

# Socialist Challenge



## A TORY BUDGET FOR THE RICH



OVER two million full-time workers earned less than £47 a week last year: local authority manual workers, shop assistants, porters, clerks, general labourers — ordinary working class people.

All their money goes on the bare necessities: food, rent, rates, fuel and clothes.

The Tory Budget is a disaster for them. Those basic necessities will go up in price. Even the limited protection of the Price Commission is being done away with.

Meanwhile the wealthy are laughing all the way to the bank. The cold reality of the Budget should end any illusion that it's possible to bargain with this government. Thatcher & Co. may well be willing to talk to the unions — but talk costs them nothing. The cost to the labour movement is confusion. Confusion as to what this government is about. Confusion over what the labour movement must do.

Thatcher is preparing to attack working class living standards and rights. She may be treading more carefully than Heath did, but her goal is just the same.

We have to give her the same response which finally toppled Heath: unity of the labour movement for mass action to defeat the Tory attacks.



### NOW'S THE TIME TO FIGHT



## OUR POLICIES

Capitalism is in crisis. The leaders of the Labour Party and the trade 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:

• 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.

• To begin to fight for the creation of a unified 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 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 defeating 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.

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)

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Send to Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper St, London N1.

## EDITORIAL

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# The Tory Budget

HOWE'S budget has been presented by the press as a policy to 'set the nation free'. The income tax cuts are supposed to give 'incentives' to get the economy back on its feet.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In the first place for working class families the cuts in income tax are totally overturned by the increase in VAT duty on cigarettes and the price rises they create. In fact millions of people living on the lowest incomes will actually be worse off as a result of the budget.

The only people who will gain will be a small

number of the highly paid.

The huge cuts in public spending will attack living standards directly by cuts in social services. Tens of thousands of workers in the public sector will be made unemployed in addition to the 22,000 jobs the Tories have already 'frozen' in civil service.

The selling of state assets in public firms is also a major attack on the working class. Income from the profitable parts of public industry will be lost to private hands. It immediately threatens jobs as the private asset-strippers get to work.

The British economy is already moving into a major slump in 1980. The only way to get out of that is a major programme of public spending and a whole series of nationalisations under workers' control to guarantee investment and safeguard jobs.

The Tories are now putting hundreds of thousands on the dole queues through cutting public spending and denationalising industry.

This is not a budget to free the nation but one that will imprison millions more of its people even further into poverty and unemployment.

## Oil—let's see the books

THE OIL monopolies' credibility is starting to wear thin. At least that's the situation in the United States, where 69 per cent of people in a recent poll were convinced that the energy crisis has been engineered by big business.

There are good reasons for the sceptical response. A year ago the papers were full of the 'oil glut'.

The press are now trying to blame the crisis on the Iranian revolution, the OPEC countries or the American 'petrol-guzzling' people.

The papers can't quite make up their mind who to attack first.

Most British papers have plumped for the American workers. They have loudly applauded Carter's statements that workers in the USA

should choose between heating oil and petrol. But the problem is not oil-greedy America, but profits-greedy oil monopolies.

The attempt to blame OPEC is equally dishonest. OPEC countries increased their supplies to make up for the shortfall of Iranian oil. And when Saudi Arabia restores production for former levels it was a decision taken in full collaboration with the oil monopolies who complain so loudly.

There were more than adequate supplies to compensate for the cut-off in Iranian oil-production, both in Alaska, the North Sea and Mexico.

But the oil companies are not interested in maximising supplies, but maximising profits. They refuse to develop refineries in the USA until

the price of oil is decontrolled there. Likewise in Britain. One of the last acts of the Price Commission was to let through two big price increases for British Petroleum this year — in three months. BP and Esso will be two of the big firms that will mourn the passing of the commission least [for the others see page 5].

Under public scrutiny, the American ruling class have been forced to admit that they really do not have a satisfactory explanation for the crisis.

There are explanations and they are to be found in the profit margins of the oil companies. That needs to be publicly demonstrated. The oil companies books and plans need to be revealed to the labour movement so that a workers' solution to the oil crisis can be developed right now.

## FIRST WORD

# The best laid plans....

By Brian Grogan.

THATCHER'S government wants to shackle the unions. Capitalism cannot be put on a firmer footing unless the working class is severely weakened in the course of the next recession. The problem is that Labour failed to do this in the last recession. So Thatcher does not start from a favourable position.

To prepare the way for an assault which uses the law to weaken working class organisation, Thatcher is relying on her 'popular mandate' — anyone who defies her policies is defying the verdict of the election.

She will use the defeat suffered in the election as a result of Callaghan's right-wing policies in order to step up attacks on the labour movement. But she must do this without running into a premature confrontation with the most organised sections of the working class.

So her overall project is clear:

Take up certain social issues where the consciousness of the working class is low — racism, women's rights, hanging and so on. Undermine the gains made by the working class during the post-war years through a policy of divide and rule, with massive spending cuts and increased welfare charges to drive a wedge between the public and private sector.

### Unemployment

Allow unemployment to rise, hitting blacks, women and youth first, hitting shipbuilding and Leyland, and areas like Liverpool which have already been softened up.

Then, in order to prevent an immediate united response to any or all of these attacks, draw the trade union leaders into talks and win either their endorsement or at least neutralise them.

But the weak position Thatcher starts from, with the memory of Heath's fall still strong in the labour movement, means that even small mistakes can upset the most carefully laid plan.

Massive pressure can build up for a fightback amongst the rank and file,

restricting the Labour leadership's room for manoeuvre. If the Tories move too far too fast, they could find themselves in a confrontation before they have sufficiently prepared the ground.

### Errors

Thatcher has already made a number of errors of this kind. A large part of the traditional base of the Tory Party is demanding that she make good her promises very quickly.

Thus her attack on the Price Commission — a totally ineffective body — has put her in the position of stimulating rather than curbing inflation in many people's eyes. And her massive salary increases for the 'top people', when everyone else is called upon to make sacrifices, just encourage a gut response amongst working class people across the board — even those who voted for the Tories in the election.

### Pressure

This is beginning to build up rank-and-file pressure — and threatening language is already beginning to come from the most right-wing leaders, like Duffy of the engineering union. They have no intention of doing anything, but the pressure on them to avoid open collaboration is growing.

The Budget looks like reinforcing this dynamic. Large VAT increases can only stimulate demands for massive wage increases next winter. Thatcher will find it very difficult to take an early stand against the big guns of the workers movement like the miners.

### Undermine

To be forced into an early incomes policy or statutory pay freeze would completely undermine the government's divide and rule tactics. If over the next months we can win the argument inside the workers movement against tightening our belt for the bosses, against an incomes policy under any government, then all the best laid plans of mice and (wo)men will come to naught.



## LONDON PEOPLES FESTIVAL

SUNDAY JUNE 17

Alexandra Palace  
11am - 11.30pm

Evening concert with Amba, Gina 'n' the Rocking Rebels, The Resistance and Immigrant; Jazz with Stan Tracey and Solar Heating; Theatre, with Clapperclaw, Counteract and Incubus; Folk from Bob Davenport and others; International singers; Classical music with John Sipprell and others; Jonah who will be 25 in the year 2000 and other films; Exhibitions; Sports; Dozens of children's events; creche; Political Rally with Gordon McLennan, Annie Powell and others; Debates on Children's rights, Cyprus, Racism and New Technology.

DON'T MISS THE BEST DAY OUT IN 1979

Tickets: Adult £2.50, OAP/Claimant £1, Child 60p, evening only £1.50. Details from Festival Organiser, London District Communist Party, 75 Farringdon Rd., London EC1.





## Behind the flight of the boat-people

# Red sails in the sunset?

By Geoffrey Sheridan

LORD Carrington, the Foreign Secretary, tells us the Tory government should be patted on the back for its humanitarian gesture in admitting to Britain the 98 Vietnamese refugees arriving this week after being picked up by the British-registered 'Sabonga'.

The humanity of the Conservatives, needless to say, is doled out on a selective basis. After the overthrow of Allende in Chile in 1973, the Heath government allowed in not one refugee — although many of them faced death at the hands of the Junta.

Thatcher's plans to further restrict black immigration to Britain do not need elaboration here.

It's the plight of the 'boat people' which has tugged at the Tories' heart strings, and it so happens that many of those in Vietnam who are leaving its shores in small boats believe that the West will greet them with open arms.

The migration is encouraged by more than propaganda. The determination of the United States to resist the spread of the imperialists' defeat in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in 1975 has dictated its policies in south-east Asia.

### Blockade

The US has mounted an economic blockade of Vietnam, maintained a strong military presence in South Korea, given massive support to the Thai regime, and consolidated its military forces in the Pacific.

The West has done its best to hinder the economic development of Vietnam, and it is the material

hardship experienced in Vietnam which is a major factor behind the exodus of some half million refugees since 1975.

The carnage of the American war bears a heavy responsibility for this. At the time of the liberation of South Vietnam, more than 16 per cent of the population had been killed or crippled; 56 per cent had been left homeless.

There were 3.5 million unemployed, with 4.5 million dependents — in a population of 50 million. The West's humanity does not, of course, now extend to war reparations in the form of string-free aid.

### Evacuation

The US evacuation of Saigon left more than death and destruction behind.

The Americans had propped up the Thieu regime in South Vietnam with billions of dollars, artificially sustaining numerous small business people, and maintained a civil administration geared to its war effort which employed several hundred thousand civil servants.

The re-education programme set up by the Vietnamese authorities for such people may be harsh, but the alternative would no doubt have meant firing squads.

That 170,000 Vietnamese capitalists and assorted laborators pulled out immediately after the US withdrawal is scarcely surprising. And it is no less surprising that the present increase in the number of refugees follows the nationalisation of all private trade two months ago, and the collectivisation of the land.

It would be satisfying if the blame for the 'boat people' could be laid entirely at the door of imperialism, but that unfortunately is not the case. The other culprit is, in a phrase, the heritage of comrade Stalin.



Lord Carrington, Tory Foreign Secretary

The doctrine of socialism in one country which led the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union from the late '20s onwards to shape foreign policy according to its own vested interests has reaped a bitter harvest in Indo-China.

I was a man's desire to exert its hegemony over all the workers' states which brought about the Sino-Soviet conflict, culminating in the early '60s with the withdrawal of all Soviet aid from China.

In its turn, the Chinese bureaucracy sees its hegemony in

Indo-China threatened by the revolution in Vietnam and cut off its aid to Vietnam last July, cancelling 80 projects. There followed, of course, the Chinese invasion of Vietnam earlier this year.

The trail of socialism in one country and bureaucratic rule does not stop there. The continuing Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia is in pursuit of the Vietnamese leadership's aim of bringing about by military means an enforced alliance between Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

For the Vietnamese people, these wars between the workers' states are exacting a heavy toll.

They believed that the defeat of American imperialism meant peace at last. Instead, the defence of the border areas in the North against the Chinese forces and the despatch of Vietnamese troops to Cambodia has put their country once again on a war footing, with extensive conscription and an enormous strain on the economy.

It has also threatened the position of the 1.7m Vietnamese people of Chinese origin, who have made up a sizeable proportion of those leaving Vietnam — some 200,000 to China itself.

### Merchants

Among them, especially those who head for Hong Kong, are many former merchants, bestowed on Vietnam as a result of pre-revolutionary China's thousand-year domination of the region.

But others are technicians and skilled workers from North Vietnam, including party cadres. Their

departure has brought mining production and the port at Haiphong almost to a standstill.

To what extent this migration is due to subversion stemming from the Chinese leadership, as the Vietnamese authorities claim, or to racist-inspired policies by the Vietnamese leadership, as the Chinese authorities argue, it is impossible to say.

### Chauvinism

What is certain, however, is that Stalinism fosters national chauvinism, and that the bureaucratic interests of the Vietnamese leadership prevent it from encouraging the Vietnamese people of Chinese origin to appeal to the Chinese masses.

A bureaucracy is limited in the steps it can take against another bureaucracy; all of which argues that socialist democracy and proletarian internationalism are the only measures which can halt the flow of refugees.

The West's tears for the 'boat people' fall from dry eyes, just as they would if the Vietnamese authorities forcibly closed their borders and put a stop to the exodus.

This is not to say that we should oppose the entry of the Vietnamese refugees to Britain. It is the National Front which has promised pickets, and the left should mobilise against them, as with white Rhodesians, supporting immigration restrictions would mean, in effect, telling the masses of some other country that they should put up with them. The British labour movement has to accept its responsibility for failing to oppose imperialism.



# Preston plans to beat the budget

By John Parkinson (Secretary, Preston Trades Council)

On the day Geoffrey Howe presents his Budget attacking jobs and services, trade unionists in Preston will be planning their response at a meeting of the local public sector Action Committee.

**\*Health:** Even before the Tories' slashing cuts, services are grossly inadequate. There isn't a single bed free in the local hospitals.

Preston Royal Infirmary is 'fit only for burning down', according to one local councillor. The planned new 600-bed hospital scheduled for opening in 1981 is long overdue.

**\*Abortion:** Only 17 per cent of abortions in Preston are performed on the NHS, compared with the national average of 50 per cent. The Trades Council, National Abortion Campaign, and Women's Voice group are campaigning for a day care abortion clinic in the new hospital.

Our joint inquiry into the lack of safe, speedy, free abortions has drawn a blank from the Area Health Authority.

Even local pro-abortion Labour left MP, Stan Thorne, has ignored our campaign. In a strongly Catholic town with a well-organised anti-abortion mafia, votes appear to be more important than Labour Party policy for a woman's right to choose.

**\*Nurseries:** It isn't only our health that is under fire. The Central Lancs. New Town Development Corporation, introduced to create jobs and houses, is creating mayhem.

Local parents have waged a long battle with Lancashire County Council against its policy blocking 'rising-five' entry to infant schools.

The local Polytechnic has refused to provide a nursery for staff and students, because "We can't afford it". But they managed to find two thirds of the nursery's cost — £4,000 — to blow on a visit by E. Windsor's husband and corgi for a two hour library opening ceremony.

**\*Fighting back:** We've only scratched the surface as yet. To find out what cuts are planned, and where, everyone from local parents to industrial trade unionists will have to be involved.

The Trades Council recognises that it's our job to organise action in support of public sector jobs and services. We have to show that every pound cut is one more person on the dole.

Every penny off the top rate of tax is the closure of a hospital. Every Tory proposal a kick in the teeth for our living standards.

Press statements and protests by union leaders and MPs won't wash with the Tories. Only a militant and well organised campaign will succeed.

During the public sector pay claim, the Action Committee handed out over 15,000 leaflets, organised pickets, rallies, socials. We brought together the different unions, all those who were after the same ends — £60 and 35 hours. This will be our response to the Tories attack.

By the Save the EGA Campaign

THE TORIES claim they have saved the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital. But...

\* They propose to cut more than half the hospital's beds and most of the outpatient clinics.

\* They are calling for charity to help fund the hospital.

Therefore the Camden and Islington Health Authority have decided to close all the beds at the EGA at Euston Road immediately.

It was the massive support for the hospital which won the commitment from the government that the EGA should stay on its Euston Road site. Two million pounds of government money will be made available to modernise the hospital.

## The end

But the government wants to close half the hospital reducing the number of beds from the original 150 to 40.

Funds will only be provided for gynaecological in-patient facilities and related outpatient clinics. This

will mean the end of the EGA as a general hospital for women.

The government talks about calling for charity funding for a day care hospital and further outpatient services for women. But these are just empty promises. We have been fighting for these expanded services as part of the NHS.

The Tory government's message to the women who need these services, and to other hospitals fighting closure is — if you want them you must find the money to pay for them

# EGA IN THE NHS STAYS OK

— we won't.

Successive Labour and Tory governments have cut money from health and other public services to try and bolster the profits of big business. That is why the EGA is threatened with closure.

The Tories' plans are to cut even more services and to encourage pay beds and private medicine.

Those of us who can't afford to pay for health care will have to rely on a skeleton health service dependent on charity funding.

Thousands of women locally and nationally need and want the EGA and it's a right that women should have. It should be provided by the NHS free of charge.

We pay for Health Services already through our taxes and National Insurance. Working people fought in the 1930s for a National Health Service free at the time of need. It's up to us to carry on the fight.

Hundreds of hospitals throughout Britain are forced into closure or are crippled by lack of staff and money for repairs and equipment. Waiting lists grow longer every day.

The EGA will fight alongside others demanding — an end to cuts, more money for the health service and better health care for all.

## Protest

\* A protest demonstration has been called for Wednesday 20 June. Assemble 1.00pm EGA, Euston Road, [100 yards St Pancras Station].

Further information contact the Save the EGA Campaign c/o Camden Road, London NW1.



