

Socialist Challenge

BUILD A SOCIALIST OPPOSITION FOR A UNIFIED REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

12p

16 June, 1977 No 2

POLICE ASSAULT GRUNWICK MASS PICKET



Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

THIS STRIKE MUST WIN!

Because ...

Since August 1976 over a hundred workers at the Grunwick film processing factory in North London have been on official strike. They have been out over miserable pay and conditions, for union recognition, and against victimisation.

Because, too, as the strikers are mainly Asian and mainly women, they represent the particularly oppressed members of this society.

Because ...

Last Monday a mass picket outside Grunwick was — in the words of Eddie Hayes, London Area Chairperson of the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff — 'savagely attacked by the police'.

The arbitrary nature of the more than one hundred arrests is shown by those who were lifted. They include BBC cameraperson Chris Marlowe, 'moderate' Labour councillor Karamat Hussein, and APEX London organiser Len Gristie.

Because, too, the forces of 'law and order' are increasingly being used against trade unionists, whether by judges outlawing traditional union practices, or police indulging in wholesale arrests of pickets.



Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

The strike can be won, by ...

Mobilising the entire trade union movement behind the Grunwick strikers. This would include the Post Office union defying the judges and boycotting all Grunwick's mail, as its business is mostly done by post.

After the display of law and order on Monday, why should workers heed the words of the representative of such 'justice'?

The TUC publicly calling for such a boycott and by putting the entire trade union movement at the disposal of the Union of Postal Workers if it is threatened by the Courts.

The TUC can also organise sympathetic strike action throughout the country. The anger millions of trade

unionists feel about Grunwick would ensure such a call an enthusiastic reception.

By ...

Stepping up the mass picketing, and confronting the police with the same show of strength which stopped them opening Sattley coal depot during the 1974 miners' strike.

Government publicly support the Grunwick strikers, withdrawing all police from the picket line.

For over a year now the tin pot management of Grunwick have trodden on the Grunwick workers, and the entire trade union movement. They are nothing compared to the forces the TUC and Labour Party could mobilise. Let the mobilisation begin now.

INSIDE



SOWETO

As we go to press, Soweto is simmering. All schools in the townships are being boycotted in protest at the arrest of 20 students. These include Sechaba Mntshali, president of the Soweto Students Representative Council.

The racist regime is trying to clamp down on the students before the first anniversary of last year's demonstrations on 16 June.

This is particularly important to them since the students have succeeded in one of their aims — smashing the apartheid Bantu Urban Council in Soweto.

On pages 8 & 9
• Full background to the Soweto events.
• We expose Mchisini's slanders.



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Editorial

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.
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2nd round in Belgrade

PREPARATIONS ARE in full swing for the second conference of heads of governments from the major capitalist and non-capitalist states.

It is obvious that the main item on the agenda will be the question of 'human rights'. Already given an airing at Helsinki, the issue has become the cornerstone of Carter's attempts to provide American foreign policy with a 'new look'.

The response of socialists to these gatherings has to be thought out with some care. It is no longer sufficient simply to point out the character of the regimes sustained by American capital in Asia, Africa and Latin America and to list the governments which torture and maim their opponents with the aid of US technology.

NO EVASIONS

Nor is it enough to list the growing encroachments on civil liberties taking place in Britain, West Germany and France. These are important and have to be denounced, but the central question cannot be evaded in this way.

Socialists have to say where they stand on a number of fundamental issues concerning democracy. We have to argue that the socialism we are fighting for will be more democratic than what exists today, and our everyday political practice has to reflect this assertion. This is the most effective way of demonstrating our contempt for the hypocrites of the imperialist leaders and our solidarity with all those fighting for democratic rights in the USSR, China and Eastern Europe.

OUR DEMOCRACY

Even the Communist Parties who have moved the farthest away from the USSR have still not come out for the right of other political parties to exist in the Eastern countries. They accept the monopoly of one party. We challenge this assertion as being totally opposed to any meaningful socialist democracy.

Socialists have to unequivocally argue for:

a) The right of all political parties to exist under the dictatorship of the proletariat provided they do not take up arms against the new state. This includes the right to publish their newspapers, their pamphlets, their books. The right of access to radio and television.

b) The separation of the majority party and its apparatus from that of the state. This means that there must be independent organs of power — councils where all parties have the right to be represented and where opposition parties can exist and fight to win delegates over to their views.

c) The right of workers to strike. This means the existence of independent trade unions not tied to the State or its apparatuses.

Any workers' state which operated on these principles (as even the limited and embryonic example of Dubcek's Czechoslovakia demonstrates) would have an extremely powerful impact on the working masses of capitalist Europe and America and would bring the possibilities of socialist revolutions in the West much closer to being realised.

Thus socialists attempting to intervene in the run-up to the Belgrade conference must not be tempted into merely denouncing imperialist hypocrites, but must attempt to get our own house in order.

Speakout ~on abortion 'We should be against all free votes for Labour MPs'

BENYON's restrictive abortion bill is still alive and well and winding its way through Parliamentary procedure. Anti-abortionists like the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child have until November to press for Government time to approve the bill.

The Bill — which received 170 votes to 132 on second reading — goes into Standing Committee on 22 June, much earlier than expected. This 16 person com-

mittee — dominated by anti-abortionists — will debate out amendments before the Bill is submitted to the Commons for its final reading.

Plans are underway amongst Benyon's supporters to force through a resolution calling for four Committee meetings a week. If they are successful, the Bill could be ready for its final reading as early as mid-July. If not, they still have up to three months following the August Parliamentary recess to press ahead.

The Parliamentary progress of the anti-abortionists is being backed up by a stepped-up campaign from SPUC and Life. Union conferences and student unions have been the target for this campaign designed to tie women to a life of unwanted

pregnancies. SPUC has announced a student demonstration on 24 June which will assemble at the offices of the British Medical Association in London.

The National Abortion Campaign has not let these latest developments go by unnoticed. And the abortion debate promises to be a high note of the Labour Party Women's Conference underway in Harrogate.

Socialist Challenge asked **ASTRID LEVER**, a delegate to the Conference and an executive member of the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign, for her views on the responsibilities of Labour MPs and the free vote.

Large sections of the women's movement and the abortion campaign have argued correctly that abortion is a class issue and not a moral or religious one. If the fight for equal pay and against sex discrimination is to be effective, then women must have the right to control their own fertility — a vital aspect of their lives.

If half the working class is denied the democratic right to control their own bodies, then this is an issue which affects the whole of the working class and one which both men and women should struggle for.

The Labour Government has no positive policy on abortion. While stating its support for the '67 Act, it bends to the pressure of the anti-abortionists and allows Labour MPs a free vote. As socialists we should be against all free votes.

The Labour Government and MPs should be responsible to the decisions of the working class and not to their own individual consciences.

When almost every significant conference of the working class has voted overwhelmingly in support of abortion rights for women, it is even more important for MPs to vote accordingly — or be replaced by those who will. In essence, the free vote means the 'freedom' for MPs to vote against the working class.

Many members of the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign agree that abortion is a class issue. But they refuse to struggle against the free vote. This allows MPs to sabotage the fight for women's rights and at the same time reduces the abortion issue to a personal and moral one.

Those MPs who argue in favour of the free vote on this issue are



Photo: MARK RUSHER (IFL)

ASTRID LEVER, in the chair at the successful founding conference of the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign

hypocrites, and I'm not aware of a single MP who opposes it. They refuse to recognise its class nature and claim that their moral or religious views prevent them from voting in favour. But how many of those MPs who supported Benyon's Bill, and Harold Wilson was one of them, voted against defence spending, or the war in Vietnam? The only issue on which these MPs are conscientious

objectors is women's liberation.

It is the anti-abortion forces who forced the debate on the Free Vote and we should not allow ourselves to be side-tracked onto their terrain. Our aim in LARC should be to unite all those in the Labour Party prepared to struggle for free abortion on request and — as with every campaign in the labour movement — demand that our leaders vote accordingly or be re-

moved as cowards and reactionaries.

A major part of LARC's activities over the coming year will be to campaign for the Government to bring our legislation guaranteeing women free abortion rights. We are organising a pro-abortion lobby at the Labour Party Conference. For further details please contact: Astrid Lever, 57 Trinity Road, London N2.

OUR POLICIES

Capitalism is in crisis. The leaders of the Labour Party and the trades unions offer solutions that are in the interests, not of the workers, but of the capitalist class.

Socialist Challenge believes that the two vital tasks confronting revolutionary socialists are:

1. To build broad-based class struggle tendencies in opposition to class collaborationism in the labour movement. These should be non-exclusive in character grouping together militants holding a wide range of political views.

2. To begin to fight for the creation of a united and democratic revolutionary socialist organisation which can, through an application of united front tactics, begin to be seen as an alternative by thousands of workers engaged in struggles.

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

1 The struggle for socialism seeks to unite the fight of the workers against the bosses with that of other oppressed layers of society — women, black people, gays — struggling for their liberation. This socialism can only be achieved by creating new organs of power and debating with

all necessary means the power of the capitalist state.

2 Our socialism will be infinitely more democratic than what exists in Britain today, with full rights for all political parties and currents that do not take up arms against the socialist state. The Stalinist models of 'socialism' in the USSR and Eastern Europe have discredited socialism in the eyes of millions of workers throughout the world. We are opposed to them and will offer full support to all those fighting for socialist democracy.

3 The interests of workers and capitalists are irreconcilable on a world scale. Capitalism has not only created a world market, it has created world politics. Thus we fight for working class unity on an international scale. This unity will in the long run be decisive in defeating both the

imperialist regimes in the West and the brutal dictatorships they sustain in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

In Britain it implies demanding the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and letting the Irish people determine their own future.

4 The Communist Parties in Europe are in crisis. Neither the 'Eurocommunist' nor the 'pro-Moscow' wings have any meaningful strategy for the overthrow of the capitalist state. New revolutionary socialist parties are more necessary than ever before. Conditions today are more favourable than over the preceding three decades. But such parties can only be built by rejecting sectarianism and seeing internal democracy not as a luxury but as a vital necessity. This means the right to organise factions and tendencies.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

If you agree with these principles and want to be involved in activities by Socialist Challenge supporters in your area, fill in the form below and send it to us:

I am interested in more information about activities in my area. I would like additional literature and enclose 50p to cover costs.

[Delete if not applicable]

NAME

ADDRESS

Send to Socialist Challenge, 328/329 Upper Street, London N1.

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



Strikers picket Chloride's London HQ now forced to recognise the Joint Convenors Group.

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Workers occupy to save jobs and say:

'We won't be taken for a Chloride' for a Chloride'

'We won't be taken for a Chloride', say the placards outside the Chloride Batteries occupied plant in Dagenham, Essex. The workers realise that the ride in question could end at the door for Chloride workers.

According to the latest company 'strategy', some 200 of the 1,000 jobs at Dagenham have to go and similar cuts, hitting at the 4,500 workers employed nationally in Chloride's automotive and industrial section are planned for other areas.

But after four weeks of a national strike, led by occupations at Dagenham and Manchester, the Chloride management has been forced into opening 'exploratory talks' with the Chloride workers Joint Convenors' Group.

John Hartnell, a member of Dagenham Trades Council's strike liaison committee talked to two of the occupation leaders at Dagenham, BRIAN HARDIE, convenor of the technical and Supervisory Section of the Engineering Union, and FRED HIGGS, Transport and General Workers' Union shop steward, about their tactics and their 'picketing within the factory'.

'The advantages of this form of action are enormous. We've got premises from which to organise the struggle, telephones, duplicators, offices and shelter for the pickets.

'We also have a club room, which means that people don't get bored. The main reason for the success of the occupation is that all our members are involved.

'Because of the amount of lead about, we are carrying out the normal safety check ourselves, as well as cleaning the place once a day. Even the security staff are carrying on their job. We are able to use all the experience and skills of the membership, whether it is in the field of safety, or typing out strike bulletins.

'We have been very keen to make

sure that everyone is informed about what's going on.

'In order to get all the different tasks done — including dealing with social security problems, movement of materials, and publicity — we've broken down the strike committee into sub-committees which involve the ordinary members as well as the strike committee.

'When the strike began we decided that as the Social Security people aren't too helpful to strikers, we would make sure our members knew what their rights were. So we got all the forms and leaflets and set up an advisory service.

'Even knowing what you're entitled to doesn't always help though — one of our members was

awarded 18p a week for himself, his wife and daughter.

'The first day we elected a police liaison officer. As soon as they realised that we were well organised the police didn't bother us. We haven't seen them for two and a half weeks.

'One thing we have realised, though, is that with the introduction of the Criminal Trespass laws, probably in the autumn, struggles like this will be more difficult. We think that the trade union movement has moved very slowly on this issue. After all, under the proposals we could be imprisoned just for being here.

We have learnt through this experience that although we've had a strong organisation in the plant we've been too inward

looking and parochial.

'Whatever happens we will be more involved with the trade union movement generally, and in particular we will make sure that all branches are affiliated to trades councils.'

The strike committee asks for:

- * Resolutions of support
- * Donations to the strike fund
- * Information from factories, particularly the car industry about the extent to which products from Chloride are still getting through, and the extent to which substitutes are being used.

Contact: Chloride Dagenham Strike Committee, c/o F. Grant, 25 Firbank Rd, Ramford, Essex. (Cheques to Chloride Dagenham Strike Fund.)



BRIAN HARDIE, Convenor: 'The advantages of occupying are obvious'

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



Shifting royalties

LOUIS ALTHUSSER is the most distinguished Marxist philosopher in the European communist movement. He has devotees in every Communist party. He has generally been associated with a 'left critique' of the European CPs and has been identified with semi-Maoist political positions.

However, an evolution appears to be taking place. Althusser recently signed a broad appeal on behalf of the Polish workers being victimised by the regime.

He went further and agreed together with other well-known French Marxist writers that all the royalties from Polish translations of his books should be donated to the Polish Workers Defence Committee. Can one hope that this example will be emulated by his supporters in this country?

the Troops Out Movement but the willingness to allow TOM facilities to put over their views was a welcome development in working class democracy. So the TOM wrote back bocking a stall and sending the required £2.

Also, last month Nigel Tanburn wrote again to the TOM. 'I have no recollection of an invite being sent to you', Tanburn said. 'If one was sent it was in error. I'm afraid we will not be able to facilitate your stall and I have enclosed your postal order for £2.'

Any readers wanting to organise their own stall at the People's Jubilee on (a) 'Re-writing history', (b) 'Workers' democracy', (c) censorship, (d) Sectarianism should phone Mr Tanburn on 01-836 2151.

Poor Patrick

'I am sick and tired, almost beyond belief, at the way in which the Labour Research Department succeeds in getting itself described, in BBC news bulletins, in press stories, in even the most accurate newspapers, as "an independent trade union research unit".'

'It is, in fact, a far left propaganda outfit, and for years was on the Labour Party's list of proscribed organisations, though the Labour Party no longer proscribes anyone. Its latest report, "Inequality in Britain" is a farrago of bias, distorted statistics and class hatred'.

Not surprisingly the author of these lines is none other than Patrick Hutber, the City Editor of the Daily Telegraph. His outrage reveals that some of the LRD material is beginning to irritate City persons.

Kerbside chat

ONE OF OUR readers who attended the Merton meeting organised by CP dissidents (see page 7) last Thursday couldn't find his way to the hall. A friendly CP member offered to take him there. On the way the CP member, in response to our reader's casual question: 'Well, how are things', responded that 'things' weren't good at all.

Evidently that morning there had been a census of the 'tankists' (known as such because of their support for the Soviet tanks in Czechoslovakia) and most of them were for a split after the Congress.

Fergus Nicholson was reported unhappy about the decision, as was our informant, but he thought it was too late to do anything as the die had been cast.

Lost honour

MAIHOFFER is West Germany's Merlyn Rees. As Minister of the Interior he spearheaded the attack against leftists and democratic rights. Maihofer is also, for some inexplicable reason, a member of the West German PEN (Poets, Essayists and Novelists), an association of prominent writers.

PEN decided to elect Ernest Mandel, a leading Trotskyist theoretician and writer as a member. Mandel is banned from entering West Germany. Maihofer and 16 other rightists resigned in protest from PEN.

What is less well-known is that Maihofer was facing expulsion from PEN because of his witch-hunting activities in general. The German magazine Der Spiegel explained that Mandel's election had served as a convenient excuse. What is doubly ironic is that since Mandel is banned from entering the country he cannot attend a meeting of PEN in any case.

Re-instatement

Martin Shaw, a leading Socialist Workers Party (SWP) militant in Hull who was suspended several weeks ago has recently been re-instated. Shaw's suspension followed his participation on the platform of a meeting organised by the local Socialists Against the Cuts (SAC) in the recent local elections.

It would appear that Shaw's re-instatement has come about in order to enable him to participate in the pre-conference discussions of the SWP. The conference is due to take place within the next fortnight.

Walter Invader

FROM The Times letters column:

Rhodesian raid into Mozambique

From General Sir Walter Walker Sir, It ill becomes any of us in this country to adopt a holier-than-thou attitude to the recent Rhodesian raid into Mozambique. It is no longer a secret that during the three-year Indonesian confrontation against Malaysian Borneo I, as Director of Operations, was authorised by the then Labour Government to conduct cross-border operations several miles deep into Indonesian Borneo. Indeed, a cordon sanitaire was eventually established and virtually all contacts with our enemy took place on his side of the border.

Offensive action is the only solution to guerrilla or terrorist operations. A policy of containment is the passport to defeat.

