

Socialist Challenge

TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND NOW!

END THE WAR

YES, IT IS A WAR. The deaths of 18 British soldiers, and to a lesser extent those of Lord Mountbatten and his relatives, have spelt out the truth about the Irish situation in the boldest of capital letters.

This truth is something we have been saying for the last ten years: that what is happening in Ireland is not a 'peace-keeping exercise', it is a war. The cause of this war can be easily defined: it is the British presence in Ireland.

The ultimate proof

That the Provisional IRA can kill in one single military engagement 18 British soldiers of the Parachute Regiment is the ultimate proof of the seriousness of this war. Such heavy casualties have not been inflicted on the British army in a single day since the Korean War.

That the IRA has the capacity to inflict such a heavy defeat is the ultimate proof of its strength. This is derived from the support it receives from large sections of the Irish population and the fact that there is even greater support for the cause of a united Ireland.

We fully understand and appreciate the grief felt by the relatives of the soldiers. There can be no cause for exultation when rank and file soldiers, many of whom are driven to join the army to escape unemployment, are killed.

The real responsibility

But who bears the real responsibility for the deaths? It was British politicians who sent them to Ireland. It was British generals who ordered them to kill and repress Irish opponents of the British presence in Ireland.

The war in Ireland is one which stems from the insistence of the British ruling class that its army stays in the six north-eastern counties of Ireland. The IRA has every right to engage the British army in military conflict for as long as this occupation continues.

It says much for the sense of values of the British establishment that the killing of one old man [who was one of their own] upsets them more than the death of the 18 soldiers in Warrenpoint. But then the British ruling class has always prized its leaders above those it utilises as cannon fodder. Such double standards make it hardly surprising that its presence is unwelcome in Ireland.

Immediate withdrawal

Margaret Thatcher is crying out for revenge — for more blood, more dead. We demand the reverse. We demand an end to this bloody and oppressive war. We insist that there is only one way this will come about: the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Britain from Ireland.

Let the Irish people determine their own future.

SELF DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE!

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 Street, London N1

EDITORIAL

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1 2XQ. Editorial: 01-359 8180/9. Distribution/Advertising: 01-359 8371.

Wanted: A new left wing in the unions

THE WORKING class faces the challenge of the Tory government with its combativity and organisational strength intact. This is revealed not only by the way in which workers responded to attacks on their living standards during the five years of 'hard Labour', but also by the struggles that have been launched since the Tories returned to power.

The enthusiasm shown by 2 million engineering workers for strike action for the national claim, and the decision by workers in Scottish shipyards to fight closures by refusing to release completed ships, show the sort of feeling that exists for militant action.

Moreover, there's an increasing tendency for opposition to individual attacks by the Tories to spill over into a general opposition to the government itself. Few if any workers in the industrial heartlands are today prepared to admit they voted Tory!

A determined lead by the union leaders could build the sort of movement that destroyed the Heath government. Of that there can be little doubt. A massive campaign is required to build a movement among rank and file trade unionists which can really put the heat on the union leaders and force them into leading action.

The right-wing union leaders will resist building a real movement; so will their counterparts in the Labour Party leadership. For all their huffing and puffing about this being the most reactionary government since the war, they have called on the trade union movement to recognise Thatcher & Co as the democratically elected government and to be prepared to negotiate with it accordingly.

These people are more concerned with the sovereignty of a so-called democratically elected parliamentary government than with the democratic rights of the overwhelming majority of the population: of women whose abortion rights are under attack; of black workers threatened by the Nationalities Bill; of trade unionists under attack from the Prior proposals; of all workers whose living standards, jobs and services are to come under the Thatcher axe; and of the people of Ireland and southern Africa who continue to be denied the democratic right to determine their own future.

If workers had taken the same position as these right-wing bureaucrats over the years, then we would never have established the rights we have today. These rights were won through struggle and they will be defended through struggle. The position of the union bureaucrats — of negotiation and collaboration with Thatcher; of only being

prepared to build mass action to strengthen their hand at the negotiating table — is an obstacle to building the sort of movement that can defend our hard-won rights and destroy the Tory government.

Moreover, they showed in their support for Callaghan's incomes policy, in their signing of the Concordat, in their endorsement of the last Labour government's anti-working class programme, that they have no intention of promoting the sort of policies — socialist policies — that can provide workers with lasting gains from their struggles.

Measures such as protecting wages, benefits, and services from inflation through automatic cost-of-living increases; nationalising without compensation and under workers' control all firms declaring redundancies; measures which positively discriminate in favour of women and black people — these cannot be won by collaborating with the bosses and the Tories, but only by mobilising action against them.

Forging a new leadership committed to such a class struggle perspective is a vital task. Over the last few years the left has not been up to it. This should not be a cause for demoralisation but a spur to action. In every union, in every shop stewards committee, throughout the movement, militants must set about organising a democratic and united left wing around fighting policies.

Defend the 342, stop the show trials

Oliver New writes:
EVEN magistrates have holidays. After all sending people to prison is tiring work. So Barnet Magistrates Court is in recess at the moment. But it will soon be back at work.

After a refreshing holiday it will resume work with the most blatant show trials in recent British history. It is the most recent example of co-operation between the police, the courts and the National Front.

On 10 September, ten Southall prisoners will be on trial for demonstrating against racism. The defence committee expects a total of 80 people to be imprisoned unless there is a massive labour movement protest against the frame-up of 342 people.

It is a sad reflection on the labour movement, including its left wing, that it has yet to wake up to the full significance of what happened in Southall on 23 April, almost six months ago. On the pretext of defending the democratic rights of

off the streets. To demoralise the black communities by smashing Southall. This attack is being continued in the courts.

The Southall Campaign Committee and People Unite have called a mass picket of Barnet Magistrates Court on Monday, 10 September. The nearest tube is High Barnet and the picket starts at 9.30am. We need a massive protest. The Southall show trials are not only a test for the labour movement — they are also a test for the British left and the Anti Nazi League. We must be there. Defend the Southall 342. Stop the show trials.

meetings declined.

The last meeting was attended by only two people. According to Vishnu Sharma, President of the Southall Indian Workers Association, this might have been the last meeting of the Action Committee.

Who will get the blame? The different groups will probably blame each other. So whose task is it? The IWA members are busy fighting elections. Is this the only function of the IWA? To fight elections once a year. Who will organise the struggle? Who will take responsibility?

organisation.

The Indian community collected £20,000 for a former Indian Prime Minister. Can't they do something for their brothers and sisters. We need unity and action.



fascists, the police attacked a whole community. They beat up old people, women and children. Dozens were hospitalized. Blair Peach was killed. One Asian had to have his testicles removed after the SPG had finished with him.

The aim, as McNea indirectly admitted, was to keep black people

Kuldip, one of the 342, writes:

ON 23 April, 342 people were arrested and Blair Peach was killed. So far the Asian community has not been properly mobilised to launch a counter-offensive. A few people formed an action committee to help the defendants. But they failed. After a month the attendance at the

It should be the job of the IWA. They should use the IWA as a tool and organise something instead of behaving like power hungry politicians. It is their responsibility to unite the community behind the Southall 342. We want action instead of mutual recriminations. For we will be the victims of the lack of

OUR FUND DRIVE

AS readers will observe, we have returned to 16 pages with this issue. This has enabled us to cover Nicaragua (where we were the only British paper to send a special correspondent) and the repression in Iran in some detail.

But don't get complacent. If our sales do not increase in the autumn period, or if the Fund Drive slumps again, it will be back to 12 pages.

So help us increase our sales and subscriptions to make sure that we can continue to provide you with regular and up-to-date coverage from every corner of the world.

Alongside our drive for more sales, our Fund Drive appeal is still going strong. The aim is £20,000 by the end of September and already we have nearly £14,000. During September every supporters group and IMG branch is being asked to organise a fund-raising event for Socialist Challenge, and there will also be a fund appeal at the Trotsky centenary rally on 21 September in London.

Our thanks this week to:

B. Drummond	£10.00
N. Levallois	0.50
Southampton IMG	120.00
Preston IMG	5.00
Steve Rose	5.00
Camden IMG	9.20
R. Roffey	50.00
N. Owen	0.50
Reading IMG	5.00

WEEK'S TOTAL £205.20
OVERALL TOTAL £13,682.75



The Corrie way back to illegal abortions

'How many women, like my mother, have gambled with

A MOTION from the Tobacco Workers' Union to the TUC next week calls on the trade union movement to campaign against 'any measures which seek to deny women their right to free contraceptive and abortion services on request.'

The TUC has already called a demonstration against the Corrie anti-abortion Bill. Here RAY CHALLINOR looks at what is at risk for women in the North-east, and a model resolution suggests how we can ensure Corrie hears the sound of our fury.

THE NORTH-east, with relatively enlightened medical authorities, liberally interpreting the 1967 Abortion Act, has much more to lose than most other regions if Corrie's Bill becomes law.

The tougher regulations would certainly produce a grim harvest of unnecessary suffering — wrecked lives, permanently impaired health, young women dead. Yet, most of the North-east's Members of Parliament (all males, incidentally) appear oblivious to these hazards. The majority of them voted for the Corrie Bill.

Medical

The proposed Act specifically threatens working women. The question it raises is not whether there will be abortions, but under what circumstances they will be carried out. Will it be in proper medical conditions, where the risks are less than those of having a baby, or will it be under primitive conditions, carried out by an individual with no medical training whatsoever?

To the rich and privileged, the answer is quite simple: money speaks the language of private nursing-homes and, if necessary, expensive trips abroad. It is the less well-off women who will be thrown into the clumsy hands of the backstreet abortionist.

Years ago, my mother had an illegal abortion and almost died as a result. Even so, she never regretted her decision. Later, she told me it had been necessary to keep the family intact; also, with the extra financial burden, she would have been unable to give her children a good start in life.

Gambled

How many other women, like my mother, have gambled with death for the sake of others is impossible to say. Estimates suggest that, before the 1967 Act, 100,000 women a year had illegal operations.

Of course, besides backstreet surgery, the sale of chemical abortifacients was widespread. Substances used varied from mixtures including copper, quinine, to even gin and gunpowder.

Newspapers carried adverts for

things like 'Madam Frain's magic potion', which had the cryptic afterthought 'on no account to be taken by persons desirous of becoming mothers'.

Tell-tale

A lot of the mixtures contained a lead base. One Newcastle doctor was quoted as saying that he always inspected the gums of women who had aborted, a thin blue line round the gums was the tell-tale sign of the presence of lead.

On 7 June 1913, the *British Medical Journal* mentioned the case of a Newcastle woman who had aborted after consuming large quantities of lead pills. For seven days afterwards she suffered severe headaches and vomiting; a month later her hands and legs were paralysed; and she remained very ill for a further five months.

In a sense, however, she can be classified as one of the fortunate ones. Many women suffered permanent paralysis of the limbs, blindness or death from lead poisoning.

Thankfully

Obviously, Corrie's Bill would push up the death rate among women. The amount thankfully at present remains a matter for speculation. However, let there be no doubt, to the degree women are prevented from having recourse to existing medical procedures, the Act will inevitably leave in its train deaths and permanent disabilities.

Figures issued by the Indian government reveal the full horror of what can happen when proper treatment is not available: it calculates there are 3.8 million induced abortions each year in India and 180,000 women die as a consequence.

The chance of an American soldier dying in Vietnam in 1970, at the height of the Vietnamese war, were less than that of an Indian woman planning an abortion.

But Corrie and his supporters do not seem to be unduly disturbed; they say they are concerned about the fate of the foetus. But is this really true? Are they the caring, the compassionate people they pose as being?

death'

How is it they profess such solicitude for the unborn child but do so little to campaign against the real scandal that affects prospective parents and children in the North-east?

Let me quote from some local newspapers. The *Evening Chronicle*, of 19 June 1978, reported:

'Gateshead has the highest rate in the country for stillborn births and deaths among babies less than a week old. And a report published today urges action to discover why this is.'

'The 56 page dossier compiled by the Comprehensive Community Programme — a government-sponsored body looking into low living standards — calls for a detailed investigation of the mystery deaths.'

Clearly, the prevalence of poverty, the low living standards, are an important factor, but a few days later Dr. Edmond Hay, a senior lecturer at Newcastle University in child health, gave a further reason — lack of adequate medical equipment.

Needlessly

In the *Newcastle Journal*, of 23 June 1978, he declared that 'a baby born eight weeks premature has only a 50 per cent chance of surviving to be a normal and healthy child in this region'. In other regions, where special units for premature births exist, the chance is 90 per cent.

In the North-east, however, one newborn baby dies needlessly and another becomes permanently brain-damaged every 10 days because of inadequate provisions.

Move it, pass it

WITH the TUC having called the 28 October demonstration against the Corrie Bill, there is now every opportunity to build mass Labour movement support for the demonstration.