# 'They destroyed the only beautiful thing in Battersea'

By Paul Russell

MORGAN CRUCIBLE'S army of bull-dozers swung into action at 3.00am on 6 June. They smashed into the 250 foot long wall.

Five hours later community artist Brian Barnes was looking at the remaining fragments of the country's largest mural painting.

Two years of dedicated and painstaking work by Wandsworth residents had been destroyed.

Barnes, the mural's designer, had been leading a campaign to save the mural from destruction by Morgans who plan to build luxury flats on the

site.

The campaign had received enormous popular support, because those who work and live in the area identified with the politics of the painting.

Two hundred supporters joined Brian Barnes' vigil that morning as he spent the day on top of the ruin, keeping police at bay. Food and encouragement came from bus crews in the depot opposite (bus workers had been featured in the mural.)

Driver John Clarke said, 'Its sheer vandalism. I feel terrible about it.'

A Battersea policeman had brought his family 15 miles to see the mural.

'It's the only thing I would show them in Battersea, it was a very beautiful thing.'

The Tory council leader Christopher Chope turned up to survey the ruins. He was disconcerted to see that the only section of the mural standing depicted himself and other Tory councillors fleeing the wrath of Wandsworth residents.

Then it came true!

Youth who had helped paint the wall surrounded him, half bricks started to appear. He turned on his heels and fled to the sanctuary of the nearest police station.

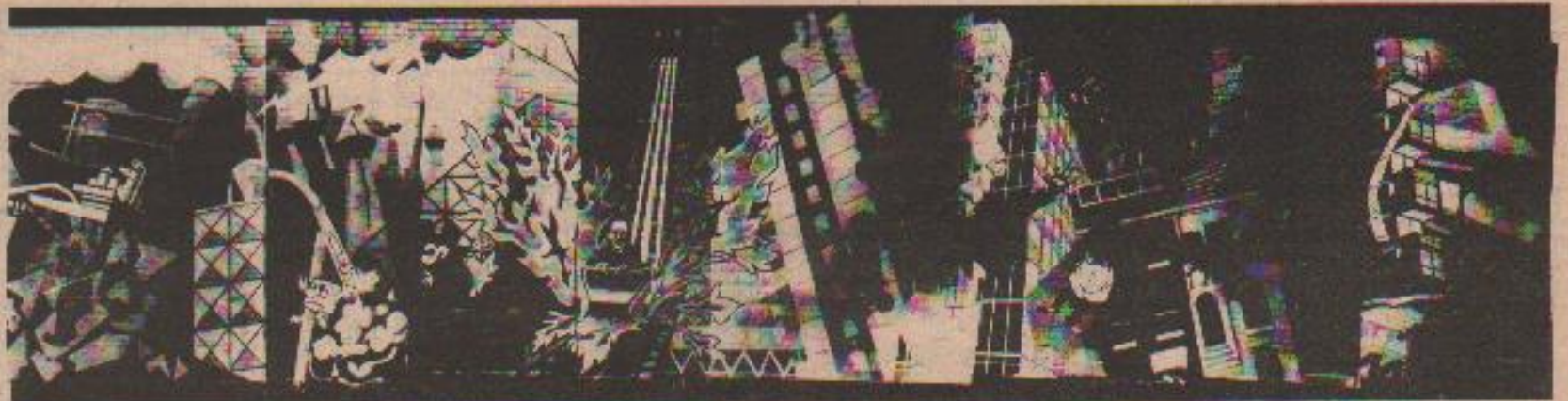
At the end of the day, Barnes and

six others were arrested and charged. Their trial has been set for 21 June at South West Magistrates Court.

Meanwhile members of the Workshop are back at the wall, painting in new figures, including a cynical quotation from the chairperson of Morgan Crucible issued at the same time he was ordering the mural's destruction.

'Mindful of our long association with Battersea and its cultural heritage.'

Contributions and messages of support to Battersea Mural Defence Fund, c/o David Limberg, 1 Stormont Road, London SW11.



## Defend Our Unions

### Rank and File Conference New Century Hall, Manchester

#### AGENDA

THE AGENDA will deal with the four major areas of the Tory attack:

- \* Picketing and the right to strike
- \* Recognition and the closed shop
- \* Redundancy and the cuts
- \* Rank and file organisation

## SPONSORS

- Action Works London Transport AUEW Shop Stewards Committee
- CPSA Manchester DHSS branch
- Dunlop Speke Joint Trade Union Action Committee
- Gardners, Manchester Joint Stewards Committee
- Gainers Strike Committee
- Hackney Council Joint Works Committee (GMWU, NUPE, TGWU)
- Heathrow Airport Joint Stewards Committee
- Massey Ferguson, Kilmarnock, Joint Stewards Committee
- Nantgarw, Coke Works NUM
- Roneo Vickers, Kirkby, strike committee
- Royal Group Docks Shop Stewards Committee
- Sandersons TGWU strike committee

## TRANSPORT

FDR in route from LONDON via the SOUTH EAST (there's a special coach to Luton, Euston at 7.35am and pick up at Watford at 9.00am). Tickets £7 return. Available from 127, Dymally Road, London, N15. Phone 01-254 5915



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## For the rich...

- Public sector bosses 43 to 50 per cent, over £212 per week.
- Civil servants, judges, Service chiefs, 25 per cent backdated to April

## For the poor....

- Public sector workers were offered 5 per cent, and had to fight for every extra penny of their final rise with it's promise of jam tomorrow from the Clegg Commission on pay comparability.

The gross increase of £3.50 plus £1, for a hospital worker, has boiled down to between 43 and 55 pence for someone who is married with two children.

The Tory Budget cuts in the basic rate of tax will be grabbed back as increased Value Added Tax raises prices.

## Unity

When your wage rise is £212 a week, a few pence on household goods is nothing. But for the millions of working class people who are low paid, unemployed, or pensioners, it's misery.

With the abolition of the Prices Commission the bosses' hands will reach even further into workers' pockets. To add to this, there is City pressure to devalue the pound.

The old slogan of 'strength in unity' was never truer than today. Unity in action needs to be at the centre of our opposition to the Tory attacks. United action by those groups of workers with pay claims in the pipeline — engineers, teachers, chemical and power workers — could see off any Tory wage-cutting schemes.

## Campaign

Only a policy which protects wages against inflation can ensure lasting gains for workers from their struggles. Policies such as automatic cost-of-living increases, flat-rate rises, and a national minimum wage are the real guarantees of workers' unity.

A campaign to end cosy TUC chats with the Tories and for militant action for such policies is what's required.

# Price rises for us, wage rises for the rich

Why don't the Tories like the Price Commission. The table below speaks for itself. Limiting price rises means less profit, and even where the Commission did allow the requested rise, the delay due to their

investigation still meant profits lost.

The Tories are after all concerned to tackle inflation, and that requires restoring profit incentives doesn't it?

Company	Notified Price Increase %	Final Price Increase %	Total Loss of Profits £m	Company	Notified Price Increase %	Final Price Increase %	Total Loss of Profits £m
Barclays Bank Ltd	N.A.	N.A.	0.63	Trust Houses Forte Hotels Ltd	5.3	5.3	1.42
Metal Box Ltd	10.5	10.5	0.45	Royal Doulton Tableware Ltd	9.3	9.3	0.18
UG Glass Containers Ltd	9.8	9.8	0.75	Proctor & Gamble Ltd	5.5	5.5	1.56
Tate & Lyle Refineries Ltd	2.0	2.0	0.50	Rida Ltd	13.0	0.0	0.25
British Railways Board				Air Products Ltd	6.0	6.0	0.70
Passenger Fares	14.6	14.5	0.50	Thermos Ltd	9.5	5.3	0.20
Miscellaneous	36.1	13.8	1.00	Butlins Ltd	14.4	9.0	1.40
Ever Ready (GB) Ltd	7.0	2.0	1.60	BOC Ltd			
ICI Ltd	5.0	5.0	0.55	Dissolved Acetylene	9.7	0.0	2.90
Weetabix Ltd				Compressed Permanent			
Cereals	8.7	8.7	0.14	Gases	9.8	0.0	2.90
Muesli	6.5	6.5	0.14	Daily Telegraph Ltd	4.5	4.5	0.50
Allied Breweries (UK) Ltd				Rugby Portland Cement Co Ltd	10.9	10.9	0.16
Beers	7.4	7.4	0.20	Bass Ltd			
Food, Drink, Accom.	7.3	7.3	0.20	Wholesale Beer Prices	7.9	-	7.0
Southalls (Birmingham) Ltd	4.3	4.3	0.37	Managed House Prices	7.9	-	7.0
IPC Magazines Ltd	2.9	2.9	1.00	Whitbread & Co Ltd			
Thames Water Authority	9.5	7.2	5.20	Wholesale Drinks Prices	5.7	-	4.50
Associated Portland Cement				Managed House Prices	8.8	-	4.50
Manufacturers Ltd				Electricity Council:			
Portland Cement	10.0	10.0	2.90	Domestic Increases	8.6	-	30.00
Special Cement	9.2	9.2	2.90	British Gas Corporation	8.5/25.0/35.0	-	22.50
British Gypsum Ltd	8.0	6.8	2.06	Total			91.12



## Another militant call to surrender

BILL SIRS of the steel workers' union has described the Tory government as an 'avowedly reactionary Conservative administration whose early actions already promise hard times for working people and greater disposable income for the wealthy'.

You might think this message, to be put before the ISTC conference this week, is a rallying call to prepare a fightback. Far from it.

He wants to give up some of the basic union rights which will be vital weapons for defending living standards.

Attacking the lorry drivers' strike of last year for the use of flying pickets, he has said that the Concordat with the Labour government could be repeated with the Tories.

The reason for this outburst?

British Steel lost £50 millions last year due to secondary picketing. No doubt some delegates at the conference will be concerned to ask him what this concern for profits will mean for the steelworkers pay rises.

## Union leaders get a shock

By Aileen O'Callaghan

IF the Executive of the Post Office Engineering Union (POEU) expected an easy life at Conference following its successful sabotage of last year's struggle for the 35-hour week then it got a rude shock last week.

On Conference's opening day the 'top table' insisted that its formulation of the pay claim to be submitted by the 126,000 strong union should be adopted. It seemed to promise a two-stage increase amounting to 25 per cent by January 1980.

A closer look revealed however that the size of the first instalment depended on the inclusion of existing pay supplements into the basic wage calculation and that productivity agreements accounted for a full 5 per cent of the total amount.

The second instalment was worse. Its calculation included a payment for restructuring and regrading even though the POEU is

supposed to be opposed completely to the Post Office's plans for these.

Seeing these strings, the Union's delegates promptly cut them and adopted a two-stage 25 per cent claim on the basis of their right to a standard of living not subject to deals about productivity, modernisation and so on.

Moreover the Union is now committed to taking industrial action to achieve these demands if they are not immediately met by the Post Office management.

Bryan Stanley, the POEU General Secretary will not find it so easy to sell out the membership on the next occasion either. Despite a vigorous campaign by the new right wing tendency — called 'Mainstream' — which supports the Executive, and despite a carefully orchestrated 'red scare' against the Broad Left in the Union, it took a desperate manoeuvre by the conference's chairperson to prevent a second defeat for the Executive on the 'Job Security Agreement' it negotiated with the

Post Office.

'High marks for artistic interpretation, none for technical merit' was how one delegate summed up the Executive during the debate on an agreement which, significantly, was one promised in our deal made when the 35-hour week struggle was sold out. Just as the delegates saw through the Executive's proposals on wages, so many of them recognised the 'Job Security Agreement' as a redundancy agreement.

The point the 'top table' will not have been slow to take is that the possibility of them trading off jobs for higher wages was severely limited by votes at Conference.

The Union's membership clearly expect 25 per cent without strings and they are prepared for a fight for it, too.

If the Executive fails to give the leadership what they expect, then the signs are already there, particularly among the POEU's younger members, that they are prepared to look around for one that will.

## Special teachers' conference

By Denny Fitzpatrick  
Paddington School NUT

THIS SATURDAY sees a special NUT conference on salaries. The Executive will be recommending an offer of 10.8 per cent in two stages plus a promise of more to come from the Clegg Commission — a loss in real wages of 25 per cent even on the Executive's figures.

The sudden acceptance of an offer only marginally better than that of the Labour government is due to the inclusion of a reference to the Houghton Relativities in the Clegg Commission brief.

Houghton, the lynch-pin of the NUT's argument, was in fact a policy which gave most to those who had most, entrenching differentials between teachers.

Only one member of the 47-strong Executive voted against the settlement — Dick North of the Rank and File group.

The rest were so keen to avoid a real fight when Labour was in office that they are now disarmed in front of the Tories.

The anger and frustration of many thousands of teachers about the salaries sell-out highlights the need for an alternative.

That's why the Socialist Teachers Alliance and Rank and File, the two opposition groupings in the union, are presently discussing fighting for a new leadership in the next elections.

Des Tierney and Mike Anderson add from Scotland:

The conference of the Scottish teachers union, the EIS, showed alarming signs that the Executive is prepared to retreat before the Tory offensive in education.

The acceptance of the idea that teachers' interests will be protected by productivity deals (larger classes) will perhaps lay the basis for any deal put forward by the Clegg Commission.

The presence of 60 delegates at the

Rank and File opposition meeting was just one sign the executive will meet with opposition.

One third of the delegates rejected the pay deal and victories were won in other areas.

Support was pledged for nursery teachers and those in special education taking industrial action to get the same conditions as in ordinary schools.

The present segregation of schools into Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic sectors was opposed, and by a narrow vote a motion was rejected calling for more protection to gay teachers (in Scotland homosexuality is still illegal).

Scottish teachers now accept that use of the belt has to stop and, while conference voted to seek alternative sanctions against school students, the Rank and File policy of ending belting and recognising the school students union received a sympathetic response.

## HEALTH - NOT CUTS CONFERENCE

- Lessons of the struggle against cuts
- Who suffers
- The attack on trade union rights
- The fight for a socialist health service

Saturday JUNE 30th

10am - 5.30

Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq.,

LONDON WC1

SOCIAL 7pm TILL 10pm

Organised by FIGHTBACK, 30 Cazenove Road, London NW1



# Youth unemployment 'A good job is one I can keep'

AS UNEMPLOYMENT continues to rocket it is youth who are the most hard hit.

And those who do manage to get jobs face appalling wages and lack of interest from the unions.

Jude Woodward talked to some unemployed youth in Birmingham about their work prospects.

Their experience forcibly demonstrates that for young workers it is unemployment that is the most burning issue.

And it is particularly on this issue that the unions should be making a big drive to bring young workers into the organised labour movement.

Tony is 18, he left school two years ago, presently he is unemployed — this time it has been for four days.

“Since I left school I’ve had four or five jobs. I’ve worked mostly in factories. When I first left school it was difficult to get work.

You went to the Job Centre and saw a job you thought you could do, but you had to have experience before you could get it.

## Discipline

It was about a year before I got my first job — working in the market on a stall. I gave that one up as it was such long hours and such lousy pay — I got £17 a week.

I came from Ireland originally, about six years ago. My parents died and I came to my aunt.

But I lived in children’s homes a lot of the time. I didn’t like school, it

was discipline all day then I went home to the same discipline or worse. I just wanted to get out.

Next I got a job packing. I was working 8am-5pm and picking up £22 for that.

I left that after about six months — by then I had a flat and I couldn’t pay for it on that kind of money.

Generally I found jobs myself, through walking around the factory areas for hours knocking on every door.

## Boring

I tried to get jobs at the Job Centre but they’d ring up the employer and find the job was filled. They’d say: ‘We’ve got someone here who thinks he can do the job — he’s never done it before’.

You might drag all the way down there and then get told the job was gone.

I went on a training scheme once — I just gave it up after three weeks. It was really boring.

You’d just put a screw in a pipe over and over again for days and they’d say you’d learnt something. Some guys would do it for six months and just learn to press buttons — then they’d say you’d got a skill.

They’d say you were starting to learn how to use machines or something like that.

One guy who did the course shows his certificate when he goes for a job. The guy who sees him comes out with all these long words about machines



Tony and Mark

— ‘Can you use such and such machine?’ — and the guy doesn’t know what it looks like so he just doesn’t know.

My next job was in the Jewellery quarter — part of Birmingham where they make jewellery, left over from the industrial revolution.

I was pickling, that’s putting trophies and cups into vats of acid, then hot and cold water.

The job itself was OK, but they never provided overalls to protect your clothes from the acid. Most of the factories in the quarter are not in the union so there’s not much you can do about it.

They just said: ‘Well, get your own overalls.’

My last job has been in the bakeries, working nights. I got £32 take home pay for working four nights from 10pm to 8am.