Yours faithfully,
WALTER WALKER,
Charlton House,
Charlton All Saints,
Salisbury,
Wiltshire.
June 5



Photo: Morning Star

Scottish anti-fascists in action

Reception for Tyndall puts him in hospital

THE SCOTTISH press seems to have a soft spot for the National Front. Last weekend readers were told 'National Front boss attacked'. Front pages showed a picture of John Tyndall sporting a bleeding eye.

But the papers got the story wrong. They 'forgot' to mention it was Tyndall who first attacked anti-fascists during his visit to Edinburgh on Saturday.

Naturally, the police then arrested four anti-fascists and charged them with assault, including the comrades Tyndall had hit. The fascist leader received a police escort and star treatment with tea and smiles.

BESEIGED

Tyndall had good reason to be angry. He and the leader of the Front's small Scottish membership, Edinburgh 'businessman' Michael Corfield, were besieged in the Radio Forth Studios after the local anti-racist committee had heard that Tyndall was to be interviewed.

Anti-fascists then picketed the police station where Tyndall and his police friends fled with their prisoners. When demonstrators shouted 'No police support for fascists', the police responded by whipping Tyndall out in a speeding car. But he didn't escape.



One in the eye for John Tyndall

Anti-fascists followed, and when he emerged from his hotel he met with a reception which required him to go straight to hospital.

The NF plans to field two candidates in Edinburgh in the next

election and Tyndall was up to publicise the fact. The press dutifully obliged with splash coverage of the Fuhrer's visit. The Front also announced that they are planning a large rally in

Glasgow during the summer.

When news of the NF's plans was out, Glasgow councillor Andy McMahon promised 'the movement will mount a campaign such as has never been seen in Glasgow since the days of Moseley'. Scottish NUS president Stewart MacIntosh promised he would organise busloads of students to demonstrate at every Front meeting. But on the day, only the farleft answered the anti-racist committee's appeal for a protest.

MINERS GALA

Only 50 yards away from where Tyndall was besieged, 10,000 miners and other trade unionists marched past on Scottish miners' gala day — led by Tony Benn and Mick McGahey. But these 'leaders' showed no inclination to do anything about the racists. They even refused to let anti-fascists address the miners' rally.

Tyndall was clear about how he saw things. Speaking after his hospital visit, he told the press: 'This is war, and in war you expect your enemy to hit you'. If the fascists are to be routed it is the big battalions who must be forced into action.

CHRIS BAMBERY

at odds. It isn't hard to explain why. The police are extremely slow to respond to calls for help from Asians. They are even less rapid in following up cases. In a large number of cases, police have advised Asians against pressing charges 'in the interest of racial harmony'!

The police don't protect the Asian community. They merely add another dimension to the terror. Racist immigration laws have provided the excuse for a number of raids and arrests, and several Asian people have said they were beaten up while in custody. Others have been arrested for alleged minor offences and kept for hours and even days only to be released without being charged.

In this situation, there is only one option for Asians in the East End of London — to organise to defend themselves against racist attacks and police harassment.



Claire Weingarten

lived for years under continual harassment.

Police statistics and the living experience of Asians are totally

Racist of the week



Paul Beasley

DEAR SOCIALIST CHALLENGE

IF YOUR 'Racist of the Week' column is not designed simply to expose the most obvious racists and fascists, but those who seek to defend institutionalised racism, then I have a name to submit. He poses as an anti-racist, but his actions tell us the opposite.

He is Paul Beasley, leader of the 100 per cent Labour Council in Tower Hamlets, East London. Every day in this borough Asians are beaten and harassed by racists. Some have been driven from their homes by fire-bombing, arson and other forms of violence.

A few weeks ago Beasley spoke at a Tower Hamlets meeting against racism and fascism. After the usual homilies it was time for questions. Our intrepid Labour leader was asked whether the Council was prepared to offer housing transfers to Asian families suffering from regular attacks.

He said 'No'. The Council could not treat any group as a special case. All they would do would be to provide homeless families

with accommodation if their flats were burned so badly as to be completely uninhabitable.

His attitude towards the Bengali Housing Action Group [BHAG] is also revealing. BHAG has been attempting to rehouse Asians under attack, something Beasley refuses to even consider. Last week Beasley told The Observer: 'They [BHAG] are members of an extreme political organisation. They are out to create trouble. Throwing them out will involve very careful organising — we want to avoid playing into the hands of extreme groups like the National Front.' We note that Beasley wants to throw out not the fascists but those who are helping their victims.

Beasley is not alone in the Labour Party. During the recent local elections, a man distributing Labour Party leaflets outside the polling station in Brick Lane said to a woman militant of the IMQ: 'You want to watch it, working with Asians — they'll have you in their harems.'

KITTY SILVERSTONE



23 April victim of fascist violence

Photo: MARK RUSHER (IFL)

Tuning in to the fight against racism

It's not often that a quarter of a million people have the opportunity to hear the revolutionary socialist argument about how fascism is to be fought. But that happened on London Weekend Television's London Programme.

Speaking in a personal capacity as secretary of the committee which organised the magnificent anti-National Front demonstration in North London on 23 April, Mick Gosling, the London organiser of the International Marxist Group, told viewers:

'I'd like to congratulate the London Programme for exposing the National Front as the Nazi Front it is in its recent report. What it didn't say, though, is how these latter-day fascists are to be fought....'

'Our committee brought together anti-racist groups, local Labour Parties, and the Indian Workers Association, as well as the International Marxist Group and Socialist Workers Party. We were also joined by many local people — especially young West Indians and Cypriots — united in our determination to stop the National Front spreading its racist poison in one of the largest black and Cypriot areas in Britain.'

'What was the authorities' response? We were banned from holding a rally on Duckers Common — a traditional meeting place — under an obscure by-law. By contrast the National Front was given the protection of 1,200 foot and mounted police for their provocative march.'

BOTTLE ATTACK

'During the afternoon one anti-racist was knifed and others were attacked with bottles on a tube train. Yet of the 81 people arrested, no less than 74 were anti-fascists. Ironically, most of these have been charged under the 1936 Public Order Act, a law supposedly introduced to curb the activities of Mosley's black-

shirts. These events show the futility of trying to fight the Front through the law and courts as many suggest.

'It's the labour movement which ends up the victim of bans and proscriptions, and it's the labour movement which must organise to defeat fascism. In the 1930s Mosley was defeated when working people came out in their thousands at Cable Street — not by the Public Order Act.'

IMMIGRATION LAWS

'Unfortunately we are fighting the Front with one hand tied behind our backs at the moment. I'm referring to the immigration laws. The argument about immigration laws has nothing to do with numbers — more people leave this country every year than come here. It has everything to do with colour. Immigration laws suggest that foreigners, black foreigners, are in some way to blame for the economic and social problems facing working people — an argument the National Front has skillfully exploited.'

'Last year's Labour Party conference voted to scrap the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts because it recognised they were racist. But so far there has been a deafening silence from the Government on this decision.'

'Fascism isn't around the corner in Britain, but the conditions of falling living standards in which it breeds are already with us. It is these conditions we must fight, not black people. For if the fascists did succeed in scapegoating blacks, it wouldn't just be the blacks but the whole labour movement which would be crushed.'

Black self defence vital now

CLAIRE WEINGARTEN campaigned against racist violence in the East End of London when she stood in the recent local elections. In the continuing campaign, she has had many opportunities to discuss with Asians who live under fear of harassment and attacks from racists and the police. Here she tells Socialist Challenge why black self-defence has to be organised now.

When Sir Robert Mark, the retired Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, drew up his report on crime in London and noted a serious increase in crimes of violence, it is unlikely that he had in mind the Asian community in East London.

In fact, the police have reacted to the recent publicity of violence against Asians by blandly stating that violent crimes have gone down in the area! East London Asians have a different story to tell.

* In April, four young Bengalis were attacked by white youths with milk bottles. One had to have over 40 stitches in his face. Dula Miah, another Bengali, was attacked by a racist gang.

* In the same month, Chaudury Amin and his 13-year-old son were attacked in their home and beaten on the head with a hammer. Mr Amin had to have brain surgery. His son may be paralysed for life.

These are just a few examples of attacks that occur daily. Some families are attacked again and again. They are victims of campaigns to drive them from their homes. One family in Poplar was subjected to two years of terror. Petrol was poured through their letter box and set alight. Bricks were thrown through their windows. Their children were beaten up.

Another Poplar family has their door hacked down with an axe. And in Bow, one family has

Deportation threat to Iranian militant

DAREB Behnam-Shabahang, an Iranian militant, has been held by the immigration authorities in Dover. He is now in Canterbury jail awaiting a Home Office decision on whether he should be deported.

Dareb, an active member of the Confederation of Iranian Students, was among the 21 who occupied the Iranian Embassy in April 1975 and were then charged with 'conspiracy to trespass'. Dareb was granted political asylum after the successful conclusion of the Iranian 21 Defence Campaign.

But he was arrested again with two other militants and jailed for one month last year following a picket in protest at a visit by the Shah's wife, Empress Farah. 'You're a trouble-maker,' immigration officials told Dareb

when he returned to Britain on 3 June after a brief visit to France. 'We don't see why we should put up with you any longer.'

His case isn't the first. The Home Office has continually harassed Iranian oppositionists and Home Secretary Rees refuses to do anything about the activities of SAVAK, the Iranian secret police, in this country. Last December the Shah himself stated on BBC-TV that his secret police operated in Britain against those he considered to be enemies of his regime.

Now Rees is doing SAVAK's dirty work by deporting the same people SAVAK is operating against. This isn't surprising. Until recently Rees was in charge of SAVAK-style repression and torture in the north of Ireland.

Photo: G. M. COOKSON (The Weekly)

As education cuts mount Teachers fight back

ON 2 JULY an open conference for members of the National Union of Teachers is taking place in Birmingham. The conference, which is supported by both the Socialist Teachers Association and Rank and File Teacher, aims at developing a serious campaign to fight the cuts in education.

Evidence which points to the need for such a campaign is mounting daily as Tory-controlled councils implement cuts under the cover provided by the attacks on education standards already launched by the Labour Government. To take a few examples:

* Oxfordshire council has threatened to get rid of 344 teaching jobs.

* Birmingham council is attempting to sue 15 teachers for refusing to teach over-size classes.

* In Hackney the Labour-controlled Inner London Education Authority is threatening 174 teachers with compulsory trans-

**OPEN
CONFERENCE
OF NUT
MEMBERS**

**SATURDAY
2nd JULY 10.30am-5pm
BIRMINGHAM
UNIVERSITY
SPENCER BUILDING**



BERNARD REGAN: Open Conference convenor.

fer. In the face of these attacks NUT members are showing an increasing willingness to fight back. When members in Oxfordshire were balloted over action, 78 per cent voted to strike.

It is this growing militancy which the Birmingham conference aims to organise on a

national scale. It is open to all local teachers' associations, schools and individuals, as well as other school staff and students.

For more information contact: Bernard Regan, 23 Kenilworth Gardens, London SE18.

by BERNARD REGAN

Speakout

Hounslow Hospital stays.... OK!

and this is what they say....

'In occupying Hounslow Hospital by "working-in" we are not taking away from the Area Health Authority the responsibility they have in law for the patients and staff at our hospital. We will, however, take no part in staff transfers, closure of beds, refusing admissions or any other activity that leads to the run-down of work at our hospital.

'We offer assurances to the Community Health Council, the public, and in particular to our patients, that patient care will in no way be impaired, and indeed where possible will be improved.

'Believing that we cannot alone defend our hospital against closure we seek wider support. We work in close relationship with the Area and District Joint Shop Stewards Committees, the Hounslow Trades Union Council and the Labour Movement in general. Their support is vital in sustaining such operations as picket lines and other related activities, when management tries to break our work-in.

'We look to the Labour movement and the public at large to help us ensure that hospital equipment is not moved and structural changes are not made which could lead towards closure. Solidarity of the London Ambulance Service will see that patients are not whisked away in the dark of night....

DETERMINATION

We have shown our determination by operating a work-in. As the closure date draws near, we anticipate management using every trick and threat to break us. Knowing that unity is our strength, management's first attempts have been aimed at dividing us. This we have withstood. Next they began putting pressure on general practitioners and consultants alike to starve us of

patients, hoping thus to demoralise us, now that the unions have made the work-in official.

'Thus far we have succeeded, with the help of our friends, in keeping the hospital well used. Soon management will move toward direct confrontation. In that event we shall be forced onto the offensive. The Defence Committee will perform its duties as an Occupation Committee, and only those actively supporting the work-in will enter the premises....

'We refuse to accept the AHA plea that Government policy makes it necessary to put cash before patient care. We reject the Government's entire programme of cut-backs in public expenditure, whether it be in health, education, transport or building. We reject private medicine and believe that every NHS hospital that closes opens the door wider to paying hospitals. We want to see the NHS restructured, so that it is run by and in the interests of the working people of this country and is free to all at the time of need. We call for a massive injection of funds into the NHS.

DEMOCRATIC LINES

'We want the NHS run on more democratic lines, so that the voice of the public, the health workers and the patients are all reckoned with. We believe that hospital closures are a false economy and ill-conceived....

'Public expenditure cuts have not brought about the revival of

industry. The working people of this country are paying for an economic crisis which is not of their making. The right to a decent living, to decent shelter, to good health are rapidly becoming commodities available only to those who can afford the price. Meanwhile drug companies make millions out of the NHS; building workers are unemployed; brick mountains grow higher while countless numbers are homeless; workers of every trade are kept idle against their will; their demand for the right to work goes unheard, while factories remain shut.

PROFITS ELSEWHERE

'What this country is facing is a massive investment strike and lock-out of workers by the capitalists who seek their profits elsewhere — in the EEC, Spain, South Africa, etc.

'When nurses take to the streets, when hospital workers break through artificial barriers and unite to defend their health service, insisting on providing patient care to the needy, then it is clear that they are calling a halt to the run-down of the NHS. If we become isolated from our allies, from our patients, from the general practitioners, from consultants, from other workers, our work-in will fail. Our goal has never been to hold an empty building.

'To succeed we need the help — the active help — of all who want to defend the NHS.'

For speakers, donations and support contact the Hounslow Hospital Defence Committee, Hounslow Hospital, Staines Road, Hounslow, Middlesex. Phone 01-570 4448. Ask for Sister Cooney (Secretary) or Sister Scott (Chairperson). If unavailable, phone 01-560 3431, ext 679 (JSCC): Chris Potter, Carl Brecker.

Union conferences debate Phase Three NALGO: no comment

This week 2,000 delegates are attending the annual conference of the National and Local Government Officers Association in Scarborough. WALTER MACLELLAN, NALGO conference delegate from Glasgow reports from the first day of Conference.

YOU WOULD have to be a visitor from another planet, not to know that the dominant issue in the British trade union movement is the future of the Social Contract.

Whether you are for the continuation of the 'constrict', and with it the decline in wages, the rise in unemployment and the cuts in social spending, or whether you are against it is the great dividing line in every single union.

REDUNDANCIES

No more so than in NALGO whose membership are the direct victims of the cuts policy of the Social Contract. The union itself estimates that the cuts will mean a massive 100,000 redundancies in the next two years. Yet amazingly the National Executive

Committee of NALGO came to this annual conference without a formal, stated policy on the Contract.

NO DEAL

It failed to submit a motion to the conference reflecting its policy by the motions deadline.

Instead it preferred to wait, hoping that by the time of the conference the terms of the deal between the TUC and the government would have emerged. Then it could slap down an 'emergency motion' committing the conference to the deal.

But things did not work out that way. No deal has been fixed. The attempt of the executive to persist in its manoeuvres came to nothing when its 'emergency motion' was ruled not to be an emergency by the Conference

Agenda Committee.

So for the debate on the pay policy, which takes place as Socialist Challenge goes to press every single motion submitted on the eve of the conference was opposed to a third stage of 'restraint'.

NATIONALISATION

Although it hasn't got a policy of its own, there is no doubt that the NALGO leadership will oppose these motions. It will for instance throw up its hands in horror at the composite opposition motion on pay, supported by Sheffield, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Islington branches.

This resolution opposes Phase 3, calls for a public sector campaign around a strategy including inflation proof wages and social benefits, the maintenance and improvement of public services, the expansion of public works, the nationalisation of banks and finance houses and the expansion of price controls.

Other motions and amendments call for a claim of £15 a week increase and a campaign of action 'and if necessary industrial action' for the across the board rise.

NATFHE: maybe

By Julian Atkinson

[Julian Atkinson is a member of NATFHE's National Council, writing in a personal capacity.]

CENTREPIECE of the Conference of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education was the debate on Phase 3 which was preceded by a speech from Len Murray calling for responsibility and moderation.

Last year the conference had passed a resolution in favour of the Social Contract if it stopped inflation, cuts, and unemployment.

This year the NEC proposed that 'in light of actual experience Conference no longer supports the present concept of a Social Contract and it therefore bases its salary policy upon the principles of restrictions on free collective bargaining shall be progressively removed.'

An indication of the growing restiveness with the leadership's vacillation was that a motion opposing the continuation of any Social Contract was lost by only 144 votes to 184 — a far narrower margin than on a similar vote last year. The word 'progressively' was deleted from the resolution, but it remained an expression of critical and half-hearted support for some form of Phase 3.

This is in line with NATFHE's surrender to the cuts in teacher training staff and collaboration in voluntary redundancies. But delegates passed a resolution opposing both compulsory and voluntary redundancy and for forming a public sector alliance in opposition to the cuts.

The old ATTI had established good positions on women's rights, but the fused organisation

had still to take a stand. The anti-abortion group, LIFE, had set up a campaign room near to the Conference Hall and leafleted conference. This led to the pro-abortion NATFHE members and the National Women's Panel holding two pickets of Conference.

A resolution was passed overwhelmingly regretting that the SDA and the EPA were limited in their effect and went on to call

for equal opportunity for women students and for comprehensive child care facilities in educational establishments for staff and students.