With many trade union branches and trades councils soon returning from their August break now is the time to submit resolutions building and supporting 28 October. The following model resolution is suggested:

'This branch notes that the anti-abortion Bill sponsored by John Corrie MP is part of the systematic attack by the Tory government on women's democratic rights in that it further restricts the right of women to control their own bodies.'

'This branch therefore resolves:

1. To support the 28 October demonstration in London called by the TUC in opposition to the Corrie Bill;

2. To call on the national executive to support the demonstration and, in conjunction with the TUC, to organise transport to the demonstration and to press the TUC to organise widespread publicity for the demonstration;

3. To call on the national executive to mandate its delegates to the Labour Party conference to oppose the 'free vote' in Parliament on the Corrie Bill and to insist that Labour MPs vote in accordance with Labour Party policy, which is for free abortion on demand;

4. To sponsor the Campaign Against the Corrie Bill, in order to build the biggest opposition to this proposed legislation, and to affiliate to the National Abortion Campaign, which is fighting for a woman's right to choose, with all the necessary facilities this implies.'

Both campaigns are located at: 374 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1.

Yet, supporters of the Corrie Bill stay strangely mute about this issue. Corrie, as a Tory MP, even supports public expenditure cuts in the Health Service that will worsen the situation.

Struggle

The propaganda of the anti-abortionists has the faint echo of a by-gone age. Even the name of their organisation, Life, bears a close similarity to its forerunner, The League of National Life, which led the struggle against the dissemination of contraceptive advice in the 1920s and 1930s.

When Marie Stopes, the pioneer of birth control, visited Gateshead, she had abuse showered upon her. They accused her of being anti-Christian, immoral and undermining family life. They said she foisted her dangerous equipment on unsuspecting women.

An angry crowd, whipped up by the local clergy, overturned the caravan, destroying her books and medical equipment. A local Mrs Grundy tore *Married Love* page by page. 'It's an obscene book', she screamed. 'It contains the most disgusting diagrams. One shows the male organ in a certain state.'

Despite persecution, the birth controllers continued their campaign

in the North-east. On the whole, they were well received. Working-class wives did not want their health undermined by the annual pregnancy or the difficulty of making ends meet by having extra mouths to feed.

The Workers' Birth Control Group persuaded Ernest Thurtle to sponsor a Private Member's Bill. Then it began to badger MPs who did not support the bill, bringing pressure to bear at grassroots level.

When the Corrie Bill came before Parliament, 68 Labour MPs voted for restoring business to the backstreet abortionist, 84 voted against it, and 100 did not vote at all.

Reminded

In the North-east, there are a predominance of Labour MPs. These need to be reminded not only of the dangers for working-class women inherent in the Corrie Bill, but also of official Labour Party and TUC policy.

Let us see that those who persist in supporting Corrie are subjected to a rumpus in the tradition of the Workers' Birth Control Group. Only in this way can we insure this diabolical piece of legislation, knitting-needles and all, is kept off the statute book.



Counter 'Life'

This Saturday, 1 September, the anti-abortion outfit Life is marching in Wandsworth, SW London.

Its objective? To protest against the setting up of an abortion day-care unit, which could provide thousands of women with free, safe, and quick abortions.

Join the counter-demonstration — 2.30pm, South London Hospital for Women. Tube: Clapham South. Be there, and bring your banners and friends.

1 September, 2.30pm, Wandsworth

PICKETS v PRIOR LAW

'Nottingham Evening Post'

For a foretaste of Tory rule, meet the Sheriff of Nottingham

MANAGEMENT of the Nottingham Evening Post has taken its approach to the unions straight out of the Tories' copybook, crushing journalists' and printworkers' organisation alongside the introduction of new technology.

The story of that defeat, and of the Grunwick-style mass pickets that are now seeking to reinstate 28 sacked journalists — the next is on Saturday — is told here by ROBIN ANDERSON, a member of the journalists' chapel at the Evening Post and its former father.

THE DISPUTE which has left 28 NUJ members at Nottingham out of work since December has been brewing since the late '60s. The issues involved are so serious, attacking the foundations of trade union organisation, that it has taken the NUJ and the print unions almost a decade to get to grips with them.

T. Bailey Forman (TBF) is one of the few surviving independent, family-owned newspaper publishers in Britain. In the '60s it began to replace outdated equipment with computer technology. But the company's steam-age industrial relations survived — and in the hands of managing director Christopher Pole-Carew, the Forman Hardy family's hired 'hitman', they became considerably worse.

In 1967 the Nottingham Evening Post became the first UK paper to instal a general purpose computer for setting editorial text and adverts.

The introduction of the computer using a system known as optical character recognition met opposition from the NGA because of its potential to replace skilled printers with unskilled typists. At that stage, it appears, TBF took a conscious decision to take on the unions and break them, so that it could introduce new technology entirely on its own terms.

The company converted fully to photo-composition in 1973 and in June of that year its chance came to confront the unions over a new process for making the plates from which the newspaper is printed.

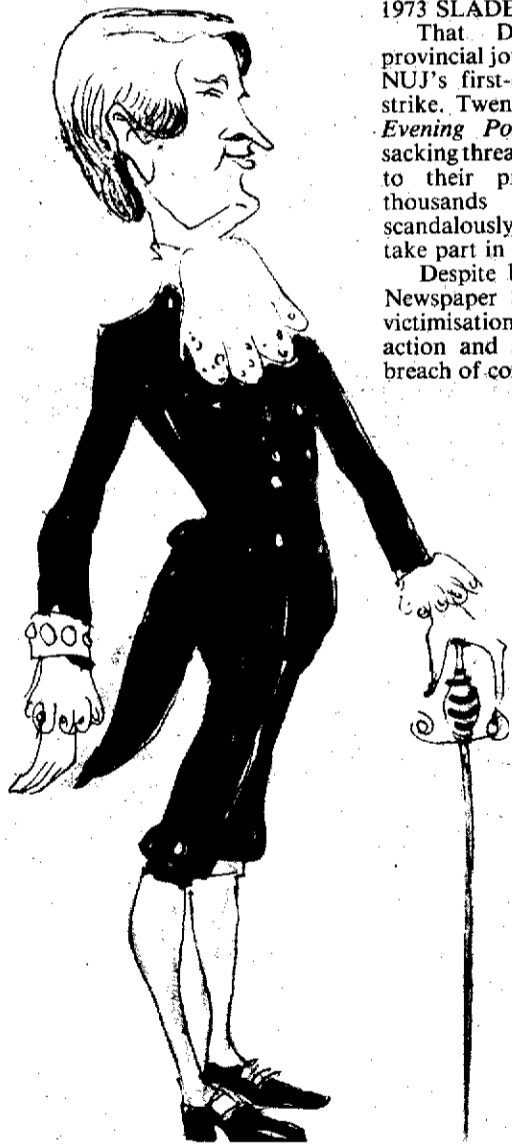
Six days before the NGA and SLADE were due to finalise an agreement on operating this process — it was not being used anywhere else in Britain at that stage — the management sacked print workers in SLADE who refused to handle it in advance of national talks. Three hundred staff were eventually locked out, the first time in the industry's history that all five unions have taken united action.

The NGA-SLADE agreement was made within the first week, but the dispute lasted another five weeks because of the company's insistence that union members loyal to them should not be disciplined. The unions successfully insisted on their right to discipline members, according to the respective rule books. One NUJ member was fined £25. He paid up and is still an active member elsewhere. The rest were expelled, and did not bother to apply for readmission, which at that time carried a maximum fee of £30 — a small price for six weeks' strike breaking.

Claiming that unions had victimised members, the company withdrew recognition. Since all unions had lost their 100 per cent membership, they could not press the company to change its attitude.

The dispute was used by TBF as an excuse for closing the morning paper, the *Guardian-Journal*, and resulted in

148 redundancies. It was the second round of job-axing in 18 months. The first, at the end of 1971, cost 95 jobs. The NUJ, NGA and SLADE have been in dispute with the company ever since, over recognition and persistent breaching of national agreements.



Cartoon: RAY DRURY

The only official meeting between unions and management took place in Nottingham in September 1977 when Pole-Carew repeated his views that trade unions had no role to play in his company. The unions, NGA, SLADE, and NUJ in particular, then drew up a common course of industrial action which included a boycott on all TBF commercial print work. This was introduced last year by the NGA and SLADE.

Within a matter of weeks the company had lost business worth well over £1m a year, and failed in its bid to obtain a High Court injunction to have the boycott lifted.

The following year, 1978, TBF closed down the commercial subsidiaries and made 52 printers redundant, including the last of the 1973 SLADE members.

That December over 8,000 provincial journalists took part in the NUJ's first-ever indefinite national strike. Twenty-eight members at the *Evening Post* defied management sacking threats, pledged their support to their profession and to the thousands of journalists paid scandalously low wages, by voting to take part in the strike.

Despite being a member of the Newspaper Society, the employers' victimisations, TBF took unilateral action and sacked the 28, alleging breach of contract. At the end of the

Christopher Pole-Carew (left) managing director of the Nottingham Evening Post.

As High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire, he takes an impartial view of the kind of police tactics (right) used against the mass pickets of the Post.

The next picket is on Saturday.

national action which won NUJ members a 14.5 per cent rise, the Nottingham 28 reported for work but were physically prevented from even entering the building. The company has consistently refused to meet union officials and has rejected all suggestion of mediation or conciliation.

So intense is managing director Pole-Carew's opposition to us that when a TV programme was being made about the dispute he refused to be in the same studio as NUJ officials. When pickets held a sit-in in the paper's offices earlier this year to demand talks, Pole-Carew and a posse of thugs kicked and punched them out of the building.

Pursuing their own recognition campaign, the NGA and SLADE began to boycott the *Evening Post's*

major advertisers in February. The response was quick. Lord Denning granted an injunction suspending the boycott, and when the NGA unsuccessfully appealed against this, it had to fork out costs estimated at £80,000.

The *Evening Post* has published throughout the dispute, thanks mainly to journalists who have been expelled from the NUJ for strike breaking. The union has been pledged by its executive to the NUJ's biggest-ever campaign to secure reinstatement and union recognition.

meetings to discuss financial support, work-to-rule, disruptive meetings, and fixed-term and indefinite strikes to secure our reinstatement.

The executive has also recommended that there should be no further negotiations with the Newspaper Society until it either makes TBF comply with the terms of the last settlement or expels it. This would mean local instead of national negotiations in the provincial newspaper field.

The executive pledged support to the *Nottingham News* workers'



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

This is taking place on several fronts. There have been several mass pickets, with a thousand attending on 16 June, including a strong contingent of printworkers as well as some 30 young Nottinghamshire miners. To a triumphant chorus of 'The workers united will never be defeated', we managed to turn back one of the delivery vans, but others were moved by a heavy police contingent.

Among those arrested on the picket line has been the NUJ president, who was fined £250 for obstruction! It is pure coincidence that Pole-Carew is the present High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire, and most unlikely that he bought the police 20 gallons of beer for their efforts on the 16 June picket.

The isolation of supplies, materials, and spares is another objective, but this hasn't been easy because of the non-union lines of supply which management set up between 1973-78, preparing themselves for the inevitable dispute.

The 28 have launched their own weekly, the *Nottingham News*, which has built up a healthy circulation of around 14,000.

At a seven-hour debate on the dispute held by the NUJ executive two weeks ago, it was decided that all chapels should hold mandatory

co-operative, and said it would use its good offices to raise the capital to make the paper commercially viable. But there was much criticism of the paper's lack of industrial and political coverage, not least the fact that it had not mentioned the 16 June picket.

Securing those 28 NUJ jobs at TBF will be a long, hard slog, but it's a fight to preserve the right of workers to strike without fear of being sacked — the most fundamental of trade union principles. No union can afford to see T. Bailey Forman win. Be with us this Saturday.

*Assembly point for pickets on 1 September is Nottingham's Forest Recreation Ground off Mansfield Road at 1pm, for a march to the mass picket outside the Forman Street offices of the Evening Post, to 'greet' the Saturday editions.

More than 50 coaches, organised by the NUJ, NGA, AUEW, SLADE, and NUM branches, will be heading for Nottingham.

For details ring the father or mother of the chapel on your local newspaper, or the NUJ 01-278 7916. London coaches leave York Way, by Kings Cross Station, at 8am. Most coaches are paid for by the unions, so there is a minimal charge to pickets.

ROUND ONE

By Bob Murphy

IN A television interview shortly after meeting Employment Secretary James Prior last week, Len Murray spelt out his opposition to the Tory proposals on union reform. 'How will they improve industrial relations? That's what I want answered,' Murray challenged in his most militant-sounding mood for years.

Then came the rub. 'We had four years of excellent industrial relations under Labour, even if last winter was a bad one,' Murray argued.

