



# IT'S GUERRILLA

# ACTION

## ROUT OF TUC 'GENERALS'

The TUC special Congress on March 5th warrants special thought by serious Marxist-Leninist fighters—the more so because the capitalist media have played it down.

The fact that it was held at all was due to the rank and file members of trade unions who reject the Government's demands on the working class. It is not to be compared with special meetings of the executive councils of unions called by the TUC, as at Croydon, which were simply devices for by-passing the membership in mass.

It was also a model and a lesson of what can be achieved through guerrilla struggle strategy against the positional struggle strategy of the 'generals' of the TUC.

The outcome showed weakness as well as gains in that it was not possible to eschew the pseudo-militant demands of the revisionists for a one day general strike. Nevertheless it is important to estimate and analyse the whole and not the part.

The special Congress was called by the General Council because it was not possible to evade the demands of those who are actually fighting employers and Government and still claim the leadership it has never in fact possessed. It was hoped that through the Report submitted by Victor Feather the actual struggle of the mass members, in ASLEF, in the hospitals, the civil service, gas workers, engineers, at Fords and so forth, would be beheaded and by-passed.

Though it was a Congress in name it was to be without Congress power. There must be no resolutions, no amendments, no reference back. The vote was to be for or against the Report, the most perfidious feature of which is voluntary wage restraint, granted 'control' of prices. In one clause is expressed the hope that the Government might change its course since there is to be participation on the Wages and Prices Board!

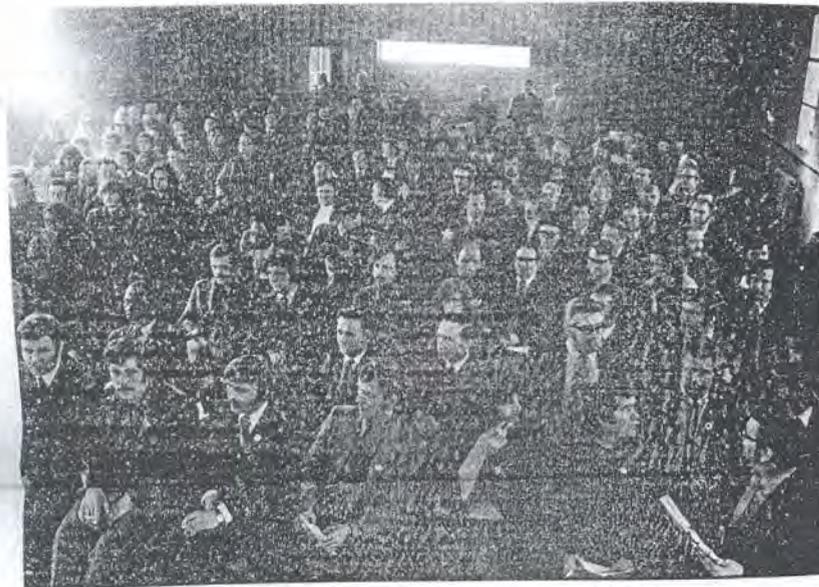
## The Voice of Struggle

But it all went awry. The 'generals' were defeated by the reference back of the Report. This was an all-out victory for the rank and file, the more so since all members of the General Council of the TUC, 'right' and 'left', were pledged by vote to support. It was interesting to note that neither of the representatives of unions whose members were most actively engaged in repudiating the Government, ASLEF and the gas workers, voted for the reference back!

Once the AUEW had decided on Sunday, March 4th, to seek amendments of the Report, the TGWU who had been indecisive but who must never look less militant than others supported the reference back as moved by the miners' representative. The result was a complete rout of the 'generals' of the TUC, adjournment and consternation. Finally no less than 12 resolutions were permitted to be tabled, and this from a body that convenes its peers, those who have placed them there, and then presumes to tell them to do exactly as told!

In the end the voice of those in struggle against Government policy, against wage restraint, for the defence of the unions and for the improvement of conditions won out. The resolution carried for 'determined' struggle against the Government, for 'one day' of protest was made more real by insertion of the word 'stoppage', thus one day of protest and stoppage. So the positional 'generals' got their marching orders!

A second resolution seeking to establish a Committee of Struggle from Congress to conduct the struggle was defeated due to the defection of the TGWU. None of this manoeuvring counts for much. What is important for us to register is that by the action of those members of unions in actual struggle their voice cannot be smothered. The TUC General Council do not command the strategy. It is the generals in action in guerrilla struggle who are evolving a vigorous strategy for victory and not substitution for it a ~~...~~ to compulsion by voluntary fetters.