The resolution also called for support for the Working Women's Charter and support for a 'woman's right to choose' on the abortion issue in concert with those organisations campaigning to maintain/extend existing abortion rights and facilities.

Scottish Conference

Wage Control and Labour Movement Democracy

Saturday 25 June, 10.15am-5pm.
Cowlane Centre, Cowlane St, Stirling.

Organised by Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement. Sponsored by Stirling and District Trades Councils, Central Federation of Trades Councils, and many other labour movement organisations.

The Conference will provide a forum for socialist activists to discuss the actions and demands needed to forge a socialist opposition to unite all workers prepared to fight back now!

★ Details and credentials from: S. McLennan, 18 Carrington St, Glasgow.

Irish elections Government promises to 'blow up' civil liberties

Voters in the South of Ireland go to the polls on 16 June in the first general election in four years — years that have seen a massive increase in repression by the Fine Gael and Labour Party coalition Government. The coalition has threatened more of the same if they are returned. GEOFF BELL reports

Prime Minister Liam Cosgrave at the start of the campaign attacked 'do-gooders, outsiders' and 'commentators... whose great vogue is civil rights'. As far as Cosgrave was concerned 'they can blow out or blow up'.

This same approach to civil liberties has characterised the coalition. The setting up of special non-jury courts to deal with republican sympathisers, the banning of television interviews with members of Provisional Sinn Fein, the barbaric treatment of political prisoners are all examples both of the Government's insistence on 'discipline' and its slavish obedience to Britain.

A leading advocate of such policies is Labour cabinet member Conor Cruise O'Brien, who is known in Ireland as 'England's

favourite Irishman' because of his use of the British media to attack republicanism. O'Brien recently hinted that there might have to be censorship of the letters page in the *Irish Press*, a daily paper which opposes the coalition.

HIND LEGS

Similar attitudes have been displayed by the Irish Attorney General, who last year said that those who protested about the erosion of civil liberties 'were up on their hind legs when they should be down on their knees'. Combined with all this the Government has presided over rising unemployment, inflation, and a steady decline in real wages.

Yet the forecasts are that the

coalition will stay in power. While Fianna Fail, led by former Premier Jack Lynch, is expected to win more seats than Fine Gael and Labour, the combined seats of the two small parties are expected to total more than Fianna Fail's.

One reason is that the Government has re-arranged the parliamentary constituencies so as to give it a positive advantage in areas where its traditional support is strongest.

A further reason is the common belief that Fianna Fail would do little better than the present Government. Opinion polls have suggested that as many as 20 per cent of the electorate sees little difference in the main parties, while as many as 50 per cent think Fianna Fail's election promises would cost too much.

But in a number of constituencies a real alternative is being

offered. Most of all in Limerick East, where victimised trade unionist Joe Harrington, a member of the Movement for a Socialist Republic (Irish section of the Fourth International), is standing as a candidate of *Bottom Dog*, a local rank and file trade unionist's newspaper.

CAMPAIGNS

According to *Socialist Republic*, the paper of the MSR, *Bottom Dog* and its supporters are 'using the election to build support for campaigns: against unemployment and repression; in support of women's rights, and in solidarity with the struggle of the anti-unionist minority in the North'.

Harrington's campaign has attracted wide support from revolutionaries in Ireland. Eamonn McCann, the Irish correspondent

for *Socialist Worker*, has publicly supported Harrington, and last weekend Bernadette McAliskey (Devlin) and other members of the Irish Socialist Party went to Limerick to work for the campaign.

This approach to using the election to organise struggles is in sharp contrast to that of Sinn Fein — 'the Workers Party', the latest name for the Official Republicans. They see their election campaign in strictly parliamentary terms.

'Our main intention in contesting this election is to win seats', the Officials' president, Tomas MacGiolla, has said. Accordingly, as the North of Ireland is not considered a good vote winner, the 'Workers Party' manifesto barely mentions the Six Counties and the party itself appears to have made no public statement on the anti-imperialist struggle.



'Long to Reign Over Us'? Garret FitzGerald (left), Irish Coalition Minister for Foreign Affairs, Robin Haydon, British Ambassador in Dublin and the Dean of St Patrick's. The occasion for the celebration was a service held in Dublin to mark the silver jubilee. Happy and glorious.

Socialist Challenge

EVENTS

BRIGHTON Socialist Challenge Forum, Thursday 23 June, 8pm, Springfield pub, Brighton.

BRISTOL Socialist Challenge Discussion Group, 'Trotskyists and the Trade Unions', Swan Hotel, Stokes Croft, Bristol.

CARDIFF Socialist Challenge Forum, Welsh Nationalism and Socialism. Speakers from IMG and Plaid Cymru. Friday 24 June, 7.30pm, Rhyminy Hotel (opposite the prison), Cardiff.

CAMBRIDGE Socialist Challenge meeting, 'The tasks of the new paper', Wednesday 22 June, 8pm. For venue phone Linsey at 0223 69347.

LEEDS Socialist Challenge meeting, 'The Next Step in Solidarity with the Black Struggle in South Africa', 8pm, Tuesday 21 June, Leeds Trades Council Club, Leeds.

EAST LONDON Socialist Challenge Forum, Tuesday 28 June, Britannia pub, Mare Street, Hackney, 7.30pm.

SW LONDON Forum, 'Launching Socialist Challenge', 7.30pm, Thursday 30 June, Clapham Manor Baths, Clapham Manor Road, SW4.

SE LONDON Forum, 'Tasks for the Left Today', Thursday 30 June, 7.30pm, Lee Centre, Lewisham.

BRENT Socialist Challenge Meeting, Sunday 19 June, 3-5pm, 45 Maresbury Road, London NW2. All welcome.

BIRMINGHAM Supporters ring 021 643 8259 for details of forthcoming activities.

NORTH-WEST supporters. Meetings coming up in Manchester, Wigan, Warrington, Bolton, Bury. Ring 061-881 3252 for details, or write to the Socialist Challenge Centre, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1.

GLASGOW: Friday 24 June, Socialist Challenge/Scottish Socialist dance. Hall proceeds to NAC Dance to 'Mephisto' plus bar extension till 11.30. Entry by ticket only from Scottish Socialist, 84 Queen St., Glasgow. Tel: 221 7481.

SOUTHALL (West London): Tuesday 21 June, IMG Public Meeting. Mobilise Against Enoch Powell (who's speaking in Hounslow the following day), Southall Town Hall, 7.30pm.

SCOTTISH tour to launch Socialist Challenge. Build a socialist opposition and for a unified revolutionary organisation.

Speakers: Rich Paisey IMG, and a representative of the Scottish Socialist League and local labour movement speakers.

Monday 20 June, Hamilton, 7.30pm, Royal Hotel, The New Cross.

Tuesday 21 June, Glasgow, 7.30pm, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall St.

Wednesday 22 June, Edinburgh, 7.30pm, Trades Council, Picardy Place.

Thursday 23 June, Aberdeen, 8pm, Music Hall, Union Street.

Friday 24 June, Falkirk, 7pm, Sipping Room, The Temperance Cafe, Lint Rigg.

Calling socialist students

'AN ULTRA-LEFT PLOT' was how Sue Slipman, President of the National Union of Students described it. 'A threat to democracy' was the reaction of Minister for Education Shirley Williams.

They were talking about the special 12-week subscription offer Socialist Challenge is making to cover the students' summer break.

Their panic is understandable. Socialist Challenge will continue to expose the anti-democratic manoeuvres of the executive majority of the NUS, as it does in this issue when it reports the smear campaign launched by the NUS against Soweto militant Mashinini. It will continue to politically nail the betrayals of the Labour Government, and it will give unrivalled coverage of student politics.

This is why Socialist Challenge is essential reading for all student militants. But we know that many students have difficulty receiving left-wing papers during the summer break. That is why we are making our special subscription offer to cover this period — 12 issues for £1.50.

Don't feel inhibited if you're not a student, this is good value for an introduction to Socialist Challenge. Just fill in the form below.

To: Distribution, Socialist Challenge, 326/329 Upper Street, London N1.

Please send me the next twelve issues of Socialist Challenge. I enclose £1.50p.

NAME.....

College.....

Address to which the paper should be sent.....

[Cheques & P.O.'s should be made payable to 'Socialist Challenge']

Speakout

irish front

- AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS
- PROVISIONAL REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT
- IRISH REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST PARTY
- IRISH NATIONAL PARTY
- MAGILLIGAN PRISONERS' WELFARE COMMITTEE
- POLITICAL PRISONERS' ACTION COMMITTEE
- PRISONERS' DEFENDANTS' FUND

The policy of Socialist Challenge is to provide a platform for individuals and groups in the workers' movement who do not have regular access to the media. This is particularly important in relation to events in Ireland, on which censorship of news and opinion exists on a massive scale.

We are particularly pleased therefore to publish the views of the Derry-based Irish Front, recorded in an interview with three members, Fionnbaira O'Dochartaigh, Mick Montgomery and Davie O'Carroll.

THE BACKGROUND to the Irish Front is that last October there began a series of discussion meetings between the various anti-imperialist groups. These went on in Derry for three months. We assessed the overall situation and what issues we could unite on.

We agreed on four basic demands: An end to harassment, torture and intimidation; Full support for political status leading to an unconditional general amnesty; Repatriation of all Irish political prisoners; Withdrawal of British troops and an end to British interference in the political, cultural and economic life of Ireland.

We see these demands as the basis on which to unite the anti-imperialist forces, not just in Derry but all over the North and in Ireland as a whole. In Derry, six organisations are united in struggle on these demands. These are the Provisional Republican Movement, the Nationalist Party, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, the Magilligan Prisoners' Welfare Committee, the Prisoners' Action Committee, and the Prisoners' Dependents Fund.

NO COMPROMISES

We are now discussing on a 32-County basis. We don't permit any organisation to join the Irish Front if it means compromising on any of our demands. They have to agree totally with all four. On principle we would oppose the Social

Democratic and Labour Party joining — they put forward the blood-bath theory, thereby arguing troops should stay.

We put the SDLP, the right-wing Catholic clergy, the Alliance Party, the Officials, the Peace Movement all in one group alongside right-wing trade unionists who have recently made demands for an increase in security. For us the demands for an increase in security means an increase in repression.

The unity we have achieved is a principled unity, on the basis of



While he was in Britain, Fionnbaira O'Dochartaigh, External Secretary of the Irish Front, welcomed the appearance of Socialist Challenge and agreed to sponsor the new paper.

the four demands. If any organisation supports those demands, it is quite welcome to join.

The type of unity we have achieved was shown on St Patrick's Day in Derry. We had 11,000 people on the streets. For the first time since 1968, all the democratic and anti-imperialist movements came together.

We want the British left to be conscious of the repression we are going to face, and to try and educate the people in Britain about what is really going on. The Loyalist strike, for example, was not the failure of the British press made it out to be. It was a victory for Paisley — since then there has been a massive increase in repression. The Loyalists have made many gains out of the strike, but we aim to counter this by forging anti-imperialist unity.

HIGH ROAD

We take the high road to the republic. The only road is to involve all the various aspects of the struggle in Ireland and all the various tendencies of the proletarian and small farmers. We seek the mobilisation of all sections of the population: the homeless, the unemployed, small farmers, women fighting for their rights on contraception, abortion and equal pay — all the people affected by capitalism.

We raise economic and social questions, as well as the national question. The national question is the social question; the social question is the national question. We aim to involve the masses in struggle.

As we say in our leaflet, we have come to a period when we must stand together, for the alien government that rules us from so many miles away has abandoned the letter of the law, withdrawn the rights of the individual, and adopted the rule of the baton and the gun. We must link together like a great chain, drawing courage, strength and resolve from each other.

The meeting in Merton Town Hall was a perilous affair. It reveals The CP nearing a split

The depths of the crisis which is shaking the COMMUNIST PARTY from its rank and file right to its Executive Committee was let loose in Merton Town Hall last Thursday.

Eight hundred militants packed into the Hall to hear Sid French of the CP's Surrey District Committee put the view that the draft 'British Road to Socialism' is an utterly reformist document that should be rejected. DODIE WEPPLER reports.

French told the meeting that the Executive Committee was getting cold feet about its decision to have a public debate on the draft in the months leading up to the CP's 35th Congress. It's not hard to see why. Feelings ran high on Thursday evening from all sides of the debate. At times the chairperson was unable to restore order.

When Jack Dash appealed for funds a loud and cynical cry came from the audience: 'Why don't you just write to Moscow?' And French also met an angry response when he lashed out at the Young Communist League.

He charged the YCL with doing all it could to incite the Czechoslovak youth to overthrow the Socialist Republic. 'If they have as much success as they've had with their appeals to the British youth, there isn't much to worry about', he added with contempt.

It's not that French was under attack throughout the evening. Far from it. His supporters were out in force and they gave as good as they got. But the presence of Mike Higgs — an Executive

agenda of the Congress.

French used his 30-minute introduction to read a carefully prepared speech which laid out the political positions held by the Surrey District Committee. He placed his comments in the context of the deep crisis facing the CP today.

NO SELF CRITICISM

One thousand *Morning Star* daily readers have been lost since January. That is a one per cent loss per month. The election performance of the CP has been just as dismal. Self-criticism for these failures has yet to come from the leadership. 'The EC has done nothing but place the blame on the Soviet Union — and the USSR is the strongest card that CPGB members have,' French declared.

He warned against the great dangers of opportunism in the Western CPs. But his policies didn't offer any hope that CP militants could turn the tide, even if they were able to democratically organise to win supporters to the

One aspect of his argument was his insistence on the need to prepare the working class for the use of violence. He didn't shy away from this task, and charged the drafters of the new edition of the *British Road* with being 'too short on coercion and too free with liberalism'. He held up the page in the draft beginning with line 1261 as evidence. 'Democracy', he said, 'appears 15 times on this page alone ... and there are only 65 lines of text.'

The leadership over-simplified this question in his view. It failed to recognise that: 'Parliament is hardly likely to go unchallenged by a ruling class which can use powerful built-in safeguards against a government wishing to introduce socialism.' French wanted to draw from this the lessons of Chile, especially concerning the role of the army.

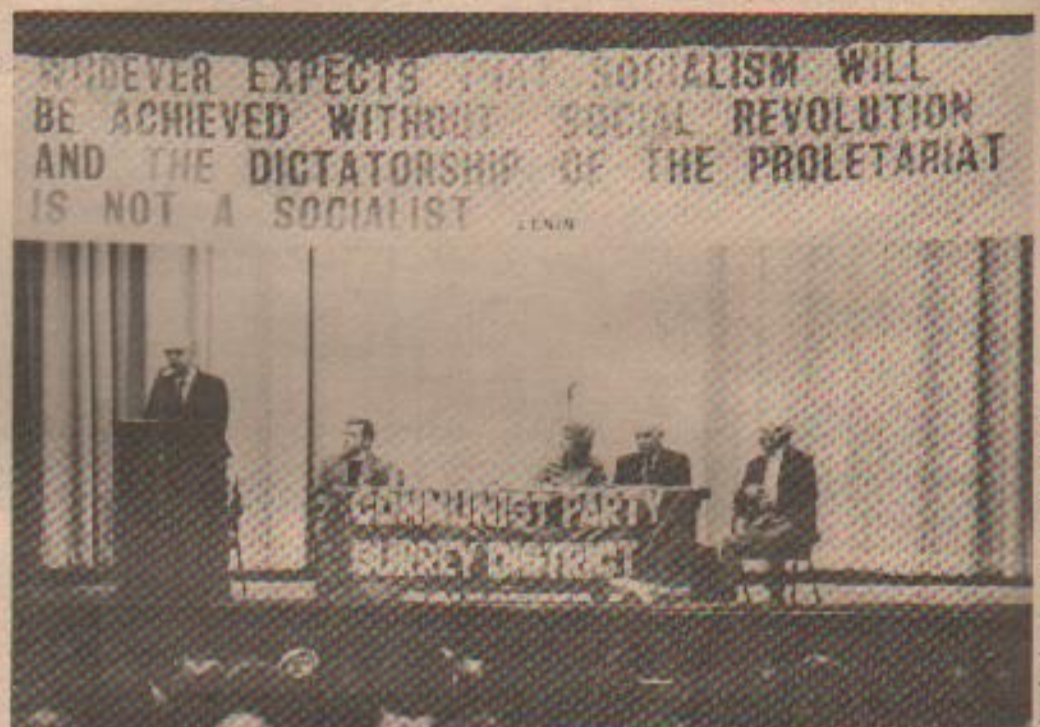
ALLIANCES

But on two counts at least French is incapable of drawing these lessons. Firstly, he quite happily accepts the concept of alliances contained in the draft programme. In reply to a question on import controls, he said that alliances on this issue even with sections of the capitalist class was not out of the question — 'This only splits the ruling class!'