In other words, the TUC general secretary agrees with the Tory government on what constitutes 'good' and 'bad' industrial relations. Where he differs is on how to achieve the former — Murray is opposed to legal restrictions. 'We want a voluntary approach,' he concluded.

The voluntary approach envisaged by the union leaders is summed up in their so-called Concordat with the last government, and in the picketing code drawn up by Moss Evans during the lorry drivers' strike at the beginning of the year. At the centre of this approach is a frenzied opposition to both mass and 'secondary' picketing.

We know why the employers and the Tories don't like it. Effective picketing is one of the most powerful tools in our industrial armoury. It was mass, flying 'secondary' pickets which played a crucial part in the miners' victory over Heath's 7 per cent norm in 1972.

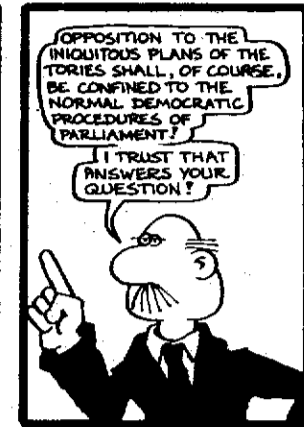
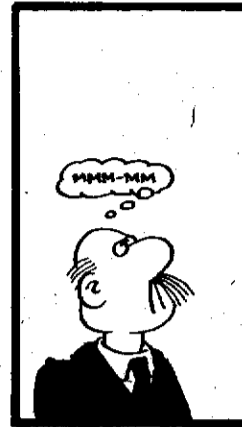
Vital role

Secondary picketing played a vital role in the lorry drivers' victory. By effective picketing of firms not 'immediately' involved in the dispute, the drivers forced the bosses to accede to their demands. Prior and Thatcher want to eliminate mass and 'secondary' picketing because they know that these can win.

Of course, the TUC leaders don't openly say this. They could never hope to gain the support of their members for proposals which were explicitly designed to weaken the unions' capacity to defend their members' working conditions and living standards.

But in reality this is their fundamental position. The union leaders are committed to operating within the system; to fighting for reforms through negotiation and collaboration with the democratically-elected government of the day.

For the union leaders, industrial action and mass mobilisation of workers are the last resort to secure a better deal around the negotiating table. Union bureaucrats are opposed to measures which directly threaten capitalism



To them it's 'secondary' picketing, to us it's vital

because after all, 'the gaffer would never agree to them'. The same goes for the system's democratic political institutions, like Parliament.

But, say the Tories, we want to curb union power precisely because it leads to mob rule, to violence, and to weakening the authority of Parliament. To this argument, the union leaders have no answer because... they agree. That's why at Grunwick, the APEX leaders and the TUC General Council chose the option of negotiating with the Scarman tribunal established by Parliament against building the mass picket.

This approach is riddled with flaws, and nothing exposes them better than the Grunwick dispute.

Suits them

The first thing that needs to be said is that the Grunwick strike was defeated, despite legislation which supposedly guaranteed the right of workers to join trade unions. George Ward and the High Court were less concerned about the authority of this piece of parliamentary legislation than were the trade union leaders!

In fact, this is always true. The employers will use the authority of Parliament so long as it suits them. Once it threatens their interests they will defy it like the steel bosses did when the

Labour government tried to nationalise the steel industry in 1951: the bosses simply broke the law and boycotted the committees established to open their books and carry through the nationalisation. If the going really gets tough — as it did in Chile in 1973 — then the bosses are prepared to overthrow Parliament itself.

For the ruling class, Parliament is there to serve its interests and provide the 'democratic' channels to secure the support of the majority of the population for this. A strategy based on acknowledging parliamentary sovereignty and collaborating with the employers and government within this framework is doomed to failure.

Only a strategy based on struggling against them for the interests of workers can be successful.

The idea that this is anarchy, mob rule, or a policy of violence is quite false. There was nothing mob-like about the lorry drivers' pickets, for instance. They were extremely orderly. They decided what could and what could not go through the picket lines on the basis of workers' needs, as opposed to the anarchy which prevails over production and distribution determined by profit.

As for violence, anyone who has attended a mass picket knows full well where the violence comes from — the police. The police openly admit that on 7 November 1977 the Special

Patrol Group violently smashed up a picket line which was still hanging about after the infamous bus had taken the scabs to work through another entrance. The pickets didn't know this, the cops did. The result was 30 people with broken bones.

What the bosses and the union bureaucrats will not admit is that the larger the picket, the less likelihood there is of violence. There was no violence at Saltley when 10,000 engineers struck and marched to the picket line in support of the miners in 1972. The cops didn't think they could take that on.

That sort of solidarity is directly threatened by the Prior proposals, which must be fought tooth and nail. But they can't be fought by the collaborationist strategy of the trade union leaders. Exercising our rights today through class struggle methods is the only way of guaranteeing the defence of those rights tomorrow.

*Will the courts now remove trade union immunity over 'secondary' picketing? Four lorry drivers who picketed a large North Yorkshire factory during the strike in January, forcing it to close for four days, are being sued for damages.

The personnel manager of the York Trailer company says: 'The firm lost production which will run into many thousand of pounds. We shall be looking for compensation for the loss of these commitments.'

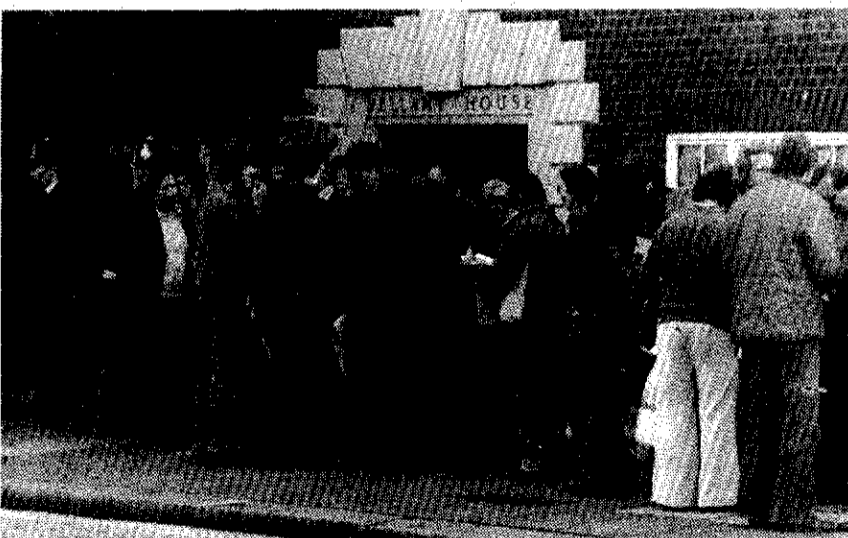


Photo: BOB MURPHY (Socialist Challenge)

Up the injunction!

By Jonathan Silberman

THE FIGHT against Wandsworth Tory council's attacks on trade unions is gaining momentum.

A mass picket outside Bellamy House on Tooting's Garratt Lane last week was described by one of the pickets as 'the biggest yet'.

Picketing began in response to plans of this South-west London council to phase out its direct works department, eliminating the jobs of some 800

building workers. As part of these plans, the Bellamy House site and another at nearby Upper Tooting Park were handed over to private contractors — Turriff's and Croudace.

Enraged by the picketing, Wandsworth council took a leaf out of their government's book and won an interim injunction against UCATT organiser Lou Lewis, forbidding him from engaging in further picketing.

The response from the labour movement is that

the organisation of daily picketing has been taken over by Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Council, who held another mass picket yesterday, with further activity planned for next month.

The broadest campaign of support is needed throughout the labour movement.

As a trades council representative told me on the picket line: 'There'll be a lot of chat at the TUC about picketing rights. We've got to make sure that such words are turned

into action when pickets are actually under attack.'

Among the pickets were a number of UCATT members who were disgusted with the antics of their general secretary, Les Woods.

Despite formal backing for the members in dispute from both the union's regional council and its national executive, Woods retreated in the wake of the court decision, instructing UCATT members not to join the picket line.

Angry

The UCATT convenor of the local Fairweather's site, Dave Williams, is decidedly angry about the leadership's performance.

'This dispute has been going on for 18 months. Now that it's come to the crunch the leadership is backing off.'

'If every union does this in the face of the attacks from the Tories then our rights are as sure as lost. We want the executive to defy the injunction. Let's have every member on the picket line.'

The same theme is taken up by another UCATT convenor, John Barlow. 'As far as I'm concerned, this is an official dispute. We need

a fight within the union to implement official policy.'

John Barlow is himself a victim of the offensive against trade union rights in the building trade, having been locked out by Wimpey.

Ruthless

Another victim was also on the picket line. Ray Mills, sacked convenor of the Kambala Road site, says: 'It is not coincidental that I was sacked and then two weeks later Lou Lewis was taken to court.'

'The council is ruthlessly attacking all those, like myself, who have been active in defence of direct works.'

Wandsworth council appears to be intent on going through with its plans. Rumours in the columns of the local press suggest that the council is considering taking out a second injunction, this time against officers of the trades council.

Boycott

With the Croudace site not working because of a boycott on cement by Transport Union drivers, the council is putting maximum pressure on Turriff's to get a move on with the contract.

'Flying pickets to other

bigger Turriff sites are being considered to step up our pressure,' says direct works acting convenor Frank Sheridan.

He dismisses the offer made by the council on redundancies. 'You can't really call it an offer,' Frank Sheridan explains.

'There's to be no change in the redundancy plans, just a 50p per week fall-back bonus for those with no work, a £10 attendance allowance if you've been especially good and the "privilege" of getting paid for not having to work the whole of your notice if you accept redundancy!'

'We need as much support as we can get if we're to turn around the attacks from the Tories', he adds.

Attend the picket, daily at 7.30 a.m. Bellamy House, Garratt Road (Tooting Broadway tube), and at the Croudace site, Upper Tooting Park (Tooting Bec or Balham tube).

*Messages of support, finance, details: Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Council, 19 Croxteth House, Union Road, SW8. Tel 01-720 9577.

Code of Practice

- 1 No crossing of picket lines.
- 2 For defence of 100 per cent closed shop and for services to be applied against any individuals breaking closed shop.
- 3 For full rank & file discussion and decision making by traditional democratic procedures — no preformed secret ballots.
- 4 Strikes to be run by elected strike committees. Pickets to be positioned in the dispute and in sufficient numbers to ensure that picket lines are observed.
- 5 All appeals for blocking and financial assistance for disputes to be carried out whenever practicable.
- 6 Support calls made by strike committees for mass and sympathy pickets.
- 7 No payment of disputes without full report facts etc, and decision making by the members concerned — no individual 'subsidies' or 'retained' official assignments.

leaflets available from Rank and File Centre, 265a, Seven Sisters Road, London N4 75p per hundred

Ford management prepares for wages battle

Welcome back.... you're laid off

By a Ford worker

HOW WOULD you like to return to work after your holidays and be laid off without pay two hours later? If you would, then 'get down to Ford' at Dagenham and enjoy this fringe benefit — omitted from the Company's commercials, but enjoyed by many.

This is just what happened to 1,600 workers on the Paint, Trim and Assembly Plant nightshift on Monday 20 August.

Management's excuse for the lay-off — a clear case of the bosses' 'secondary picketing' tactics — was the decision of 97 paint shop workers to continue strike action in support of a fellow worker sacked by Ford for alleged 'gross misconduct involving violence on a police officer', three months before his actual trial takes place.

Tiny

It was a tiny incident that gave rise to the dispute but it gives a good indication of why Ford enjoys the reputation of being one of the most vicious and 'successful' managements in British industry.

It also demonstrates what a joke Tory proposals for so-called trade union reform are when 99 per cent of disputes are provoked by management.

The management in the PTA plant were trying hard to engineer a dispute for a month before the annual shutdown at the end of July. It only takes a handful of men to stop work and the long lines halt and a lay-off is possible.

If management is feeling really vicious it can also lay off a thousand or more workers on the corresponding shift in the Body Plant.

Booths

The reason management wanted the lay-off is because the schedule for stocking up and re-tooling for the new design Cortina is way behind. There are hitches all over the line and even now only one of the three automated paint spray booths is in operation.

Rather than the company paying



for its own bungling it is making the workers pay by treating them as *casual labour* while its production problems are ironed out.

The incident which gave rise to the dispute is of concern to every trade unionist.

On the nightshift on 11 July the police, in an unprecedented move, were called into the PTA. Even at the time of the Ford riot and occupation over lay-offs two years ago no attempt was made to call the police into the plants.

Damage to cars, especially paint surfaces, is a working hazard in the PTA. Rarely is any notice taken of it. But this time the police were quickly called to investigate alleged damage to three cars.