Ford convenors shop stewards at their meeting in Coventry on Feb.28th when they voted for all-out action

## THE LINE FOR FORDS

Ford workers today are without a wages and conditions agreement, the last settlement having expired on February 28th. It was this which led to the convenors' call prior to the 28th 'all out on March 1st' — a mechanical deadline fixed without preparation. It was an immature and arrogant call to action based on the splendid fight two years previously of the 9 to 10 week strike. The heroic sacrifice of that time makes the recent insensitive demand on work mates less forgivable, coming as it does from those closest to the workers in the Ford factories.

That the 'all out' summons was not exactly "responded to has caused gleeful shouts from the press and some dismay among workers not directly involved. Crow not too soon. The conflict is inevitable; but first to get the record straight.

Immediately on receipt of the 'offer' from Fords both factories, Halewood (Liverpool) and Swansea stopped for a day and a half to two days. All unions negotiating rejected the 'offer' which totals approximately £124 million and falls strictly within the Government's limitation of £1 plus 4%. This should be compared with the 'settlement' of last time of £36 million. The new offer is less acceptable because following the 9-10 week strike of 1971 Fords as an employer have done much better than previous

The unevenness of struggle on other wage fronts demands the maximum struggle with the greatest prudence, for it will not be won by a quick all out action even supposing there was a desire to settle on the part of Fords management. Fords do not have the desire to settle. It is a mistake to say that they are hiding behind the Government and are not free agents. It is their Government as it is the Government of all employers and Fords do not wish to renege on their creature.

No single employer has opposed Government control and anti-working class legislation—the Industrial Relations Act and the Wage Freeze phases I, II and III. On the contrary they demanded such. Well then, let them suffer the consequences of their stupidity, not to say temerity.

Since the initial foray, once again Liverpool and Swansea Fords have stopped 3 to 4 days to return to their factories with all manner of sanctions such as non co-operation, no overtime, go slow. And in Dagenham there have been single one day strikes and also similar actions inside the factory, though as yet too timid. In the interim the unions formally cannot rest on rejection or unacceptable formulae. The executives of unions have been invited to recognise that this battle is not to be confined within Fords.

What is now required is the maximum action within to cause maximum

economic loss to Fords with the minimum loss at this time to the workers waging the struggle. The front must be held in this fashion at least until Vauxhall has to make their offer in mid-April. This will follow the same pattern as Fords, pious utterance by General Motors that 'we must obey Government restraints; we cannot be law breakers' when everyone knows of course that the companies are bursting with magnanimity and are only prevented by Mr. Heath from being generous to workers!

The Ford workers line to the employers must be 'You made the bed. Now lie in it. Never mind the law. We want more.'

By sustaining till April an internal fight within and from time to time without Ford workers can expect to be joined by their workmates at General Motors Vauxhall confronted with the same struggle and the same reply from the employers. Vauxhall workers will surely assume their moral obligations remembering that they have been saved this effort time and again by the calendar, by the prowess of Ford workers preceding their own need to struggle and presenting them with the same gains relatively gratis.

Who knows if Ford yankees are brought to a standstill and Vauxhall yankees likewise, perhaps Nixon will instruct Heath to settle!



## International Women's Day

On this international Women's Day, March 8th, we salute the magnificent women of Vietnam who have endured all the terrible hardships of US Imperialism's aggressive war; who, fighting shoulder to shoulder with their menfolk, have won the freedom of their country and also their freedom as women in a socialist Vietnam.

In China and Albania women suffered the worst forms of feudal degradation: by taking up arms in their country's revolutionary war of liberation they freed themselves from a double oppression, as women and as workers. In these two socialist countries women are moving forward in every area of life, social and economic, on an absolutely equal footing to build a new society from which all forms of exploitation have been abolished.

In Britain, too, from the time of the Bryant and May's Match Strike right up to the Sewing Machine Strike of the women at Fords, women have thrown themselves into the struggle for their own rights - a struggle which is also the fight for the emancipation of the working class.

Under feudalism and capitalism women are enslaved, are treated as simply the means of transmitting property rights or become property themselves, are subjected to the worst conditions of employment at the lowest rates of pay. Only in socialism and the fight for socialism do women take their place side by side with men in comradeship on equal terms.

Women can only liberate themselves through the liberation of the whole working class and the working class can never achieve complete freedom unless it achieves complete freedom for women.

## Women's struggle in Britain today

Women in Britain are not isolated from the arena of struggle. Economic necessity has forced more and more of them out of the home into direct confrontation with the owners of the means of production, the bosses - and on very unequal terms! The capitalist economic system declines to pay even lip service to the equality of women. And the capitalist social system singles women out to be the domestic slaves in the petty, individualistic economy of the home.

The British ruling class in particular is expert in ways of trying to divide the working class, whether it pits men against women, catholic against protestant or white against black. Working class women are now able to see more clearly the class nature of their oppression.

Women should no longer need men to do their organising and agitation for them. The only effective leadership for women must come from their own ranks. In the past women have been reluctant to accept leadership roles but their rising class consciousness is forcing them to take responsibility in their own class struggles.