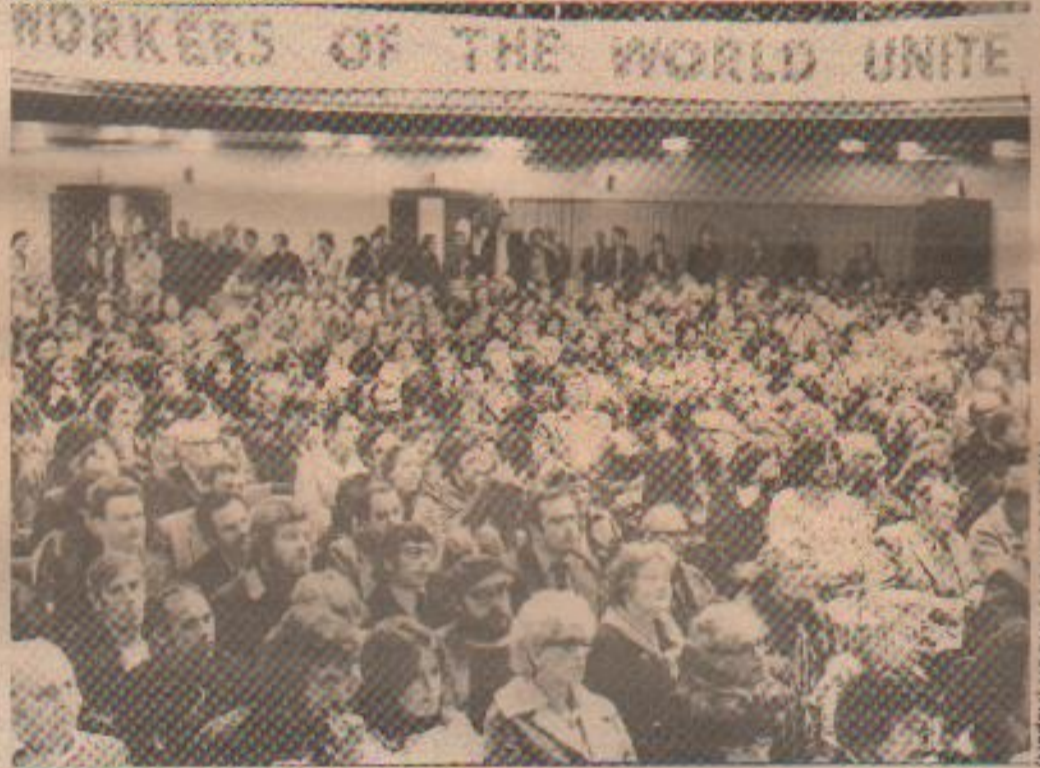
Secondly, French explicitly rejected independent and democratic organs of workers power, such as soviets, as a vital component of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He was ready to appeal to Lenin in an empty, dogmatic way, but utterly dodged the necessity for building soviets with an off-hand joke about the far-off days when the Wimbledon soviet would see the light of day.

But of all the leadership's policies French placed in the firing line, it was the EC's criticisms of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe which roused an especially vehement response. Tackling questions on the de-stalinisation process, French berated the 'mythical lack of freedom in Eastern Europe — as if the talk of freedom was something absolute'.

He chose to hold up Solzhenitsyn as a case in point, mocking the income and wealth Solzhenitsyn has accrued in Switzerland. In French's mind, the Soviet Union was everything the leadership denied. Unemployment does not exist, food prices are stable, and although a recent rent rise was announced, this has been the first in 40 years, and 'even *The Guardian* has been forced to comment that women fare much better in the



Above: French is joined on the platform by [l to r] Colin Jones, chairperson Marsey, Alan Bush and Jack Dash. Below: The audience who came to hear the case put by French was mainly CP members. But many militants from the far left also attended.



Soviet Union than in the West', he added.

TENDENCIES

French's policies are marked by a combination of a firm insistence on retaining the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat and — because he equates the two — an intransigent refusal to recognise the crimes of the Soviet bureaucracy in its attempts to maintain its privileges at the expense of the working class.

His supporters are by no means a monolithic block. But they were united in their opposition to Brian Grosan of the IMG when he raised the need for the democratic right of tendencies and factions. The hall erupted with heckling from all corners. Rank and file militants yelled out: 'Lenin was opposed to factions'; 'Go and read Lenin'. They are of course wrong, but without a doubt this is one of the most sensitive questions in the party.

Despite the hostility from the ranks of Sid French's supporters,

the first issue of *Socialist Challenge* — which carried the summary of Charlie Doyle's alternative to the *British Road* — sold over 120 copies at the meeting.

And in the long run, even the mistaken policies promoted by French himself will not be the subject of a clear debate. Ultimately his supporters will suffer the same fate as all those CP militants who are beginning to question the line of the EC under the impact of the rise of world revolutionary developments.

How the *Morning Star* reported the occasion:

Against new draft

At a meeting in Merton Town Hall in South London attended by 800 people on Thursday night Mr. Sid French, Surrey district secretary of the Communist Party, spoke against the new draft of "The British Road to Socialism." A collection of over £400 was made.

Committee member who supports the leadership — indicates that the deep divisions are worrying the CP leadership.

CONGRESS DECISION

Higgs pointed to these concerns in his contribution — the first recognised by the chairperson. *Would French be bound by the decision of the Congress in the event that it accepted the draft drawn up by the leadership?* In his refusal to indicate the outcome of such a situation in advance, French made clear that a split in the CP could well be put on the

positions advanced by French.

French hammered away at the fundamental policies he feels the EC has trampled on in the current draft. He put the need to retain the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat at the forefront of his argument.

But his dogmatic attachment to this concept was evident when challenged by a member of the audience. Although he argued for the need of the working class to impose its will on society upon seizing state power, he equated the dictatorship of the proletariat with nothing other than the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union today.

SWP approaches CP for joint work

The Central Committee of the SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY has sent a long letter to the Political Committee of the COMMUNIST PARTY making an appeal for united action and joint work. The extract below contains a list of the SWP's concrete proposals.

1 Joint meetings of the industrial departments of our two parties to discuss how to encourage the struggles for wage claims outside the limits of the social contract the moment Phase Two ends on 31 August. We would suggest a joint campaign for claims of £15 across the board — but we would of course be prepared to fight for other figures in concrete situations.

2 Joint meetings of our active members in particular industries and factories now so that we can encourage such struggles in August and later, as well as provide aid for the many long strikes that are still continuing.

3 Joint meetings also of our two industrial departments around particular, important

industrial disputes. Joint meetings of our members involved in those disputes.

4 A joint campaign inside the unions for the defence of traditional trade union practice in respecting picket lines and in opposition to blacklegs' charters of all sorts. Joint meetings of our members in the unions that have put their names to such documents to promote the campaign.

5 Joint meetings of the committees of our two parties responsible for anti-racist activity with a view to launching a joint campaign within the Labour

movement to drive the fascists off the streets. Joint meetings of our members nationally and locally to implement the aims of this campaign in relation to particular fascist mobilisations.

Such measures would represent the first, modest steps towards the united action that is so desperately needed. We believe, as we said above, they would attract the support of many thousands of militants who are not members of either of our parties, but who see the need for a fightback to begin now. We trust you will consider them, and give us your reply at the earliest possible moment.

Next Week's Issue:

SURPLUS VALUE: Terry Eagleton/Marxism and Art.

OPEN FORUM: SWP's position on far-left unity.

UNDER REVIEW: Cathy Porter/Larissa Reisner's 'Hamburg At The Barricades'.

PLUS News and Analysis of election results in Spain and Ireland.

REMEMBER SOWETO!

THIS WEEK marks the first anniversary of the outbreak of a struggle which shook South African racism to its very foundations. Beginning among the students of the black township of Soweto, the movement of revolt rapidly enveloped the whole country, drawing in hundreds of thousands of black workers, and spreading to the 'coloured' people of Cape Town, whom the regime has always tried to insulate from movements of resistance among the rest of the black population.

This upsurge capped off five years of steady growth of organised resistance by the black working class and deepening resentment by urban youth at the erosion of their few remaining rights. It reflected, at one level, the very development of South African capitalism, whose profits are sucked out of the labour of an ever-growing black working class, permanently settled in the cities and with no attachment to the impoverished rural 'homelands', which the regime insists are the only places where they can be allowed to hold political or social rights.

On another level, this discontent was fired into action by the defeats imposed on white racism and its imperialist backers in neighbouring

Mozambique and Angola.

The racists threw up a ring of repressive fire around their privileges, killing hundreds of youth, imprisoning dozens of others, and driving hundreds more from their communities into exile. They managed to check the Soweto movement — but not to defeat it.

Its sources and inspirations continue to live, and the movement has already found new expressions: the vigorous movement against the attempted rent rises in Soweto, and, marking the anniversary of the struggle in their own way, the movement against the collaborationist, puppet 'Urban Bantu Councils' now spreading through Soweto and adjoining townships.

White racist rule is today under seige as never before in the 'front-lines' of Zimbabwe and Namibia. But it is also facing a full-scale revolt in its very heartland — South Africa. Only when the workers of South Africa have finally dealt the blow that will eradicate the oppression of white racism and the exploitation of racial capitalism will they consider concluded the task begun at Soweto.



16 June 1976 is a day no South African, black or white, will forget in a hurry. It started with a peaceful protest by Soweto students against the compulsory introduction of Afrikaans in schools. It ended, thanks to police repression, with many injured and dead.

As the weeks advanced the students' struggle began to involve black workers, a process which was to result in the tremendously successful stay-at-home strikes. Above all the strikes demonstrated the enormous power of the black working class.

The victory of the MPLA and the defeat of the South African forces in Angola contributed to this fantastic growth in self-confidence. This should be viewed against a background of rising strike rates amongst black workers, the 1973 Natal strikes being especially noteworthy, the increasing formation of black trade unions, and the growth in other fields, such as squatters committees. The assault on the apartheid system, which went far beyond the initial issue of education, was given real fire by this combination of factors.

Whereas prior to Soweto there was some opportunity to conduct a limited political practice, after the mass mobilisations had died away the racist regime began systematically to clear the ground of political opponents. Apart from removing the most advanced militants from the political scene this increased repression has had far deeper effects.

The black working class in South Africa is a class in formation. It is not as yet a class for itself. The most pressing and immediate task is surely to develop this awareness, and one of the most important ways of doing it is through the development of black trade unions. If this is no longer a possibility in the present period, one in which black unemployment is approaching two millions and state repression is increasing, then what possibilities remain?

This inability on the part of the black workers to organise, and the ability to set up other organisational structures has considerable effect on the form the struggle takes. For many militants now in the townships the black workers are seen as irrelevant to the struggle, and the inevitable ultra-leftist practice flows from this error. In the place of the working class another sociological category is substituted: either 'the people' or students.

For many militants the only conclusion to be drawn from all this is that political struggle is impossible in South Africa, and that the struggle must be shifted on to a military plane. Whereas the African National Con-



gress was found seriously wanting during the events in Soweto its analysis of South Africa now has a real resonance amongst such people.

MILITARY TRAINING

But their policy of sending militants back into South Africa after military training has resulted in various arrests and a number of trials. The trial of ANC militants at Pietermaritzburg continues, and yet another one has started in Pretoria with 12 ANC militants on trial. Their ability to influence the course of events in South Africa remains nil; the strategy they adopt represents a retreat from the real problem of engaging the black working class successfully in the liberation struggle.

The overall strength of the urban blacks remains, with a significant retreat being inflicted on the white regime over the attempt to increase rents in the townships. Increases of around 80 per cent were proposed, increases which were defeated by mass demonstrations in the townships. Inflation continues to soar, with increases in bus and other prices. Some strikes still occur, such as the strike of miners at Vereeniging with 3600 workers refusing to work.

Under pressure of the economic crisis besetting South Africa these contradictions must grow. The organisational form best able to advance such a struggle is for underground trade unions to be constructed, able to exploit any opportunity to further the workers'

cause.

South Africa should not be seen in a vacuum. The situation in Zimbabwe, the development of international solidarity and the struggle in Namibia all weaken the ability of the South African regime to maintain its level of repression. At present the situation in Zimbabwe is key. A successful outcome to the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe will have enormous effects on the struggle in South Africa.

South Africa will then have failed to stabilise the situation in southern Africa and her political option will be increasingly limited. This will especially be the case if it is realised that there is no chance of building socialism in Zimbabwe without first coming to terms with South Africa, and seeing the struggle for Zimbabwe as ultimately the struggle for South Africa.

GREATER SUPPORT

Over the past year in South Africa the struggle has entered a new and difficult phase. It requires greater support from the world working class, and especially from the British. The trade and investment link between Britain and South Africa is colossal. The successful implementation of an investment boycott would undermine the South African economy and its ability to increase its military spending. In South Africa the struggle continues. Soweto was the first step.

CLIVE BALDWIN

BLACK WORKERS

But it became clear that by continually calling stayaways, without tangible results, the students ran the risk of demoralising the black workers. After their initial successes the support offered by the workers dwindled; the brutalising conditions of apartheid had had their effect. In many senses the forms of struggle thrown up were a great step forward. However, these struggles in no way seriously challenged the strength of the racist state; its capacity for repression was in no way stretched.

A letter from exile to the butcher

This is an extract from a poem addressed to the South African Prime Minister J.B. Vorster, by BREYTEN BREYTENBACH. Breytenbach, a white South African of Afrikaaner origin, was sentenced to nine years in jail under the Terrorism Act and the Suppression of Communism Act in 1975. He has been held in solitary confinement since his trial and now faces a possible death sentence.

the prisoner confesses

I stand on bricks before my fellow men
I am the statue of liberation
with electrodes on my balls
trying to scream light into the dusk
I wrote slogans in crimson urine
on my skin and over the floor
I maintain my vigil
choke on the rope of the intestines
slip on soap and break my bones
murder myself with the evening paper
tumble out of the tenth storey of heaven
to deliverance on a street among people

and you butcher

you who are taxed with the security of the state
what do you think of when night reveals her skeleton
and the first chattering shriek is squeezed out
of the prisoner
like a birth
with all the fluids of parturition?
are you humble before this bloodied thing
with all its convulsions
with the torn breath of its dying
in your hands?
does your heart also get hard
when you touch the limp limbs
with the same hands that will fondle your wife's secrets?



'A fact power reason ANC COL'

The recent attempted coup in... matic in many respects, wi... doing very little to clarify things... The most recent, by Preside... coup's perpetrators were 'ultra... up a 'Chinese-style regime'. E... relation to reality that it must... purely for consumption in Mos...

In fact the coup's principle author, former Interior Minister Nito Alves, was widely known to be pro-Soviet in outlook, and rose to prominence as the MPLA's 'hammer of the ultra-lefts' in the Luanda slams. On balance, it would seem that there were few real political divisions involved in the coup attempt. It was the work of a faction — carefully assembled by Alves and his associates inside the MPLA, and its mass...

Soweto

WE ARE glad to bring greetings at a time when important work is going on to build international solidarity on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Soweto struggle.

These struggles marked an important beginning in the fight of the black people of South Africa against the oppression.

We are sad to see at such a

NUS slanders Mashinini 'AN INSULT TO THE MILITANTS OF SOWETO'

DEMONSTRATE!

Saturday 18 June
Assemble
Speakers Corner
London
1.00pm

**SUPPORT
THE SSA/NOISS
Alternative Platform
at the end
of the demo**

It is not usual, even in the context of the traditional sectarianism of the British left, to have two alternative platforms at the end of a united demonstration. But that is what militants who turn out for the NUS-called Soweto anniversary demonstration face in London this Saturday. COLIN TALBOT, a member of the National Union of Students Executive, explains how this situation has arisen.

Earlier this year Tsietsi Mashinini and a group of other Soweto exiles in London issued an international appeal for solidarity actions with those struggles against the racist South African regime. The focus for these actions was to be the first anniversary

of the Soweto uprising which started on 16 June 1976.

This appeal has received substantial backing, including more than a dozen national trade union leaders, a dozen Labour MPs, the Anti-Apartheid Move-

ment, many artists and intellectuals, and ... the National Union of Students Executive.

At the time the Appeal was endorsed by the NUS Executive there was not a single question or query raised about the credentials of Tsietsi Mashinini. After the NUS had announced its decision to call a national demonstration on 18 June an Executive working party drew up plans for the demonstration.

On that working party it was the Broad Left themselves who proposed that Tsietsi be one of the central speakers at the demonstration. They readily accepted my suggestion that NUS should organise a national

speaking tour with Soweto students. Why was the NUS Executive prepared to cooperate so fully with people who they now say do 'not represent a force of liberation'? Why are they prepared to go so far as to provoke a split in the solidarity movement by their sectarian attitude to Tsietsi and his comrades?

The NUS Executive is dominated by the Broad Left coalition, which is in turn dominated, especially on international issues, by the Communist Party of Great Britain.

For years the international solidarity movement has been persuaded that the African National Congress was the only liberation movement in South Africa. For example in 1970 it adopted a solidarity policy which referred only to the ANC. Today the situation has changed. Starting with the Durban strikes and culminating in the massive Soweto uprising last year a new, mass resistance movement is developing.

Although the ANC has played a part in this, and many individual ANC members a very heroic part, no-one could seriously claim that the ANC led this mass resistance movement. But the ANC and its Communist Party supporters don't want to admit that. So they try to discredit those leaders of the Soweto students who are critical of the ANC and have no intention of joining it. That is the origin of the campaign against Tsietsi and the other Soweto leaders.

The attitude that the far left members of the NUS Executive have adopted to this campaign is simple. Firstly, we will do everything in our power to drag out into the light of day the slanders and despicable lies which are being circulated about Tsietsi and his comrades. They are heroic freedom fighters who have laid their lives on the line on the struggle against apartheid. We do this irrespective of the views of Tsietsi and the other Soweto students, with whom we may have many differences. We would do exactly the same for ANC militants if the need arose.



Soweto student leaders (left to right) Tsietsi Mashinini, Selby Semela, Barney Makhahle.

Photo: ANDREW WILKINSON (Report)

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Alves was dismissed
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suggesting that the
ad been persuaded to
ir protegee. But to have
ived at all in such a

dubious and risky adventure the Soviets must have felt that they had important differences indeed with the Neto Government.

On the other hand, Alves' relations to the Cubans seems to have been uniformly hostile. One of his major supporters, José Van Dunen, political commissar of the armed forces, was known to be opposed to the growing Cuban influence. And one of the insurgents' chief targets for elimination among the MPLA leadership was the Minister of Finance, whose department was under considerable Cuban influence and had just implemented a radical scheme detaching Angola's currency from the escudo zone, thus simultaneously breaking an important link with the imperialist world economy and striking a powerful blow at currency

hoarders and speculators.