That, to borrow a phrase, is when the shit hit the fan. Workers in the area resisted police attempts to remove one man. More police were called. It would seem that a large number of panda patrols in East London have so little to do at night that between 20 and 30 were able to arrive in no time at all.

However, something known as 'the balance of forces' meant there were no arrests.

But the investigation continued. As a result, one man was charged with criminal damage, a shop steward with assault on police (which even the company admits is a lie), and a third man with assault on police. This is the person the company also sacked.

After wasting weeks in procedure

trying to get this decision reversed, the paint shop walked out on the eve of the summer shutdown. To guarantee that they could implement a lay-off immediately on the return to work, management gave the necessary notice by sending out letters to all 'B' shift employees before the end of the holidays.

A leaflet put out by the Ford Workers Group (the Combine) explained the significance of these events:

'What is at stake here is not only "double justice" of the worst kind but, apparently, a decision by management to use the police to settle internal plant disputes.

'Is Ford now intending to staff the personnel departments with the local CID? We must ensure that the unions

insist that no police are used inside the plants again.'

Police

Although there was a return to work on Thursday night after management agreed to change the sacking to a suspension and pay the man until his trial in December, the question of the police remains one of outstanding concern.

The lay-off also came at a time when the preliminary sparring is starting about this year's Ford claim, due to be submitted on 24 September.

The aim of management in provoking small strikes and lay-offs is to weaken the collective strength of Ford workers which was demonstrated in last year's nine-week pay strike, which buried the Labour government's 5 per cent wage limit.

This year there is no official limit and the officials are talking of a 'substantial increase'. Of course this is to avoid committing themselves to a figure.

Unanimous

The Ford Workers Group (the Combine) is suggesting that figure should be £125. But unlike last year, when the Coventry conference of shop stewards produced a high claim and forced it on the officials, the senior stewards and full-timers are much more in control.

Despite the unanimous position of the Body Plant shop stewards in favour of a Coventry conference this year, it has not been convened.

Even discussion in the union branches at Dagenham has been blocked on the grounds that the claim is an inter-union one and therefore only inter-union bodies, i.e. the Joint Works Committees, can discuss it. Catch 22!

On the positive side, the officials are making a cost of living agreement one of the main points in the claim. If this is linked to a serious fight for a 35 hour week, Ford workers will be taking important steps towards defending their standard of living and their jobs.

Unemployment—time to fight back

By Jude Woodward

THE TORIES are planning to approve the axing of 10,000 jobs in British shipbuilding, which would add still more workers to the 1.5 million already unemployed. The slightly more optimistic unemployment figures produced by the government recently will not last for long if closures on this scale are allowed to go ahead.

And shipbuilding is just the most recent to be hit. Thousands of jobs have already gone from British steel. The mammoth public spending cuts planned for the coming year will chop large numbers of jobs from the public sector.

There is no doubt that unemployment is a serious issue, both for those in and out of work, that's why lots of people will be on the Right to Work march this weekend. It's time to start fighting back. But countering unemployment is not as easy as all that, because out of work you've little power, in work it's easy to forget the whole issue.

The TUC and individual trades unions all have policies which, if they were fought for with all the weight that the trade union movement has at its disposal, could begin to defeat unemployment. One such policy is for a 35-hour week. A reduction of the working week by five hours for each worker would create new job vacancies and ensure that available work was more equitably shared around.

Most of the trade unions include a demand for a 35-hour week in their wage claims each year, but then drop the demand as soon as they get round the negotiating table. The Right to Work march will end with a lobby of the TUC in Blackpool. It should demand that the TUC organises a fight among its member unions for the 35-hour week.

The problem is, of course, that this won't happen. Each year the TUC passes quite good paper policies, promising action quite often, Socialist Challenge 30 August 1979 Page 6



ONE LAW FOR LEN...

but then it does nothing. So it's not enough for the Right to Work to lobby the TUC, it has to carry on campaigning all the year round to get the unions and trades councils to put up a fight against unemployment.

In particular, the labour movement has to take responsibility for the unemployed. In the '30s the unions refused to fight unemployment; they had been too thoroughly defeated themselves to do much about it. As a result the unemployed had to organise themselves independently in an Unemployed Workers' Movement.

Today the trade union movement is not in that situation. It is quite capable of organising the unemployed and leading the fight against unemployment. The Right to Work campaign has to fight to try to make them do it. It has to



...ONE LAW FOR US

fight to get the unions to set up unemployed-worker sections for any of their members who are made redundant or who cannot get jobs.

Those who have never had jobs, particularly the youth, should fight for local trades councils to establish unemployed youth committees to take up the fight against youth unemployment.

This would lay the basis to ensure that the fight against unemployment is taken to the heart of the organised labour movement. Unemployed workers would be able to fight within the unions for policies to defend their interests.

Many trade unions have taken the attitude of accepting voluntary redundancies and

natural wastage, which mean that present members do not unwillingly lose their jobs, but that jobs are wasted (to use a term coined by the Mafia), which has a similar effect on those in the dole queues. This is the kind of attitude that unemployed-worker sections could combat.

After the march we need a Right to Work conference to discuss the kinds of policies we can pursue all the year round and how to campaign for them. These are the kinds of things we will be arguing for on the Right to Work march.

*Come to the Young Workers' Conference organised by Revolution. Birmingham, Saturday 15 September, 11am to 6pm. Details from: 76B Digbeth, Birmingham 5. Tel: 021-643 9209.

Left wing emerges in SNP

By George Kerevan

WHO said this? '...we must go on all-out attack against the government's policies. For instance, we should give a lead to our local councillors not to implement Tory policies which will impoverish the lives of our people... If that means a dozen Clay Cross councils across the land, and councillors being fired by the government, good and well.'

Tony Benn? Hardly, his speeches are always more ambiguous. The editor of Socialist Challenge? No, but it might have been. It was in fact Margo MacDonald, Senior Vice President of the SNP, in an interview in the Daily Record.

MacDonald is a member of the newly formed SNP left-wing tendency — the 79 Group. The 79 Group calls for an independent Scottish socialist republic under workers' control.

Collapse

The appearance in the SNP for the first time of an organised, public left comes in the wake of the collapse of devolution and the Tory election victory. At the general election the SNP lost nine of its eleven MPs but retained a solid 17 per cent of the vote. The 79 Group represents a section of the SNP leadership who have drawn the pertinent conclusions.

Says MacDonald: 'Let's face it, the May election drew lines clearly — we all know where we stand now. First, the support for devolution came from the working class — the middle class Nationalists and the Tory converts vanished into the "No" voting booths. Second, Scotland voted overwhelmingly Labour.'

The response of the 79 Group has been a left turn: 'There is only one class in Scotland which will go for independence, and that is the working class — independence, like every other

social advance, can only be won in the class war,' MacDonald argues.

The 79 Group has a membership of probably no more than 250. It is very much the creation of a stratum in the leadership based on the party intellectuals who are seeking a populist strategy to outflank Labour in a massively proletarian Scotland. These include Steven Maxwell, SNP publicity director and former fellow of the Royal Institute of



MARGO MACDONALD: eyes left

International Affairs. And Gavin Kennedy, one-time Labour Party leftist turned prominent academic.

The emergence of the 79 Group is a contradictory development. Demagoguery about Clay Cross and class war could undoubtedly mobilise mass working class action against the Tories. Kennedy is capable of taking to the streets, and indeed led an illegal march down

Princes Street in Edinburgh to protest at the shelving of devolution. But it remains to be seen how far the 79 Group leaders go before they take fright.

One is not hopeful of people like Maxwell who can say: 'It is probable that an independent Scotland would consider that a balance of Scottish interests required her to continue her present communications and reconnaissance roles in the Western defence system.'

Defection

Indeed, left-sounding phrases could not only outflank Labour but be used to contain genuine rank and file radicalisation of the SNP. Already this year has seen a small defection from the SNP to help create the Scottish Republican Socialist League. Though tiny — with perhaps only thirty members — the SRSL is the largest explicitly Marxist nationalist grouping to appear since 1968. It plans to produce a Scottish left-wing newspaper.

The activities of the 79 Group have been channelled into running in the elections for senior party posts at the SNP conference, which opens on 13 September. This indicates both the Group's fear of expulsion and a preoccupation with bureaucratic infighting rather than a genuine attempt to mobilise the party rank and file.

Ambitious

They are opposing the dominant faction in the SNP hierarchy, which is based on the traditional small town petty-bourgeois democrats and a leaven of ambitious, machine-politics ex-MPs. Party president and geriatric Dr. Robert McIntyre is a graduate of Stirling town council. Westminster leader Donald Stewart, a former Lord Provost (mayor) of Stornoway, is a classic

petty-bourgeois reactionary. He voted for the reintroduction of hanging and has been in the forefront of opposing legalisation of homosexuality in Scotland.

These forces have begun to retreat back to their pre-devolution position of independence-or-nothing. Arch right-wing demagogue Douglas Henderson, the ex-MP for Aberdeenshire East, is chief proponent of this view. For fundamentalists such as he, the SNP must present the facade of being a multi-class, non-ideological party open to all who want Scottish independence.

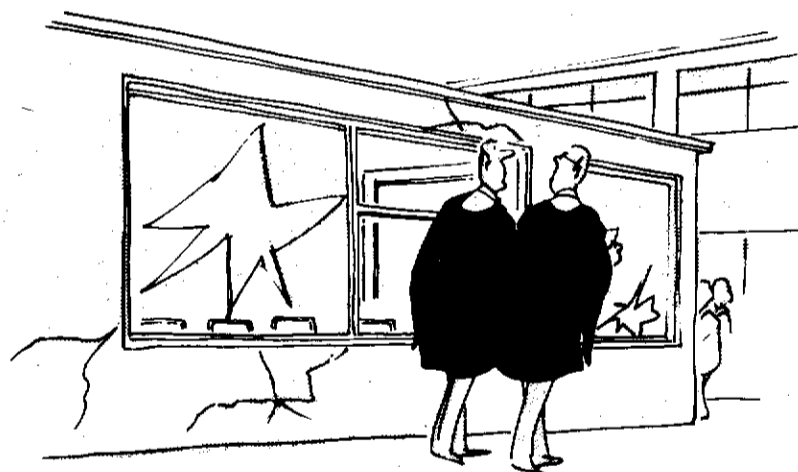
In practice, of course, this is nothing but a cover for abstaining in the fight against the Tories. However, retreating behind a 'hard' line on independence, the right wing will be able to blame the devolution fiasco on the left who were its most ardent supporters.

The most likely outcome at the SNP conference is a victory for the right wing. Nevertheless, the objective political situation in Scotland will ensure that a left nationalist current of some sort will emerge.

For revolutionary Marxists, especially those who thought that they could now forget about the national question, the necessity to avoid a sectarian stance to the young workers attracted to this current will be of prime importance in the struggle for a united front against the Thatcher government.



Educashun isn't working!



'Say what you like, these new schools don't stand up to classroom violence like the old Victorian ones.'

By Valerie Coultas

REMEMBER the election promises of the Tories about freedom of choice in education? Well, last week Dr Rhodes Boyson, the minister in charge of higher and further education, decided that the freedom of thousands of A-level students to attend university should now be denied.

The University Grants Committee has written to universities saying that they should cut undergraduate entries in 1980 by six per cent.

Boyson justified this decision by referring to the British higher education system as 'the most expensive in the world'. He declared: 'There is no right of 18-year-olds to read whatever subjects they want at whatever cost with a guarantee of a job at the end. That mad dream has come to an end. In a free society it's just not possible.'

Qualified

This 'mad dream', however, was once subscribed to by no less a figure than Lord Robbins, who chaired the Royal Commission on Higher Education in the 1960s. Ensuring the availability of higher education to all those 'suitably qualified' was a

Robbins principle that both Labour and Tory politicians of the day defended.

What will these cuts mean if the university heads agree to the new dictates? Immediately, 5,000 fewer places will be available next year. The government is urging that the cuts be implemented selectively. The tightest squeeze is going to be felt in the most popular subjects — law, business studies, accountancy, English, history and the social sciences.

Fire

Social science subjects will come under particularly heavy fire because they are considered to have less relevance to economic performance. In addition the new universities will have to cut more places than those training grounds for the ruling class, Oxford and Cambridge.

All school students will be forced to attain higher grades to gain a place at university. Women will suffer especially because there has been a big increase in the number of female applications to attend colleges over the last few years.

But above all the effect of these proposals will be to further exclude working class students from going to university. Public school students will

be pushed by their specialist teachers in their smaller classrooms to attain the higher grades needed. Working class kids in the urban centres, in schools that are being run down because of the savage cuts in public spending, will now find it even harder to get a place.

The proposals will also mean redundancies for academic and non-academic staff.