The white collar work force is comprised largely of women. Part of the reason why the struggle in this field is only embryonic is because women in the past have hesitated to fight against the system which reinforces their degradation. Nurses, shop assistants, clerical workers, process workers, hospital and allied domestic staff, of which women make up such a large part, are among the lowest paid sections of the working class. But this situation is rapidly changing as the recent fight against 'the freeze' by hospital workers, civil servants and teachers has shown, as women emerge among the leaders.

## Women and the Party

from 'Women in Class Struggle', a C.P.B.(M-L) pamphlet.

Women workers need the leadership of the party of their class just the same as do men workers. That should go without saying. But in addition, the workers' party is the only organisation of any sort which is working for real equality of the sexes and an end to the special oppression of women under capitalist rule. Workers do not put their faith in any reformist or escapist, feminist 'solutions' for women. No reforms within the capitalist system, or utopian communities, or new 'life-styles', can bring equality and an end to oppression so long as we are ruled by the capitalist class. In fact they can be diversions from the struggle for these ends, if ever workers are persuaded to split up to concentrate on sectional issues.

We say that only by tackling the fundamental question - which is that of state power - can workers get in a position to tackle all the secondary questions that affect women, such as inequalities in the law, in education, social and family life, etc. In its struggle for state power the working class cannot afford the disaffection of any of its sections. When sectional inequalities, such as those which affect women, prove an impediment to struggle, the class must direct its efforts toward removing them. Here lies the importance, for example, of the fight for equal pay. The same process goes on under much more favourable conditions during the period of working class power. As the class has no interest in oppressing any of its sections, women can gradually win their struggle for equality throughout all spheres of life. They have a great stake in the proletarian revolution.

But the Party cannot sit by and rest on the assumption that women workers must support it in their own interest. Lenin said "... the women of the working class will not feel irresistibly driven into sharing our struggles for state power if we only and always put forward that one demand, though it were with the trumpets of Jericho. No, no! The women must be made conscious of the political connections between our demands and their own suffering, needs, and wishes. They must realize what the proletarian dictatorship means for them: complete equality with man in law and practice, in the family, in the state, in society; an end to the power of the bourgeoisie."

The battle against the freeze, against the employing class and its government is spreading. The decision forced on a reluctant TUC General Council means the involvement of practically the whole class. Those sections in direct confrontation with the freeze on their wages, often sections without a tradition of struggle, are waging the battle in that most effective of ways - the guerrilla struggle. With the workers themselves choosing when and where to apply the pressure. With the unifying aim of breaking the freeze kept clearly in view. With so little scope for confusion and class compromise. As in last year's miners' and builders' strikes with the mass keeping a tight rein on the 'leaders'.

The government may talk about their determination to uphold their pay laws, but their weakness is plain for all to see. Whatever happened to that other anti-working class law, the Industrial Relations Act? Wasn't that supposed to stop the very sort of strikes we see now - the ones we are told 'damage the national interest'? We have smashed one law - we are in the process of smashing another.

## British Rail

Drivers and management were both stepping up the pressure. The drivers were holding one-day strikes and withdrawing co-operation, for example, insisting on double manning of trains without speedometers. British Rail was calling for a 'stricter line' to be taken against drivers with 'unreasonable attitudes'. When local management tried this, however, they found a whole terminus closed down. ASLEF is demanding £40 a week for drivers under restructuring talks promised last year. British Rail have only offered £33.50 and say increases must come under the

Phase II limit for this year's pay talks, for which the three rail unions have lodged a 'substantial' pay claim. But it is not a good sign for the NUR to claim 'members are fed up to the teeth with having to bear the brunt' of alleged public annoyance (and with some 30% of commuters quite happily staying at home during the strikes, perhaps the NUR should consider the 'silent majority' who aren't brandishing their umbrellas). If you fear unpopularity over someone else's action, can you plausibly threaten action of your own to win a 'substantial increase'?



Briant Print workers march in support of Shotton steel workers

## Zenith Carburettors

Zenith, the biggest supplier of carburettors to the motor industry, which showed its anti-union nature with the sit-in at its Stanmore subsidiary, is at it again. The chairman of the ASTMS works committee at the Deptford factory, who is also quality control manager was told to give up union work after a one-day strike for recognition. On refusing he was sacked. 44 other members came out, and shop-floor workers have taken action in support. The firm then offered two years salary, over £5,000 if the man would 'get lost'. But not everybody thinks like James Coad, and the offer was refused.

## Bootle Buses

Drivers and conductors, members of the T & GWU at Bootle Depot of Ribble Motors staged a series of one-day strikes every Friday, in support of their demand for the withdrawal of the Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive from the recently introduced 693 (schools) service in Crosby. They see this as leading the way to possible future major alterations in the allocation of work between Ribble Motors and the MPTE, and these alterations are likely to lead to a loss of work at Bootle Depot.