What happened with that was that I learnt the job from the foreman. After 2 or 3 months the gaffer comes up and tells me I’m doing it all wrong.

I lost my temper and told him to do it himself.

All I can do is keep looking and hope to find another job, but the chances at the moment are pretty vague because of all the new people leaving school.

In Birmingham at least, jobs like these are the only ones open to

younger kids with no qualifications. And they’re such crap jobs that they don’t last long.

What I’d call a good job is any job I can last in, that’s not too boring. £30-£35 is good pay.

Mark is 16 and left school a year ago, he is unemployed having had one job since he left school.

“I was chucked out of school in the March, but I went back in May and June last year to do exams. I got seven ‘O’ levels.

I’m interested in doing work that uses the talents I’ve got in drawing and design — like technical drawing.

The only way to get that kind of job is to get an apprenticeship or go to college and do an ONC or HNC.

Doing an apprenticeship destroys you as a person — it’s four years of shit wages which effectively imprisons you at home. You’ve got no money to move away.

That’s how they operate — to make sure you’ve got no freedom.

When you’re young you’ve got a tendency to be more rebellious, to take less shit, so the work discipline is tough and they ensure you have to stay at home so you are under the control of your parents.

You can get a craft apprenticeship at British Leyland with one or two basic CSEs. I could have got in as my father works at Leyland.

But whole generations of my family have worked at Longbridge and I’ve seen what it does to them. I used to go past everyday and saw them all coming out — it was so depressing.

In our area it’s the equivalent of going down the pits.

But the apprenticeship is not bad pay — if you stay at home — and in the end you’d be alright.

A friend of mine — Keith — is an apprentice electrician. But he won’t be signed up officially till September. Till then he just has to take shit from the bosses, the other workers and the unions don’t care.

He was told to go and work in Peterborough on contract work for three months. It’s a 60 hour week for £90. But he has to live in digs and pay for all that.

A mate of his got hit by something falling from the scaffolding and had his back broken. Keith could hardly face going back after that.

## Stupid

I want to go to college but that poses problems as at my age you can’t get a grant. And fulltime at college you can’t sign on.

You have to survive off your parents. Mine weren’t prepared to do that before, but I think they are now.

But I don’t want to live at home — there’s no choice.

I have to go down and report to the Careers Service every week.

I told them I wasn’t prepared to accept a job where I worked 40 hours for £21 and they’d agree with me. But then they’d come back and offer me a job as a shit-shoveller and things like that.

They treat you as though you’re stupid. They treat you like a kid.

They offered me a job as an office junior for £16 a week!!

The way the dole operates is in queues. The only communication with others is the acne on the person in front of your neck.

We’ve got to try and break through that isolation and get together and try to organise.

And the unions should take an interest and not let us get pushed around and ripped off when we do get work.

Photo: Mark Souter

## Women’s aid

By Jude Woodward

WOMEN’S Aid in Birmingham is three and a half years old.

Throughout this time it has been negotiating for a permanent refuge — without success.

Last week, in exasperation, they occupied a Council-owned house that had been standing empty for two years.

London has 25 women’s refuges and that is inadequate, Birmingham has none at all.

The women were fobbed off with a short-life property for a period, but it had to close in January due to its awful condition and overcrowding.

‘It was falling apart around our ears’, one of them said.

‘The social service department are quite helpful with giving grants, but the housing department completely ignores us.’

The women were offered a terraced house, again short-life, with only enough room for two families.

The Council had told Women’s Aid that the previous house was overcrowded, so this offer was simply an insult.

The house under occupation had been standing empty for two years, but when the women moved in the Council turned off the electricity.

The Council plans to sell it back to the freeholders, who want it for an American company to build a private hospital on the site.

As soon as it was occupied a woman with five children moved in, despite the conditions, as it was the only way to escape the violent situation in her home.

Birmingham Council must be forced to meet its responsibilities towards battered women.

Women’s Aid will not leave the house until they have been given a

reasonable property for homeless women.

## Abortion conference

By Penny Duggan

The National Abortion Campaign conference last weekend concentrated its energies on working out how best to defend the existing, limited right to abortion that looks likely to come under attack through a Private Members Bill in this session of Parliament.

The conference, although only attended by 75 members, drew together activists from all over the country.

We decided that in the event of a restrictive bill as proposed by Corrie, NAC should initiate a campaign around the slogan ‘No lowering of the time limit — Defend the 1967 Act’.

This campaign should culminate in a major national demonstration, organised by the women’s TUC, at the time of the third reading in the autumn.

Despite this defensive situation plans for a national conference of the labour movement, to discuss what positive legislation on abortion we want to see, will go ahead for Spring 1980.

NAC’s Declaration, incorporating the principles we want in any positive legislation, will be published as soon as possible as a starting point for discussion.

The campaign for the provision or extension of local day care abortion facilities will continue to be a major activity for the local groups.

NAC will also continue to develop discussion with other groups such as Black Women’s groups, Women and Health groups and will participate in the Women and Health tribunal.

## Fight immigration laws

THE TORIES are proposing a whole series of attacks on the rights of black people, both within the country and among those who would like to live here.

These proposals include a new Nationality Act, a register of dependents, voluntary repatriation, greater restrictions on black people wanting to work or settle here and an intensification of ‘counter measures’ against ‘illegal immigrants’.

These proposals still further reduce the status of blacks to second class citizens, giving the go-ahead for greater police harassment and tacit approval for every kind of racist attack.

The basis for this is set by the 1971 Immigration Act.

This Act discriminates against blacks trying to enter through the patrial clause, and means they can be picked up, detained and removed — without right of appeal — if they are suspected of being illegal immigrants.

It divides working people on the basis of colour by creating a cheap and temporary workforce pitted against white labour.

The Campaign Against Immigration Laws exists to co-ordinate opposition to the Acts in the labour, anti-racist and black movements and turn it to concrete activity.

CAIL is holding a public meeting on 16 June and national pickets of all detention centres on 7 June at 2pm.

For info contact: CAIL, Box 133, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1.

### Campaign Against Immigration Laws

## NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

WHAT? — there is to be a National Picket

WHERE? — outside ALL prisons and detention centres where detainees under the immigration act are kept.

WHEN? — at 2pm, Saturday, 7th July

ALL the prisons below will be picketed:

- Bedford Prison, St Laves St, Bedfordshire
- Birmingham Prison, Winsor Green Rd, Birmingham 18
- Canterbury Prison, Longport, Canterbury, Kent
- Cardiff Prison, Knox Rd, Cardiff
- Durham Prison, Old Leazes, Durham
- Harmondsworth D.C., Colbrook Bypass, West Drayton
- Heathrow D.C., Queens Building, Heathrow
- Holloway Prison, Parkhurst Rd, London N7
- Leeds Prison, Armley, Leeds, Yorkshire
- Lewes Prison, Brighton Rd, Lewes, East Sussex
- Lincoln Prison, Greetwell Rd, Lincoln
- Pentonville Prison, Caledonian Rd, London N1
- Hisley Remand Centre, Warrington Rd, Hisley, Warrington
- Winchester Prison, Rumsey Rd, Winchester, Hampshire



By Geoff Bell

IN 1969, when Ian Paisley was battling with Unionist Prime Minister Terence O'Neill for the hearts and minds of the North of Ireland's Protestants, a Maoist group in Dublin produced a leaflet explaining the reason for this contest.

It was an inter-imperialist conflict, said the leaflet, with American imperialism backing Paisley and British imperialism backing O'Neill.

The story is a warning against glib explanations for the recent criticism of influential United States politicians of British policy in the North of Ireland.

No-one has yet suggested it represents a renewed conflict of interests between the two imperialist powers but the most popularly given reason is equally facile. That is, that there is nothing more to it than attempts by a few politicians to attract the Irish vote.

### Gift-wrapped

The case of Edward Kennedy shows why this explanation falls flat on its face. Kennedy does not need to criticise Britain over Ireland to win the Irish vote; he already has it for he is a Catholic, he is a Kennedy, and the birth-place of his ancestors remains somewhere in Ireland.

Similar assessments can be made concerning the other Irish-American politicians who have been to the fore in criticising British policy. Governor Hugh Carey of New York, Senator Daniel Moynihan and the House of Representatives Speaker, Tip O'Neill all enjoy broad support. Their political lives do not depend on the Irish vote which anyway is fairly tied in with the Democratic Party machine.

So why did Kennedy accuse Britain of 'violating the spirit of its recent pledges to the European Court of European Rights', in his St Patrick's day message in March?

Why has Tip O'Neill made repeated criticism of Britain's Irish policy, accusing the main parties of treating Ireland as 'a political football' and two weeks ago calling for an embargo on American arms' sales to the RUC?

### Patient

Why has Carey advocated a more repressive policy of Britain for its repressive policies?

Why has Moynihan said that the US will not be 'patient forever' on the question of a united Ireland?

All these gentlemen are highly influential. The saying goes that the 'Tip' in O'Neill stands for 'to influence presidents'. Kennedy came second behind Carter with O'Neill third in a recent public opinion poll in the USA on who was the most powerful American. Moynihan is one of the leaders of the Democrat's right wing while Carey is governor of the second largest state in the USA.

Other American politicians, notably George McGovern and Mario Biaggi have made stronger criticism of Britain's role in Ireland than have the 'four horsemen' as they are dubbed. But it is the influence and power these four have which make their statements mean something. And this raises a further puzzle concerning the role President Carter played in all this.

### Spectacle

The answer to these and other riddles concerning the ridiculous spectacle of the USA posing as the champions of human rights in Ireland begins with a recognition of the state of play in the Six Counties.

British policy in Ireland is in one big mess. The recently leaked top secret British Army document confirms that the Provisionals have the ability and support to carry on their resistance as long as they choose.

The election successes of the Loyalist right confirms the Protestant population are as unlikely to endorse a 'compromise' settlement as ever they were. British policy itself is, in American language, a 'destabilising factor'.

If British politicians are reluctant

# American advice on England's Vietnam



to face these facts the Americans are not. When William Whitelaw was attempting the 'power-sharing' Sunningdale settlement Kennedy issued public statements of approval. When Merlyn Rees refused to give in to the Loyalist demands for a return to Stormont the 'four horsemen' issued their strongest criticism so far of the IRA. As long as Britain appeared to be attempting some settlement the American big-wigs avoided any 'human rights' criticism.

Their attitudes changed after two meetings held earlier this year. One was between Top O'Neill and Callaghan at which, it has been reported, Callaghan cheerfully agreed he had done a deal with the Unionists at Westminster to allow Labour to stay in power. The second meeting was between Moynihan and Roy Mason after which, according to the *New York Times*, Moynihan was 'absolutely dazed'. He was quoted as saying of Mason, 'He had no intention of doing anything about Northern Ireland except keeping the British there...there is no political will to settle'.

The problems such a stance poses was summed up in a pre-election interview with Kennedy in the *Belfast Telegraph*. complained Kennedy, 'I

personally feel extremely strongly about the need to condemn violence and terror. But our ability to influence and convince people that there is a better way would be diminished if nothing happens'.

### Equivocate

Busily following his policy of repression Roy Mason ensured that nothing did happen. But in America the traditional leaders of the Irish-American lobby were attracting increasing criticism for their silence from McGovern, Biaggi and even trade union leaders such as Ted Gleason of the International Longshoremen's Association who threatened to 'black' British goods entering American ports. To that pressure can be added the increasing attention Britain was attracting to itself, and by implication the Western world in general, through the European Court and Amnesty judgements.

There were also factors at work internal to Democratic Party politics. Moynihan is one of the leading right-wing Democratic critics of Carter's foreign policy. Kennedy continues to equivocate on his

presidential intentions and O'Neill as the keeper of the Democratic machine can act as an unofficial spokesperson for Carter. Each had good political reasons to pose as the champions of human rights in Ireland. Some may even have an emotional attachment to the idea of a united Ireland.

If all this wasn't enough there is the friendship between Kennedy and John Hume of the SDLP who also realised that the longer Britain's 'political initiative' was put off the larger was the loss of influence on the Catholic population in the Six Counties of reformist politicians such as himself.

The Americans did try and lobby the British on their worries. What 'dazed' them was the complete lack of movement from the British Government. The only option they had left was to go public.

At the centre of their concern, governmental or otherwise, is that Britain permits an increasingly unstable situation to develop in Ireland from which anything could emerge. It is for this reason that the best informed advisors of the British bourgeoisie in this country welcomed the American's intervention. The *Economist* described O'Neill's 'political football' statement as 'one of the most sensible speeches about his forefathers country ever made'. The *Financial Times* judged the collective intervention as 'no bad thing'.

What they all fear is a Cuba-type situation developing in Ireland. For British politicians this might seem remote. But US imperialism has learnt the hard way that far-off possibilities come uncomfortably fast if they are not dealt with in time.

## SOLIDARITY NEWS

### Student appeal

AN APPEAL to the student movement has just been published by the International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland.

The appeal calls for delegates from student unions to take up the reserved places on the labour movement jury which will hear the case against the British government.

The final hearing of the Tribunal takes place on 7/9 July in London's Conway Hall. Further information on the Tribunal and extra copies of the appeal can be got from 47 Wilsham Street, London W11.

### State racism

EAST LONDON organisations including East London UTOM have organised a demonstration against state racism. The march, on Saturday 16 June aims to draw the links between racism against Irish people and racism against Asians and blacks.

Originally intended as a response to the attack by the National Front against the Bloody Sunday demonstration earlier this year the demonstration hopes to link the two struggles.

The march will start from Hyde Park [Speakers Corner] at 2.00pm. After the march there will be a social at City Poly Students Union [tube Aldgate East] with the film 'Patriot Game' and the reggae band Amber.

### Pat Arrowsmith

TROOPS OUT campaigner Pat Arrowsmith will appear in Cardiff magistrates court this Thursday. This will be the first of two appearances she will be making in the court (the second is on 28 June) as a result of being arrested twice during her candidature in the general election.

The arrests came as Pat was speaking on Ireland. She says:

'I consider these charges to be a gross injustice and an attack not only on my right to speak as a parliamentary candidate, but on the rights of everyone who speaks out against the government's policy on Ireland, and the rights of potential voters to hear what their candidate has to say.

'I want it to go on record that if I am convicted on these spurious charges I will in no way cooperate with the authorities — I will pay no fine, nor will I be bound over and if I am sent to jail, I will go on hunger strike until I am released.'

A petition demanding the right of free speech on Ireland and the dropping of all charges against Pat will be presented to the Home Office and the Cardiff Chief Constable this week.

Signatories include Lords Anthony Gifford and George McLeod, Emlyn Williams (S. Wales NUM President), Arthur Scargill and Neil Kinnock MP.

### Liverpool arrests

'DON'T write in any left-wing papers about police ill-treatment' was the warning given to Colin Maguire and Alf Cotterell when they were released after two days detention under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The two, members of the IRSP support group in Liverpool, were arrested after collecting money for H Block prisoners.

Alf suffers from cancer of the stomach. But this did not prevent police keeping him and Colin in isolation cells with lights permanently on.

Frank Field, Labour MP for Birkenhead, has written to Merseyside police and put down a question in the Commons demanding an explanation of police conduct.

But only action by the labour movement will stop more names being added to those scratched deep in the walls of the Bridewell isolation cells.

### 100 march against PTA

More than 100 people, including British socialists and Irish Republicans, marched last Saturday against the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

They were on their way to Brixton prison to protest the detention of Jimmy Scanlon, a building worker and member of the IRSP Support Group. Jimmy is being held in Brixton while his appeal against deportation is being heard.



# WHY WE MUST DEFEND

The Tories want to see as much profitable industry in private hands as possible. That's why they are gunning for the National Enterprise Board.

Tony Benn has attacked the Tory proposals by warning that they will cut off the life support system for capitalism.

The Tories want to send the patient out for a good stiff constitutional, whilst Benn wants it to stay in the intensive care unit.

So why do socialists argue for nationalisation?

RICH PALSER looks at the arguments. Elsewhere we ask who stands to gain from de-nationalisation, and look at the steel industry to see how nationalisation has been introduced in the past.

## Tories gunning for the NEB

The Tories say that the nationalised industries are inefficient because they are nationalised. The facts show otherwise.

For example, between 1958 and 1968 output per person rose by 4 per cent in British manufacturing as a whole. In the nationalised railways it rose by 4.6 per cent, in the mines by 6 per cent, in electricity by 7.5 per cent, and in the nationalised airlines by 10 per cent.

One of the reasons why the Tories have not tried to de-nationalise the electricity, gas, rail or mining industries is that private ownership would be incapable of generating the long term investment necessary to maintain these industries — and they are all vital to the economy as a whole.

In the private sector investment is left to the anarchy of private profit — if the profits don't warrant the risk, then no investment.