The Tories have revealed the true meaning of their promises in the education field. Freedom for the rich

to have an even greater chance to send their offspring to university, freedom for the poor to compete for a place at college against even greater odds.

The leaders of the National Union of Students, the National Union of School Students, and trade unionists involved have a clear responsibility to explain the class nature of this attack and fight it with all the resources at their disposal. If they do not, the Tory principle that education is a privilege and not a right will be clearly established.



'It's an exclusive little Comprehensive for the children of Ministers.'

NEXT WEEK

- *Can Khomeini be halted? — on-the-spot report from Iran
 - *TUC debate
 - *A mass daily newspaper for the workers' movement. Is it on its way?
 - *Major editorial statement on building an anti-war movement
 - *White Rhodesia — the final days?
- All in your 16-page Socialist Challenge next week. To be sure of a copy, subscribe now. Details page 16.

WHAT'S LEFT

ENTRIES in Whats Left are 5p per word. Display ads are £2 a column inch. Deadline: 5pm Friday before publication. All payments in advance.

HACKNEY Socialist Challenge group meeting: 'Fighting the Cuts'. Speakers invited from local campaigns against hospital and school closures. Thur 6 Sept, 7.30pm, Britannia pub, Mare St, E8.

IMG TRADE UNION fraction meetings: 8 September — NUT, NATFHE; 9 September — NUPE; 23 September — ASTMS; 30 September — NALGO, CPSA. For details write to Centre or phone 01-359 8371.

HULL UNIVERSITY FI Society and Socialist Challenge supporters present 'The Patriot Game' (for first time in Hull) — Fri 19 Oct, 7.45pm in Middleton Hall, Hull University, Cottingham Rd, Hull. Tickets (75p) from any SC seller, Socialist Books, or ring Angie 441822.

'NO CUTS in the Health Service' — public meeting, Thur 6 Sept, 7.30pm, North Peckham Civic Centre, Old Kent Rd, London SE1. Speakers: David Townsend (suspended AHA member), Bill Bennett (COHSE, personal capacity), Janet Maguire (ASTMS, sec. of campaign).

FREE Annette Bahner! Young SPD member arrested in East Berlin for enquiring into the infringement of democratic rights in East Germany. Lobby and demonstration at East German Embassy, Wed 5 Sept, 11am-1pm. Organised by International Campaign Against Repression.

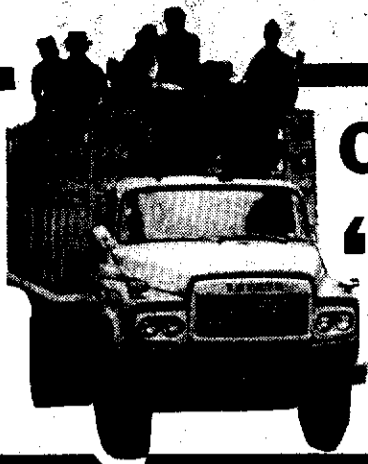
WANDSWORTH RAR present Leopards, Administrators plus bar, disco — Thur 6 Sept, 8-11.30pm, St Anne's Hall, Venn St, SW4. £1 (75p wageless).

SOCIALIST feminist and child urgently need room for two months. Phone Oldham 692 1468 or Freeman 852 1671.

BOOKS for Southern Africa comrades — money is desperately needed for this vital field of international activity. Or send any books you can spare. Books for Southern Africa, Box 102, c/o Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1.

POLITICAL PRINTSHOP, London, needs person for design work. Printshop experience would be useful asset. Applicants must have had some experience in design, although training would be given. Applications to: Socialist Challenge (Print), PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

IRELAND: The Issues at Stake. Revolutionary Communist Tendency dayschool. Sat 1 Sept, 10am-5pm. The City University, St John Street, EC1. Speakers: Frank Richards, Phil Murphy. 5.30pm, 'Patriot Game' film. Entrance £1 all day, 50p evening only.



Clive Turnbull reports from Nicaragua

"The insurrection is over but

'Half our population is starving'

LEA GUIDO DE LOPEZ is the Minister for Social Welfare in the new government. Lea is a Sandinista who previously spent some time in Switzerland, where she was a member of the Revolutionary Marxist League, Swiss section of the Fourth International. She described to us some of the problems of running a brand new ministry.

UNDER the dictatorship there was no provision whatsoever for the welfare of the people, not even at a primitive level. The corruption at every level of the state ensured that the people were forgotten.

So as far as social welfare is concerned this is a completely new ministry. Under the dictatorship there was no policy for protecting children, youth, women and the elderly. Absolutely nothing. When I took over this ministry, the comrades said to me: 'You're the minister'.

Series of frauds

So we have begun to work and define what should be the functions of this department as well as investigating how the money was spent on the few programmes that existed under the dictatorship. Here we have uncovered a whole series of frauds. Military plans to assassinate opponents, bribes paid to certain trade union leaders, and so on. We have even discovered a racket whereby the dictatorship sold children abroad.

What are our problems? People have enormous expectations in relation to what should be socially planned. They want a sharp rise in their standard of living and it is obvious that from our point of view this social plan is the area in which we can carry out a number of fundamental reforms to meet the basic demands being raised by the people — concerning health, education, welfare, etc.



In fact we have suggested to the government that the name be changed to the Ministry of Development and Social Welfare. Our vision of this ministry is not one of social benefits, but rather one which together with other ministries oversees social development in a planned way.

The government's policy in the social sector needs to be part of a perspective of combining various social services with the communities, so that gradually some of these services will be totally administered by the people. That's our conception.

Committees

When we speak of supporting community organisations we mean those which arose spontaneously during the struggle, like the civil defence committees, which are now called Sandinista defence committees. These were created massively in the working class, urban and rural areas. So we think that these rank and file committees can deal with a number of problems in the area of services, administration, etc.

SEVERAL weeks after the insurrection which overthrew Somoza, the country is in the throes of a revolutionary upheaval. A state of dual power exists, but with this difference: the bourgeoisie has no repressive state apparatus at its disposal. The masses remain armed and in a state of permanent mobilisation.

The future of the Nicaraguan revolution depends on the political evolution of the left wing of the Sandinistas

Where they do not exist we could create these community organisations, or combine them with the defence committees to carry out a series of social welfare programmes. Our ministry is the one most suited to have this contact with the masses.

Community action

In the ministry we have a section which we call community action, and which is in charge of this planning. We hope this will be a link to the mass organisations and help to develop a series of programmes of this type.

For example, at this time we have not appointed anyone to be in charge of the distribution of food. What we have created is an infrastructure for distribution — grocery stores in the different towns — and have arranged with the FSLN in the different towns for them to conduct a census so that on the basis of these criteria they can distribute the little food that we have.

In addition I have defined the sectors with priority for the ministry, such as children women, the unemployed, etc. So we plan to develop a series of specific programmes aimed at them in addition to the community work.

Few resources

In relation to children we want to develop a government policy for the protection of children, and to do the same with youth and for the advancement of women, a series of political and cultural measures. This is an unexplored area, and so this is a policy that has to be defined.

Our problem is that we have a lot of plans and few material resources to carry them out.

Our country has been destroyed by a war. The people fought against the dictatorship and there have been enormous losses. Our social and economic inheritance is burdensome.

In addition to the overall plan and general objectives of our ministry, we have an emergency plan: to confront the problem of hunger that we face right now. More than a million people are suffering from starvation. Small businesses and commerce have been totally destroyed.

Political problem

Here in Managua, the country's main city, this is not just an economic problem — it is a political problem which we have to try to solve as soon as possible. Obviously the fact that 50 per cent of the population suffers from starvation is a gigantic problem for any country.

An important element is international solidarity. This is a vital question for us, and we have been working with international agencies and governments to obtain the aid that is so badly needed at this time.

At this point international aid has not been as massive as we had hoped. It has improved in this last week due to the calls we made and the pressure we have exerted on an international scale. But it is not enough to fulfil the present demands. We need between 300-400 metric tons of food daily to be able to solve these problems.

I would like to take advantage of this interview to appeal to various sectors, particularly the political organisations, to show their solidarity with this situation that the Nicaraguan people face. To solve this problem and to develop a solidarity movement means concretely at this time to explain the revolutionary process currently taking place in our country.

WHAT has the overthrow of Somoza meant to the workers? I spoke to a 50-year old woman who works in a match factory.

Do the workers understand what a nationalisation is?

Yes, the boss has left.

Do the workers understand the meaning of the nationalisation — that the factory no longer belongs to the boss, but is owned by the state?

Right. We are working with enthusiasm and more willingly, because now we have a free Nicaragua, where we can say anything we want. We are all willing to build. If they can't pay us now, then we'll wait to get paid, because some day we're going to get paid.

Who benefits from your efforts?

The new government that we have. We're ready to make a sacrifice in order to build a free country. I'm 50 years old and I've only seen Somoza in power. What they paid, was pathetic, everything was outrageously expensive. We could barely eat.

And what do you expect from the government today?

We expect the best. Everything now is better. Even one month and one day later, everything is going fine.

And how do you see things going since the fall of Somoza?

Everything is fine. Perfectly fine. Somoza used to say

'All us old women are ready to fight'

everything was going well, but it was a lie. They would show photographs from the days when my grandmother was born. Now things are different. Things are calm, and we can all work in peace.

You didn't have a trade union before. Were there people who tried to form a union?

A lot of people tried. But what happened was that when people had meetings and elected representatives to try to form the union and everything that a union requires, they would immediately take punitive measures, and fire them.

In order to get rid of them the company would pay a lawyer — whatever the lawyer charged — because the boss would say that he'd rather pay a lawyer than a worker.

They tried a lot of times, but we could not get involved — not because we

were afraid, but because we knew that if we didn't work here we wouldn't find work anywhere else. So we went through many hard times in this place.

And today this government is concerned with giving people work?

Absolutely. In fact everybody has work now.

What is happening with the union?

We are organising the union. But since there are many groups, we don't want to join the first one that comes along.

We are in the process of discussing which one is in our best interests. We have to go to the Casa del Obrero (Workers House) to get ourselves organised and decide which one is best for us.

How do you women workers manage to work, take care of your children

and keep a home?

Well, we used to leave the children with a neighbour and many women had to pay for someone to care for their children. Many of us have no family, or have only a mother who is very old, and we have to leave our children there.

But now one of the things we hope for, and which the government has offered, is child care centres.

They offered to set up child care here?

Right, a place where we can leave our children so that we can come to work — a place where they will give them proper meals, medicine and so on.

This has been projected?

Yes, this is a new plan which we hope will be implemented, because for us workers it's a relief to know that our children are

cared for.

Before we had none of this — even our youngest children, the 11-year-olds, were harassed by the National Guard. We were constantly worried, and often when we got home they would tell us: your child has been arrested.

We would ask why, and they would tell us that they were suspected of being Sandinistas. It was horrible to live this way.

Everyone was terrified?

Yes, it was really horrible. Now we are all at ease. Now even we, the old women, are ready to pick up the gun, because Somoza left us in a terrible state, starving to death.

He'd better not think of ever coming back, because we're not going to let him. In Nicaragua all of us old women are ready to fight.



SOME of the students 2,400-strong teachers' Nicaragua, who are so manoeuvres of those w

he revolution has just begun”



and their ability to defeat imperialism and the native bourgeoisie.

CLIVE TURNBULL has just returned from Managua. He interviewed a government minister, a matchworker and the leader of a neighbourhood committee for Socialist Challenge. Next week he writes his own impressions of developments in post-Somoza Nicaragua.

Grassroots power

BETTY is a leader of a 'barrio' (neighbourhood) committee in Managua and a militant of the FSLN. The barrio committees are organised throughout the country, and at present constitute the major link between the masses and the Sandinista High Command. This interview was carried out in the Casa Sandinista (Sandinista House) of the Monsenor Lezcano barrio.

Can you explain to us how the barrio committees were formed and what has been their role?

The defence committees were formed before the insurrection when we saw the need to organise the people to prepare them for the eventuality of civil war. It was a question of gathering together all the people in a barrio or sector so that they could respond in an organised way when the war broke out.

The question of protecting the fighters was almost always posed — they needed food, medicines, etc. At the same time we showed people how to prepare shelters against the bombings and shelling, in accordance with the general guidelines that came from Geneva.

Soon the need arose to have separate committees within the civil defence committees — supply committees, health committees to deal with the problem of getting medicine and medical care for the fighters, and self-defence and vigilance committees to detect paramilitary groups or Somocistas that might be on the loose.

With the victory of the insurrection, the civil defence committees become secondary. We

have begun the task of organising ourselves to defend our Sandinista revolution, and they have become Sandinista defence committees.

People from different barrios arrive every day at the Casa Sandinista de Ricardo Morales Avile to ask us to help them get organised into Sandinista defence committees. This building houses the committee which is in charge of the mass organisations — everything related to popular organisations like the neighbourhood committees, the Sandinista trade union federation (CST), the Sandinista youth organisations, and other such organisations.