Certainly on the Cuban side there was no doubt about their attitude: they immediately rallied to the side of the Neto regime. Put together this suggests a substantial Cuban-Soviet divergence over the best course of events in Angola.

It is a sad comment on a self-proclaimed 'revolutionary' regime that the paucity of internal democracy, the absence of a free debate over political options, and the absence of effective organs of mass political power, has reduced it to a level where crucial political issues remained buried behind the curtain of factional in-fighting and are left to be resolved by the mechanisms of insurgency and counter-insurgency.

Roy Alexander

to Students' Greeting

important time the decision of the National Union of Students to keep Tsietsi Mashinini — a leader of this struggle — off the platform of the 18 June demonstration.

We hope that Socialist Challenge and everyone here will oppose this decision and campaign to get it reversed.

The South African struggle needs unity and international solidarity. We hope that Soc-

alist Challenge will fight in Britain for these things with all its energies.

Barney Makhahle (Secretary Soweto SRC)
Selby Semela (Treasurer Soweto SRC)

(Message to the rally which launched Socialist Challenge.)

AFRICA

ZAIRE
Interview with
South African
Revolutionary

ZIMBABWE
NO! to
NEW MANDATES

in struggle

AFRICA IN STRUGGLE: a journal of Marxist analysis which also aims to act as a forum for all African Socialists on the problems of the African revolution. Single copies 30p (plus 10p p&p), annual sub. [3 issues] £1.20. All enquiries to: Africa in Struggle, c/o Rejoice, 32819 Upper St., London N1.

Southern Africa in Crisis

30p

RED WEEKLY pamphlet

SOUTHERN AFRICA IN CRISIS is a 48 page pamphlet which traces the emergence and development of the white racist states, explains the role of imperialism in bolstering them up, charts the rise of the black resistance movements and puts forward a programme of struggle today. Excellent value at only 30p (plus 10p p&p).

NON-SECTARIAN

Secondly, we demand that NUS take a non-sectarian attitude to solidarity work and support all those who are fighting the apartheid regime. Any other policy would be sectarian irresponsibility.

Thirdly, we have supported and worked hard for the maximum mobilisation for the 18 June demonstration. It is mainly the far left dominated students unions and NUS Areas which have had serious campaigns to build for this demonstration. We want this demonstration to be a success.

One thing, and one thing only, has made us decide to hold an alternative rally. That is that on a 'Remember Soweto' demonstration the NUS is denying a platform to one of the most prominent leaders of the Soweto students.

Not only is that a sick joke; it is an insult to the militants of Soweto, and to the memory of those who died on 16 June 1976.

We cannot allow such an insult, such irresponsible and degrading sectarianism, to go unchallenged. We are holding an alternative rally in order to give a platform to the Soweto students' leaders. The ANC is welcome on this platform. So is the Broad Left. We are not the sectarians.

Every single militant, whatever their politics, who attends the demo on Saturday must ask themselves a simple question: did we come here to honour the Soweto dead and express our solidarity with the living struggle, or did we come here to insult their memory and their leaders?





FELIPE GONZALEZ: the jet-setting Socialist Party leader, firmly defending Spanish capitalism.

Felipe on the campaign trail

There is no doubt who is the star of the show. Felipe Gonzalez, glamorous leader of the Socialist Party (PSOE), has been conducting an American-style campaign, touring the country in his private jet, speaking at up to a dozen meetings a day.

'Hurricane Felipe' a leading Spanish news magazine called him — the only opposition politician with the charisma and 'sex appeal' to match Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez.

It is no surprise that Gonzalez has cultivated a public hostility to Suarez, while Santiago Carrillo and the Communist Party leaders have gone out of their way to snuggle up to the former general

European trade unions, including the British TUC — ten times as much as it was able to raise in dues from its own membership.

And the Socialist party T-shirts which are selling like hot cakes

dragging the Communist Party (PCE) in his wake. Just as much as Carrillo, Gonzalez has no intention of breaking down the surviving apparatus of the dictatorship.

But while Carrillo has embraced the monarchy with open arms, Felipe has been more circumspect. You will see hundreds of republican flags at his rallies; he knows better than to drive his working class support into the hands of the far left.

RADICAL IMAGE

Like the PCE current in the Workers Commissions, the UGT has not led a single struggle against the Government's austerity plan but it was careful not to alienate itself from the recent Basque general strike by calling for a return to work, which was what the PCE did. While the PCE will make any concession as a token of its respectability, the PSOE can afford to present a more radical image.

Whatever Felipe may say on the election trail, the social democrats of Europe are a guarantee that he will not fail in his responsibilities to Spanish capitalism.

carry a German-language label!

But it would be a mistake to regard the PSOE's campaign as an apolitical junket. Certainly many of the massive crowds in squares and stadiums up and down the country are chanting 'FelipeFelipe'. But just as many of them are unimpressed by their leader's jet-set image.

'Asturias socialista', they chanted in the heart of the mining belt which has always been the party's working class stronghold. And in Galicia: 'el pueblo unido gobierna sin partido' ('the people united rules without a party'). But even this does not embarrass Felipe.

OPPOSITION

Certainly he was the first to propose that the opposition sit down and talk with Suarez,

RICHARD CARVER reviews the final days of the Spanish election campaign.

Adolfo Suarez and friends

Adolfo Suarez is the most successful Prime Minister in Europe. No, I haven't fallen under the man's spell.

While other European leaders see their policies undermined by a tottering economy and working class upsurge, Suarez — with the help of the peculiarly obliging reformist parties of the working class — has seen his reform project carried out to perfection. No, it is a statement of fact.

It is no accident that the Democratic Centre is relying almost entirely on Suarez' prestige to carry them to electoral victory. The Centre is a loose federation of moderate capitalist parties, formed by a group of technocrats and career politicians with little popular base. Suarez is their only asset.

When he came to office less than a year ago Franco's system of government was almost untouched. Those were the days when the 'bunker' looked on Fraga as a sort of reincarnation of Leon Trotsky.

CYNICISM

The political cynicism which Suarez picked up as a leading fascist was now turned to a thorough reform of the system. A series of manoeuvres isolated first the Francoist diehards and then Fraga and the 'neo-Francoists'.

For Suarez and his backers the crucial problem was how to neutralise the workers' movement — an exercise which it carried out by a combination of severe

repression — the murder of fifty workers — and governmental reform. And the lynchpin of the project was the working class reformists.

The Socialist and Communist Parties needed no persuasion to drop their previous strategy of mass pressure to 'reform' the dictatorship and enter into direct negotiations with the Government. And it was that shoddy compromise which gained Suarez his reputation as a statesman.

The reformists could be relied upon to keep their distaste for repression on a purely verbal level. When Suarez jailed 1200 far left militants after the fascist killings in January the Communist Party then proceeded to endorse the Prime Minister's handling of the crisis.

They could be relied upon to damp down the struggle in the oppressed nationalities — a tactic which will rebound on them when the bourgeois nationalist parties of Galicia, Catalonia and the Basque country sweep the board.

Most of all, they could be relied upon to confine working



ADOLFO SUAREZ

class action to one-off protest marches, like the November 'Day of Struggle' against the austerity plan. It is worth remembering that the Basque country, where the struggle against the dictatorship has gone on unchecked, is the area where the Communist Party is weakest.

There is no doubt that Suarez will gain a large part of the vote — though we can no longer talk with certainty of a Centre majority — simply because he is seen as the man who made the elections possible.

It will be a sincere vote for democracy; and the responsibility for that massive illusion lies with the working class parties who have endorsed his democratic credentials.

The basis for Suarez' success is a fragile one. It presupposes that the perilous condition of the Spanish economy can be cured overnight and that workers will not persist in defending their falling living standards and fighting for democratic rights. And these are foolhardy assumptions.

Suarez may win the elections, though it is a brave pundit who is prepared to bet on the result. It would be an even braver one who hazarded a guess as to how long he would remain in power.

'Hurricane Felipe is designed to appeal to a Spanish "public" starved of open politics for four decades and supposedly bewitched by the razzamatazz of the campaign trail.'

secretary of the fascist Movement.

Hurricane Felipe is designed to appeal to a Spanish 'public' starved of open politics for four decades and supposedly bewitched by the razzamatazz of the campaign trail.

FINANCES

The PSOE has spent more than £1.5m on the campaign — a figure matched only by Suarez and considerably more than Fraga, who has been on a non-stop speaking tour for months. And it is an open secret where the money comes from.

The West German Socialist Party set up offices in Madrid several months ago, the spearhead of a financial campaign by the Socialist International. Last year the party's union arm, the UGT, received more than £350,000 from

SWP and Spain

Last week's Socialist Worker, paper of the Socialist Workers Party, comments on the FUT: 'The main problem they have is that the LCR does not want the front to continue after the election — so there is no organisation for the considerable numbers who come to their meetings and read their propaganda to join.'

This, comrades, is a little bit cheeky. Firstly, because the LCR has consistently fought for the unification of revolutionaries into one organisation. Representatives from the OIC attended the LCR's last congress and talks on unity have been held. Important differences remain, but the LCR sees the joint platform — which is un-

deniably a revolutionary one — as a step towards resolving these differences.

But secondly it is an astonishing argument in view of the SWP's own position on revolutionary unity. Not only does the SWP not favour unity; not only will it not run joint revolutionary election slates; it won't even discuss the possibility.

In terms of size the LCR stands in the same relation to the Spanish left as the SWP does in Britain — in fact it is considerably larger.

At first sight it may seem irrational that there are four separate far left slates. But it is not.

Unlike Britain, where the far left is overwhelmingly revolutionary, three out of four platforms are explicitly in favour of a 'tactical' alliance with ruling class parties.

The French paper *Le Monde* put it quite touchingly: Suarez 'has relegated to illegality a number of formations to the left of the Communist Party ... which have given as many demonstrations of their wisdom as the friends of Mr Santiago Carrillo'.

Their 'wisdom' consists of their participation in the Democratic Co-ordination — a joint front with capitalist parties — until they were jilted by the decision of the major working class parties to dispense with the strategy of 'mass pressure'.

The programmes of two of the slates — the Democratic Left Front (led by the PTE) and the Workers' Electoral Grouping (led by the ORT) — are a heart-felt cry for a return to the good old days of the Popular Front. And in the case of the PTE their wish has begun to come true: in Catalonia it has teamed up with two of the bourgeois nationalist parties.

Manuel Guedon of the ORT says that his party is supporting the

elections 'for the same reason as the PCE and PSOE'.

The Popular Unity Candidature, set in motion by the Communist Movement (MC), has a slightly different conception. Consciously modelled on the Portuguese GDUPs, set up during the election campaign of Otelo de Carvalho, they operate in a decentralised way as part of a long-term campaign for Popular Unity.

The platform on which it stands shows that the echoes of Allende's Chile are not accidental. Its economic programme stands for the 'struggle against the big national and foreign capitalists'. The 'socialist transformation of society' will come in 'the medium and long term'.

OPPRESSED NATIONS

The oppressed nationalities will also have to wait a while, since they are to have no more than a revival of the old autonomy statutes. And the question of who governs is neatly resolved by saying that 'a democratic Government' will preside over 'an authentic constituent process' which will 'culminate in

free elections'.

The LCR (Spanish sympathising organisation of the Fourth International) was not prepared for unity on that basis. The MC's jargon manages to obscure the central need for free elections now to an assembly which will have the power to redraw the constitution.

PROGRAMME

In other words, what is needed is a programme of struggle for the overthrow of the dictatorship. 'If there is a danger of a backlash', explains LCR leader Jaime Pastor, 'that is all the more reason to intensify the mobilisation of the masses which is the best way of struggling against it.'

Neither can the question of the Government be left to the bland formula of 'the democratic parties'. It is the mass working class parties which must govern, without Suarez or the Christian Democrats or any of their other political mentors.

The LCR was able to get agreement on a joint electoral programme with the Organisation of the Communist Left (OIC) and Communist Action (AC). The programme of the Front for Workers Unity (FUT) spells out the need for immediate elections to a Constituent Assembly under fully democratic conditions —

which means a final break with the dictatorship.

It advances policies against attacks on workers' living standards by pinning wages to inflation and sharing existing work with no loss of pay. It stands for full rights for women and the oppressed nationalities and for a radical agrarian reform.

Unlike the other far left slates the struggle for socialism is not relegated to 'the medium and long term'. In industry and finance all institutions must be nationalised under workers control. The platform explains how the struggle for independent organisation and workers democracy has to be carried on in conjunction with the fight for democratic rights under the capitalist state.

Like the other far left slates the FUT is illegal. But unlike them it has not shown the 'wisdom' which might endear it to *Le Monde*. Its electoral campaign has been hampered by this; for example the name of the platform does not appear on the ballot paper, a serious problem in view of the hundreds of candidates standing.

The FUT election platform is printed in the latest issue of *INPRECOR*. 30p plus 10p p&p from: *Inprecor*, 32819 Upper St., London N1. Subscriptions: £7 per 125 issues, £3.75 for six months.

Open Letter from an Old Bolshevik

'By imprisoning Rudenko they prevent him preparing his defence while they remain free to prepare new forgeries.' PYOTR GRIGORENKO appeals for the defence of human rights activist Mykola Rudenko.

TO THE LEADERSHIPS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES,
TO ALL EUROPEAN COMMUNISTS!

MYKOLA Rudenko, a prominent Ukrainian poet, imaginative writer, philosopher and communist has been arrested. For more than 7 years they persecuted him: expelled him from the Party, from the Writers' Union, prevented him from publishing his works and thereby earning a living, conducted a long criminal investigation, intimidated him, sent thugs to attack his flat, carried out searches and confiscated manuscripts of his literary works. And now they have arrested him.

I do not know what charges they will bring against him. As is usual in such cases, it will be some kind of falsification. With an eye to the future, they planted 39 dollars during a search last December.

It is also not accidental that the method of repression used against him was arrest: Rudenko is a Second World War invalid who was seriously injured in the spine and remained on his feet only thanks to a carefully worked out system of physical training and the care of his wife.

What right have these people, for whom the war was something they saw only in the cinema, for whom loyalty to their country

means only attachment to a bureaucrat's chair, for whom human life is nothing in comparison to their career, who know only one profession — lies, provocations and trickery — to slander and repress people?

Even if there had been a basis for suspecting Rudenko of some crime, then he as a sick war invalid should remain free until his trial. But for liars and falsifiers that would be inadmissible, for Rudenko would then have a chance to refute their fabrications. By isolating him they prevent him preparing his defence while they remain free to prepare new forgeries — that is the sole reason for his arrest.

What, in reality, has Rudenko done? Why have they been so ruthless with him and why do they want him sentenced?

First, because of his theoretical work, *Economic Monologue*. The Soviet leadership has no response to the author's conclusions except imprisonment.

Second, because he is the organiser and leader of the Ukrainian Helsinki monitoring group and a member of the Soviet branch of Amnesty International.

To have a sharp mind, to champion the freedom to receive and distribute information and to defend prisoners of conscience — these are the worst crimes in the USSR. For this they imprison,



'To have a sharp mind, to champion the freedom to receive and distribute information and to defend prisoners of conscience — these are the worst crimes in the USSR.'

they take lives, hypocritically covering up their reprisals by manufacturing 'criminal' acts on the part of the accused.

Communists! Together with progressive forces throughout the world, you have defended democrats in Spain, leading to a wide political amnesty for political prisoners including communists.

For a long time a struggle was waged for the liberation of Paraguayan Communist Party leaders, and the fascist Stroessner regime was forced to release them.

Many people and organisations have defended democratic freedoms in Chile. As a result, a large number of Chileans, including the Communist Party leader Luis Corvalan, have been released by the Pinochet regime.

How is it possible, against such a background, that Communists deserve to suffer? How is it possible that there is a country, which calls itself socialist, governed by a Party which calls itself Communist, which throughout its entire history has never carried out a single political amnesty? How is

it possible that this Government conducts a constant struggle against thinking people, against citizens who openly support democratic rights?

At this moment, the Soviet regime has started a new anti-democratic attack. The arrests of Mykola Rudenko and of Alexander Ginsburg, who organised the aid for Soviet political prisoners, are evidence of this.

It is the duty of European Communists to stop this attack. If they do not take up this task, we will have nothing to reply to the anti-Communists who claim that the Communist Parties are only an apparatus for establishing and defending totalitarian regimes of a fascist type.

I do not want to believe this. I, a Communist throughout my entire life, believe that genuine communism is inseparable from democracy. For this reason I call upon you to demand that the Soviet Government stop its political terror, carried out in order to strengthen their own power, and harmful to the cause of communism.

Dear Comrades! Demand from the Soviet leadership:

1. That it stop the repression against the movement for human rights.
2. That it immediately release Alexander Ginsburg and Mykola Rudenko.
3. That it carry out a general amnesty for political prisoners in the USSR.

These are minimal democratic demands, which even the Francoist regime in Spain has been able to meet in less than a year. If the Brezhnev leadership refuses to fulfil even this minimum, that will be irrefutable proof that in relation to democracy it is no better than the Pinochet regime.

8 February 1977

Pyotr Grigorenko

IN BRIEF

ITALY: A moderate pro-abortion bill met with a surprising defeat in the senate last week. It was only the opposition of seven left senators and the absence of many others which led to that result. The left-wing parties, principally the Communist Party, are engaged in talks to arrive at a governmental agreement with the ruling Christian Democrats. The Christian Democrats are opposed to abortion.