## Closure

Breknell, Dolman and Rogers, the Bristol ticket machine and vending machine manufacturers is to be closed. The firm employs 500 workers. Three years ago the firm was taken over by the Vokes group. This was followed by redundancies. In December the Tillings conglomerate took over Vokes for £9.7 million.

## Civil servants

In another example of guerrilla action, 25 CPSA members at the VAT central unit increased the pressure already caused by an overtime ban by holding a one-week strike just as VAT is about to come into operation. Taxmen are about the only trade unionists who can only be accused of 'holding the nation to ransom' when they are not on strike. So here guerrilla tactics can put on maximum pressure with minimum inconvenience to the public.

## Coles Cranes

1,500 workers were continuing their ten-week sit-in at this Sunderland factory, a subsidiary of Acrow Engineering. The sit-in began when the company broke existing agreements.

## Gas workers

3,250 industrial and commercial gas users were cut off, together with 1,200 schools, as the gas workers intensified their action. They also started to put pressure on the Gas Corporation to cut the pressure off from industries using natural gas. If the selective action continues to build up in effectiveness, there will be no need for calls such as that from the South-West region for all-out strike action by all 47,000 gas workers. In the West Midlands, for example, a complete overtime ban and a strike by only 10 men cut off 2,450 businesses.

## Miners

The government's Pay Code for Phase II may well have torpedoed the Coal Board's hopes of an easy settlement of the mine-workers' claim. The Phase II limit had been painstakingly calculated as a £2.29 increase, the pension had been doubled to £3 and there was the prospect of an additional week's holiday being offered. But the Pay Code now stands in the way of this extra holiday, leading to almost certain rejection of the offer, although with both sides the negotiations having concentrated so far on technicalities to squeeze past the edges of the freeze, any outright confrontation with the freeze could be a long way off.

## Docks

A meeting of dockers in London's enclosed docks accepted an offer of £2.60 in line with Phase II. At the same time the meeting threw the whole thing back in the employers' court by withdrawing 'flexible working practices' which the employers had insisted on continuing as a condition of the offer. Let's see how they like that kind of pay deal. Meanwhile 1,400 riverside dockers and 1,000 tally clerks have accepted Phase II increases of £2.82 and £2.70 unconditionally.

## London teachers

London teachers staged the third of their three-day selective strikes for an increase in the £118 London allowance. 2,500 teachers from 212 schools were involved.

## Steel

Following the TUC special congress there has been the TUC steel committee's delegate conference on steel redundancies. It achieved - nothing. This should come as no surprise to those who know the TUC. Calls for industrial action, the only hope for stopping the redundancies, were ruled out on the perfectly reasonable grounds that the individual unions must make their own decisions. In which case why, bother with the conference? Meanwhile the action committee at the Shotton works in North Wales, where 6,500 jobs are threatened has called a rank and file conference in Manchester on April 13, and the big steel union, the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation is to hold its first-ever delegate conference on April 18. But conferences in themselves are no substitute for action.

## Penguin Books

Following their half-day walkout on Thursday, 22nd February, the Horton Road and Harmondsworth NUJ Chapels voted by an overwhelming majority at a mandatory joint chapel meeting on March 9th for industrial action against the management's latest offer of £1450-1900 compared to a claim for £1550-2150.

# FROM THE WORKERS TO THE WORKERS

A picket in the hospital ancillary workers strike at Kings College Hospital.

## FIRST OF ALL, WHAT IS YOUR CLAIM?

We are demanding £4 a week across the board. At the moment we earn between £14.50 and £19. The Government have 'offered' £1.20 for women and £1.88 for the blokes, which is just ridiculous.

## HOW DID THE STRIKE COME ABOUT?

We'll, we are holding selective strikes up and down the country. The T&G here has 700 members, and when we met we had a unanimous vote to come out. We've got support from the ETU, PTU, NUT, CPDSA, NALGO, LASH, etc., nationally and locally. WHY ARE YOU USING THE GUERRILLA TACTIC OF SELECTIVE STRIKES?

It's the strong hospitals first: Kings is one of those in the lead. We're solid here, and we'll win. Later there may be a possibility of an all-out strike.

## HOW HAVE OTHER STAFF IN THE HOSPITAL REACTED?

Magnificently. We need solidarity to win: the nurses are refusing to do our work and are sticking to nursing; the ETU are right behind us, ready to take action if necessary; individual nurses are picketing with us when off duty; and this is a teaching hospital - the students are here with us and put out leaflets for us - in fact everyone is doing what they can.