Since our committees are organised on a block by block basis — four blocks at a time — we have initiated these organisations with the people themselves, integrating every person in a given block. Then we elect a representative for each block.

We also elect a supplies representative to distribute the foodstuffs or solidarity packages that we receive from abroad. And we have a person to be in charge of health, who promotes discussions and prepares a store of medical supplies in their area.

We further elect a representative of the propaganda committee to inform the people and make a political analysis of the present conjuncture, so that the people will understand what we are doing and where we are heading — that is, to give them a political understanding.

This Casa Sandinista we are in has as one of its main functions the promotion of political discussions, popular propaganda, and the initiation of educational campaigns. At the moment we are carrying out a discussion around the project of national reconstruction



so that the people will know what the junta is doing, what the FSLN leadership is doing, and that we are working to fulfil their needs.

We understand that right now our task is one of meeting demands, of working out concrete plans to meet the needs of the population.

This means, for instance, solving the problem of water for those areas where the pipes were destroyed during the war. It means solving the problem of public lighting, which was rendered useless during the war. It means finding a way to distribute equally amongst the neediest the goods like the solidarity food packages that we are receiving.

It also means initiating a health programme, especially a preventive health programme to avoid the spread of epidemics which could be an obstacle for the revolutionary movement.

We are on a campaign footing to carry out this revolution in an organised way, block by block, barrio by barrio, province by province, city by city, until we have a single organisation which is the one that will ensure the triumph of our revolution. Our office personnel are here on a volunteer basis. No-one is paid.

How do they manage to survive?

People are beginning to go back to their jobs as the economic situation is slowly resolved, and those who work six or eight hours a day dedicate the rest of their time to working here.

Have there been elections in each block and each barrio to elect representatives?

Yes, this was done democratically.

How often do these councils meet?

The barrio committees meet once a week, and the area committees twice a week.

How is the work of the barrio committees coordinated?

The central headquarters at the Casa Sandinista de Ricardo Morales Avile coordinates the work of the barrio committees, and we in turn bring the issues raised in the barrio committees to the Casa Sandinista.

What is the relationship between the barrio committees, the junta and the government?

The barrio committees are carrying out the reconstruction projects that the junta has put forward. For instance, it tells us that we need to fumigate all the empty buildings to prevent contamination. The barrio committees carry out the work that the junta needs done on the basis of the reconstruction projects.

What about the militias?

We have militias in each barrio to protect us and to solve problems of a military nature. They are independent from the barrio committees. In other words, while we are in charge of the political organisation, the mass organisation, the militias are tied directly to the army. But we depend on the popular mass organisations.



Rigoberto Lopez Perez secondary school who demonstrated outside to 'ask them to bring the revolutionary cultural message to the children in need of it today...an educated people will never accept defeat by the y on taking in people through the poor quality of education'.

Simon Bolivar Brigade

LAST WEEK 60 members of the Simon Bolivar Brigade were expelled from Nicaragua. The following statement was issued by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.

THE decision to despatch the Simon Bolivar Brigade to Nicaragua was not discussed by any elected body of the Fourth International. It was an initiative of the Colombian PST, a sympathising organisation of the FI.

We shall have to discuss publicly and with the comrades concerned on the basis of more detailed information the balance-sheet of this initiative. At the same time we will be equally ready to discuss publicly and fraternally with the Sandinista comrades on the tasks and perspectives of the Nicaraguan revolution.

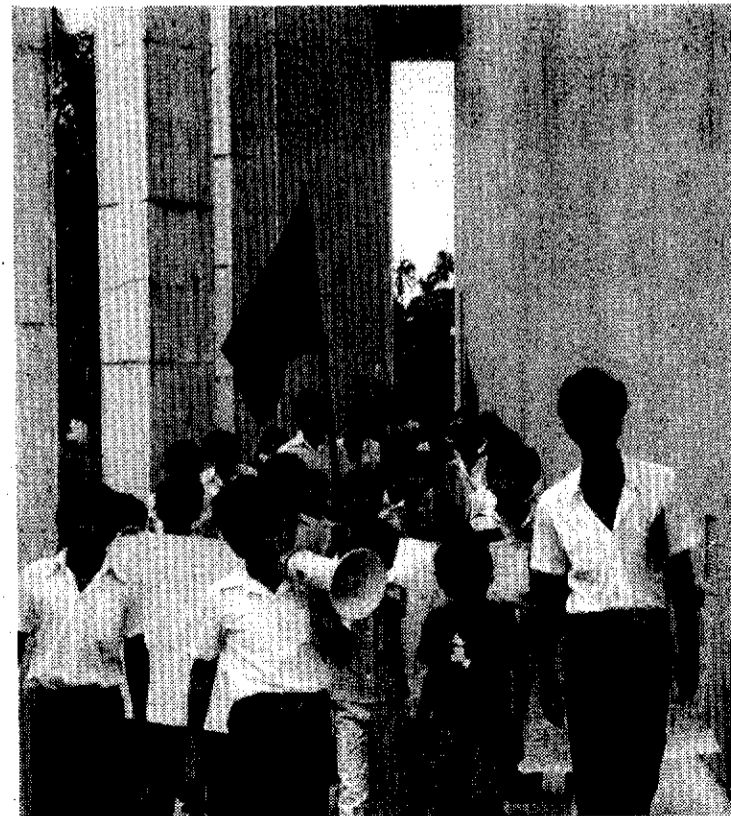
However we have no hesitation in condemning the statement made last week by Jaime Wheelock, the Minister for Agrarian Reform, who denounced 'the Trotskyists and all

those who seek to accelerate the evolution of the Nicaraguan regime.'

Jaime Wheelock is a member of the 'Proletarian Tendency' of the Sandinista Front. This tendency has called for a Nicaraguan revolution, not only against the dictatorship and imperialism, but against capitalism. It has defended together with the armed struggle the necessity to construct mass organisations of the working class and the peasantry.

It is not very convincing, despite the political differences, to believe that 60 foreign volunteers posed a serious problem for a revolutionary leadership that enjoys mass support. We cannot support the deportation of these comrades, whatever political errors they may have made. Differences in the workers movement cannot be solved in this way.

In any event, we refuse to accept the ritual denunciation of 'Trotskyists', which has served in the past as a pretext and alibi for extremely dubious enterprises.



IT WAS not just secondary schools who demonstrated outside the teachers' meeting, in the National Theatre but elementary school students as well! The demonstration was organised by the Revolutionary Student Front (FER).

KHOMEINI DECLARES WAR ON NATIONAL MINORITIES AND LEFT

AS we go to press a secret trial is taking place in the oil town of Ahwaz in Southern Iran. On trial are 14 members of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party, the Iranian section of the Fourth International.

Their crime: supporting the demands of Iran's oppressed nationalities, the Kurds, Arabs and the Azerbaijanis. No defence lawyers have been permitted to attend the trial, and according to reports from Tehran the public prosecutor has demanded the death sentence.

HOJABR KHOSRAVI was also arrested with the other comrades, but later released. He is a member of the Central Committee of the SWP. Hojabr explained to Socialist Challenge the background to the attacks being directed against the Iranian Trotskyists:

'They accuse us of being everything under the sun. Agents of imperialism, and so on. But what is the real reason behind the attack on the

14 socialists face execution

Fourth International in Iran? It is obviously not that we are capable today of mobilising hundreds of thousands of people against the regime on the streets. It is because of our ideas and some of our political initiatives since the fall of the Shah.

'We can say with pride that it was our women comrades who took the initiative for the first major demonstration against the socially oppressive laws — those directed against women. From the very first day we were able to project our politics publicly we defended the rights of the national minorities. It is this, our political ideas and our ability to communicate these through our press to tens and tens of thousands of workers, that upset the obscurantists.

'To give you the most recent examples. During the recent fake elections to the 'Experts Council' we were not even allowed to distribute our leaflets in a number of cities outside Tehran. In Isfahan our party headquarters were attacked by thugs. One of our comrades who was selling newspapers was abducted from the streets and tortured. This torture was publicised a few days later in the national press.

'The arrests which took place in Ahwaz in Khuzestan were related directly to our defence of the nationalities. The local headquarters of the SWP was attacked and nine comrades were arrested. Seven comrades were sent from Tehran in order to defend those nine. While they were distributing leaflets in the streets they were arrested and put in jail. Two of us,

including myself, were freed because they could pin nothing on us whatsoever. The rest are in prison.

'We sent two independent lawyers to Khuzestan to discover what the charges were against the 14. They were told that they were distributing leaflets defending the Arab population of Khuzestan. And since Khomeini charges the Arabs with getting arms from foreign agents, our 'guilt' is that we are defending foreign agents!

'The trials are held in complete secret. We have asked that they make it a public trial so that lawyers could attend. But they have refused. We have heard that the prosecutors have called for their execution.

'We appeal to all those who defend democratic rights, especially those who opposed the Shah's regime, to join us in struggling against the new wave of repression which is taking place in Iran.'

Repression initiated by Khomeini

The following comments were made by Fred Halliday at a press conference called to publicise the plight of the 14 SWP militants.

Having just spent two weeks in Iran I can testify that the political climate changed in those two weeks from high summer to the depths of winter. In Tehran itself it was possible to hold meetings, to publish books, to print critical newspapers, to move about freely. This was the beginning of August.

By the time I left this was absolutely impossible. Left-wing bookshops were being attacked, books were being burnt, offices were being invaded by right-wing thugs, demonstrations were being broken up and there was a climate of hysteria. This was organised by the government to intimidate all its critics.

I saw the major opposition paper Ayandegan being closed by teenaged gunmen. I saw left-wing demonstrations against censorship being attacked by right-wing fascists with bottles and staves.

Radio

The first point to stress is that this is something which is systematically encouraged by the government. The government radio, the pro-government press and the speeches of government leaders, foremost among them the Ayatollah Khomeini, have deliberately encouraged this reaction.

These are not the actions of irresponsible or untypical groups. Whether it is committees consisting of well-paid government employees or groups of right-wing hoodlums who attack people on the streets, they are acting on



A 300-STRONG picket outside the Iranian Embassy in London last Saturday demanded 'Troops out of Kurdistan! Socialists out of jail!' as part of a broad campaign against the repression of the Khomeini/Bazargan regime.

Labour movement support for the release of the HKS 14 has included a telegram from Alex Kitson, deputy general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union and chairperson of the Labour Party's international committee. TUC delegates from the Civil and Public Services Association delivered a letter to the embassy last week protesting the repression against the Kurdish people and calling for the release of the HKS 14. This letter will be circulated at the TUC Congress next week to gain further support.

Amnesty International has cabled Prime Minister Bazargan and the Ayatollah Khomeini calling for the death sentence threat to be dropped, and Bernadette McAliskey has also cabled the Iranian authorities demanding that the trial be halted and the repression stopped.

the direct orders of the government.

This became very clear to me when interviewing government ministers. One of the most powerful people in the regime, Foreign Minister Yazdi, repeated word by word the kind of slanders against opponents being uttered in the more hysterical press articles and on the demonstrations on the streets. It was clear that a decision had been taken, sometime in the beginning of August, to crush all opposition.

People who were opponents of the government had been victims of repression before that — the people from the Socialist Workers Party had been arrested in June — but this did not become generalised until the beginning of August.

They are quite willing to accuse their opponents of being agents of the CIA, agents of Israel, etc. When I asked Yazdi for evidence of this he went to his desk and produced a set of files which he waved at me.

These were SAVAK

files on various oppositionists, which he said proved these people were agents of Israel/CIA. The idea that SAVAK files were truthful, that he should be using these same files which were used by the Shah's secret police, was astounding.

The climate of hysteria which Khomeini has added to in speeches of the last few days is one which is directed against all opponents of this regime. One of the tragic aspects of this is that many of the people who are being imprisoned

or chased underground are the same people who sacrificed so much in the struggle against the Shah — people I met who had spent eight, nine years of their lives in jail being tortured by SAVAK are now having to go underground again.

There is no way in which people who have been arrested by these committees on the orders of Khomeini have got even the most minimal legal rights. The idea that Islamic law has got proper

procedures is quite simply a lie.

Lawyers cannot get access to these people. I know a lawyer who went to try to see the public prosecutor who is now prosecuting the SWP militants. He wasn't given any information, he was denied access to his clients and information about what the charges were.

Once the trials start they are carried out without proper defence counsel, and without evidence. Then there are

the summary execution. This is taking place throughout Iran and is being sanctioned by the rhetoric about the Islamic revolution.

Language

The particular reason why the members of the SWP were arrested was the question of the national minorities — who incidentally comprise half the population of Iran. Under the Shah they were denied simple rights — even the right to be taught in their own language — and since the Shah's overthrow they have been making demands which by any standards are very reasonable — they wanted a degree of regional autonomy, administrative control, control over the local police, etc.