GHANA: Students from three universities and other colleges have taken to the streets in demonstrations over living standards. They are calling for the displacement of the Acheampong military regime and the rejection of the 'Union Government' proposal which is aimed at maintaining the rule of the neo-colonial ruling class and diverting attention away from Acheampong's failed economic policies. The demonstrations were nation-wide and the students were cheered and joined by the general public.

Many students have been beaten up and many seriously injured, while others are languishing in jail. Reports indicate that medical treatment has been obstructed by the military and police. The three universities and some secondary schools have been closed down.



SAHARA: The Polisario Front, the Saharan liberation organisation, has announced the capture of the Bou-Craa phosphate mines. The Spanish technicians in the mines have been forced to flee.

POLAND: Jan Josef Lipski, a member of the Workers Defence Committee, has been released from jail. The chairperson of the official Writers Union had made representation to the prosecutor-general on Lipski's behalf.

SPAIN: Mariano Sanchez Covisa, the leader of the Guerrillas of Christ the King, has been released by the Suarez Government. He had been arrested after the discovery of a massive arsenal in one of his Madrid apartments.

LEBANON: Israel has been responsible for heavy shelling of Palestinian camps in the southern Lebanon, causing widespread damage and casualties. This is part of a general military build-up on the Israeli side of the border. Palestinian sources reckon that this is in preparation for a major offensive.

ZAIRE: A favour returned ... President Mobutu Sese Seko has invited Belgian businessmen to reclaim their stake in industries nationalised during the 'Zairianisation' phase of his economic policy.

ZIMBABWE: Liberation fighters last week blew up the main railway line between Salisbury and Bulawayo. Rhodesian Government representatives tried to make light of the action, on the grounds that no casualties were inflicted. In fact its importance lies in the fact that guerrillas had never previously penetrated that far into the country's central mining district.

QUEBEC: It's nice to know who your friends are. A group of 300 French-speaking businessmen have attacked the Quebec Government's (moderate) French language bill on the grounds that it would give 'free rein to intolerance'. Oh yes ... and they think it might have a bad effect on the country's economy!

French Fascists on the March

BOMB AT ROUGE, WORKER MURDERED

A bomb was sent to the offices of Rouge, the paper of the French section of the Fourth International, after a striking worker had been shot dead by right-wing thugs.

The 20-kilo bomb, which was clearly designed to kill, did not detonate properly and only caused minimal damage to a machine after the comrade opening the package saw smoke coming out and threw it away. The attack was a grisly recognition of the part played by our comrades in solidarity with the strike at the VMC engineering factory in Reims.

Members of the CFT, a scab 'union', and SAC, the paramilitary Gaullist organisation, drove up to the picket line at VMC and fired a number of shots, wounding three workers. One of them, Pierre Maitre, got a bullet in the skull and later died in hospital.

CFT leader Auguste Blanc denied that the killing was officially sanctioned by his organisation, blaming it on 'irresponsible madmen'. But the disclaimer cuts little ice when you consider the CFT's record.

It was formed in 1959 out of the fusion of three scab outfits. From the outset it involved a number of ex-Nazis and collaborators as well as individuals linked to the far right in the Algerian war. Despite Blanc's protestation, this latest killing is typical of their strong arm methods.

A number of incidents in recent years are directly attributable to the CFT:

- * 21 May 1971: shots fired at far left militants in a Citroen plant.
- * September 1971: a CFT com-



VMC workers head the march in Reims demanding the dissolution of the scab CFT. [Inset] Pierre Maitre, the murdered worker.

mande of thirty men attacked Citroen union militants distributing leaflets.

* 11 December 1971: Communist Party members attacked in the Citroen Cuen plant.

* 13 July 1972: attack on dance organised by Yugoslav immigrant workers.

* 8 March 1973: attempt to break strike in Citroen Reims.

* 1 April 1976: two union militants severely beaten up at Citroen Levallois.

* 2 April 1976: attack on strikers and union delegates at the Levallois factory.

So there can be little doubt that the attack was directly planned by the CFT. And, going on past history, it is quite likely that management was also implicated.

All the major working class organisations have called for the dissolution of the CFT, but the CGT and CFDT unions, affiliated to the Communist and Socialist Parties respectively, have done little more than call a five-minute national strike.

According to them it is the state which must 'implement its own laws' to stop the thugs. The main concern was that 'the elections (in a year's time!) are allowed to take place in peace'.

Only the revolutionary left, principally the LCR (French Section of the Fourth International) and Lutte Ouvrière, understood that groups like the CFT and SAC can only be dealt with by workers taking the

defence of strikes and occupations into their own hands; by democratic defence squads rather than reliance on the police.

And it was only the far left which called a national demonstration in solidarity with the VMC strike and against the CFT.

But in Reims itself more than 20,000 workers, including representatives from all the major factories, marched through the town.

The only answer from the CGT, which is the single union at VMC, was to tell the strikers to go back to work — an instruction which was overwhelmingly rejected by the workers.

RICHARD CARVER



Brazilian students demonstrate against military dictatorship.

Free Brazilian prisoners

Belo-Horizonte — beautiful horizon. But not so beautiful for the thousands of students who demonstrated in Belo-Horizonte, Brazil on 4 June, as the armed riot police loomed on the skyline.

It was the largest demonstration since the enormous mobilisations on May Day which marked the first open appearance of the Brazilian opposition since 1968. The Geisel dictatorship has no intention of allowing this show of strength to go ahead. Even a Brazilian paper described how the riot troops intervened in demonstrations on 19 May 'with a violence that had not been seen since 1968'. The Education Minister announced that he would 'not permit agitators to upset the tranquil, orderly life of the educational institutions of this nation'. And the rector of the Sao Paulo law school closed it down on 'information that foreign elements could disturb the order'.

On 28 April police swooped and arrested eight worker and student militants for illegal leafletting — no minor offence in a country like Brazil. The eight are: Celso Brambilla, Marcia Bassete Paes, Jose Maria de Almeida, Adimir Marini, Fernando Antonio de Oliveira Lopes, Anaita Maria Fabri, Fortuna Dwek and Claudio Julio Gravina.

In a country where 'disappearance' of political prisoners is frequent, the lives of these comrades are in danger. They must be freed.

From a correspondent
* Send telegrams and messages of protest to: Brazilian Embassy, 32 Green Street, London W1.

Dutch siege 'rescue'

ENTEbbe PART 2



The picture that tells it all. Small wonder that the South Moluccan community resorts to kidnapping.

No doubt some bright spark is already half way through a best-selling book on the subject. Charles Bronson has probably been signed up for the film version, which you can expect at your local cinema within the next month. The Dutch train seige rescue ranks with Entebbe as another victory for Western civilisation.

As at Entebbe the troops went in with their usual respect for human life and all the subtlety of a sledge-hammer. Of course the hostages were perfectly safe, we are told. They were protected by a 'wall of flame'.

The press has shed no tears for the six South Moluccans killed, though they are very concerned about the two hostages. Supposedly they were killed by the Moluccans, even though one hostage made it clear that she never thought they would kill her and the four teachers in the nearby school turned down a chance to escape.

Believe whichever story you choose, but bear in mind that Starfighters, mortars, machine-guns and 'walls of fire' are not very discriminating weapons.

The 'rescues' have confirmed two things about the defenders of law and order which have long been apparent. Firstly that the much-vaunted concern for the welfare of the hostages is distinctly subordinate to carrying out a smooth military operation — poison is their latest weapon — and maintaining good public relations.

Secondly that the authorities and press will use every such incident to strengthen their power to deal with 'subversives'. Even the liberal Guardian last Monday managed a not too subtle combination of the South Molucca story and a 'special' report on how terrorists are able to make atom bombs.

Leaving aside the fact that Guardian 'specials' are generally

as special as the common cold, the political intention is obvious: the strong-arm tactics are justified because next time they might blow up half of Holland.

It really is quite astounding when you think that most of the world's real terrorists have their fingers on the button of something far worse than an A-bomb. When The Guardian names Harry S. Truman, the terrorist of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for what he was, we may be inclined to take their warnings more seriously.

But even more ominous is the way the Common Market Governments have used the opportunity to strengthen their co-operation against 'terrorism'. The most frightening example is the use of the Special Air Service in the Netherlands.

A conference of EEC Interior Ministers a fortnight ago, chaired by 'anti-terrorist' expert Merlyn Rees, decided on a number of joint initiatives on security, including the compiling of international lists of 'subversive groups'.

That is not just designed for the South Moluccans and the IRA: in Britain the Special Branch has political files on tens of thousands of people labelled as 'subversives'; when the French Ligue Communiste was banned in 1973 it was as a 'subversive' organisation; the Spanish far left remains in illegality as 'subversives'; in West Germany, the bulwark of the 'free world', 'subversives' are banned from one fifth of all jobs available.

No wonder that Merlyn Rees told the press he thought the inclusion of the word was rather tactless.

What's Left

Rates: 3p per word. Display: £1.50 per column inch. Deadline: 3pm Sunday before publication.

HULL SOCIALIST TEACHERS Conference: Saturday 16 July, noon. Venue: Students Union, Hull University. Speakers: Terry Ellis and Brian Haddock (Tyndale), Dave Picton (STA). Conference fee: £1. Contact: G. Daniel, 41 Savery St, Hull. Tel: 0482-709184.

FIGHT BACK: March for George Ince. Sunday 3 July, Assemble Tower Hill, 2pm. For more information: Free George Ince Campaign, 40 Thornfield House, Rosefield Gardens, London E14. Tel: 01-867 6542.

NATIONAL ABORTION Campaign Benefit Concert, Sunday 26 June at Dingwalls, Camden Lock, London NW1. Joanne Kelly, Carol Grimes and Quintessence II. Doors open 7.30. Licensed till 1.50am.

GAY PRIDE WEEK: 25 June until 2 July. Begins with march through London 25 June. Donations for the week's events plus future activity to: Gay Pride Committee, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1.

THE LEVELLER No. 6 out now. British torturer speaks; Women in history; Nuclear safety; Left regroupment; Dave Edgar interview; Labour in decay — Pt. 2; Letters; agitprop and more. 35p or £5 sub from: 155a Drummond St, London NW1. Tel: 01-367 0176.

WEDGE: New revolutionary journal of cultural practice and theory. First issue includes: grant aid and the crisis in political theatre groups; debate on the mass media; critique of the CP's cultural practice; work of Chile Cultural Committee and more. Cost: 75p. Subscriptions: £3.50 for 4 issues, from 56a Shitand Road London W9. Editorial address: 30 Homsey Park Road, London N8. Tel: 01-888 1161.

BRISTOL meeting on the Arab revolution. Speakers from the General Union of Palestine Students, Fourth International, and IMG. Sunday, 19 June, 7.30pm, at Bristol University.

ASIAN Socialist League. Public Meeting against Racism. Sunday 19 June, 4pm. Spandish, Warwick Road. Speakers include Tariq Ali and local trade union militants.

WEST LONDON Anti-Apartheid Group. Cider and Cheese Party. Namibia/Zimbabwe Medical Aid. Saturday 18 June. WMA Hall, Westbourne Park Rd, W11. 8.00pm.

MARGIST BULLETIN No 5 on sale now price 40p. New Light on the Political Revolution in Eastern Europe. Carter and Bourgeois Democracy. The Lib-Lab pact. From left-wing bookshops or Sam Biscoy, c/o 9 Clifton Rd., London N22.

POLISH WORKERS Defence Campaign Bulletin No 2. Price 2p plus post, from 265a Seven Sisters Rd, London N4.

HOUNSLOW HOSPITAL Grand Dance in aid of the work-in. Organised by Heathrow T&GWU. Disco, Band, Late Licences, Buffet. 8-12pm, Friday 24 June, Central Control Tower, Heathrow. Tickets available at £1.50 from Cath Cooney/Cynth Scott at Hounslow Hospital, Staines Road, Hounslow. Tel: 01-570 4448.

CARI Public Meeting. Organised by the Campaign Against Repression in Iran. Saturday 25 June, 12.30. Australian Bar (Davenport), Hurst St., Birmingham. Speakers Roger Klein and from CARI.

EAST ANGLIAN Workers Delegates Conference. Sat and Sun 18/19 June, 10am till 4pm each day at the St Margaret's Institute, Alexandra Rd, Lowestoft, Suffolk. Doors open 9.45am. For — End the Cuts, Free Collective Bargaining, Withdrawal from Common Market, Fight Low Wages, End Unemployment, Implement Socialist Policies Now. A National Price Freeze, Trade Union and Labour Movement speakers. Delegate Credential, £1 each from B. Cooper, Org. Sec., 327 London Rd, South, Lowestoft, Suffolk. Tel: Lowestoft 62473.

TWO NEW PAMPHLETS from Big Flame: *The Revolution Unfinished — A Critique of Trotskyism*, 50p; and *Crisis in Education*, 30p. Add 10p postage. From: Big Flame publications, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. Trade orders from Publications Distribution Cooperative.

NEWCASTLE SOCIALIST Centre meeting on 'What is Revolutionary Socialism?' Tuesday 21 June at 235 Jesmond Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne 2. This is part of a follow-up series after the 'Revolutionary Unity' meeting. **TYNDALE DEFENCE Committee** meets every Thursday, 7.30pm. Prince Albert pub, Wharfedale Rd, London N1. **SOCIALIST TEACHER Journal** No 2 just out. Contains articles on Tyndale, Class size, Democracy in schools debate, Black Papers. Price 30p. Bulk orders — sale or return — from: Tony Graham, 13 Bloomfield Rd, London N8. Also Socialist Teacher Broad-sheet: 5p — Special for the Open Conference. Sale or return. **SOCIALIST TEACHERS Alliance** Meeting in Brighton, 'Education and the Working Class' at Sussex University, Thursday 23 June, 5.30pm.

ILEA CUTS: Meeting of militants from London NUPE, UCATT, and NUT to discuss cuts by the Inner London Education Authority. Joint School-workers Committee now set up. 22 June, 7.30pm, Weavers Fields School, off Bethnal Green Road. **CACTL Benefit:** 17 June. Organised by TGWU. At Caxton House, St Johns Way, London N19 (Archway tube). Bar extension 8-12pm. Cost 85p (85p claimants). Lee Koamin band, Keen and the Mustard Gang disco. This is the first of a series of benefits and concerts planned for June and July.

Senegal: fighting for the right to strike

For three months students at the University of Dakar, the capital of Senegal, have been on strike. What began as a dispute over a 15 year 'state contract' imposed on science students has grown into a struggle involving the rest of the university and all the high schools in the city.

The issue at stake is the right to strike, not just for students but for the workers' movement as a whole.

The Government of President Senghor has a reputation for liberalism and democracy — a view which was not shared by students when he sent armed troops in battle-dress to occupy the campus.

116 students from the social studies faculty have been locked out. They were soon joined by 642 from the science faculty, of whom eight have been imprison-

ed and one expelled. At first the students' leaders refused the support offered them by hundreds of school students.

Revolutionaries in the university argued for the need to build the widest possible support for the struggle, since it involved the right to strike for more than just university students. It was agreed to allow the school students to hold assemblies in the university. Support has grown rapidly in the schools of Dakar.

From a correspondent.

Bangladesh Premier jeered

SCORES of Bengali socialists demonstrated against the Bangladesh military dictator, Ziaur Rehman, when he arrived to attend the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference. They were workers belonging to the British branch of the JSD (Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal — Socialist National Party), which has been brutally suppressed.

One of its leaders, a veteran of the liberation struggle, Col.

Taber, was executed several months ago. Most of the JSD leadership is in prison and there are an additional 64,000 political prisoners. Rehman's regime is supported by the orthodox Maoist currents and the JSD is the major socialist force opposing the regime.

(Further details from JSD, c/o Socialist Challenge, 328 Upper Street, London N1)



Leaflet for the left slate in recent Pakistani elections. Usman Baloch, now imprisoned, is pictured right.

Repression in Pakistan

As Prime Minister Bhutto moves towards a negotiated settlement with the opposition, the mass discontent appears to be subsiding. However a number of militant trade-unionists, who oppose both Bhutto and the right-wing opposition parties, are unlikely to be released.

Usman Baloch, a leader of the United Workers Federation, who has been imprisoned several times under Emergency regulations over the last eight years is in jail again.

Baloch campaigned as a candidate in the 1977 provincial assembly elections on a platform of democratic and transitional demands, which included the withdrawal of troops from Baluchistan, restoration of all democratic liberties, sliding scale of wages and the right of recall of all elected representatives. The impact of the campaign

was felt in Baloch's stronghold: the industrial suburbs of Karachi. On May Day, Baloch and his comrades organised a working class demo in defiance of the military authorities. Immediately after the rally Baloch and several other leaders of the United Workers Federation were arrested and sentenced by a Martial Law Court to six months hard labour.

It is obvious that Bhutto's deal with the opposition will not help them.

MOHD AKHTAR

IT WAS IMPERIAL domination that provided the Crown with its brightest jewel in both the figurative and literal senses of the word. India provided the material basis for enveloping the working class in bourgeois mythology. It also provided the Koh-i-noor, the largest uncut jewel in the world, which to this day is mounted in the ceremonial crown.

Such remarkable external success had deep internal repercussions. It served to fix the old, transitional polity of England into an unbreakable shell. What could possibly be wrong with a society which had won these triumphs? The newer bourgeoisie of an industrial century was won over, first to tolerance then to love of the bastard-state. All the marks of crypto-feudalism were rhapsodized into supreme virtues. That generally backward-looking, shambolic character inflicted upon it by historical isolation turned into a manifestation of racial wisdom: the British gift for peaceable non-radical change.