## HOW IS THE PICKETING GOING?

We had 200 out manning all the gates. We don't stop doctors, consultants, etc. or any essential supplies going in. But drivers either carry supplies in and leave the truck outside or they take them back.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING INSIDE?

We're manning only emergency duties, for example we're catering for the 300 patients who can't be moved, but have demanded that private patients move into public wards and eat the same food if they want to be fed.

## ARE THEY TRYING TO EMPLOY SCABS?

No. That would be in breach of agreement and they know that we'd pull out all the stops then.

## HAS THERE BEEN ANY VICTIMISATION?

Only among the nursing staff who will tell you themselves.

## A nursing sister, member of NALGO

### WHAT SORT OF VICTIMISATION?

I have been on the picket line, and suddenly after working here for four years with good reports they said my work was at fault and asked for my resignation: I expect to get a letter of apology this afternoon. (This was after the authorities were told that if she was forced to leave the ETU would strike.) We (about 60 nurses in the Nurses Action Group) are picketing, and our union has decided not to do any non-nursing work.

### IS THE ACTION SOLID?

Yes, we're solid, and we're going to beat them!



Pickets outside King's College Hospital, London, during the hospital workers' strike

## Gloucester Hospital strike

Gloucester hospital workers are new to industrial struggle but their morale is very high. There is no doubt that the fight is with the government as well as the local hospital board. Of about 1000 strikers, 5-6000 attended a mass meeting in Kings Square, Gloucester.

Workers were told by the hospital authorities that a strike would make no difference and they could do without what they insultingly call 'floorwomen'. But now not even a brave show of floor scrubbing and linen washing by consultants and hospital secretaries can disguise the fact that wards are closed and no hospital can function without ancillary staff. Hospital workers, when accused of putting people's lives at risk and causing misery, answer that on £17 per week they too suffer great hardship to the

detriment of their own families who can't have holidays and have to live under slum conditions. Why not expand the NHS and better the conditions of its workers? Because this system puts healthy profits as its priority.

The whole health service is understaffed, putting a great strain on doctors, nurses and ancillary workers alike. Women cleaners, all older women, report that there were no replacements for workers off sick and the other cleaners were expected to do the sick woman's work without extra pay. Asking supervisors, when they could be found, for overtime in which to do the extra work was like squeezing blood from a stone.

Other local workers are beginning to mobilise support for the hospital, and the knowledge that a victory for one is a victory for all is spreading.

Once upon a time people seeking an improvement in their fortunes would make a pilgrimage to a saint's grave or go round the city of Lhasa on their knees banging their heads on the ground at every step. Today they write X on a piece of paper every five years and put it in a ballot box. Less energy is expended but the result is exactly the same: no change in their fortunes. The magic doesn't work.

Yet still the search for an easy way out continues, like that of our ancestors for the Philosopher's Stone which turns everything to gold.

All round the world this month electors have been voting while workers fight. The fact that these are often one and the same people simply goes to prove the dialectical truth that workers who can be so clear may also strive for the impossible --- to live with Capitalism. Elections organized

# PRAYER WHEELS AND BALLOT BOXES

by Capitalism cannot overturn Capitalism. It should be obvious but the lesson has to be learned, again and again.

In Northern Ireland a vote was taken to establish the right of Britain's 32,000 strong army of

occupation to keep Ireland divided. In the South the parties contended over who would be the lackey of imperialism and connive at partition. In Bangladesh an election was held to put a facade of democracy on the Awami League's conspiracy with India to dismember Pakistan. In France the revisionist 'CP', like a dog slinking back to the master who beats it, have aspired yet again to manage the Capitalist State, which in the past has shamelessly changed the electoral laws to keep them out. And in Britain we have had three more by-elections. The press maintained that these revealed nothing more than a general dislike for the Labour and Tory parties. True, but they had one other thing in common: in all three the percentage who bothered to vote fell since the last election. Workers are learning.

## FROM A CIVIL SERVANT

February 27th will surely go down in history as a milestone on the road to the creation of a socialist Britain. For this was the day when the ruling class learned that they can't even rely on their own direct employees to carry out their dictates. On that day nearly all the ports and airports in the country were either thrown into disruption or closed completely. Labour Exchanges, Social Security offices, driving test centres, libraries and museums were put out of action. Most of Whitehall was out of commission and for the first time in history Cabinet Ministers had to pass picket lines to get into No. 10. Even the radar stations and missile sites were affected.

The Civil Servants' strike proved two points. First, no matter how the ruling class may try to redeploy the working class, whether they put workers in

offices or factories, whether we wear 'blue' or 'white' collars, our nature will not change. Trade Unionism is here to stay, and it makes no difference if we operate a machine or fill in a form, for we all have our uses to the Capitalist class (if we didn't we would soon be out of work) and therefore we must have an economic bargaining power if we care to use it. Second, the strike shows that the Civil Service is not made up of tame lap dogs who have no views of their own. When the ruling class can't even control the people who man the corridors of power and the secret defence bases, when even their own Industrial Relations Court is on strike and there are no persons willing to put their laws into effect, then they will be in a sorry state indeed.