Benn is right in saying that the nationalised industries have been run as a life support system for capitalism.

### Subsidy

Firstly, they provide cheap services to private industry. ICI has a contract for gas which runs till 1984, under which they receive gas worth £110 million a year to ordinary consumers for £20 million a year.

Between 1947 and 1957 the sale of coal to private industry at lower prices than to the domestic consumer gave them a subsidy of £2000 million.

Secondly, they provide a fixed and ready market for goods. In 1974-5 the Post Office bought £800 million of telecommunications equipment from firms like GEC — whose average profits are 15 per cent.

Thirdly, they pay compensation to former owners. The old rail owners get about £50 million a year, turning any profit into a loss for the railways.

To see that they are run in the interests of capitalism their controlling boards were filled with reliable 'commercial gentlemen' from the start. Of the directors on the boards of the nationalised industries in 1950 only 12 per cent had any connection with the labour movement.

Today the National Enterprise Board is headed by a majority of company directors or former directors.

Yet even run along totally capitalist lines, the nationalised industries have proved themselves more efficient than the private sector.

Saving capitalism has not done much for those that work in the industries. Tens of thousands of jobs

have been lost. Wages and conditions in these industries have been the first to come under attack through wage freezes and productivity deals.

So is it worth the candle? If the Tories want to cut off capitalism's life support system, shouldn't we let them?

The question isn't new. As long ago as 1912, a group of miners wrote in the *Miners' Next Step* that 'as they feel the increasing pressures we shall be bringing on their profits, they will loudly cry for nationalisation. We shall and must oppose this.'

### Workers Control

Unfortunately, however, capitalism will not cease to exist of its own accord. When the pressure on profits make investors scarce, and the state is not called in to bail industry out, the result is massive closures and lay-offs. Mass unemployment is used to demoralise and weaken working class organisation, and thus boost profits again.

The call for nationalisation under workers' control is a call to get rid of the bosses if they cannot provide jobs. To take their company off them if, like George Ward, they refuse to give workers decent pay and conditions. It is a call for planning against the anarchy of private ownership and profit.

In fighting for the nationalisation of firms creating redundancy the workers' needs and interests, not the private sector's, must be served.

The previous owners are not entitled to compensation — they have been living off the backs of the workers who produce the wealth for years.

New technology must be used in order to improve the life of the workers through a shorter working week.

Products and prices must not be geared to cushioning the private sector.

Instead of control being placed in the hands of the company directors, Lords and consultancy experts, the workers must control how the industries run through their own directly elected representatives.

### Victory

Nor does the fight stop having won these demands. Private industry is tremendously concentrated and powerful. A mere 80 companies own two-thirds of industrial assets.

Any serious victory in the fight for nationalisation would not only fail to increase investment in the private



sector (and without that no island of socialist nationalisation could exist for long), but it would positively make things worse.

The wealthy few are hardly likely to invest their money in new technology when they see workers on the offensive to maintain living standards and the threat of nationalisation hanging over their heads.

That's why Benn's talk of 'planning agreements' being used to see that investment takes place is pure fantasy — it's only by challenging the 'right' of the big capitalists to dispose of their wealth as they will that planning of the economy can begin.

Exerting control over the economy means denying those 'rights'.

Nationalisation of the major banks and finance houses, placing them under the control of the workers organisations so that credit and investment are under their control — that is the first essential step towards socialist planning.

Opening the books of the major

companies and subjecting the employers to the scrutiny and control of elected workers' committees is the next.

There should be no retreat from fighting for socialist policies, including nationalisation. The Tories offensive can easily be used to divide workers.

The Post Office Engineering Union for example has consistently called for the two main sections of the Post Office to be run by different boards — one is a profitable telecommunications sector, the other the loss-making postal service.

Any de-nationalisation plans of the Tories will have similar divisions in mind.

If workers in these industries see no credible socialist alternative to nationalisation as we now know it, the basis will be laid for further divisions as the profitable sectors go back to the private sector and the workers remaining are left to suffer the worst.

## Denationalisation

In the summer of 1977 the then Labour government sold off to private hands 17 per cent of British Petroleum shares.

This £540 million sale was just one of the concessions, along with more cuts in public services, which the Government made in return for continued loans from the International Monetary Fund.

The new Tory Government wants to go a lot further in raising money this way. It also has the advantage that their friends in business will gain — and that is after all what a Tory Government is best placed to do.

The first to go will be some of the companies in

which the National Enterprise Board Take Ferranti electronics firm. In it recorded a year £9.12 million cent increase.

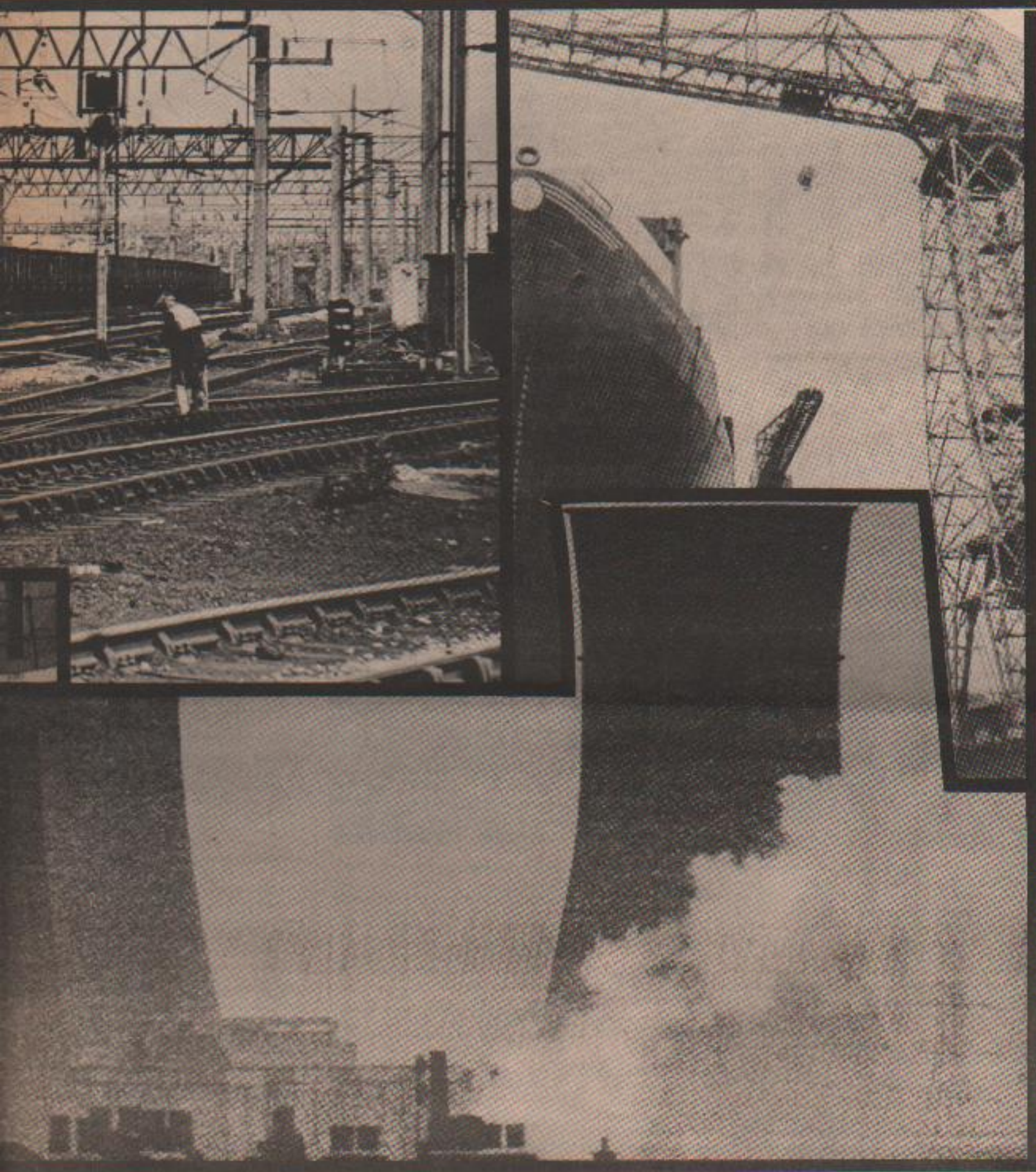
Under the original agreement the NEB took Ferranti, it had shareholding in a profit.

### Tories

This it did £960,000 on the Tories know where that can the private investment to have the healing unpre



# NATIONALISED INDUSTRY



## Steel - creeping devastation

NATIONALISATION in Britain has always been used to aid private capitalist industry, rather than as a step towards socialism. A prime example is the British steel industry — nationalised and denationalised according to how it benefited private ownership.

Britain's domination of the world markets was broken by the First World War. Since then the British steel industry has been unable to compete with its main rivals.

The latter had better and more advanced technology, concentrated in large units, while Britain's much earlier development meant that massive investment and re-organisation to concentrate resources was needed.

With the depression of the 1930s, however, the owners of British steel did the opposite. They banded together to fix a common price for steel sales, and lobbied to win a tariff on cheaper foreign imports. Attempts to introduce new technology were resisted in the interests of immediate profit.

Nationalisation could provide a pro-capitalist solution. First, because the state would be in the best position to fork out the massive investment needed, whereas private capital feared the risk or saw insufficient returns in it for them.

Second, because the necessary re-organisation could then take place without being blocked by the steel owners. Unwilling to see change lest they were the ones who lost out, they could be guaranteed a safe return on investment through the compensation promised to former owners.

But in 1945, when the Labour government came to nationalise the industry, the war had temporarily eased the situation for the steel employers. German and Japanese industry had been severely weakened, and the steel owners were not going to give up the short-term profits which this offered them on the open world market.

So the owners' federation organised to sabotage Labour's nationalisation, and refused the Iron and Steel Corporation any co-operation — even technical advice.

The Minister of Supply was forced to admit in the House of Commons that 'these people (the employers) decided to threaten, and indeed did carry out, a political strike... there is concerted action by a number of people for the specific purpose of sabotaging an Act of Parliament.'

When the Tories came to office in 1951, a year after nationalisation, there was no attack on the steel employers for defying an Act of Parliament. Steel was simply denationalised.

By the 1960s, however, German and Japanese steel had been rebuilt — again using the most advanced technology and production methods. The basic problem had re-surfaced. It was clear that private capital could not resolve it, and that things could not go on as they were.

So when the 1964 Labour government set about steel nationalisation the Tories and employers did not go out of their way to prevent it, but merely pressed to get the best compensation for the owners.

They also managed to ensure that the profitable sectors were not included. Much of the specialist steel production and engineering processing was left in private hands.

Under nationalisation the steel industry has been run with two main objectives in mind. The first has been to boost productivity and cut jobs.

Thus the Benson report of 1965 set a 10-year target of producing 15 million tons of steel a year with 200,000 workers — nine million tons more, with 116,000 workers less, than in 1965.

The idea was to put British steel back on its feet in the long term, so that even if a return to private ownership wasn't viable, it could at least provide a cheap and dependable service to private industry.

Acting as a buffer to private industry has been the second objective. With the engineering, shipbuilding and machine tool industries in crisis, low steel prices can encourage investment in new equipment and machinery.

So BSC prices to the private sector have been kept down, whilst import restrictions have been lifted to allow cheaper foreign products easier access to Britain.

Nationalisation in steel so far has not been a step towards socialist planning but a stage in capitalist rationalisation.

## nationalisation - who gains?

Enterprises for them. The most stunning NEB 'success story' is Fairey engineering — rescued from bankruptcy by a total NEB takeover, and now showing



pre-tax profits of £5.2 million.

A return on capital of 26.6 per cent is a gift horse the private sector won't look in the mouth.

The Tories of course say that these will be best run in private hands anyway. If that were true the Government would not have been pouring money into them via the NEB in the first place.

State investment was used because the wealthy private investors were either unprepared to take risks or didn't see enough returns.

In 1976 profitability averaged 3.5 per cent in the British economy as a whole — well below half the low point on the previous industrial cycle in 1970. That's why the investors are not investing.

The wealthy might possibly be inclined to take-over those companies

that are now fit and well after massive government injections, but if there is no firm guarantee of returns they will not be so forthcoming.

### Favour

Even in the case of ICL, the computer firm, another NEB involvement which recorded a 24 per cent increase in profits in 1978, the massive investment needed over the next few years may put off the private sector despite its current healthy state.

When the Tories get round to denationalising other industries — sections of shipbuilding, steel or the telecommunications side of the Post Office — they will be only too aware that doing big business a favour depends on whether big business sees it as a favour.



## Against race, sex discrimination

## US shows the way to 'affirmative action'

**DISCRIMINATION** against black people in Britain is an everyday occurrence.

Between 1974 and 1977 general unemployment rose by 138 per cent, whilst for black people it rose by 307 per cent. Amongst men with degree standard qualifications, 79 per cent of whites get professional or management jobs compared to only 31 per cent of blacks.

Women, too, face discrimination in all walks of life. Formal equality under the law has done little to change the situation.

One response in the United States to combat discrimination has been 'affirmative action'. Below we reprint sections of an article explaining the issues which recently appeared in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.

By Ernest Harsch

ONE OF the most important cases affecting the labour, civil rights, and women's movements in the United States went before the Supreme Court on 28 March.

Officially known as Brian F. Weber versus Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation and United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO, the case began in 1974 when Weber, a white lab technician at the Kaiser Aluminum plant in Gramercy, Louisiana, filed suit to overturn an affirmative action plan for black and women steelworkers negotiated by the union.

## Favourite

Brian Weber charged in his suit that this modest gain for blacks constituted illegal 'reverse discrimination' against him and other white males, that the affirmative action programme gave skilled jobs to blacks that whites would otherwise have got.

Weber is employing one of the favourite arguments of the ruling class to justify opposition to struggles for equality by women and oppressed national minorities in the United States. He and his backers are accusing the victims of committing the crime.

Those who try to use the myth of 'reverse discrimination' as a bludgeon against the black civil rights movement claim that since the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act everyone has been 'equal'. Therefore, according to this logic, any special measures to help blacks or latinos or women means that they are getting 'privileged' treatment and that everyone else — that is white males — is being discriminated against.

## Punctures

A brief look at the reality of American society today punctures this myth.

The infant mortality rate for blacks is nearly twice that for whites. Black children go to schools that are frequently segregated in practice, and they receive far less money per pupil for education than white children do.

According to official Labor Department figures for unemploy-



**BRIAN WEBER.** His challenge to affirmative action underscores the real meaning and importance of labor solidarity.



ment during the third quarter of 1978, 8.5 per cent of black men twenty years of age or older were out of work, compared to 3.6 per cent for white males; 10.6 per cent of black women of the same age category were unemployed, compared to 5.4 per cent for white women; and 34.8 per cent of black youths of both sexes aged between sixteen and nineteen were jobless, compared to 13.7 per cent for white youths.

For those who get jobs, discrimination is just as rampant. The Labor Department figures for average weekly earnings of full-time workers in May 1978 bear this out:

Whitemen	\$279
Black men	213
Hispanic men	201
White women	167
Black women	156
Hispanic women	141

These low wages for blacks, latinos, and women exist for one fundamental reason: they're profitable.

As a fact sheet on the Weber case published by Machinists Local 685 in San Diego pointed out: 'The

companies profit from keeping workers divided and thereby driving down wages and working conditions for all. They are the only ones who stand to gain by pushing blacks, women, and Chicanos down even further.'

Against this background, oppressed nationalities and women realised that special measures were required to help them overcome the handicaps they continued to be shackled with and gain equality.

They demanded 'affirmative action' — special preferential programmes — to ensure that they were hired for previously segregated or all-male jobs, received training for more skilled positions, or were admitted to universities and educational programmes previously closed to them in practice if not by law.

Under the pressure of these demands for affirmative action (which often took the form of legal suits against discriminatory practices by schools or companies and sometimes unions), the first real affirmative action programmes were

instituted in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Universities were forced to reserve a certain number of openings for black students and others from oppressed national minorities, especially in those departments that had been almost exclusively white, such as medicine and law.

Similar gains were made against discrimination on the job. One significant victory came in early 1973, when the communications giant AT&T was found guilty of discriminating against women and minority workers. It was forced to provide back pay to those workers who had been discriminated against; raise wages for women, blacks and latinos; and begin an affirmative action programme that was to guarantee a certain percentage of skilled jobs to women.

About a year later, the United Steelworkers of America union negotiated affirmative action agreements covering nearly a million USWA members, the most extensive in any industry thus far. The programme at Kaiser Gramercy was part of that.