Of all the depressing things I saw in Iran there is nothing more depressing than the fact that the government ministers, the official press showed no comprehension as to what these people wanted. They were accused of being agents of foreign powers of feudal powers.

Tragic

It is because of this that there is now a situation in the Kurdish areas and in the Arab areas where these people who are demanding minimal rights and those who are supporting these demands like the SWP are being shot at, arrested and killed.

It is ironic that the government talks so much about the rights of the people in Eritrea, Palestine, but they deny ethnic rights to people inside their own country.

Tragically Khomeini still has considerable popular support in the areas of Iran inhabited by Persian speaking people. I don't think he is going to fall easily.

۱۲ صفحه

۲۰ ریال

آهنگر

سال اول شماره ۱۰ سه شنبه ۵ تیر ۱۳۵۸

چرا تصویر افراشته را از سردر آهنگر برداشتیم؟ ...
جنگ با همسایگان يك توطنه است ...
ترا گفته بودیم، هورا کنی نگفتم صحبت ز شورا کنی ...
سخنرانی نخست وزیر دولت شماره ه موقت ...
تهرانی در خدمت انقلاب اسلامی قرار گرفت ...

تهرانی - جانی ها ...! من بجای شما از ملت خجالت می کشم ...



THE front page of the now banned opposition newspaper Ahanger flaunts a cartoon showing Khalkali the chief judge of the Islamic Court, in the guise of the notorious Savak torturer Teherani. The prisoners are an oil worker, SWP member, national minorities and a Fedayeen.

OF ALL the problems facing Ayatollah Khomeini's regime, perhaps the most pressing and the one that could break his position is the stagnation of the economy.

Things were going badly before the revolutionary upheaval began, and months of strikes and disruption have made matters worse. Now a quarter of the 11-million strong workforce is believed to be unemployed, inflation is running at over 30 per cent, and shortages in shops are becoming more frequent.

I saw the crowds fighting outside a shop in Ramsar on the Caspian coast to get access to a shop selling soap powder, and the merchants of the bazaar who played such a role in putting Ayatollah Khomeini into power are beginning to complain about the government's inefficiency.

The sector least affected by the changes has been agriculture. The villagers — who still make up half of Iran's 36-million strong population — were at first reluctant to support Ayatollah Khomeini, because they feared he would reverse the Shah's land reform programme.

Agriculture

Only in the last weeks of the Shah's rule did groups of younger men, often migrant workers or students coming back from the towns, actually voice open opposition. In the end, it was the local *akhunds* or religious officials who stepped in to take the place of the government officials in whose hands village power had previously rested.

Agricultural output had been lagging far behind demand in recent years, but as a result of the lifting of

Economic crisis deepens

By FRED HALLIDAY

price controls it is believed that this year's harvest will be considerably higher and farmers are said to be bringing back into cultivation land left idle in previous years. It is debatable whether this will last, as the technical services provided by the government in the past are no longer being maintained.

Oil output is down by one third to around 4 million barrels a day, but because of increased OPEC prices revenue is up to around \$25 billion and a considerable amount of this is believed to be lying unspent because of the paralysis of the governmental machinery.

However, the rest of the non-agricultural sector is faring badly. Construction, which used to employ about one million people, is almost at a standstill and all around Tehran one can see idle cranes on abandoned building sites.

Industry is believed to be operating at about 40 per cent of pre-revolutionary levels, and although many firms are continuing to pay their employees despite the lack of production, unemployment is rising, and many service industries have ceased operating entirely.

Anti-Khomeini sentiment is running high in the northern provinces of the country along the Caspian coast where, as I saw myself, the tourist industry has collapsed, as a result of the ban on mixed bathing and the shortage of money in the pockets of those who used to come there for the summer.

The regime makes considerable show of the fact that it is going to help

the deprived, the *mostazifin* who were neglected by the Shah. So far, this has not gone beyond the rhetoric so characteristic of the Third World demagogic regimes.

According to the economics editor of the pro-government paper, *Islamic Republic*, the only concrete measure taken has been to provide electricity of under 100 kilowatts free of charge, and to make loans for housing construction available on a system whereby the government loans 10 times what the would-be purchaser can put down.

Vacuous

Beyond that, official spokesmen engage in vacuous talk about a new 'Islamic Economics' based on the religious concept of *touhid* or unity, but as the economics correspondent made clear, the ideal of a classless society is one towards which Iran has not yet begun to move. It is being used more to enjoin unity and non-conflict between existing classes rather than to restructure the social system inherited from the Shah.

Ayatollah Khomeini's appeals to the workers indicate, however, that he knows they could undermine him as they broke the Shah, and the government is taking no chances in the oil fields. Wages there, already high, have been doubled since the revolution, and although this is supposed to be Ramadhan, when Muslims fast during the day, the canteens in the oil fields continue to serve lunch.

Many workers' committees that sprang up during the revolution itself have continued to operate, but they have fallen increasingly under the influence of the local *akhunds* or of the pro-Khomeini revolutionary organisations, uniting different factories, have yet come into operation.

The observation of one fisherman whom I asked about Ayatollah Khomeini might well sum up what a lot of such people are anxiously thinking. Pointing to the portrait of the Shah on a banknote he said: 'The Shah brought us money with his picture on it. If Khomeini can do the same, he will survive, otherwise he will have to go.'

An area of equal concern and of more overt resistance is that of social behaviour, where Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers are trying to impose a new religious model.

Alcohol, produced and drunk in Iran since long before it became a Muslim country, is now prohibited and what drink there is can only be bought on the black market.

Although women singers are now banned from the radio and TV, their songs are still sold in cassette form on the streets, and after the first week of Ramadhan people in parts of Tehran were eating, drinking and smoking in public.

In my own conversations with people on the street and in collective taxis, I found that although most Iranians are pious, and believe strongly in God and Islam, they do

not like the *akhunds*. Indeed, as a result of Ayatollah Khomeini's attempts to set back the clock, anti-clericalism is growing in the country.

Those most affected by the Islamic injunctions are members of minority religious sects and women. Although Christians (mainly Armenians), Jews and Zoroastrians are given constitutional guarantees, all feel uncomfortable in the new Islamic Republic and they have all been hit economically because they are mainly trading communities.

The Bahai, a heretical sect who broke from Iranian Islam in the mid-19th century, are not given such recognition, and their main temple in the centre of Tehran has been turned into an Islamic educational centre.

Press

Women face discrimination in a number of spheres. The demonstrators of last March prevented Ayatollah Khomeini's government from making the Muslim headscarf, the *hejab*, or the black cloak, the *chador*, compulsory there and then. Women in the centre and north of Tehran as well as in some provincial towns still dress freely, but they are always liable to harassment by gangs of young men, and there is a real possibility that Ayatollah Khomeini will try to enforce the *hejab* after the Islamic constitution comes into force later this year.

Women judges have been removed, women's sports have been all but banned, and the unemployment produced by the recession is falling unequally on women.

'The shame on your doorstep'

By Geoff Bell

IN 1965, Brother Leonard of the National Union of Railwaymen told the Trades Union Congress:

'I would like to point out that in [one part of] the United Kingdom there is a very large majority which is treated as second class citizens, although the United Kingdom has signed the European Social Charter and undertaken to be bound by it.

'In the North-east counties of Ireland the right to apply for a job and to get it on merit does not apply. I am asking the general council to use its influence with the present Labour government...to see that this very, very low type of behaviour is stamped out.'

The president of the TUC replied to this speech by saying, 'We shall note what you have said'.

The TUC has been 'noting' the North of Ireland ever since. At only four congresses since 1966 — those in 1971, 1976, 1977 and 1978 — have there been resolutions on Ireland. References have been made in various general council reports, but inactivity and disinterest are the best way of describing the attitude of the leaders of the British trade union movement towards Ireland.

Invaded

Only rarely have congress delegates heard the reality of the situation in the Six Counties. Once was when a delegate from the National Union of Seamen told congress in 1971: 'Can you imagine the situation if Britain had been invaded by the Germans and we had later kicked them out of Britain with the exception of the six counties in the South-west corner...this is the position in Northern Ireland.

'What would be the position if

English people were denied the right to work, the right to live? Naturally trouble would start. What would follow, as followed in Northern Ireland? Troops would be flown in. What kind of troops? We can talk about Vietnam or South Africa, but everybody bows their head when you mention Northern Ireland because the shame is on your doorstep.'

The NUS delegate ended his speech by demanding 'get the British troops back'. But the suggestion that Britain and its troops are in any way part of 'the Irish problem' is a suggestion that the TUC has gone out of its way to deny.

Guarantee

In 1970 the general council's report called on 'all concerned' to 'take action to promote a return to order in Northern Ireland,' while two years later the report went Loyalist and called on the British government to 'provide a guarantee that Northern Ireland would remain a part of the United Kingdom'.

As a variation on this Loyalist theme, the TUC has been happy to present the British government's view on the North of Ireland. In 1971, the year internment was introduced, a TUC press statement insisted that 'the impression of widespread violence and civil disorder...is a considerably exaggerated one'.

Then in 1976 the TUC leaders joined the reactionary chorus who applauded and over-estimated the Peace People. Transport and General Workers Union leader Jack Jones said in the international report for that year: 'We welcome the women's peace marches throughout Ireland which demonstrated the overwhelming yearning for a return to the ways of peace.'

In all this — the defence of the



Much of the information in this article is taken from Five Days in Ireland, a report of a visit by a delegation to Belfast and Derry from Newcastle Trades Council.

The report is an informative and interesting account of first hand experiences of a group of British trade unionist in the North of Ireland. It costs £1 and is available from Newcastle on Tyne Trades Council, 199 Hugh Gardens, Benwell, Newcastle 4.

partition of Ireland, the need for a return to 'order', the underplaying of the struggle taking place in the streets — the TUC was speaking with the same voice as that of whichever British government happened to be in office at the time. Common to them all was a misrepresentation of what was actually going on — an ignoring of the national question and the Irish national struggle.

Instead, the TUC insisted, all that was required was a few reforms. The general council report for 1972 commended 'a Bill of Rights as one method of achieving a guarantee of full civil and other rights to the people of Northern Ireland'. This view was applauded by Belfast delegate Andy Barr, who maintained that 'the Bill of Rights is the key question'.

All Campaign were promoted by members of the Communist Party. Both were unanimously endorsed by the TUC; in that sense the vote was as meaningless as the policies they supported.

The unreality of the TUC and its Irish policy is illustrated in other ways. A constant theme has been the repeated references to what the general council report of 1971 described as 'the non-sectarian traditions of the trade union movement...extending from the workplace to the community at local and national level'.

Illusions

Throughout the last ten years the TUC has been fond of moralising about the non-sectarianism and strength of the trade union movement in Ireland. Illusions about this movement's influence were rudely shattered in the Loyalist strike of 1974, when a march led by Len Murray designed to break that strike attracted the support of less than 200 workers.

That was hardly surprising. By avoiding the central issue in Irish politics — the partition of Ireland and the British presence — the TUC might have achieved the 'unity' of its membership in Northern Ireland, but it is a valueless 'unity' because it is based on silence.

So there are no motions on H Block at this year's TUC, no motions on the Prevention of Terrorism Act, none on the revelations of British torture in Ireland which have hit the world's headlines since last year's Congress. There are no motions at all on Ireland. Which, for Tory Northern Ireland Secretary Humphrey Atkins, is one of the few pieces of good news he has had since his miserable regime began.

The union leader who 'controls' the RUC

TERRY CARLIN is the Northern Ireland Officer of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. As such he is the leading trade union bureaucrat in the North of Ireland.

But this is not all Carlin does. He is also a member of the Police Authority of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Carlin sits on the controlling body of this infamous police force as a nominee of the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, which more or less has 'home rule' when it comes to trade union affairs in the North of Ireland.

Nominee

Its political positions reflect the Loyalist philosophy of the majority of trade unionists in the Six Counties. Hence the NIC's willingness to lend respectability to the RUC by having a nominee on the police authority.

An attack on this collaboration was launched at last month's annual congress of the ICTU by Barry Sullivan, a delegate from the National Union of Public Employees who condemned Carlin's role in the police authority.

He described the

WARNING this man works with the RUC



Terry Carlin

report him to your local trade union

authority's role as a 'whitewash agency for the RUC tortures', and

warned that Carlin's membership was only giving credibility to the

RUC and Secretary of State Humphrey Atkins'.

Sullivan went on to tell delegates that it was time the trade union movement stopped avoiding its responsibilities and looked at the whole situation in the Six Counties. He said the ICTU should withdraw Carlin from the police authority.

Ignored

The response of the ICTU executive was to say that conference had no authority on these matters, which were up to the Northern Ireland Committee to consider.