After the 27th we can safely say: the Civil Service will never be the same again!

## HOSPITAL STRIKE

Some 40,000 of the 230,000 health service ancillary workers were on strike, and most of the others were taking some kind of selective action. In a fine application of guerrilla tactics, strikes at only 250 hospitals had effects at over 700 hospitals due to a cutoff of laundry. At the Northern General Hospital in Sheffield, 900 workers planned a sit-in on learning that laundry was being done outside. Accusations about 'endangering human life' sound especially nauseating coming from a ruling class which cold-bloodedly allows old people to freeze or starve and shoots down men, women and children in Northern Ireland. One much-publicised case of a return to work on the basis of 'Let's accept the government offer and get back to work before somebody dies' resulted in a mass meeting overturning the decision and the local leadership that had pushed it.

### Solidarity

At Roehampton Hospital, where the artificial limbs are made, several hundred carpenters and metal plastic workers in the workshops called a mass meeting and passed a resolution that any work sent to them would be blacked. This act of solidarity of craft workers with the striking hospital workers is a sign of the times.

### And the rest?

A total of 5,351 serving members of the British forces had been discharged since 1968 because of psychiatric disorders, said the Minister of State, Defence, Mr. Ian Gilmour.

## IRELAND

Since operation Motorman when British troops entered previously no-go areas, the wave of assassinations has gathered grave momentum. British troops, not content with having their regular burst of machine gun fire at any 'group' of more than one person that happen to be standing at a street corner, introduced their special plain clothes men. These '£200-a-head blokes' are used for spying as well as assassinations. They have license to kill, something Ian Fleming only dreamt of in his James Bond novels.

Some of the achievement of the plain clothes soldiers include the shooting and killing of Patrick McVeigh on May 12 who was standing with four other men in Flighy Road. A car stopped and someone inside opened up with what was described as 'Chicago-style shooting'. Daniel Rooney, 18 years of age, was shot dead and his companion injured in a similar manner in September last year.

Such methods of repression and terror are not new to the British army which had its training in Cyprus and Aden where the same methods (now more refined) were used.

Like all armies of occupation; be it the German Nazi army or the US in Vietnam, they employ murderous methods when faced with resistance by the people. Hitler used tanks to flatten buildings and people, the US Generals rained death and destruction from the sky on people, crops and buildings alike. The British Government through its army is daily terrorising the Irish people in Ulster with raids on their homes, internment, torture and indiscriminate assassinations.

## NIRC marked

The effectiveness of the engineers' action against the NIRC fines has now been confirmed - right from the horse's mouth. NIRC has dismissed Mr. Joseph Langston's complaint against the AUEW (from which he resigned) for keeping him out of Chrysler, where a closed shop operates at the Ryton, Coventry plant. Chrysler don't fancy the idea of producing cars with only Mr. Langston in the factory. The employing class, and their government, don't fancy the idea of again losing millions in production through strikes without much hope of changing union opposition to the Industrial Relations Act. So our fine 'independent' courts swung into action and Mr. Langston, whose kind were once praised as 'men of principle', 'staunch individualists', etc., found himself transmogrified into an 'eccentric', an 'odd-shaped peg', even an 'officious meddler', by that former champion of individualists, Sir John Donaldson. And what of that other 'staunch individualist' Mr. James Goad of CAV? He still manages to find reasons for not turning up and trying to get into branch meetings. He knows he wouldn't just be unpopular among trade unionists if he tried again.

## What is a scab?

From the articles of the Friendly and United Society of Cordwainers, in the year 1792.

'What is a scab? He is to his trade what a traitor is to his country; though both may be useful to one party in troublesome times, when peace returns they are detested like by all. When help is wanted, he is the last to contribute assistance, and the first to grasp a benefit he never laboured to procure. He cares but for himself, but he sees not beyond the extent of a day, and for a momentary and worthless approbation, would betray friends, family and country. In short, he is a traitor on a small scale. He first sells the journeymen, and is himself afterwards sold in his turn by the masters, till at last he is despised by both and deserted by all. He is an enemy to himself, to the present age and to posterity.

Of such characters this Society will not be composed, being determined to admit - of those only whom we have strong reason to believe are friends to the real interest of the trade in general.

## NW civil servants strike early

When it was announced recently by the executive of the main union in the Civil Service, the Civil and Public Services Association, that their members would be called out on a one-day strike on February 27th, many members asked, Why? Why choose a date a month hence? Why give so much notice to the employer? And why pick a Tuesday --- the one day when a stoppage would have least effect?