These affirmative action programmes have so far made only a small dent in the huge discriminatory barriers in education and employment. But despite their limited nature, the ruling class fears the gains that women and oppressed national minorities have already been able to wrest from them.

It fears that the existing programmes could serve as springboards for further struggles and more extensive gains. It fears the unifying and radicalising influence that affirmative action is having on the working class.

For these reasons, it launched a concerted offensive against affirmative action almost as soon as the first programmes were implemented. Since the mid-1970s, literally hundreds of 'reverse discrimination' suits have been filed.

Some groups on the American left oppose affirmative action, claiming that it divides the working class. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, failure by the labour movement to fight for the special needs of women, black and latino workers would only play into the hands of the ruling class as it tries to perpetuate its divide-and-rule policies.

## Prejudices

Affirmative action is an essential tool for building working class solidarity. Struggles in defence of the most oppressed strata of workers actually strengthen the entire class.

They break down the racist and sexist prejudices that impede workers unity. They educate the working class to think in broad social terms. They help to build the unions by winning greater confidence and participation from women and the oppressed national minorities.

Affirmative action, finally, is a crucial component of the fight to transform the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle.

It does this in part by strengthening working class solidarity and by orienting the unions toward broad political questions. It tends to weaken the positions of the class-collaborationist union bureaucracies, which base themselves on the most privileged strata of the working class.

It aids the fight to democratise the unions. Especially important, it draws the most militant fighters into active leadership roles and begins to assemble those forces capable of leading the American workers forward.

The importance of affirmative action struggles in the United States is a reflection of the impact of both the women's and black liberation movements, but especially of the vanguard role of the black struggle. As a result, American workers have learned vital lessons about the basis on which class solidarity is forged.

On this question of affirmative action, the American working class is more advanced than workers in any other country. Though they still have many other things to learn, this one particular acquisition helps arm them more effectively for the even bigger class battles that are already in sight.

## WHAT'S LEFT

**POSTERS** showing arrest of Hugo Blanco by the Peruvian army. 50p each, funds to be shared by IMG Fund Drive and Peruvian PRT. Write for poster, enclosing 10p for p&g, to R.D. Duckworth, 35 Malvern Avenue, Frenchwood, Preston.

**WANDSWORTH** Rock against Racism Gig. Crisis, Reafer and Disco. £1 (75p wageless). Thursday 21 June, 8-11 pm. St. Anne's, Venn Street, London SW4.

**BRITISH PREMIERE** benefit screening of Arthur Mac Caig's *THE PATRIOT GAME*. A powerful and analytical feature-length documentary on Northern Ireland. Captures the spirit of the nationalist resistance and shows what the British media cannot show. Presented by The Other Cinema and UJOM at the Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, London SW1 on Sunday 24 June at 4.30 and 7.30 pm. Adm. £1.50. Tickets available in advance from The Other Cinema, 12-13 Little Newport Street, London WC2.

**WANTED!** Full-time refuge worker for Hackney Women's Aid. Write: HWA, 37 Cecilia Road, E8 for details.

**WOMEN'S WAGES:** Can we benefit from the free-for-all? Speakers include Kerry Scholt (Economist), Bea Campbell (Red Rag), Tessa Woodcraft (Nalga, in personal capacity). Thursday 14 June, 7.30pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

**MIKE KUNZ** (formerly of Berns) please contact Irish History Workshop, c/o Box UT, 76B, Digbeth, Birmingham B56DY, re cartoon history.

**MALE GAY** socialist seeks cheap and spacious living space. East/South London from Autumn. Tel: Roland 01-274 999 daytime.

**SMASH ALL** Immigration Controls! MASS PICKET of Harmondsworth Detention Centre, Heathrow. Saturday 21 July 2.00pm. Organised by Revolutionary Communist Tendency; supported by black and anti-racist organis-

ions. Contact BM RCT, London WC1V 6XX for details.

**RADIO** Citta Futura is a free radio station of the revolutionary Left in Rome. It was featured in the recent Granada TV programme 'Chain Reaction'. The comrades of RCF will be organising a series of talks and film shows in Britain this July on 'Free Radio and the changing political situation in Italy'. If you would like us to come to your town, please write to us at this address: RCF, via dei Marsi 22, 00185 ROMA, Italy.

**BROADSIDE** Theatre, a London based socialist touring group, requires: 1. a second administrator (graphic design skill an advantage); 2. a versatile female performer (including singing). Both full time. Long term commitment. Write giving full details of experience, skills, politics, approach to theatre and reasons for wanting to work with Broadside to 55 Holbein House, Holbein Place, London SW1. For further details phone 01-478 2581.

**CAMPAIGN** Against Racism and Fascism — CARF — new address from May 79. CARF, Box 12, c/o 136 Kingsland High St, London E8 2NS.

**REVOLUTIONARY** Communism: Tendency. Racial oppression — how to fight it. Second of three forums on how to build working class defence against attacks on black communities. 15 June. British imperialism and racism — the experience of the last 30 years. Kevin Green.

## STUDENT COMMUNITY ACTION NEWCASTLE

needs a new Coordinator

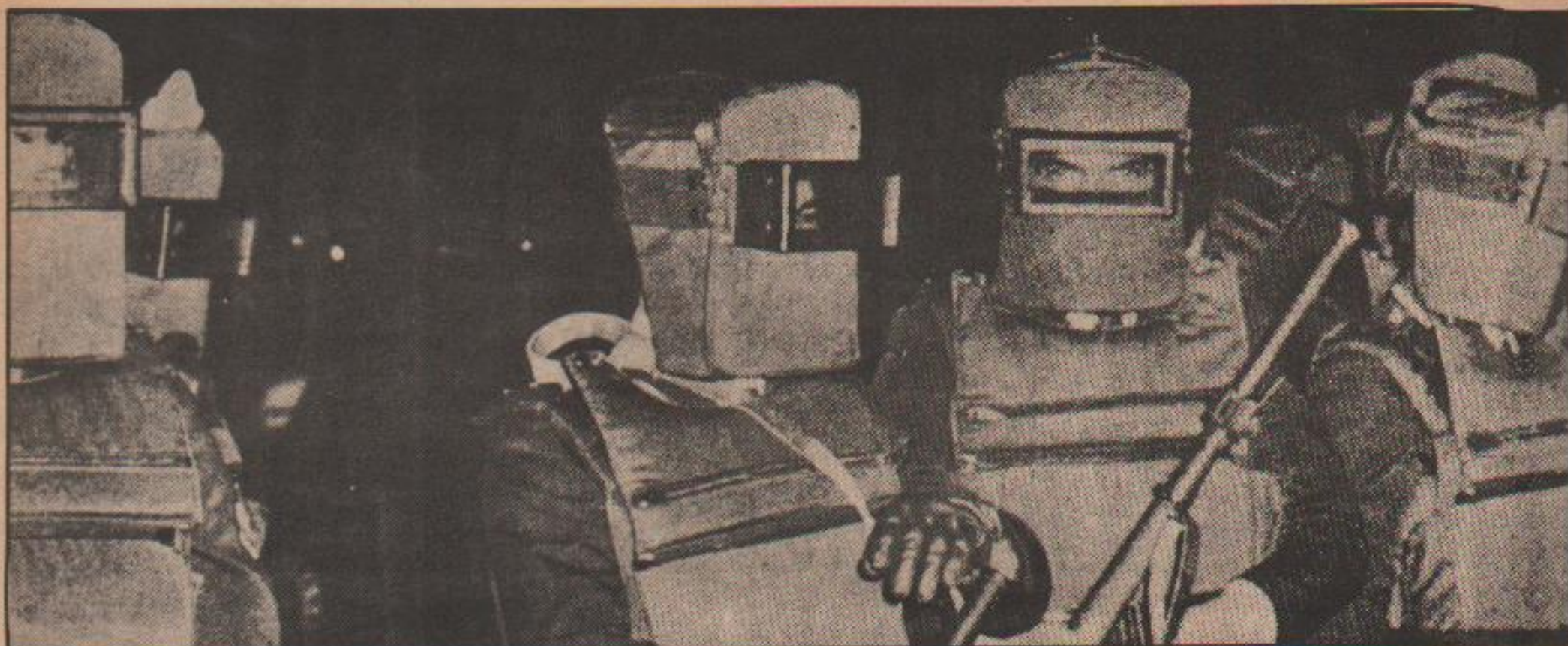
To structure and organise the next stage of the group's development. The job entails administration, liaison, publicity, funding application, research into new areas of work, etc., etc.

Experience an asset, ability to make ideal work is vital.

Fixed term contract of 2 plus years.  
Salary negotiable.

Details from: Tim Lett, SCAN, c/o Students Union, Kings Walk, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1.





Italian riot police in bullet-proof gear.

## Stalemate continues in Italy

By Martin Meteyard

**NO CHANGE.** That was the outcome of the general election in Italy on 2-3 June. The stalemate in Italian political life continues, exactly reflecting that between the capitalists and the working class.

Much was made of the fact that the vote of the Communist Party (PCI) fell by a full 4 per cent to 30.4 per cent. But it still held on to half its gains in the 1976 election.

What is more, this didn't benefit Italy's ruling party, the Christian Democrats, whose vote also declined slightly. Many of the PCI's lost votes seem to have gone to a militant protest group, the Radical Party (whose share rose from 1.3 to 3.4 per cent). The far left's vote also went up from 1.5 to 2.2 per cent.

### Austerity

This stalemate reflects one simple fact: the capitalists' austerity policy, pursued since 1976 with the active collaboration of the PCI, hasn't been able to inflict any substantial defeat on the central sections of the working class.

It's not for want of trying on the PCI leaders' part. They have made concession after concession as the price for inching closer to their perspective of a government of 'national unity'.

In July 1977 the PCI signed a joint agreement with all the parliamentary parties except the fascists of the MSI and the far left and the Radicals. This accepted the principle of a reduction in labour costs, mobility of labour, and redundancies.

But a principle is one thing; to carry it out quite another. Working class resistance on the ground culminated in a huge strike by

metalworkers and a 200,000-strong march through Rome on 2 December 1977.

The PCI used this not to launch a struggle in defence of working class interests, but as a bargaining counter with the Christian Democrats to show what forces could be let loose if they didn't play ball in the PCI's parliamentary game. At the beginning of 1978 the PCI finally made it into the 'parliamentary majority' supporting the new government headed by Christian Democrat leader Andreotti.

### Clarity

And the consequences for the working class? They were spelt out with startling clarity by PCI trade union leader Luciano Lama in an interview in the Italian paper *La Repubblica* (28 January 1978):

'The union is proposing that the workers follow a policy of sacrifices. Not marginal sacrifices, but substantial sacrifices...

'We can no longer force companies to keep on a number of workers in excess of their productive possibilities, nor can we continue to demand that the lay-off fund go on forever paying the surplus workers their wages...

'Therefore...we maintain that when it has been ascertained that companies are in a state of crisis, they should have the right to fire.'

The union proposes...but the working class disposes. This year's annual report by the president of the Italian bosses' organisation, Confindustria, deplored the gap between the good intentions of the PCI and union leaders and their inability to deliver their base.

The resistance of the core sections of the working class has preserved the bulk of its gains. The sliding scale, whereby wages keep

pace with inflation, has been modified but not done away with. Redundancies have been largely fought off despite Lama's promises to the bosses.

But others have suffered: weakly organised workers, women, youth (who make up 75 per cent of the unemployed). They have been the first victims of the big price rises and cuts in social spending which are part of austerity. It was their votes which contributed to the PCI's big advance in 1976 — and which it has now lost again.

The other aspect of the PCI's collaboration with the Christian Democrats has been its backing for the government's law and order policies. It has voted for the extension of police powers (the Reale Law), backed the strengthening of the repressive apparatus, and actively encouraged a witch-hunt against the far left.

These strong state measures, justified in the name of 'fighting terrorism', are already being used against the working class. Factory delegates at the Italsider plant in Genoa are among the latest to be hauled in for alleged connections with the Red Brigades. And the FLM union is now being sued by the engineering bosses' federation, Federmeccanica, for 'illegal' strikes and picketing.

### Uncertain

But the future remains uncertain. There is talk now of a return to the 'centre-left' formula with a coalition government between the Christian Democrats and the Socialist Party (PSI). But for all their anti-Communist bluster, the capitalists have to come to some arrangement with the PCI; they have to give it something to offer its base.

The entry of the PCI into government would certainly give it something to induce its membership to go easy on the struggle. But it also holds out the very real danger that the expectations which such a development would arouse in the masses could bring their militancy to boiling point.

So a more likely solution is perhaps the inclusion of some pro-PCI independents in the government as a temporary compromise pending further manoeuvres.

### Prolonging

One factor prolonging this crisis is the total inability of the far left to offer any alternative solution. The PDUP, which won 1.4 per cent of the vote and six MPs, spends most of its efforts in trying to get the PCI to 'turn left'; while the other far left slate, the 'New United Left' which polled 0.8 per cent and got no MPs, is mainly marked by its turn away from the labour movement towards 'new social layers'.

But the shape of an alternative, though not as yet in an organised form, is beginning to emerge in the widespread discussions taking place at the base of the unions. This is particularly true in the FLM, where the Trotskyists of the GCR have started to win some small influence, and where the leadership has already been forced to launch a struggle for a 38-hour week and an across-the-board rise.

Through a fight to unify and centralise struggles around such demands, and to elaborate an alternative workers' plan to end the crisis, with the demand that the PCI and PSI end their class collaboration and form a government based on the trade unions and the mobilisation of the masses, the present agitation in the ranks can pave the way for an organised alternative.

## EEC poll misfires

By John Marston

THE European Parliament is virtually powerless. But it is one in a series of interlocking Common Market institutions which together are intended to coordinate capitalist attacks on the working class, as well as the exploited masses of the 'Third World'.

It was the need to give some popular legitimacy to these institutions — rather urgent with the approach of a new recession — which lay behind the calling of last week's direct elections. But this manoeuvre wasn't altogether successful, as the low turn-out showed.

Only in the two countries where voting is compulsory (Belgium and Luxembourg), as well as in Italy (where it is a 'civic duty' laid down in

the constitution), did the turn-out bear any relation to national election figures. Otherwise the additional number who stayed at home varied between 18 per cent (Ireland) and 45 per cent (Britain, where the turn-out was only 31.3 per cent).

So it is going to be difficult to pretend that the EEC's institutions now have some popular mandate — particularly in Britain.

Here the Tories won 60 seats with the support of only 16 per cent of those entitled to vote. The lack of proportional representation (pathetically justified by some Labour leaders on the grounds that we shouldn't have anything to do with such a nasty Continental idea) made the whole thing even more farcical, with each Labour member representing more than twice as many votes as

each Tory.

Furthermore, an ITN poll showed a direct link between the massive abstention in Britain and opposition to the Common Market. Their sample showed anti-EEC feeling running at 2 to 1 among non-voters, with two-thirds of those voting pro-EEC. If accurate on a national scale, this would show 55 per cent against the EEC — a position hardly reflected in the choice of candidates available.

So what of those who offered a socialist alternative to the bosses' Common Market? The Trotskyist Fourth International ran a campaign for a United Socialist States of Europe in all nine EEC countries (as well as the three applying to join), but was only able to stand candidates in four.

By far the most successful campaign was run in France. Here the FI's section, the LCR, ran a common slate with *Lutte Ouvrière* (Workers Struggle). This won 622,506 votes (3.09 per cent), which should have

ensured the election of two members — except that the French parliament laid down that 5 per cent was necessary to have anyone elected.

The meetings addressed by the slate's two main candidates, Arlette Laguiller (LO) and Alain Krivine (LCR), were consistently well attended. The real interest in an internationalist alternative to the rabid chauvinism of the Communist Party and the pro-imperialist stand of the Socialist Party was also reflected in some of the local votes.

In the big industrial belt around Calais, for instance, where many workers are threatened with redundancy, the Trotskyist slate won more than 4 per cent.

Elsewhere revolutionary candidates, despite a generally successful campaign, fared less well in the vote. Tariq Ali, standing in the West London constituency, won 1,635 votes (just under 1 per cent). The Trotskyist slate in Belgium won 0.3 per cent. Figures were not available at

the time of going to press for the Trotskyist slate in Luxembourg.

Bernadette McAliskey's anti-imperialist candidature in the North of Ireland won more than 34,000 first preference votes. We will analyse the results of this campaign in next week's issue.

### Intercontinental Press

combined with IMPRECOR

THE situation in Nicaragua is the subject of a lengthy article in the latest issue of *Intercontinental Press/Imprecor* (Vol. 17, No. 22), which also covers developments in Iran, South Africa, Kampuchea, and Japan.