Basking in its 'golden age' of colonial depredation, the new Anglo-Scottish bourgeoisie felt no particular need to reform and modernize its state system. The ramshackle machinery was simply patched up and expanded where necessary. Dynasty and all. Political sloth was justified as 'laissez-faire'; ideological somnolence was under-written by the new, romantic myth of origins — a sickly travesty from which the Revolution drained away altogether, and where Charles I became a tragic hero. At the core of this system, all the vital features of the 18th century compromise remained intact (as they do today): hierarchy, deference, a civil-based élitism, gentlemanly secrecy in government, 'amateur' administration, and so on.

BICYCLING KINGS

This is the context that explains the new role of the monarchy in modern Great Britain — or, it is more strictly accurate to say, in a Britain which has refused to become 'modern' for so long that it is now incapable of the jump without a revolution. From mid-Victorian times onward, as the Westminster polity slumped into ever more convinced inertia and self-satisfaction, dynastic matters grew proportionately more significant. Under the Empire, socio-political conservatism was registering a success without precedent. Kingship became the mighty expression of this tendency — a tendency which, of course, could not help being really popular in nature, and basically affecting the development of Britain's working class movements.

The British monarchs do not stand alone in the social sky (as fairy-tale accounts pretend). They are surrounded by a necrophiliac state-order groaning with beautified relics, rusty talismans and mystic precedents. Reconstruction of this tomb was a first priority of the post-1945 Labour Government. The Crown rests, as it has done since the Revolution, upon a narrow but determined civil élite devoted to the sapient management of that mass passivity linked to empire. It is the whole pre-modern hegemony which supplies the climate of British Royalty. Without the former, the latter would at once lose the peculiar ideal power and popularity it still enjoys.

This is why it is quite misleading to compare the Windsors to other surviving forms of monarchy. It is true that some modern states (like Denmark or Sweden) have retained a ceremonial dynasty in preference to an elected president. But this is the obverse of what happened in the United Kingdom. Here an archaic state-order has employed — one might say over-employed — the symbolism of monarchy to avoid modernisation. The Windsors are not really bicycling kings and queens, egalitarian monarchs. They are the tools of an inaccurate social conservatism which has successfully emasculated both egalitarianism and political democracy.

PYRAMID OF LACKEYS

As British imperialism shrank and the regime wobbled on the long downward course, the Crown swelled in importance. Each new retreat was accompanied by louder Royal salvos, more obsequious slaverings from the high bourgeois Establishment and more hysterical flag-waving down below. In general, a Crowned Head is supposed to function as a palpable image of continuity and reassurance; here, it acts as a powerful guarantee of stalling over-continuity and Empire-style complacency.

It would be a much happier situation if Queen Elizabeth were functioning as an opiate to forestall the coming socialist revolution. The truth is many degrees more dismal. She and her pyramid of lackeys constitute a dead-weight repressing — so to

‘The British monarchs do not stand alone in the social sky [as fairy-tale accounts pretend]. They are surrounded by a necrophiliac state-order groaning with beautified relics, rusty talismans and mystic precedents. Reconstruction of this tomb was a first priority of the post-1945 Labour government

TOM NAIRN concludes his article on

The House of Windsor



speak — the revolution before last in Britain. Their ideological force is built upon a now ancient loss of radical nerve by the bourgeoisie itself — upon the inner capitulation of last century, most strikingly expressed for us by the virtual disappearance of middle-class republicanism in Victoria's reign. The 'magic' of our monarchs is the sweet odour of decay arising from this mountainous dunghill of unfinished bourgeois business.

The particular, exaggerated popularity Royalty enjoys is the voice of a still-active social conservatism. It is one manifestation of a nation which turned its back on the pains

of progress generations ago, then grew unable to do anything else. Now, each new half-hearted and knock-kneed failure to 'put Britain on its feet again' is followed by a relapse into Tolkien-like reveries of compensation. The Dynasty is essential for this. Thus, the Labour Party launched its last white-hot painless revolution in 1964-67; a decade afterwards it is presiding over the Silver Jubilee and quite openly praying for North Sea oil to make the Golden event of 2002 possible. Oil will keep the invalid carriage going as the empire once did. At the end Sir David Owen's Government will stage a 21st Century Spectacular making the

present circus look like a village fête.

It is odious, but not surprising, that so much of the working class in four countries remains enthralled by this geriatric symbolism. The social conservatism in question is not a confidence-trick practised on them by the governors (although of course there are elements of this in the stage-management of the Royals). It is a deeply-embedded cast of mind, and one not yet shattered by mass experience. Imperialism has left behind a detritus far bigger than superficial judgements on the left admit, and several generations have squeezed this substance into compacted, resistant form. It is transmitted in a thousand ways through the capillary vessels of popular culture, as well as whipped up by Ministers and press barons.

For this reason counter-hysteria against the Queen has small effect. Denunciations of what she costs, or how many acres she owns, are a futile side-track. This is not in any way a counsel of despair. It goes without saying that an uncompromising republicanism will remain central to all the non-Labourist forms of socialism in Britain. However, there is little value in abusing the Monarch herself, in isolation from the decrepit Cathedral-State where she is enthroned. When this edifice is at last shaken down it will bury her dynasty in its ruins.

NEW STATESMAN GIBBERISH

Prospects for such a consummation look better than for many years. At last, the bourgeoisie itself has come to despair of the anachronistic state which once served it so well. There is a steadily mounting tide of criticism of the formerly sacrosanct Constitution and party-political system (even from arch-Tory figures like Lord Hailsham). New assaults are being prepared on the central bastion of Whitehall's Old Corruption, the 'Administrative Class' of the bureaucracy. Not even the atmosphere of general reaction we are now enduring has prevented this disintegration. The capitalist class no longer really believes that it is simply 'economic policy' which is wrong, or that this or the next caucus in Downing Street will finally 'get it right'. It has begun to grasp that economic fiasco is inseparable from the nature of this pre-modern hegemonic order. Slowly, still fitfully — because of the clash with its accumulated instincts of rule — an acuter section of the élite is manoeuvring towards a sharper break with tradition. It still bawls 'God Save the Queen' one moment, quivering at the thought of the next Honours List; but the very next it reads in its house-magazine, *The Economist*, that... 'Britain's constitutional system, consecrated by its monarch, is both its chief blessing and its greatest impediment to change... By preserving, as well as she does, the idea of continuity in the life of her country, the Queen has unwittingly helped to protect those who have used what constitutionally exists to obstruct change...' (June 4 1977, 'A Meaning to Jubilee').

Of course, *The Economist* does not follow its own logic and advise removal of the impediment to change. Like the *New Statesman* (in whose 'Anti-Jubilee' issue the main article is a resounding defence of the monarchy) it holds fast to the founding hypocrisy of our state. After the usual staggering table of hopeless infirmities and structural failures which 'obstruct change' in Her Majesty's realm, the editorialist blandly concludes that future Prime Ministers must, simply must, do better. The Monarch herself should employ the Queenly offices in that direction. Premiers 'should be encouraged, by her in private and by others in public, to use the cloak of dignity that royalty can put upon change to stop Britain's constitutional democracy being so inefficiently underdemocratic...' After all, since she is an obstacle to any effective change whatever, it does follow that she provides 'one large assurance... against change getting out of hand'.

LOSS OF MARBLES

Even by the standards of Jubilee Week, this is awe-inspiring drivel. Unable to raise much public protest against the orgy, socialists can take some comfort from the fact that the ruling class is losing its marbles. As one stone after another falls on its head off the crumbling old pagoda, the ancient Windsor *Weltanschauung* gives way too. The *Observer* and the BBC will go on stuffing royalist polyfills into the cracks as long as they can. But the foundations themselves are collapsing under the added stresses of world recession and the nationalist withdrawals in Scotland and Wales. Rather than squirming over the Jubilee, socialists ought to plan — I hope with at least a measure of optimism — for the day when the rulers admit that the old building is uninhabitable, and come out of it fighting.

LETTERS

Letters to Socialist Challenge [maximum 400 words] should be sent to 'Comment', Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1. Letters marked * at the beginning have been abbreviated for reasons of space.

SWP: get the facts right

* AS AN INDEPENDENT socialist, critical of the SWP and, to a lesser degree, of the IMG, the emergence in the recent period of a drive for revolutionary unity has come as something to be welcomed. Given your careful formulation of your disagreements with the SWP, I was startled to find — in the first issue of Socialist Challenge — a letter by John Strauther which cut against the necessary task that you have set out to achieve.

When the IS emerged as an open current in 1950 it was after a period of harsh treatment within the Fourth International group in Britain and with a perspective not of breaking with the FI but of affiliation. It did not support the US intervention in Korea, but on the contrary was neutral between what it viewed as two imperialist powers.

The comparison between that and the Vietnam war, where it favoured the NLF, is not as simple as John Strauther has suggested. The IS, rightly or wrongly, considered that the NLF was an authentic national liberation force, and was not equivalent to Stalin's Korean satellite.

On Ulster too, Strauther is less than helpful. The IS capitulated to pressures within the left, in this case to the widespread belief among Irish Catholic militants that the army would protect them from the Orange terror.

As for the fight against inflation-proofed wages, this is the reason Will Reese notes in the article immediately below the Liverpool letter — 'the syndicalist position which sees this demand as a threat to the militancy of the working class'.

What, on all these counts, is

the underpinning of Strauther's venom against the SWP? That he is incapable of recognising that a socialist group can have the same position as British imperialism for different reasons.

It is incumbent upon revolutionaries to support the sliding scale; to be clear on struggles in Ireland, Vietnam and Korea; to oppose the Cliff group's bureaucratic attacks on opposition tendencies within the IS.

It is additionally correct to regard the Fourth International as the mainstream of the revolutionary movement and the IS/SWP, because of its syndicalism and sloppiness on matters of principle, not coming within the area of immediate regroupment.

On all these points one can agree with comrade Strauther. But to portray the IS as a conduit of Western imperialism and an enemy of Marxism is to do the struggle for revolutionary unity a disservice.

S. MAX [Birmingham]

WHILE I do not want to get embroiled in an exchange on the merits of the Socialist Workers Party I cannot let John Strauther's opening remarks in his letter go unchallenged (Socialist Challenge, 9 June). Firstly, the Socialist Review group did not depart from Trotskyism in 1950, because: most of the people involved were expelled bureaucratically from the Healy organisation in 1950, so their 'departure' was involuntary; and the organisation re-affirmed its political and organisational commitment to Trotskyism by



asking to be recognised as a sympathetic group of the Fourth International.

Moreover, it passed a resolution at its second national committee meeting specifically claiming that its theory of state capitalism was seen as a logical extension of Trotskyism. One could argue with the logic of such a position, but one could not infer in any way that such people were departing from Trotskyism.

Secondly, I feel it is scandalous that John Strauther should accuse the SR group of supporting imperialist intervention in Korea. I can state without any fear of contradiction that he will be unable to provide one scrap of evidence for such a smear.

Most of the founding members of the SR group were Trotskyist militants of many years standing and would not have been associated in any manner with support for imperialism.

One should realise when looking at the evolution of IS and the SWP that by the mid-fifties nearly all of the founding members of the organisation had left it. One should not project backwards the political gyrations of what was essentially a completely new organisation, since apart from Cliff and literally one or two people, the original group faded away by 1955.

If there is to be political debate, at least let it be correctly informed.

KEN TARBUCK [Hove]

Amin: an excuse for racism

CHRIS O'BRIEN is correct in as far as he goes when discussing the Amin affair (Socialist Challenge 9 June). He is, however, being a little simplistic when he says that the Kremlin's attitude to Amin, coupled with the growth of an

opposition which has destabilised the Amin regime, is the sole reason that British imperialism has launched its offensive against Amin.

In fact, the campaign conducted in the most blatant fashion in the pages of the national press serves a number of purposes. The desire of imperialism to ditch the Frankenstein monster they created is an important consideration. But there are others.

Firstly, the anti-Amin campaign fits neatly into the campaign of racism which the press has been stirring up. Secondly, this campaign also provides a useful ideological weapon in the attempt to contain the liberation struggle in southern Africa. The general message in this respect is clear: 'Look at what happens when these blacks run their own countries'.

Amin helps to link the criticisms of his regime to attacks on the liberation fighters by his continual 'militant' demagoguery against apartheid. Indeed, even while writing this the BBC Radio 4 programme PM Reports has just carefully linked a report on Uganda to a report on the liberation struggle!

There is a further point which Chris O'Brien missed. He was correct to point out that the bourgeois press concerns itself only with suitable 'personalities' and virtually ignores the mass terror of Amin. This is sickening enough. What is worse is their hypocritical double standards.

These Tory and liberal rags remained silent about the butchering of Soweto students. They remain silent about the barbarous regime of the Shah of Iran and do not demand he be banned from Britain. Indeed any old dictator is quite welcome, as long as he or she supports the 'Free World'.

Dictators from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Brazil, Thailand, Spain etc are all quite acceptable. Of course, the masses aren't told about the barbarities of these regimes, whereas they are told about Uganda. The press thus appears to be wonderfully liberal and democratic in attacking Amin. What a joke!

JAMES O'BRIEN [Manchester]

GREETINGS

Marxist Worker Group

THE MARXIST Worker Group welcomes the regroupment initiative begun by the IMG and the attempt to bring about an open and honestly-conducted debate about the tasks facing revolutionaries in the present period. The publishing of Socialist Challenge and the offer to open its pages to other groups on the far left is a positive and useful step on the road to unifying the far-flung forces of revolutionary socialism.

It is good to see that the traditional sectarian methods that have dogged the left for so long are hopefully beginning to disappear — if only partially. We must not assume, however, that because this is happening the revolution is just around the corner, or that there will be a mass breakthrough for the forces of Trotskyism.

There is no magic formula for easy success. Marxism is itself in a state of acute crisis. The revolutionary movement is lacking in experience, possesses little continuity in the field of theoretical development, and has been incapable so far of educating a layer of skilled communist cadres, without which any talk of 'a revolutionary party' is simply absurd.

These problems are still very much with us and will not solve themselves. Thorough education of members, both in the field of theory and of practice, is essential for any revolutionary organisation to undertake. So, too, is the practice of collective discipline. It is no good deciding on a particular course of action only to find that in practice it is not carried out. And only through education is the required level of discipline likely to be achieved.

The road to a mass revolutionary party will be long, hard and tedious. The IMG's initiative could be a beginning but

there will be many more steps and many more set-backs to follow it.

We must guard against the sense of over-optimism which is likely to come with any new beginning, and make sure it does not blind us to reality — especially the reality which is closest to us — the state of our own organisation; its functioning, its efficiency, the extent of its influence, and most of all its limitations and weaknesses.

There is no point in kidding ourselves here: we must look at things in a cold and critical light. Optimism and good intentions are not enough to defeat the bourgeoisie. For this we need a party based around women and men who are educated and disciplined revolutionaries and who have a clear idea of the tasks before them. We are still a long way from even laying the foundations of such a party.

Socialist Challenge could be a useful tool in this all-important task. Equally its sights could be set too high, producing a sense of overconfidence and ending up by demoralising its own supporters by promising a rapid breakthrough which, in view of a whole number of factors, is unlikely to take place.

The Marxist Worker Group will be attempting to ensure that the initiative begun by the IMG follows the former path rather than the latter. In this sense we hope that Socialist Challenge will become a tool to assist in the development of a revolutionary organisation which takes its tasks seriously, which is skilled and efficient, which is self-critical and democratic and which can begin to command some respect among the working class people of this country.

Neil Duffield,
For Marxist Worker Group.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE! Socialists do just that. Join together and challenge the capitalist society which exploits and enslaves, oppresses and destroys in order to maintain an out-moded system which only sees profit as a motive for its continuation, regardless of the suffering it causes to those who create this wealth.

Sectarian attitudes can only serve to prop up this decaying system and delay change, whether it is a group or an individual acting in this way. Change can only come through combined struggle — it has

always been so. I was born in 1919 and have seen great change, yet I am at 58 still chained down by capitalism. But I know these chains can be snapped if all those searching for a classless society tug at all our chains together.

Doubters need only read Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto to see how to move to and then through socialism into a real communist society free from greed, giving according to ability and taking only our needs.

ALF FLEMING [Manchester]

Gay Left Collective

DEAR SOCIALIST CHALLENGE, We enclose a cheque for £5 for your fund drive, as an indication of our support for your new venture in socialist journalism.

We are in broad agreement with your argument that the capitalist crisis demands a unified socialist response, and, like you, we look forward to a regroupment of the revolutionary left and to the formation of a socialist party firmly rooted in the working class.

We see as an important element in this the struggle against sexism, and the opening up of socialist theory and practice to include feminism and gay liberation. We therefore welcome your promise to broaden the spectrum of opinion reflected in the paper and look forward to participating in your ongoing debates.

In solidarity, Gay Left Collective.

Coventry WACC

DEAR COMRADES, At our last meeting we unanimously agreed to support Socialist Challenge in its attempt to open up discussion among all sectors of class struggle. We

hope to write in the paper at a later date. Good luck!
M. Wallford
WOMEN'S ABORTION AND CONTRACEPTION CAMPAIGN, COVENTRY

Violence in the revolution

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL Marxist Group's pamphlet 'Revolutionary Socialism — why and how' says that the socialist revolution in Britain could immediately increase living standards enormously (my emphasis), and poverty would not be a big problem even if the revolution did not spread quickly to other advanced countries (p. 15-16).

Britain is an economically developed country with a well-organised and literate working class; and even the revolutions in Russia, China and Cuba led to great advances in working and living conditions, women's rights, education, health, public transport, and so on.

But given that the pamphlet does not mention the violence of the revolutionary struggle; the dislocation of production and services by strikes and sabotage; the death of revolutionaries in clashes with the capitalist state and counter-revolutionary gangs; the export of capital and various forms of economic sabotage by world capitalism; the unreliability of the Russian and other bureaucracies for aid and support — the impression is given of a brief revolutionary process immediately followed by some kind of working class utopia.