A number of offices in the North West region decided to strike on Friday, February 16th, and informed the CPSA headquarters that this was happening. The word spread very quickly in the North West and other offices said they would join in. Because of this pressure the CPSA National Disputes Committee met on the evening of the 14th and decided to give official backing to any offices in the region who came out on strike on the 16th. This was passed round on the 15th and offices in many areas held meetings to decide if they would strike the following day. Over 20 offices out of 33 in the North West region came out on the 16th, which was a good victory for the strength and organization of the members in the area.

This will show the membership that they do have the power and organization to provide a lead for the Union in fighting for the full back-dated increase they are entitled to.

## THE GNOMES AGAIN

Hardly a day goes by without a meeting between finance ministers, bankers, the International Monetary Fund etc., taking place. The capitalist world is trying to find a solution to its crises. Nixon, like Wilson before him, blames speculators for the recurring financial crises. In reality, speculation for a quick profit is as much a part of capitalism as production for the sake of profit, they go hand in hand.

Just as speculation in land is today more secure and profitable than investment in industry, so speculation in money is more profitable than investment in one country for production. Both stem from the present and inherent sickness of capitalist economies.

The monetary crisis is bringing to the limelight the divisions among the capitalist countries. Each attempts to solve its problems at the expense of the others. The Common Market countries, while fighting among themselves, are united against what even the Financial Times calls 'dollar imperialism'.

A new realignment of currency has been arrived at. This, like previous ones, can solve nothing. One currency loses its privileged place, another gains it until the next round of monetary upheaval. Meanwhile fortunes are made. And the working class of every capitalist country suffers more with higher prices and increasing attacks by the ruling class.

The monetary crisis is a reflection not only of the economic stagnation of capitalist countries; it is also a reflection of the increasing and developing working class struggle within the capitalist countries; of the changing of the balance between the imperialist powers and the anti-imperialist forces in the world in favour of the latter.

# VIETNAM; IMPLEMENTING PEACE

The Vietnam peace agreement, written with the blood and bone of the Vietnamese people, is requiring a similar sacrifice and struggle to implement it. For while the Provisional Revolutionary Government, the Liberation Army and the Vietnamese people have been demanding its strictest implementation the Thieu regime is determined to sabotage it.

Saigon troops have repeatedly assaulted the liberated areas since January 28th. Every violation has been met with fierce resistance. Advances by armoured convoys have been blocked by villagers on the highways, Saigon units have been engaged in day-long clashes, women have leapt on to invading tanks to prevent their houses being destroyed by flame-throwers, attempts to burn grain in the liberated areas have been frustrated.

Meanwhile, in the areas controlled by the Saigon regime people have been demanding freedom of travel and freedom to make a living. Thousands of people, including dependents of soldiers in the Saigon army, have been holding demonstrations and distributing literature demanding that the Saigon regime implement the agreement and stop prolonging the war.

Just as the Vietnamese foresaw, the Paris agreement has become a new weapon in their hands. For, as Thieu commits his violations, his intrusion into liberated areas and intensified harassment of those living under his regime, so the more he becomes isolated from the mass of the people. Indeed, since the signing of the agreement, many officers and men of the Saigon troops have deserted their units and crossed over to the people. In west Nam Bo 4000 officers had deserted up to February 20th. Elsewhere, others have refused to attack liberated zones, airmen have refused bombing orders, and

thousands have just gone home.

The people of South Vietnam do want peace, they do want democracy, they do want national reunification. And more, they see that only Thieu now stands in their way.

Meanwhile, in the North the Paris agreement has been greeted by a flurry of activity as the rebuilding process begins. Despite the havoc caused by the American bombing, spring and early rice transplanting has practically been completed, in record time and in an ever expanding area. In all districts, thousands of cooperative members have thrown themselves into the task of refilling the bomb craters and planting the rice.

On the industrial front the devastation of US raids has given the same impetus to rebuild. For example, women workers of the Hai Chan confectionary factory, damaged by US bombs, have set up tents to continue production. At the same time they are rebuilding the factory with their own hands.

On March 4th, Long Bien bridge spanning the Red River, and the biggest in North Vietnam was reopened to traffic. This was the bridge that was bombed time and again by US aircraft during the war. In the 41 days since the signing of the agreement the railway workers of Hanoi had succeeded in completing the repair job and so opening five railways of North Vietnam.

It is the same zeal and hard work which will repair the bridge between North and South Vietnam. In the wake of the US defeat, the Paris International Conference has guaranteed the fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese people. Given that, the traffic should soon be flowing freely throughout Vietnam.