Single copies of the journal cost 30p plus 10p p&p, but subscriptions work out much cheaper at £2.50 for an introductory offer of 10 issues, £5 for six months (24 issues), and £9 for a year (48 issues). Please make out cheques to 'Intercontinental Press' and send to: IP/I, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



# The importance of Muldergate

By John Hunt

IT WOULD be tempting to see the resignation of President Vorster of South Africa as the concluding chapter of a meaningless and squalid affair which merely illustrates the corruption of the apartheid regime.

In fact it has profound consequences for the future because of the structure of South African politics.

The ruling Nationalist Party was built as an alliance of the Afrikaner workers and petty-bourgeoisie with aspiring Afrikaner capitalism, and cemented by the Nationalists' promise to protect the high wages and political dominance of the whites

had Rhoadie been shut up.

Instead he went to Europe, revealing that Vorster and Finance Minister Owen Horwood had been in on the deal, and giving an extended interview to the BBC. Mulder then backed up his allegations against Vorster.

The best option for Prime Minister PW Botha was therefore to ditch Vorster quickly, in the hope that he and Horwood would be spared. The final report of the Erasmus Commission duly obliged.

But the scandal has come at a very bad time for Botha, coinciding with a systematic attempt by the government to restructure apartheid.

The Riekert commission has

Reared on crude racism, they see this modernisation of apartheid as a capitulation to the blacks. White miners have already gone on strike against any such 'concessions'.

These fears of the Afrikaner workers and petty-bourgeoisie have combined with their moral horror at Muldergate to produce a sharp swing towards those who can show themselves more consistent racists than Botha.

Andries Treurnicht, an ultra-rightist, recently beat PW Botha's nominee for the Transvaal leadership of the Nationalist Party. And last week the NP's majority was slashed in a by-election as the Herstigte National Party — which takes the view that Botha is selling out to Communism — increased its vote from 530 to 2,428.

Botha's ability to avoid a political explosion in South Africa through minimal concessions to the black masses is now seriously threatened by a revolt on the right of his party which has been fuelled by Muldergate. Further revelations in the affair could thus prove decisive.

\*Picket South Africa House [Trafalgar Square] on third anniversary of Soweto uprising — Saturday 16 June, 1pm. Organised by Black Consciousness Movement.

AN immediate point of interest for the British left is the information which has emerged about the South African Department of Information's operations in Britain. This prompts a number of questions.

\*Who are the two Labour MPs who, according to Dr Rhoadie, the disgraced former head of the department, were paid to lobby for South Africa in the House of Commons and to spy on the Anti-Apartheid movement?

\*What has the TUC done to investigate the payment of R100,000 to leading trade unionists in Western Europe, in order to induce them to sabotage the week of action against South Africa organised by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in January 1977?

\*What were the results of the purchase of 50 per cent of the British/US newsagency UPI-TN by the South Africans?

A public inquiry initiated by the labour movement would undoubtedly come up with some very interesting answers. Which may be why the TUC and Labour Party leaders haven't shown any great eagerness to delve more deeply into the whole business.

THE most extraordinary part of Muldergate has yet to be revealed.

On 22 November 1977, Robert and Jeanne-Cora Smit were found murdered in their Johannesburg home. Rumours soon began to circulate that Robert Smit, a top-ranking finance expert, had been investigating a currency swindle involving highly placed people. PW Botha has denied this, and police say that they know of no connection with Muldergate — but reporters investigating the case have been repeatedly harassed.

A journalist on Rapport, a pro-government paper, was charged by the Press Council when he wrote that the police had admitted a link with Muldergate. And a Johannesburg Sunday Express reporter was tried in camera after writing that two German hit-men had been used in the killing.

Nevertheless, in March a well known jurist and conservative, Judge Ludorff, announced that a mercenary, Sydney Excell, had made a statement to him declaring that he had flown two hit-men into the country to carry out the murder. The police hysterically denounced Ludorff's story... but the truth won't remain hidden for ever.

against any encroachment by the blacks.

This was ideologically underpinned by the Afrikaner Calvinist religion, according to which they should be upright, direct and moral in their dealings with each other, but always ready to strike down the enemies of the Lord's anointed.

In line with this moral dualism, they support brutal measures against black activists, but see evidence of corruption by Afrikaner politicians as a heinous betrayal of the Nationalist tradition.

The first sacrifices by the government on the altar of this tradition were former Department of Information head Rhoadie, Cabinet Minister Connie Mulder, and BOSS security chief General van den Bergh. But last December's report of the Erasmus Commission cleared Vorster, and all would have been well —

recommended that responsibility for enforcing the hated pass laws should largely be taken over by the employers; that black-owned businesses should be allowed to operate in 'white' areas; and that black workers should have the right to stay in the urban areas.

The Wiehahn commission has recommended that for the first time registered black unions should be established (although with much state restriction and interference) and that some forms of racial discrimination should be reduced (though not eliminated).

This is an intelligent strategy to maintain the status quo by trying to co-opt the black bourgeoisie, petty-bourgeoisie, and trade union bureaucracy in order to hold back the struggles of the black masses.

The problem is that many Afrikaners don't see it that way.

## Trotskyists arrested in Iran clashes

AFTER the bitter fighting between Arabs and the army in Southern Iran a fortnight ago, the Bazargan government has climbed down. A peace treaty drawn up between Arab representatives and the Bazargan-appointed governor general of the province of Khuzestan conceded some of the Arab demands. In particular it was agreed that some of those taken prisoner during the fighting will be released.

There is no news however of seven Iranian Trotskyists who have disappeared after being arrested by a local 'Imam' committee.

The Arabs, an oppressed nationality in Iran's rich oil-producing Khuzestan province, started the fight for their rights on 27 April. A mass demonstration in Khorramshahr demanded an end to the harassment of their religious leader Sheikh Kaghani.

It was in Khorramshahr that the fiercest fighting took place a month later. 'Revolutionary guards' and Iranian Army regulars turned their guns on the Arab Cultural Centre in the city, arresting 46 people.

At the same time raids took place against Arab militants throughout Khuzestan. In the town of Ahwaz, nine members of the HKS [Socialist Workers Party], the Iranian section of the Fourth International, were also

arrested.

Only two of those arrested are being held in prison. Seven others had all their clothes and personal possessions removed from their houses and have disappeared. In a press conference in Tehran, HKS leaders expressed fears for their lives.

The arrests were not unexpected however. The local 'Imam' committee has previously threatened that all 60 members of the HKS in Ahwaz would be arrested because of leaflets they had distributed supporting the demands of Arabs and Kurds for self-determination.

The weekly paper of the HKS, Kargar [The Worker], also carried a long interview with a militant of the Political Front of the Arab People.

Abdul Rafursuleh's message was that: 'Our fight is inseparable from that of other oppressed nationalities. We hope that the Iranian working class, which shut down the factories and shut off the oil, will get its rights, because it has yet not done so... It is the working class that is going to reconstruct Iranian society.'

[Messages appealing for the release of the HKS members should be sent to Mehdi Bazargan, Prime Minister, Tehran, Iran, and to the Islamic Revolutionary Council, Tehran, Iran. Further information from Socialist Challenge].



## Peru student hunger strike

STUDENT unrest in Cuzco, Southern Peru, came to a head during the final week of May. Protest against the limitation of places in higher education showed itself in the streets with marches and one-day strikes by all school children and students.

The strongest of these protests began over two weeks ago as 40 young men and women attended mass at the church of the Templo de la Compania de Jesus on the Plaza de Armas. After the service they barricaded themselves in the church and declared a hunger strike in support of student demands.

Sixteen days later six people had been evacuated and hospitalised. The strength of the student feeling for their cause was illustrated by scenes we witnessed when two more of the hunger strikers were dramatically brought out.

As the church bells tolled, each of the sick students, seemingly unconscious from lack of food, was strapped to a pew and precariously lowered some 30 feet into the waiting arms of friends and supporters packing the square below. They were hurriedly rushed off to a nearby medical post, where their condition was said to be serious. The hunger strike continues in earnest as negotiations with university officials have failed so far to satisfy the students' demands.

# NO TORY SELLOUT IN ZIMBABWE

ASSEMBLE: 2.30PM SMITHFIELDS MARKET FARRINGDON TUBE

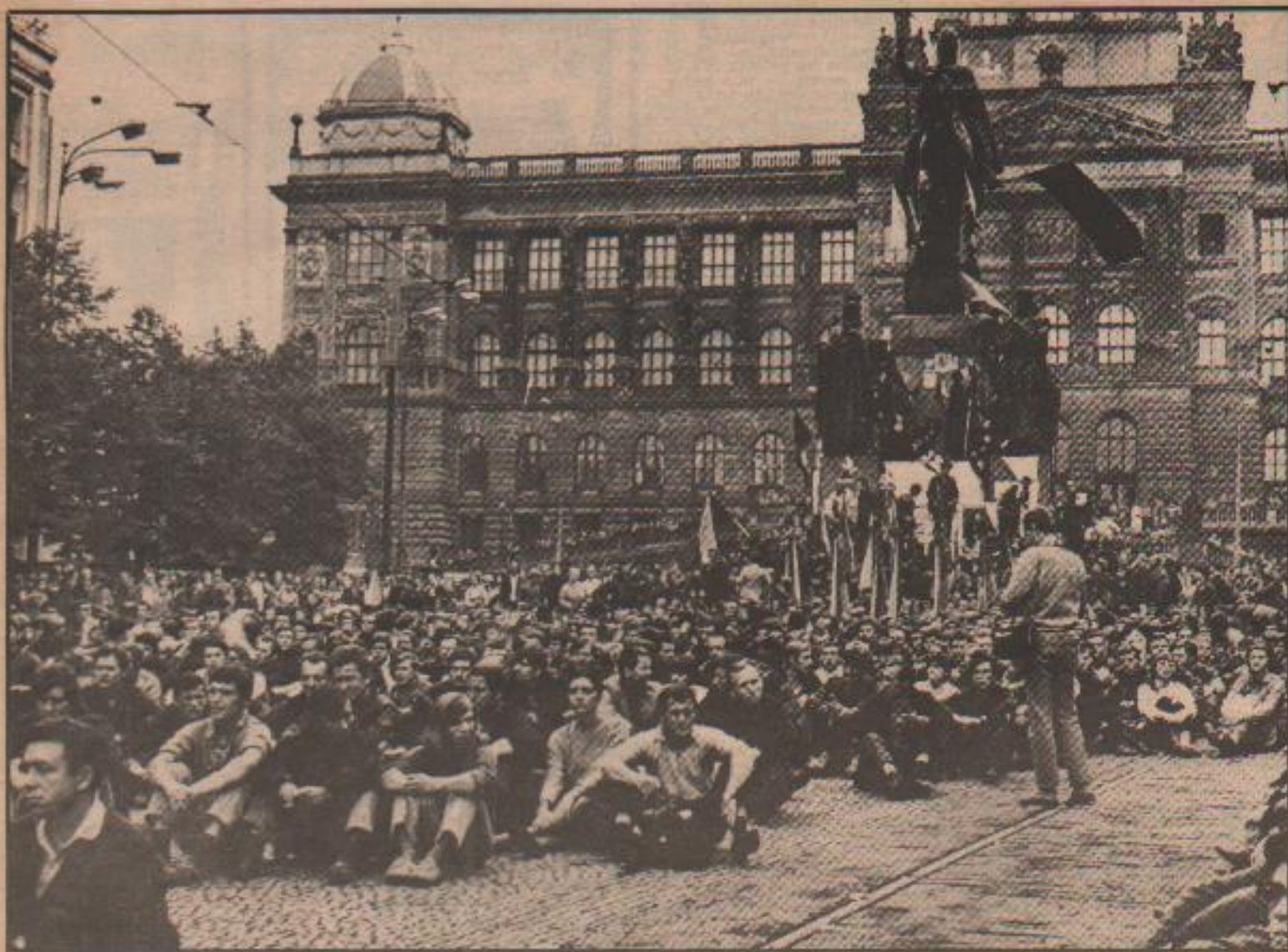
SATURDAY JUNE 30

MARCH VIA FLEET STREET & RHODESIA HOUSE

TO TRAFALGAR SQUARE RALLY AT 4PM







## Arrested Czech speaks out

# 'People must be able to make their own decisions'

**PETRUHL**, editor of the information bulletin produced by the Charter 77 civil rights movement in Czechoslovakia, faces up to ten years in prison on charges of 'subversion of a dangerous character' after being arrested on 29 May.

Seven other Charter activists face sentences of up to five years on charges of subversion 'of a less serious kind'.

Uhl has been active as a revolutionary socialist since before the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Below, in extracts from an interview carried out in January 1979, he explains his view of revolutionary politics.

### When did you become a Marxist?

I became a Marxist while I was still at college. I was very much influenced by the courses on Marxism, especially those of Professor Jiri Hermach. This was 1958-63. It is interesting for me that today Professor Hermach is one of the signatories of the Charter.

At the beginning I was a reformist. I had a critique of the bureaucratic system but I thought that the faults could be overcome gradually. I was very politicised by my experiences in France during the 1960s. I was there for two months in 1965, then again in 1967, and three times in 1968.

In Paris in 1965 there was this internal crisis and debate in the Communist Party's student organisation, the UEC. There were three tendencies: a 'pro-Italian' (Togliatti) tendency, the Trotskyists, and the Stalinists. This is where I first met Alain Krivine, the leader of the Trotskyist tendency.

I took part in all the big battles. I prepared myself for the discussions and I intervened. I also took part actively in their work. I used to hand out leaflets with the pro-Italian tendency.

I brought back with me from France the famous letter of the Polish dissidents Kuron and Modzelewski. When the Prague Spring, the democratisation process, began in Czechoslovakia in 1968 I translated it into Czech and the Student Parliament in Prague published it and

distributed it.

We made about a thousand copies. It was possible to do that then, the bureaucratic structures were loosening up. The translation and publication of the Kuron letter was my first important political act.

### What was your personal involvement in 1968?

In Prague, in the spring of 1968, there was a left-wing discussion club organised by Zbyně Fiser (a philosopher, poet, at the time a Maoist, a propagandist of the Peking line, but also in favour of self-organisation and workers' councils). This question of self-organisation and workers' councils was in fact the main issue of discussion in the club.

I played an active role in this club and was the editor of its Information Bulletin. The club was really an amalgam of the far left, the Stalinists, a few Khrushchevites, and so on. We had about one hundred in Prague, more in the provinces. The club disintegrated at the time of the invasion.

I was also active in the trade union movement. At the time I was a teacher in the Prague Technical College. There was a trade union committee of eight people elected by the college and I was elected to this committee in April 1968.

Through my position in the union structure I was able to participate in union activity at a national level. I was a delegate to national conferences, for instance, and was able to intervene at this level.

After August I looked for a new milieu to work in. The club had disintegrated. My union was far too weak and also too reformist to offer any real possibility. I was a teacher, and not in industry, so the question of workers' control didn't arise in such an immediate way in my union.

At this point I linked into the student milieu. I had many friends in the Arts Faculty and also in my own faculty from student days. I played an active role in the student strike in November 1968 and out of this strike we formed the Movement of Revolutionary Youth (MRY).

### What role did you play in the creation of the

### MRY? What were its activities?

I played a very central role. My comrades were generally about 24-25 years of age. I was 28, experienced, had been abroad, knew the revolutionary movement in Western Europe, had read and so on.

In the beginning the MRY was a discussion group. It was open; its manifesto was distributed publicly, read publicly at student meetings. But gradually it became more and more clear that we couldn't appear publicly at all.

We produced at this time and distributed a 100-page document which was mostly extracts from Trotsky, Bukharin, three or four articles from Czech Marxists, the Praxis group, Djilas and so on. These all dealt with political, social and philosophical questions and the goal of this action was to promote discussion on the nature of the political and social system. This was done clandestinely.

The MRY had no stable structure. It was very spontaneous. We attempted to form cells but that failed. In June 1969 we discussed what we would do for the first anniversary of the invasion in August.

Some tracts of a nationalist character already existed, so we decided that we would prepare a Marxist tract. There was no committee which decided this; it was a result of very spontaneous discussions in the group. But under which name could we produce such a tract?

It wasn't possible for us to publish it as the MRY because everyone knew who we were and the police would know who to go for. So we picked on the name Revolutionary Socialist Party as a cover-name for the MRY.

There were two tracts produced, a Manifesto and an Appeal to Youth. I was the principal author of the Manifesto. When it was finished there were a few people who were not happy with it. They then wrote the Appeal to the Youth. But the Appeal was actually a very good text. It was less ideological, but good.

After August 1969 the brutality of the police was so great, and was increasing, that we decided to establish an illegal movement. It was still not a party, but we were much more rigidly organised. We had cells, a co-ordinating

committee, a division of labour and of responsibility.