Compare this with the Socialist Workers Party's 'Why You Should be a Socialist' by Paul Foot: 'There will be plenty of mistakes made by a workers

democracy' (p. 46), but nothing about all the other problems that it would face.

And '...on great decisive class battles the only guarantee against violence is for the workers to ensure that they have more strength than the employing class and be prepared to use it' (p. 60) as if it were only the lack of 'strength' that led to the defeat of the General Strike of 1926 or to the rise of fascism in Spain or Germany, and as if a peaceful road to socialism is possible if only the workers are strong enough!

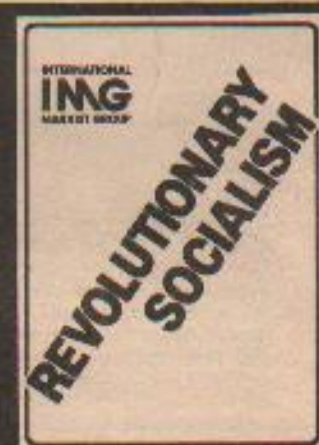
Revolutionary socialists, unlike the Communist Party, see

that revolutions involve violence, pain and hardship, and are not afraid to say so. Let us hope that future editions of the IMG and SWP pamphlets are very explicit about the likelihood of civil war, the need for workers' armed defence squads, the role of the revolutionary leadership, and some of the problems that will have to be faced during the course of the revolution — remembering that the latter does not end on the day the working class seizes power.

ALAN THEASBY [Middlesborough].

OUT NOW! A new IMG pamphlet which pinpoints the nature of the crisis, exposes the bankruptcy of the capitalist system which produced it, and puts forward a revolutionary socialist programme for action.

This pamphlet will be the basis for an open debate on the way forward in the first eight issues of Socialist Challenge. Price 25p plus 10p p&p. Five or more copies post free (cash with order). All orders to Reigocrest, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.



When private vices become a public virtue

Private Vices, Public Virtues is directed by the Hungarian Miklos Jancso — a major figure in world cinema, the director of a series of coolly allegorical anti-Stalinist epics mostly concerned with historical episodes in Hungarian revolutionary struggle.

Even though more recently Jancso has been making films in the West on other subjects, you might still wonder what a film of his is doing at the Prince Charles cinema in London which, after it opened a few years ago, quickly passed from showing prestige art productions (like Peter Brook's King Lear) to a blockbuster run of that prestige pornographic film Emmanuelle.

The answer can apparently be found on the advertising placards outside the cinema: 'A voyeur's eye' (Daily Telegraph); 'Eroticism gone mad' (London Evening News) — and this masterpiece of what Brecht called 'gastronomic criticism': 'A film by one of the poets of the modern cinema which is to pornography what caviare is to a take-away hamburger' (Australian National Times).

Don't be put off. The film is a deeply political one. It appears erotic (but definitely not pornographic) because it uses libertarian means to make a critique — and to suggest a class analysis — of libertarian politics. But since it does so in the same allegorical way that Jancso has made his own, the critics are either too stupid to see, or else easily able to disguise, its political impact. Nevertheless there are things in this film which could not have been done any other way.

Over the opening pre-title sequence, a voice explains that no one really knows what happened at Mayerling, when the Austrian crown prince apparently committed suicide with his lover. What was the background? Sexual scandal? Opposition to the Emperor? Such events, the voice continues, are the stuff

which legends are made, legends which turn private vices into public virtues.

Perhaps like the incredibly loaded spectacular, Mayerling, starring Omar Sharif and Catherine Deneuve, which portrayed the affair as one of the great episodes in the history of romantic love? But we see from the pre-title sequence to expect something quite different here.

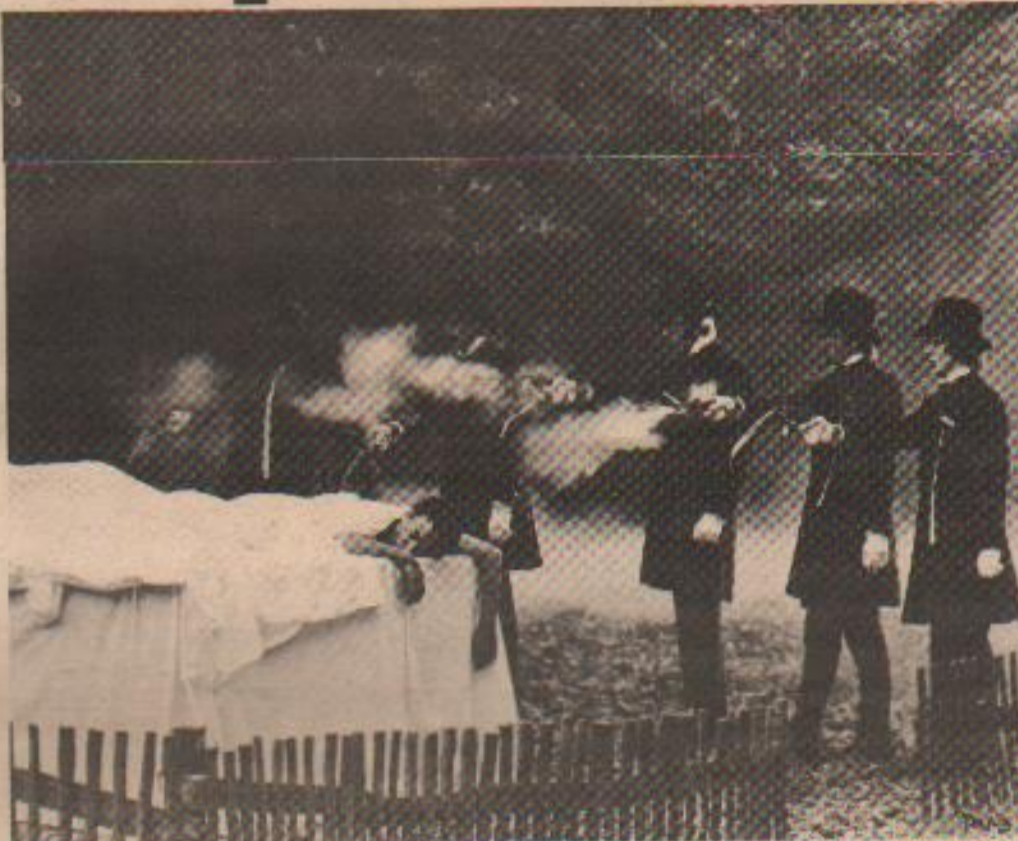
NAKED PRINCE

As we then see the prince prancing naked through the gardens, as a band plays, as he embraces a woman, not his wife, and as his old childhood nurse jerks him off, what emerges is an image of the prince and his entourage as a group of sexual libertarians united in hatred of the Emperor's autocratic rule.

As the prince later explains, because of the Emperor's dogmas and the stale proverbs he has for everything — State, family, religion — every day they do physical and spiritual exercises to try and forget them.

The perfectly straightforward plot which the film unfolds in the midst of its deliberately idealized and cinematically utterly beautiful display of erotic foilage, concerns the planning and execution of a major scandal by the prince and his entourage — an orgy involving other members of the nobility.

Inevitably, as the film reveals, doomed to failure. But it also portrays the motivation of the conspiracy as a conviction that against autocracy you can only use the most excessive means. And, moreover, that 'excess is



The death scene from Private Vices, Public Virtues

good for the health' (as one of the characters declares).

'The circus of truth is among us', says another, as a circus troop arrives to entertain the gathering nobility. And in spite of elements in the film which some viewers will find distasteful and others politically questionable, the question which it is brilliantly designed to evoke in us, invoking the joyous spirit of May 1968, is simply: 'What really counts as the circus of truth?'

PRESTIGE PIECE

Such a question is not even remotely raised by another prestige piece of erotica currently showing in London, Immoral Tales, by the Polish director

Borowczyk, now working in France. Here you should not be fooled by reports that the film 'explores the nature of feminine eroticism in relation to various taboos'. It does so in a totally voyeuristic and sexist way.

Ironically it could have been a good film, since it does manage to link Christian and other imagery of devotional subservience to the sexual and social subservience of women. The trouble is that it delights in portraying this subservience instead of criticising it in any way whatsoever.

The difficulty is that films like this one are dangerous to the project of creating revolutionary consciousness, probably more so than standard Hollywood-type genre movies which no one any

longer believes in, although they can still often be enormously entertaining.

The difference is that pornography is tactile. If you're a man it can give you a hard-on even against your conscious will — and I know that it also turns some women on as well; while true eroticism on the other hand makes you think feelingly — always a positive process.

And in many ways, pornography Borowczyk-style is even more dangerous still, because it is given a veneer of respectability by its artistic surface. What kind of conscious revolutionary strategy is needed against this, now or later on, is, we must admit, still a completely unanswered question.

MICHAEL CHANAN

Thirty of the best brass bands

The hill leading up to Dobercross is steep and long. But, when you stand at the top on a Whit Friday you can see a remarkable sight. Thirty of Britain's best brass bands are surging up the hill moving slowly towards you in a mass of colour and power.

The colours are indistinct at first, merged by the summer's haze, instruments glinting in the sun. The bands strain and heave against the hill, playing as they go. Like some old steam engine adjusting the speed of the march to the steepness of the hill.

It's called the Saddleworth Band Festival — you won't see any of it in the media but it's attended by tens of thousands of people. Each band plays in each of the seven villages around Saddleworth. The names of the bands themselves are lyrical — Brighouse and Rastrick, Fahey Engineering, East Lancs Paper Mills, and the marvellously named Hammond's Sauce Band.

At Delph, another village, each band comes marching in down the hill, the music bursting ahead of them. It's an awe-inspiring sight. 'Why don't we have them at demos?' I thought.

So what's this got to do with socialism? Well, seeing those bands marching up the hill, really straining to make it to the top, gives you a grand feeling of the power of the working class, and of working class culture, proud and strong, and brass bands are a neglected part of it. It's probably the only music in Britain that's of the people, by the people, and for the people.

So if you want to give brass band music a try, there's the miner's gala this month. In September there's the British championships at Belle Vue, Manchester, and next Whit Friday the Saddleworth Band Festival, a great working class festival, a great day out — and the bars are open all day long! See you there.

PETER BURTON

COMMENT

In defence of Katherina

IT IS EXCELLENT that the first issue of Socialist Challenge devoted a whole page to cultural coverage. I hope that the paper will continue in that vein.

But I hope that the review of *The Lost Honour of Katherina Blum* by Carl Gardner and Jane Clarke is an experience that will not be repeated in a hurry. I don't wish to comment on the artistic merits of the film — though I think it was considerably better than they allowed for — but certain of their remarks cannot be allowed to pass.

'Films like this discredit the left in every way', Gardner and Clarke tell us. 'It is the worst film with radical pretensions ever made' — a rather sweeping statement for anyone who has bothered to look at, for example, the Stalinist school of filmography or Hollywood 'radicalism'.

And then we are told that the directors 'should never be allowed near a camera again'. What insufferable arrogance! Do they really mean that or is it just a rhetorical flourish?

If it is the former perhaps the comrades would be better off writing for Pravda. They will find a lot of like-minded 'Marxist' critics there.

Contrary to what your reviewers seem to think it is no joke to talk about censorship in West Germany. They sniff at the 'paranoia' of the film, blissfully unaware that the operation of the West German state is a conspiracy. I don't know how much they know about West Germany

— precious little if the review is anything to go by.

Perhaps the comrades have never heard of the *Berufsverbot*: the prohibition of socialists from state employment. Perhaps they don't know about the collaboration of the trade union bureaucracies in repressive state practices.

Did they hear Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's remarks justifying the bugging of conversations between the Baader-Meinhof defendants and their lawyers?

They certainly seem to be ignorant of the extent of open armed activity by the State and the perilous role of the Springer press. The end of the film, the funeral of the journalist, bears an uncanny resemblance to the funeral of State Prosecutor Suback — a massive political display by the right wing.

No, it is not the greatest film ever made, but the fact that it begins to pinpoint these very real aspects of the West German state means that it deserves more serious attention.

When protestors occupied the West German embassy in Sweden in solidarity with victims of state repression, one of their demands was that Katherina Blum be networked on Swedish television. Not every-one shares your reviewers' opinion that the film represents 'no danger to the status quo'. The Swedish authorities refused to show it.

SARAH HART (South London)

Dwelling in the rotten underbelly

Socialist writers have often turned their hand to describing the horrific conditions of the masses under capitalism — Engels 'Conditions of the English Working Class' is a formative work in his genre. Journeyman has now republished another such 'classic' of socialist literature, Jack London's *The People of the Abyss*, and it would appear that little had changed for the mass of Britain's poor, in the 60 years which separate Engel's work from London's day.

Adrift in London in 1902, the author immersed himself in the cesspit which was the East End (while maintaining a safe, comfortable 'base' from which to write).

From there he produced a savagely tragic indictment of life under capitalism at the turn of the century — a world of thousands of wandering poor, doss-houses, death, disease and under-employment.

It is brilliant, unrestrained writing, which the left has produced only occasionally. But despite its brilliant descriptions and sympathetic standpoint, London's weaknesses tend to obtrude.

Firstly, unlike Engels, London has not even the beginnings of a theoretical understanding of the

processes at work (see Gareth Stedman Jones' excellent book 'Outcast London' for an assessment of these). What theoretical slabs London does have at this question tend to be hopelessly wide of the mark.

For example, he maintained that due to the massive emigration of the 'fittest' away from the squalor he describes, Britain's 'national stock' was bound to be weakened, with the result that the economy's productivity would decline. A novel if rather bizarre interpretation of the eod of the empire!

London also prescribed to the contemporary fear that one day the poor would sweep out of the East End like a tidal wave, to engulf and devour the richer areas of London. This did much to fuel the inadequate and paternalistic reform programmes of the ruling class in the later years of the 19th century and in the Edwardian era.

Most disturbing is London's view of the mass of East End poor, which at times is reactionary in its implications. He viewed them with disgust; more of a fear of the masses than a socialist anger at their plight. For London their conditions seem to stem more from their own essential impotence and inadequacy than the system which created their impoverishment.

A great book then, deserving our attention for its evocation of the rotting underbelly of British capitalism. But a book marred by



The abyss of East London: 'A world of wandering poor, doss-houses, death, disease...'

London's own curiously confused politics, which eventually led him away from socialism into a jingoistic and alcohol-soaked despair.
CARL GARDNER

'The People of the Abyss', by Jack London, is published by Journeyman at £1.20.

Socialist Challenge

REMEMBER SOWETO...



....THEY WON'T!

You've sold us out!

SEND US MORE! That was the demand for the first issue of Socialist Challenge.

In the West Midlands, Birmingham took 500 and Coventry 150, both had sold out in two days and were back for more.

In Edinburgh they only had 60 left for the miners' sale and they went in as many minutes. It was the same story at the South Wales miners' festivities where sellers shifted 110 before they retired empty handed.

The timely nature of our feature on the crisis in the Communist Party was emphasised by the big sale at the meeting addressed by Sid French last week in Surrey.

The London left bookshop, Collets, sold out their 120 order in two days and were on the phone asking for another hundred.

Other sell-outs came in Leeds, Liverpool, Oxford, Bristol and Bradford.

We expected exceptional sales

for the first issue. But we thank our supporters for surpassing those expectations.

Our own opinion of the first issue is that it lays a good foundation for future improvements. We realise that it will be difficult to build the paper we promised because of the sometimes justified suspicion that exists on the left towards a campaign for revolutionary unity. We said it wouldn't come about overnight and we stick by that.

But at the very least we appeal to those who do not agree with us to write in to our 'Open Forum' and tell us why.

Harder tasks face those who do agree with us.

*** ORGANISE:** Help to build the paper's supporters in your area. We will put you in touch. Build meetings in your town. We will provide speakers. If you want to be put in touch with Socialist Challenge supporters in your town we can help again.

*** WRITE:** We want to create a network of journalists all over

the country. We have produced a practical guide to writing for the paper. If you want one, tell us. Get your local readers group to choose an editor to get those articles in.

If you support a campaign get them to write a 'Speakout' column. If you have criticisms of our contributors or want to add something, write in to our 'Comment' page. If you want to be more closely involved, come to the Editor's open meeting on Fridays. Just ring up.

*** SELL:** If there are no sales of Socialist Challenge in your town, write to us and we will supply you on a sale or return basis. Put the paper in your local newspaper or bookshop. If you collect unsold copies the manager will generally agree.

Use the student subscription offer as an introduction to the paper. Above all get the money for sales in quickly. Don't allow back debts to build up.

*** GIVE MONEY:** We cannot rely on advertising or the million

and one hand-outs that the capitalist press need to keep them going. So who can we rely on?

We believe that it would be wrong to depend on the contributions of any one group. That would endanger the success of the fight for regroupment. From the word go we are determined to make Socialist Challenge self-reliant. The fight for that principle is easily expressed in pounds and pence — £600 per month.

We believe the first sales of the paper have shown the need for a paper which puts class interest above those of any one particular group. That is why we are confident that with the help of our readers, we will succeed.

Make our cheques and POs to Socialist Challenge, and send to:

Fighting Fund, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.

And remember the four watch-words — organise, write, sell and give.

Socialist Challenge

READ A SOCIALIST OPINION — WRITE A UNITED REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

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Please send me a 1 year subscription [cost of £5 includes postage].

Please send me copies [state number] of Socialist Challenge each week for sale.

I enclose a donation of £..... [state amount].

I am willing to donate £..... each month [state amount] to the Socialist Challenge Fighting Fund.

Total amount enclosed: £.....

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