## INDIAN REVOLUTION FORGES AHEAD

There is a conspiracy of silence about the growth of guerrilla war in India's villages, a guerrilla war that is being waged under the leadership of the Communist Party of India Marxist-Leninist. The Indian mass media and that of the capitalist world, while giving much publicity to every adventurist stunt, consistently ignore the development, despite tremendous repression and setbacks, of the Indian communist revolution. People are still encouraged to suppose that the antics of the two revisionist parties for seats in yet one more electoral contest represent the strength of communism. Far from it. Certainly the killing of Comrade Charu Mazumdar last July while in police custody, was a very serious blow to the Party. But it rallied its forces, learnt from past experience, and decided to seize the initiative instead of a passive defence against a growing police state.

### Indian reaction

The Indian Government must be the only fascist state that can masquerade as a democracy. All kinds of people suppose that this is a country where political freedom and opposition can flourish simply because every five years there are general elections and people with very radical labels are elected to parliament and have even formed governments. But there is no fundamental contradiction between the aims of the capitalists and landlords who rule India and the kind of parliamentary democracy practised in India. There is only talk about socialism while building up a state apparatus to help not the people but the capitalists and landlords. State industries are run on the basis of intense exploitation and ruthless oppression. Strikes are declared illegal and scarcely any kind of industrial dispute can proceed without bloodshed by a trigger-happy police. Incidentally this alleged democracy passed a law some four years ago - the Industrial Security Force Act - creating a special police solely for the purpose of intimidating workers in the public sector.

Political prisoners run into hundreds of thousands, while conditions of imprisonment and detention, let alone the strange disappearance of thousands on the way to the police station, are savage. The Party, however, has the best answer to such repression - jail breaks, some of which have been spectacular.

### Soviet imperialist backing

Because of the U.S.A.'s economic and military difficulties in Indo-China the Soviet Union has been able to push its way into a position of great importance in India. It has been the sole supplier of military aid, was behind India's war against Pakistan in December 1971 and is in the process of building India up as the biggest base for its war plans against China.

More recently Soviet Imperialism has been investing in India's rich natural resources. Along with the predators of the other imperialist countries, it has joined in plundering the wealth of India - with this difference: it pretends to be helping India's 'socialist' development because the kinds of things it is investing in are heavy industries - steel, petro-chemicals, etc. - enterprises which are not going to help the Indian people, only the capitalists and the Soviet Union. Indian products are bought cheaply only to be re-exported to some other Russian satellite at more inflated prices.

### Guerrilla victories

The Indian revolution has therefore to fight many enemies, not the least being revisionism. It has succeeded very effectively in overcoming difficulties and consolidating its position in areas like North Bengal, Bihar and states like Punjab and Hariyana, where the so-called 'Green Revolution' has only helped the landlords while impoverishing the poor peasants. Most encouraging is the news from Andhra, in South India, where the guerrilla struggle has been resumed.

## BARREN BUDGET

The ceremonial fanfare which announces every budget would have been best replaced by a blast of raspberries for all that was to follow this year. Even that great array of newspaper pundits and television 'experts' were visibly embarrassed by the lack of anything even worthy of their superficial comment.

But should we be surprised by this? The Budget has always been a means of direct economic control by the state on the working class, and there has been little of benefit gained from these yearly pronouncements. This Budget was no exception - VAT, the most far-reaching tax ever introduced, was set at 10% - a 10% tax on virtually everything the working class uses. The new income tax scheme comes into operation with huge handouts for the wealthy. The maximum rate drops from 90% to 75% - and, for example, Mr. Heath will get an increase in take-home pay (and that's what counts!) of over £6 - so much for wage freezes. All this however we already knew.

So why has this Budget been so insignificant? No longer can any Government whether Labour or Conservative attempt to control their chaotic economy by fiscal policies alone. Faced by international and domestic strife, the ruling class has been forced to adopt new measures and can no longer fool even themselves into thinking that a once-a-year Budget can keep Capitalism in Britain 'on course' for another year! Mr. Barber, himself, was not even able to follow his Budget on its charade through Parliament, Brussels and his EEC 'partners' needed him to help decide who stabs who in the back next to 'solve' the international currency crisis. At home, as every worker involved in the present struggles can verify, the real force of the attack on our class has come from the Industrial Relations Act and the Wage Freeze.

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& Sat. 9.30-6 pm	& Sat. 2 - 6 pm	

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Friday March 23. "The new Tsars": film and speaker on China's resistance to Soviet imperialism. 7.30, Bellman Bookshop.

Friday March 30. "Marxist economic theory and Britain today": speaker and discussion. 7.30, Bellman Bookshop.

Friday April 6. "White collar workers into class struggle": speaker and discussion. 7.30, Bellman Bookshop.

Friday April 13. "China against world revisionism": speakers and discussion. 7.30, Bellman Bookshop.

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Tuesday May 1. CPBML MAY DAY MEETING. Chairman, Reg Birch. Speakers, 7.30 Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (Holborn tube), London.



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