We were very much against spontaneism but we didn't yet make any attempt at democratic centralism. We were about 100 people. We had a clandestine journal and in the autumn of 1969 we were able to distribute leaflets.

But the political situation was generally very unfavourable. Because we were clandestine we were penetrated by the police. Soon 19 out of 100 were in prison. I got four years.

### What kind of balance sheet would you make now of the MRY experience?

It was a very positive experience. It was one whole year of concentrated political activity, political activity in a free movement, freely associated. This was something extremely important for us. All our organisations before that were controlled by the state, just as they are now once again.

Nevertheless, it was wrong to found this clandestine organisation in August 1969, because clandestinity can only lead to sectarianism, passivity, and isolation.

I don't say that clandestinity is wrong in general, or that it is always wrong in the states of the Eastern block. But clandestinity is a phenomenon linked to retreat or defeat of the revolutionaries.

Positively, it can conserve revolutionary consciousness. But in the 20th century, in the bureaucratised and degenerated states of Eastern Europe, it is not possible to wage an effective struggle against the political system if we exist in clandestinity.

### In the MRY in 1969 you were no longer, shall we say, of the 'pro-Italian' tendency of 1965, but a Trotskyist, a revolutionary Marxist. How did you come to Trotskyism?

Already during the Prague Spring in 1968 I was a revolutionary Marxist and I said so openly in the club. I wasn't a member of the Fourth International but I received all the documents of the FI and my best friends were in the French Section.

Also, shortly before 1968, in 1966-67, I had read Trotsky in Czech. I read *The Revolution Betrayed* and a collection of Trotsky's writings from 1927-28. But most important for me were his histories of the Russian Revolution, both 1905 and 1917. Those two works are a great 'school of revolution'.

I am not a nostalgic Trotskyist. I make a critical analysis of what Trotsky has written and done. Actually I don't like the word Trotskyism and I prefer to speak simply of revolutionary Marxism.

It is wrong to say that there are two antipodes, Trotskyism and Stalinism. I am part of a movement which opposes capitalism and imperialism and consequently I oppose Stalinism. It is my anti-capitalism which is the basis of my political consciousness, and it is this anti-capitalism which takes me to Trotskyism.

I maintain that the only solution to the Czech situation is not bourgeois democracy — although it has more freedoms than we have here now — but a completely different social system, based on self-organisation, with the political structures of a direct democracy, with a real emancipation of the working class, of youth, of women.

When I speak here of organs of direct democracy, of self-organisation, this does not mean I am against parties. What I am against is a system where people cannot make their own decisions but someone else makes decisions for them.

I am in favour of political parties, with clubs, papers, radio and television, agitation and propaganda and the freedom for parties to make proposals, suggestions, present political alternatives which people can choose to follow if they wish — not only follow but participate in.

Parties are a means of politicisation, of education. But they are not organs or exercisers of power. Power must be in the organs of the working class and not in the parties. The workers in the councils, in the organs of direct democracy are not responsible to any parties but only to those who elected them.

**BOTH the Committee in Defence of Czechoslovak Socialists and the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign are taking up the Charter arrests. They are asking immediately for the largest possible number of labour movement protest telegrams to be sent to the Czechoslovak Embassy, 25 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8.**

**Copies of all such protests should be sent to: 'Czech Defence', 328 Upper Street, London N1 for forwarding to the Charter in Prague. Messages of solidarity can also be sent to: Anna Sabntova, Anglicka 8, Prague 2, Czechoslovakia.**



Race Relations Act

AFTER Southall the government may soon have to make some move against the National Front. The question is: what move?

It can treat the whole thing as a 'public order' problem, in which case it will hand greater discretionary powers to the police under the Public Order Act to stop meetings 'liable to cause a breach of the peace'. Or it can treat the problem for what it really is — a question of racialism — and instigate effective proceedings against the NF under the Race Relations Act for inciting racial hatred.

If we were demanding the use of the Race Relations Act, we would be in a much stronger position than we are today. Instead of making up 'laws' of our own ('no platform for fascists'), we should be demanding that the authorities implement the Race Relations Act, which the NF contravenes every time it opens its mouth.

Why aren't the police implementing the law, for which they are supposed to be responsible? This is the point we should be making. If the police were seen as defending those they should be prosecuting, then the responsibility for riots would fall on the police, and it would be understood why anti-racists sometimes 'take the law into their own hands'.

In reality the police are the law-breakers, yet we permit them to appear as well-intentioned umpires between two groups of extremists who come along to 'smash' each other up.

Also, by ignoring the Act, we needlessly declare ourselves 'enemies of free speech'. What the NF say is already proscribed by the law itself.

This is not to argue against mass action or self-defence. But it is one thing to depend on the law, quite another to foolishly disregard it, ignore it, or refuse to approach it politically.

The state will intervene against the NF in one way or another. But the way the Front is attacked is even more important than the mere fact of the suppression of this puny group. At the end of the day, how will the police appear? How will the left appear? How many new laws will be on the statute book? These are the questions we should consider.

The time has come for the far left to drop its mindless hostility to the Race Relations Act and, from now on, campaign actively for it to be used against the Front.

DAVE BAILEY (London)

'Deer Hunter' stinks

MY complaint about *The Deer Hunter* was not so much the film itself, but the extravagant publicity which preceded it. We were told that this was going to 'tell the real truth', 'show the American population the reality of US foreign policy' — heavy promises indeed, which dragged myself and many other people into the cinemas of the world. But did we get the real McCoy?



Napalming of innocent civilians? Government corruption? No. Instead we get nasty Orientals forcing our all-white boys to undergo the terror of Russian roulette. No, the film was a non-starter.

The most frightening thing happened in the intermission. While having a pint in the bar, I noticed a guy with his mates and he was pointing his finger like a gun. His target: a Chinese guy who happened to be at the other end of the bar. Coincidence? Draw your own conclusions.

Like the Merseyside air, *The Deer Hunter* stinks!  
LENNY KEIGHT (Merseyside)

Problem of Constituent Assembly

I WAS interested to follow your stimulating reports and analyses of the unfolding Iranian revolution over the last few months. One central problem, however, arises which does not appear to have been dealt with adequately within the pages of your paper.

Dave Frankel (18 January), for instance, argues that the main task of the present stage is to call for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly. While I think that the slogan for the immediate convocation of a Constituent Assembly is correct it is at the same time insufficient. Why? Because of the structural limitations of a Constituent Assembly — it is, after all, an institution par excellence of bourgeois democracy guaranteeing the hegemony and continuity of bourgeois rule — in representing the working class and facilitating its conquest of power.

Lenin, in an article written in April 1917 answering the question 'Should a Constituent Assembly be convened?', answered: 'Yes, as soon as possible. But there is only one way to assure its convocation and success, and that is by increasing the number and strength of the Soviets and arming the working class masses. That is the only guarantee...'

'While demanding the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, revolutionary Social Democracy has ever since the beginning of the Revolution of 1917 repeatedly emphasised that a

republic of Soviets is a higher form of democracy than the usual bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly' (emphasis in original).

Needless to say, I have no quarrel with Trotsky's article on China, 'The Slogan of a National Assembly in China' (2 April 1930), which Dave Frankel quotes extensively. The insurgent Iranian working class must nevertheless form organs of its own power — that is, workers' and soldiers' councils — which it can utilise effectively when the inevitable showdown with the Constituent Assembly occurs.

The focus for forming soviets can come through the call for a Constituent Assembly — that is, stressing the importance of workplace and neighbourhood working class organisation and no trust in the bourgeoisie — and other questions which are of paramount importance to the Iranian proletariat.

Anything short of that denies the whole perspective of permanent revolution. And unless the work for such a perspective begins immediately, and not by any stages, it will spell the bloody defeat of the Iranian working class.

JOHN EBEL (Melbourne, Australia)

THE LENGTH of letters printed will usually be kept down to 400 words in order to encourage as wide a range of contributions as possible. All letters may be cut at the Editor's discretion. Unsigned letters will not normally be published, although we will withhold real names from publication on request.

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Further details from CUL 11,  
16 King Street, London WC2.

SC under the Tories

'DIALOGUE, not monologue' should be the watchword of Socialist Challenge at a time when socialists are confronted with new political tasks. That was the view expressed by editor Tariq Ali in a contribution to a meeting of the paper's National Policy Committee a fortnight ago.

The NPC is the body elected by the Socialist Challenge conference in May 1978 to guide the broad editorial direction of the paper.

Dodie Wepler from the Editorial Board argued that a strong framework had been established by the paper with its insistence on the need for a global political alternative to the left of social democracy and the Communist Party. It was this which prevented the paper from succumbing to a 'crude anti-Toryism', as Theresa Conway from Manchester put it.

Within this framework, George Kerevan from Edinburgh maintained that the real test will be whether the paper can organise its readers and supporters when the struggles we think are on the agenda begin to occur. But this involves the staff getting out of the offices much more. 'The Ford strike was covered well in the paper — but we still haven't tackled how to improve our union coverage', said Kerevan.

'It's not just a question of making the articles shorter. For instance, I wish the militant from British Oxygen who spoke at the Socialist Challenge trade union conference had taken more space to explain to the paper's readers in detail exactly how they have developed strong shop floor organisation; what political prospects there are in the union in the fight for a socialist alternative; and so on.'

Steven Marks, a member of the International Socialist Alliance, agreed with this, and thought this could ensure that the paper reaches out beyond the organised left.

Socialist Challenge also needs to link up with the debate inside the labour movement which initially centred on why Labour lost the election. Steve Potter argued that this is especially important now that Benn is making a few more noises than when he was in the Cabinet.

Finally, Jude Woodward from the

Editorial Board presented proposals to step up the youth coverage in the paper during the summer months.

The much-debated issue of the Under Review page was tackled by the NPC for the first time. All comrades noted a tremendous improvement in the page. It is more accessible and is no longer dominated by one point of view.

It still remains a bit vague as to what appears on this page — and that will probably continue in the view of Geoffrey Sheridan, who edits the page — but the general approach was accepted. However, within this framework, Paul Highfield from Cardiff insisted — and others agreed — on more consistent television coverage.

The NPC noted the resignation from the staff of the paper's international editor, Richard Carver. He will continue to be a regular contributor, but will be replaced as international editor by Martin Meteyard.

One of the more important reports came from the paper's finance offices. Because of the failure to reach the £2,500 fund drive target for several quarters running, the crunch has finally come.

For this reason, it is impossible to continue the publication of a 16-page paper during the summer months. The IMG is therefore currently considering a cutback to 12 pages for July and August. Readers have been alerted for some time that this would occur if the financial situation was not reversed.

Furthermore, although sales went up by an average of 25 per cent or more during the election, they are dropping today. In light of these facts, it was agreed that the next NPC would plan an item on the fund drive for the paper.

Finally, this also informed the approach of the NPC to the proposal for a national Socialist Challenge conference in October. Most comrades on the NPC favoured a working conference on how to build the paper at every level: its sales, writing for it, organising supporters' groups, and so on.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

**NORTH WEST**  
MOSS SIDE Socialist Challenge supporters sell the paper at Moss Side Centre, Saturday, 11-1.  
MANCHESTER SC Centre has been closed because of fire damage, but will be reopening shortly. All mail/enquiries should meanwhile be sent via the paper's national office in London.  
OLDHAM SC group meets regularly at the Gardeners Arms, Middleton Road, Westwood. Next meeting Thurs 21 June, 7.30pm. 'The opposition in Eastern Europe'. Paper sales every Saturday, 11-1, outside Yorkshire Bank, High St. For further details tel. 061-652 7851.  
**NORTH EAST**  
MIDDLESBROUGH Socialist Challenge sales, Saturday lunchtime near the lorry stand at Cleveland Centre. Also available from Newsfare in Linthorpe Road.  
DURHAM Socialist Challenge Supporters Group. For details contact: Dave Brown, 2 Pioneer Cottages, Low Pitington, Durham.  
MIDDLESBROUGH paper sales, Saturday lunchtime at Cleveland Centre, near lorry stand opposite Wood's Baths. Also available from Newsfare in Linthorpe Road and Cleveland Centre.  
STOCKTON-ON-TYNE readers can buy Socialist Challenge and Revolution from the bookstall upstairs at Spencer Hill Road, Stockton. Stockton High St.  
**SCOTLAND**  
For information about the paper or to support its activities throughout Scotland, please contact Socialist Challenge Bookstall, Queen St, Glasgow. Open Wed, Thurs, Fri and Sat afternoons. Phone for alternative

arrangement (221 7481). Wide range of Fourth International publications.  
**HAMILTON** supporters sell Socialist Challenge every Saturday in the Hamilton shopping centre, 1-5pm. For details of local activities contact John Ford, 553 Elliot Crescent, Hamilton.  
**EDINBURGH** Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-346 0466 for details.  
**DUNDEE** Information about Socialist Challenge activities from 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Join in SC sales outside Boots (corner of Reform St) each Saturday 11am-2pm.  
**MIDLANDS**  
COVENTRY SC group meeting: 'New Technology'. Tues 26 June, 8pm, Wedge Bookshop.  
**BIRMINGHAM** supporters sell the paper outside New Street station every Saturday, 10-4. Phone 643 9209 for details of SC activities.  
**NOTTINGHAM** readers can buy Socialist Challenge regularly at Mushroom Books, Beeston St.  
**LEAMINGTON** Socialist Challenge group meets every other Sunday. Contact 311772.  
**YORKSHIRE**  
HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at the Friendly & Trades Club, Northumberland St.  
DEWBURY Socialist Challenge sales regularly on Saturday mornings in Westgate at the Nat.

Westminster Bank, 12.30-2.00pm.  
**LEEDS** Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday at City Centre Precinct, 11am-1.30pm. And at Elland Rd — when Leeds Utd are playing at home.  
**HUDDERSFIELD** Socialist Challenge sales regularly Saturdays 11am-1pm in the Piazza.  
**YORK** Socialist Challenge is on sale at the York Community Bookshop, 73 Walmgate or from sellers on Thursdays (12.30-1.45) at York University, Vanbrugh College. Saturdays (11.30-3.30) at Coney Street.  
**SOUTH WEST**  
FOR INFORMATION on activities in the South-West, write to Box 002, c/o Fullmarks, 113 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol 6.  
**SOUTHAMPTON** Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday Even 10am-12.30pm at the Post Office, Botolph Claydon.  
**BOSTON** Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday, 11am-1pm in the 'Hole in the Ground', Haymarket.  
**ISLE OF WIGHT** readers can buy Socialist Challenge from the Oz Shop, 44 London St, Ryde.  
**BATH** Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday, 2.3.30pm, outside Macficheries, Ring Bath 20298 for further details.

**SWINDON** supporters sell Socialist Challenge 11am-1pm Saturdays, Regent St (Bramall Centre).  
**PORTSMOUTH** Socialist Challenge sales, Saturdays 11.30am-1pm, Commercial Road Precinct.  
**SOUTH EAST**  
**NORWICH** Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday in Davey Place (opp. market) and bookstall Thursdays at University of East Anglia.  
**COLCHESTER** SC supporters meet regularly. For details phone Steve on Wivenhoe 2949.  
**BRIGHTON** SC forums fortnightly on Tuesdays. Contact Mick on 605052.  
**LONDON**  
TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Challenge Group meets every fortnight (phone 247 2717 for details).  
PADDINGTON/N. KENSINGTON supporters meet every Saturday 11am-1pm at the station. Also available from Newsfare in Linthorpe Road.  
WILLOW supporters sell every Saturday 2.30pm, at Kilburn Sq, Kilburn High Rd, London NWS.  
**HEMEL HEMPSTEAD** supporters meet regularly on Sundays evenings. For details phone book on Hemel Hempstead 41037. Also paper sales Saturday mornings in Times Square.

**WALTHAMSTOW** readers can buy Socialist Challenge regularly from Sheridan's Newsagents, 36 Hoe St, E17.  
**LEYTON** readers can buy Socialist Challenge from Patel's Newsagents, 326 Lea Bridge Road, E10.  
**TOWER HAMLETS** Socialist Challenge supporters sell every weekend: Saturdays meet 10.30am, Whitechapel tube; Sundays meet 10am, Brick Lane (corner of Buxton St).  
**HACKNEY** supporters sell every Saturday, 12.2pm, in Kingsland High St, Dalston — meet outside Sainsbury's.  
**HARROW** Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly: details from Box 50, London N1 2XP.  
**HARINGEY** paper sales at Finsbury Park and Seven Sisters tubes. Thurs evening; Muswell Hill and Crouch End Broadway, Saturday morning. Also available at Muswell Hill Bookshop, Muswell Hill Broadway; Vares newsagent, Middle Lane, N8; and Bookmarks, Finsbury Park.  
**PADDINGTON/N. KENSINGTON** SC forum: 'The Tories, the unions, and the fight in the public sector', introduced by John Suddaby (Camden NLPE secretary). Wed 20 June, 8pm, at Meeting Room, 1 Tharpe Close, W10.  
**HACKNEY** SC group meeting: 'No recognition of Smith/Muorewa', with speaker from Zimbabwe Information Group. Thu 24 June, 7.30pm, Britannia pub, Mare Street, E8.



