday 13 March 2-5pm
Wreck the checks! MANWAR public meeting. Speaker: Fran Eden. For details phone 01-274 3951

Thursday 18 March 7.30pm
Women and the unions. Speaker: Kate Marshall. *Britons Protection, Great Bridgewater St.*

Friday 2 April 7.30pm
Smash the apartheid state! Speaker: Charles Longford. *Britons Protection, Great Bridgewater St.*

LONDON

East London
Monday 2 March 7.30pm
Women for Communism inaugural meeting. *Homerton Library, Homerton High St.*

Tuesday 16 March 7.30pm
ELWAR activists meeting. *City of London Poly, Calcutta House, Old Castle St (near Aldgate East tube).*

North London
Preparing for power
A series of ten forums on the international class struggle in 1982. *Hemingford Arms, Offord Rd, N1.*

Preparing for power

Thursday 4 March 7.00pm
The capitalist crisis: is there an end in sight? Speaker: Tony Allen, editorial board of *the next step*.

Thursday 11 March 7.00pm
Women in the crisis. Speaker: Anne Burton.

Thursday 18 March 7.00pm
What about the American working class? Speaker: Kevin Green.

Thursday 25 March 7.00pm
NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Speaker: Gareth Evans.

South London
Thursday 4 March 7.30pm
Woman — a special kind of slave. Public meeting. Speaker: Annie Dillon. *Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5.*

Friday 12 March 7.30pm
Police off our backs! SOLWAR public meeting. *Room 119, Lambeth Town Hall, Acre Lane, Brixton SW2.*

Irish Freedom Movement

COVENTRY

Tuesday 2, 16, 30 March 7.30pm
Irish Freedom Movement meetings for activists. For details phone 01-274 3951 or write to IFM, c/o Box 79, Students Union, University of Warwick, Coventry.

LEEDS

Monday 1 March.
Picket to commemorate the start of Bobby Sands' hunger strike. *Leeds town centre.* Phone 01-274 3951 for details.

Thursday 18 March 7.30pm
Public meeting about the youth delegation to Ireland. See *Leeds Other Paper* for details.

MANCHESTER

Tuesday 25 March 7.30pm
Ireland: the trade union connection. Public meeting sponsored by AUEW Ashton No 2, TGWU 6/389, COHSE Manchester 332. *Britons Protection, Great Bridgewater St.*

Plus regular meetings for activists. Phone 01-274 3951 for details.

LONDON

East London
Wednesday 10, 24 March 7.00pm
Irish Freedom Movement activists' meetings. *Dalston Labour Club, Dalston Lane, near Dalston Junction, E8.*

North London
Tuesday 9 March 7.30pm
Join the youth delegation to Belfast and Derry! Meeting for delegates and supporters. *Camden Neighbourhood Centre, 12 Greenland Rd, Camden NW1.*

Thursday 1 April 7.00pm
Irish Freedom Movement 1982. Public forum. Speaker: Keith Tompson. *Hemingford Arms, Offord Rd, N1.*

For regular activities contact Box IFM, 234 Camden High St, NW1.

South London
Sunday 21 March 3.00pm
Youth for Irish Freedom film benefit. *Ritzy Cinema, Brixton Oval (near Brixton tube).* £1.00/75p unwaged.

Friday 2 April 7.30pm
Youth delegation to Belfast and Derry. Rally and send-off social with Irish band. *Vassall Neighbourhood Centre, 147 Brixton Rd (near Oval tube).*

South London Irish Freedom Movement meets fortnightly:
1 March. *Buckmaster House, Stockwell Park Estate, Brixton.*
15, 29 March. *Room 7, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton.*
For details phone 274 2895.