# Waiting rooms that lead to the Gulag

**Workers Against the Gulag**  
 Edited by Viktor Haynes and Olga Semyonova  
 Pluto, £1.95

THERE are, I believe, a few eccentrics on the left who continue to believe that the Soviet Union can be called a 'workers' state'.

For them in particular this well edited collection of documents should be compulsory reading — together with *A Worker in a Workers' State* by Miklos Haraszti, a remarkable account of work in a Hungarian tractor factory.

For writing and circulating that book Haraszti was, inevitably, put on trial, for incitement to 'hated of the state'. For planning to publish parts of the book, and for speaking in defence of Haraszti at his trial, the editor of a leading sociological journal lost his job.

It is, nevertheless, a sign of the relative liberalism of the Hungarian state that it was possible to contemplate publication, and in the end Haraszti received no more than an eight months' suspended jail sentence — about the same as John Berry got at the end of the ABC trial, remember?

## Big Brother

No such relative leniency tempers the harshness of repression in Hungary's Big Brother neighbour, the Soviet Union. There you do not have to write a book, or engage in any kind of consciously political protest, in order to become the victim of police harassment and worse.

As *Workers Against the Gulag* makes painfully and repeatedly clear, all you need to do is to complain that you are not receiving the wage to



which you think you are entitled; or criticise the works management for not observing the safety regulations. For making such apparently trivial protests you can easily lose your job.

And if you are rash enough to persist in your objections, the likelihood is that you will end up in

one of those notorious psychiatric 'hospitals' — in reality, prisons — which, it is clear from this book, are still doing a flourishing trade.

On the evidence of the 49 case histories given in this book, the waiting rooms of such bodies as the Central Committee of the Party are particularly dangerous places. It seems that if you wait too long, you are more likely to see the inside of a prison than the office of the functionary you were naively hoping to talk to.

But now an attempt has been made to bring together some of these independent spirits in the Soviet working class within the Free Trade Union Association of Soviet Working People.

## Independent

As the editors point out, there have been no genuinely independent workers' organisations in Russia since the 1920s. So the formation of the FTUA, small and relentlessly harassed as it is, may mark the re-emergence of a working class, and not merely intellectual, opposition to the tyranny of the Soviet state.

It ought to be the particular concern of the left to expose these evils, and express its solidarity with Russia's working class protesters.

As one of these protesters, Nikolay Yevgrafov, says in a moving appeal to socialist and communist activists: Soviet totalitarianism is using Marxism as a cover.

Pluto, in publishing this book, not only gives support to a brave struggle for working class rights; it is also helping to restore the good name of Marxism, to which the Soviet rulers have done so much damage.

ANTHONY ARBLASTER



## When the Kissinger had to stop

**Sideshow — Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia**  
 By William Shawcross  
 Andre Deutsch, £6.95

STARTLING revelations abound in this book, which deals with the events which led to the current crisis in Cambodia and pins the responsibility fairly and squarely on the United States and particularly on Kissinger and Nixon.

William Shawcross, a journalist, says: 'Cambodia was not a mistake; it was a crime.' The evidence is overwhelming. Virtually Nixon's first foreign policy initiative after his inauguration was to order the secret bombing of Cambodia.

But it was not until four years later in 1973 — when revelations were pouring out of Washington in the wake of Watergate — that the Senate learned of the unauthorised extension of the war into a neutral country, the effects of which Shawcross elaborates in detail.

It was on the ruins of this extension of the war that the Khmer Rouge destroyed all the bases of the social and economic power of the ruling class, and through barbaric methods akin to that of Stalin collectivised agriculture to attempt the reconstruction of their wrecked country.

The fate of the small bureaucratic élite of the Angkor was finally sealed by the Vietnamese invasion, which co-operated with a dissident faction of the Khmer Rouge to install the government of Heng Samrin.

This invasion was a step by the Vietnamese to establish by military power an enforced alliance between Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. It did not advance the cause of the Cambodian people nor of the Indochinese revolution as a whole.

The imperialists were dealt powerful blows by that revolution. They were forced to abandon their 'rollback and containment' strategy, which Shawcross has documented to such chilling effect. It is a shame that his pessimistic conclusions should accord with the current ideological campaign accompanying 'the Chinese option' so favoured in State Department circles.

STEVE POTTER

## Advise and rule

**For Her Own Good — 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women**  
 By Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English  
 Pluto Press, £3.60

THE most interesting part of this thorough book is the chapter entitled 'Motherhood as pathology', in which American women are blamed for everything from homosexuality to communism.

'Korea revealed that American youth was soft; Sputnik showed it was stupid...

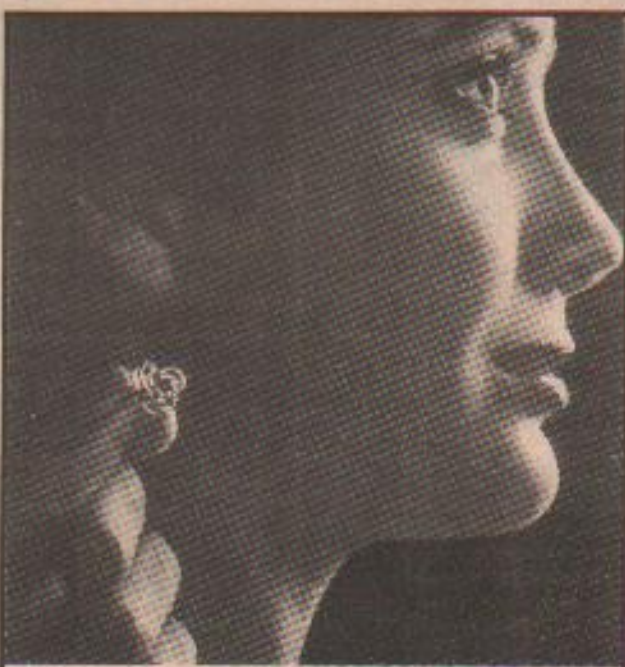
'Clearly American youth was unfit to face the Enemy. Then the movements of the '60s came along and revealed that youth was the enemy.'

The attacks on American motherhood came during the frostiest period of the Cold War, in which Soviet youth was paradoxically made out to be model citizens (and probably were).

'We Americans don't want to move the world. But we don't want anyone else to either.'

'So Johnny had better learn to read. Because you can bet that Ivan is spending a lot of time on his books.'

The ways in which American women were told how to manage their lives varied with each generation and For Her Own Good is a mine of useful information, but the book has a number of weaknesses.



'He said, Here's a little something to match your evening dress.'

More details would have given us a better understanding of how social control has functioned historically — how women reproduce the desired attitudes in their children.

Unfortunately, Ehrenreich and English tackle the subject at the level of the individual woman, rather than the ways in which attitudes are generally transmitted in society.

Their answer is posed on two fronts. First, in terms of women's gullibility and helplessness; and at the other extreme,

the capitalist-patriarchal plot.

What the book is really about is the official, scientific response to the 'woman question' confronted by the husbands of 'idle' women with nothing to do but mind the children.

The use of such experts went hand-in-hand with the denial and destruction of women's autonomous sources of knowledge — their mothers and neighbours.

But the book does not adequately deal with the social control of individ-

uals through the institution of the family, and in particular how women's oppression leads them to explain their discontent through supposed personal deficiencies.

Rather than relying on descriptive material, it would have been more useful to examine explicitly how science is put at the service of ideology, and what this means in relation to the treatment of women with Valium today.

## Gap

Because the experts advised and lived off middle class women, there is a large gap where black and working class women should have been.

Even if they had minimal contact with the experts in the last century, nowadays these ideas are transmitted through advertising, television, and most importantly by women's magazines.

The millions of women who read the problem pages from an early age pick up prevailing attitudes on everything related to personal life, from acne to incest.

Because they indicate the concerns of women, a comparison of these columns over the past 50 years would give a more accurate and succinct historical perspective than the 300 pages of For Her Own Good.

JEAN MACKENZIE

## Take Hegel on holiday

**The Ontology of Social Being**  
 1. Hegel 2. Marx  
 Lukacs  
 Merlin Press 1978, £1.80 each.

THESE two books by Lukacs are in many ways, a good indicator of his own strengths and weaknesses. The book on Hegel is excellent, that on Marx is wooden, boring and makes no new contribution.

In the preface to a reprint of his *Theory of the Novel*, Lukacs wrote: 'The Theory of the Novel was the first German book in which a left ethic oriented towards radical revolution was coupled with a traditional-conservative exegesis of reality'.

If we understand by 'traditional-conservative exegesis of reality' not the empiricism of Britain, but German classic idealism, then this statement applies to these two books as well.

It also reveals Lukacs' own originality — and his weakness.

His strengths lie in asserting and demonstrating the supremacy of German classic philosophy over all previous capitalist or ancient philosophical traditions.

He shows the continuity and connections between Marxism and the great bourgeois tradition — in aesthetics, philosophy and politics.

Lukacs shows Hegel and Goethe as the peak of classical bourgeois culture, and how Marxism links to that great bourgeois achievement.

But when it comes to those aspects of Marxism which go radically beyond, indeed rupture with, previous bourgeois accomplishment, then we find a wooden stiltedness and unease.

We can find this picture of Lukacs' development in his earlier works. But in these present books on Marx and Hegel, taken from his last major work *The Ontology of Social Being* it appears almost in caricature.

Nothing that Lukacs wrote could be devoid of individual insights and flashes of brilliance, but the overwhelming impression of the volume on Marx is of flat woodenness.

Particularly when dealing with economics, Lukacs fails to come to grips with the real problems. His discussion of such famous works as the 'Introduction' to *The Critique of Political Economy*, for example, avoids all the real issues.

But what a difference when we turn to the volume on Hegel. With what relish and coherence Lukacs shows how Hegel despatched his bourgeois predecessors.

Lukacs here shows Hegel for what he was — not some obscure preacher of religious nature-philosophy, but the culminating figure of bourgeois philosophical thought. In innumerable aspects Hegel towered over those who had gone before.

This was Marx's own opinion — and he wasn't exactly an ignoramus in such matters — and Lukacs demonstrates vividly why it is true.

His discussion of many aspects of Hegel's thought stand out for their tremendous grip of the subject and their conciseness.

I doubt that in its rigorousness and appreciation Hegel has been paid many finer compliments than the 117 pages of this book — I certainly know of none finer in English.

Even the literary style of the two books reflects their unevenness. And it's not just a question of translation. It is a real struggle to get through the book on Marx, taking pages to make elementary points.

On Hegel he is full of concise, incisive and hitting the nail on the head lines and paragraphs. It is a book on major and difficult questions, but with attention it virtually reads itself.

JOHN ROSS



# Socialist Challenge

## Blair Peach was murdered Disband the SPG

By Geoffrey Sheridan

FIRST the Metropolitan Police wouldn't confirm or deny the Daily Mirror report that a member of the Special Patrol Group was being held for questioning at Rochester Row police station over the killing of Blair Peach.

Then late on Thursday night the police acknowledged that they had been questioning an unnamed SPG member for four days — an announcement which was followed a day later with the news that the officer concerned had been suspended from duty and would face disciplinary charges over the SPG attack in Southall, but not for Blair's murder.

Almost two months have passed since that murder, and no one has yet been charged with it despite the following facts:

- There are four eye-witnesses who saw Blair hit by an SPG member;

- A month ago the Mirror reported that the police investigation had been narrowed down to six suspects;

- Two pathologists have concluded that Blair was killed by a blow from a cosh, and a lead cosh was found on Friday in a police locker at Rochester Row.

Coupled with the latest postponement by the police of the inquest on Blair's death — to 17 July — the length and secrecy of the police investigations aid only one thing: a cover up.

The police may yet decide to find a culprit among its ranks, but McNee's mob is certain to protect the SPG as an elite squad of demonstration and strike smashers, with or without lead-lined coshes.

We will only find out the truth about Blair's death and expose the operation to the SPG murdering squad through an independent inquiry, which of course the Tories refuse to set up.

Southall Action Committee, which embraces virtually all the local organisations in Southall, has asked the National Council of Civil Liberties to set up an inquiry, with representatives of black organisations and trade unions invited to take part.

That inquiry will be launched in the next few days, and it will need funds to cover its costs and publicise its findings. Financial assistance is also required for the 340 arrested in Southall on 23 April, who now face the kindly hand of British justice.

Ealing magistrates have granted only 15 of them legal aid, and have now transferred all cases bar those of



Photo: P.H.H. McCOWEN

juveniles and women to Barnet magistrates court miles away from Southall where the large majority of the defendants live, and with a fine reputation for meting out justice to the Grunwick pickets.

Southall Action Committee has



therefore launched a campaign and defence fund with £100,000 as the target. Publicity material is being prepared for distribution in the

labour movement. The lessons of what took place in Southall and the demand to disband the SPG need to be widely explained.

It's up to us to make that possible.

Donations to: Defence Fund, c/o 18 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middlesex. For speakers, contact Parita, Oliver, or Eve on 01-574 1325. A picket of Barnet magistrates court, opposite Barnet tube, is to be held on 3 July, beginning at 10am.

The banners on yesterday's funeral procession for Blair Peach showed that the events in Southall have led an increasing number of people to appreciate who is protecting the fascists of the National Front.

The campaigns which led last week to the sentences of the Virk brothers, jailed for defending themselves against a racist attack, being cut by half, and the freeing of George Lando, the West Indian who spent a year behind bars because of fabricated evidence, reveal the need for organisation and defence to stop the police and courts going their own sweet way.

### Clubbing together against racism

By Raghib Ahsan

POLLYANNA'S is a night club in Birmingham city centre.

The Commission of Racial Equality found that the club had been carrying out racist practices and served it with a 'no discrimination order' under the 1976 Race Relation Act.

The response of the owner of the club was to defend his quota-system policy and so far has refused to comply with the notice.

Ahmad was refused entry for not wearing a tie. Others were going in without ties.

Francis, a West Indian, was told he wasn't a member, but there is no membership system.

Other excuses are used to refuse entry, such as jeans, turbans, etc.

The Birmingham Campaign against Racism in Clubs was set up in March. It has built up a wide range of sponsors.

Its first act was to mount pickets of Pollyanna's. It has been picketed every Saturday night from 10.15 to 11.30 for the last ten weeks.

Business has really been hit. A delegation to the TGWU regional secretary resulted in his promise to write to all the TGWU branches for support.

The campaign offers an opportunity to carry forward the fight against racism in the labour movement.

The key to all this is the continuation of the picket. The committee has called a national picket on 16 June at 9pm from Victoria Square.

A fund has been set up to meet the fines and legal costs of those arrested.

Send donations to: The Birmingham Campaign Against Racism in Clubs, c/o Labour Club, 14 Bristol St, Birmingham.

## SUBSCRIBE NOW

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Abroad: Airmail, £16.50. Surface, £10 per annum.  
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Name .....

Address .....

I enclose a donation for the Fighting Fund of .....

Cheques, POs and Money Orders should be made payable to 'Socialist Challenge'.  
Complete and return to: Socialist Challenge, 328 Upper Street, London N4.

## OUR FUND DRIVE

THIS paper's in danger, OK. Read the report on page 14 of the meeting of its National Policy Committee and you'll see what we mean.

The money isn't coming in. It's as simple as that. And we don't have rich bankers or advertising revenue to tide us over. Money from sales and money for the Fund Drive is what we depend on.

It's not that there isn't a lot of support for the paper and what it's fought for. Our subscriptions, for instance, just keep on going up. So, in fact, does the number of individual donors. The problem is really one of collective organisation and responsibility.

How many supporters' groups, for instance, have recently organised a fund-raising event like a jumble-sale, party, or benefit bop?

### Stepped up

Take a leaf out of Hackney's book. There the comrades have organised two benefits already this year, both of which have made money for the paper (as well as sustaining the local Socialist Challenge group).

A benefit bop takes a lot of work on the night, but it's relatively simple to organise beforehand. You need a

hall (try the local student union), a band or two (there are usually some around who will be sympathetic and prepared to play for not too much more than expenses), and you're away.

Sort out whether you want some sort of disco as well, what the bar arrangements are, whether you want to do food, what you're going to charge — then print up posters and leaflets and make sure they get around.

It's really not that difficult — and get cracking now, because the future of Socialist Challenge is going to depend on your efforts in a few weeks' time.