Carlin himself reported to delegates that the NIC had ignored a resolution passed at the previous year's congress — one which had called for a public enquiry into the death of Brian Maguire. Maguire was a shop steward of the white collar section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers who was found hanged in an RUC police cell just over a year ago.

The failure of Carlin and the rest of the Northern Ireland Committee to follow up this resolution is hardly surprising. After all, the police authority — even Carlin himself — might come under scrutiny in any such enquiry.

British Labour and Ireland: 1969-79

the cost of bipartisanship



the case for troops out now

by Geoff Bell

cartoons by Cormac

BRITISH LABOUR AND IRELAND 1969-79

A new pamphlet by Geoff Bell with cartoons by Cormac, which analyses the costs of bipartisanship over the last ten years. It is available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St., London N1, cost 40p + 10p post. Bulk rates available on request.

John Maclean: Born 24 August 1879

'He forged the Scottish link in the golden chain of world socialism'

By Pat Kane

JOHN MACLEAN has been recognised as one of Britain's foremost revolutionary leaders. He was a Marxist teacher who organised and educated the growing political movement along Clydeside in the first quarter of this century.

He opposed the First World War, and was involved in the industrial disputes that created 'Red Clydeside'. His grasp of Marxist principles was to guide him through those turbulent years of the Russian Revolution and the Easter Rising in Ireland — a period he described as the 'rapids of revolution'.

Debates

When Maclean lived in Glasgow, it was the second city of the British Empire and one of the most industrialised regions on earth. In the East End of the city was Glasgow Green, where, every Sunday, thousands of workers turned out to listen to debates.

Not all the speakers spoke about politics. Many spoke about religion, the differences between Catholic and Protestant, Christian and atheist. The temperance movement was active and flourishing. Most of the speeches were of a high academic level.

This was the type of city that stimulated Maclean. It had a radical tradition as a result of the influx of Highlanders and immigrant Irish and a socialist and trade union movement that was growing and becoming more political.

In 1910, Maclean debated Tom Johnson, who was later to become a Cabinet Minister, on the political nature of the Labour Party. Unlike other revolutionaries of the time, Maclean welcomed the Labour Party, since it increased the political independence of the working class.

Marxism

In the weekly paper 'Forward', Johnson claimed that the Labour Party was the 'heir' to the Marxian tradition'. Maclean hotly disputed this:

'Marxism stands for the revolutionary transformation of society. In fact Socialism established surely means the overthrow of capitalism, and that is revolution... The workers party that is any use in my estimate is one that recognises that the workers are robbed by the capitalists, and understands how that robbery takes place; and one that is organised to prosecute the class struggle politically until Socialism is attained. Such a party would be a Socialist Party based on Marxian principles.'

Maclean analysed how capitalism had developed into a world economic system. He explained how imperialism had increased competition that would lead to war.

Maclean's politics were based on understanding the international nature of capitalism and the need to defend the class independence of the workers throughout the world. This is why Maclean was to become Britain's most important internationalist leader and achieved recognition as such from the Bolshevik leaders.

Prior to the war, Maclean was a member of the British Socialist Party (BSP). He was active in the Co-operative movement, and started his famous educational classes in Glasgow. His main textbook was 'Capital'. The shop stewards who attended his classes were later to become the leaders of 'Red Clydeside'.

Major test

The First World War was to become a major test for the world movement, splitting the BSP and destroying the Second International. Maclean's response to the war appeared in 1914 in 'Justice', the BSP paper.

'It is our first business to hate the British capitalist system... it is our business as socialists to develop a "class-patriotism", refusing to murder one another for a sordid world capitalism.'

There could be no reconciliation with the ruling class, either in peace or in war. In Glasgow, Maclean established *The Vanguard*, a paper that was to lead the anti-war movement, and that supported the growing industrial unrest in the factories.

The mass movement was growing around three issues: opposition to the Munitions Act, the raising of rents, and the threat of conscription. The year 1915 started with the engineering strikes for a two pence an hour increase. These gave rise to the Clyde Workers Committee (CWC). Prominent in the



leadership of the Committee was Willie Gallacher, and Maclean, although a teacher, was welcomed at all the meetings.

All that summer anti-war revolutionary propaganda was circulating throughout the factories. But it was the rents issue that threatened the 'war effort'. Rents had risen through the increase in workers flowing into Glasgow to work in the engineering shops.

Opposition grew, and by October 1915, 25,000 people were on rent strike. In November the landlords tried to convict one family for non-payment of arrears. The Clyde exploded. The CWC called the factories out, and they marched on the court.

Gallacher recalls the scenes at the Sheriff Court where the trial was due to take place.

'John Maclean was on a platform addressing the crowd... It was obvious to the Sheriff that the situation was too dangerous to play with. He telephoned Lloyd George in London. "The workers have left the factories! What am I to do? They are threatening to tear down Glasgow!" "Stop the case," he was told. "We'll introduce a Rents Restriction Act." The mass movement had won its first great victory.'

This was the beginning of real mass actions against the government's attacks on workers' rights. Over the Munitions Act, many of the yards and factories struck.

Unfortunately the workers' unity was

broken at Parkhead Forge, where they reached a separate agreement. Nevertheless, the engineers won many concessions over war time working restrictions. This break in the unity was to be used to the full when the introduction of conscription was proposed.

On 5 January 1916, the Conscription Bill was placed before Parliament. The ruling class had had enough of 'Red Clydeside'. They understood that they would have to break the Clyde workers if they had any hope of conscription being introduced throughout the country. All the socialist press was banned. Maclean and the other leaders were arrested. On 11 April, Maclean received the heaviest sentence of all those arrested, three years penal servitude.

Maclean was to spend the next 14 months in prison, while on the Clyde a massive campaign was launched to secure his release. It was around this time that differences with Gallacher and the CWC were beginning to appear.

Gallacher, although a member of the BSP with Maclean, was heavily influenced by the American 'Wobblies', and their brand of syndicalism. He favoured concentrating on the industrial front.

Maclean argued that it was necessary to develop an anti-war movement and the type of actions seen around the rents struggles, in order to develop the independent political capacities

of the working class. As soon as Gallacher was released, he re-activated the CWC, and the main campaign was 'Free John Maclean'.

Maclean was in prison when two major events occurred that would shape the future course of his politics: the Easter Rising in Ireland and the revolution in Russia.

All over the Clyde anti-war activity went hand in hand with the demand to free Maclean.

Lloyd George visited Glasgow in June 1917. He was advised that unless Maclean was released 'the workers were in a mood to tear up Glasgow'. He was released the next day.

The anti-war movement was boosted by the events in Ireland and Russia. Demonstrations were organised, and on 8 July, the Women's Peace Crusade organised two huge demonstrations. With Maclean free, the movement was on the march once more.

October

Maclean could see that the war would not last, especially with the victory of the October Revolution, and the continued troubles in Ireland. In November 1917 he wrote a pamphlet called the 'War After the War'. He began to look to the miners to take the vanguard role that the Clyde engineers had previously occupied.

But it was Russia and Ireland that were to consume him for the rest of his life. In 1918, he was appointed Russian Consul in Glasgow, and along with Karl Liebknecht from Germany was appointed honorary president of the All Russian Soviets.

The October Revolution reshaped the entire socialist movements. For the first time the workers had seized power. For Maclean the task was to make sure they kept it.

He campaigned everywhere for 'Hands off Russia', but always stressing that the most effective defence was the overthrow of capital in Britain. From the Bolsheviks he learned the importance of Soviet type democracy, and came to view Lenin as a close political comrade. Maclean supported the formation of the Communist International, and was imprisoned once more for his propaganda in favour of Soviets and his defence of the Russian Revolution.

In 1918 he made his famous 'Speech from the Dock', where he outlined how capitalism had started the war for profit. He never cowered before the judge, instead he attacked the whole system, and urged the workers to follow the example of revolutionary Russia. His speech coincided with May Day, when 100,000 workers downed tools to march through Glasgow. He was sentenced to five years imprisonment.

Ireland

Through the summer of 1918, the mass movement once again demanded the release of Maclean. G N Barnes was the sitting Labour MP for Gorbals. He had supported the war, so his constituency had kicked him out and re-selected Maclean. With Maclean in prison, Gallacher stood in, and the government was once forced to release him before the December 1918 election.

Over the next five years he threw himself into the defence of the Irish revolution. The isolation of the Clyde workers eventually resulted in their defeat.

But the example of the political struggles on the Clyde and the national struggles in Ireland and India led him to evolve his republican beliefs. He founded the Scottish Workers Republican Party, after he failed to start a Scottish Communist Party affiliated to the Comintern. The dominance of the Russians in the Comintern and his distrust of the dubious political backgrounds of the early Communist Party leaders meant that he never joined the CPGB.

He was arrested twice more before his death, being sentenced to three and twelve months respectively. He had written that 'I'll continue fighting until John Bull kills me, or I die naturally.' He died in November 1923 of pneumonia, while campaigning for the SWRP in the General Election.

The inscription on the memorial cairn erected by the Glasgow labour movement and the Maclean Society says:

'He forged the Scottish link in the Golden Chain of World Socialism.'

Consultants' backhander

PUZZLED by the apparent absence of pay beds in NHS hospitals in South Glamorgan where I work, I began to ask patients how they got into hospital, and a pattern emerged. A £12 backhander to the consultant will get you over the longest waiting list. A growing number of NHS patients needing to go into hospital are being advised by their GPs to see Mr X or Dr Z privately. One private consultation and your case becomes urgent!

Admission to a hospital bed is decided entirely by the consultant's 'clinical judgement'. This is nothing more than a lucrative fiddle for some consultants taking advantage of the shortage of NHS beds and exploiting people who may be desperate, crippled and in pain.

I am trying to get facts to back up what I've noticed. What do other readers know about this practice, and what we can do to expose it?

NHS worker [Cardiff]

Studs Lonigan

WHATEVER the outcome of the industrial dispute at Independent Television, it should at least have one beneficial effect. The delay in screening programmes will give socialist journals an opportunity — which, to the best of my knowledge, all of them have so far missed — to draw their readers' attention to the dramatisation of James T. Farrell's classic trilogy, *Studs Lonigan*.

If it leads some of them to read *Studs Lonigan* in recently reissued paperback form, then that would be an added bonus. The Trotskyist movement has produced few novelists, and James T. Farrell was a great novelist. Why should we forget his existence?

RAY CHALLINOR [Whitley Bay]

★ James T. Farrell died of a heart attack on 22 August. We will carry an obituary in a future issue. — Eds.



IT IS impossible for socialists to follow the course of the Popular Unity government in Chile, from Allende's election in September 1970 to the generals' coup three years later, without having one's emotions wrenched this way and that, writes GEOFFREY SHERIDAN. Exhilaration at such things as the land takeovers and the formation of the cordones, which established dual power in the industrial belts, is all the while overshadowed by what we know was to come on 11 September 1973.

The Spiral brilliantly pieces together those developments, concentrating on how imperialism and the Chilean bourgeoisie moved to crush the threatened usurpation of their power and interests.

The 150-minute colour film, narrated by Donald Sutherland, takes its theme from a game devised at a law school in Massachusetts in 1965, which sought to offer US imperialism a more sophisticated variant of gunboat diplomacy by examining how various political and social groups can be weighed against a left-wing government.

Although this model can overstate the part played by actual conspiracies, The Spiral ably illuminates the choices which were open to Popular Unity and the Chilean workers and peasants, with a compilation of the best film and TV footage taken of those fateful years. Not to be missed.

The Spiral is showing at the ICA in London from 14 September for three weeks and can be hired from The Other Cinema, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2. Tel 01-734 8508. Rental: £35.

State agents mushroom?

DAVID Yaffe's letter (16 August) attempts to justify the Revolutionary Communist Group's exclusion of political tendencies from their meetings, and their physical attack on a member of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, by redefining workers' democracy. The RCG argues that its concept of democracy is not a bourgeois one, but one 'which serves the interests of the working class'. Since the RCG can define these interests as it sees fit, any views which it disagrees with can be dealt with administratively — in the 'interests of the working class', of course.

Comrade Yaffe's accusation about the RCT has no substance. At no time did the RCT disrupt or threaten RCG meetings. The RCT is not the first organisation to be excluded from RCG meetings in Manchester and London. Presumably all these exclusions were done in the 'interests of the working class'.

However, even more insidious than this attempt to redefine proletarian democracy is the RCG's tactic of labelling political opponents as agents of the state. Last year the RCG told its supporters that the Spartacist League was financed by the CIA. In March this year, the RCG warned its supporters not to talk to members of the RCT because they were agents of the state. Earlier this month, a South African comrade who criticised the RCG after a meeting of the Newham Defence Committee was branded as a spy for BOSS. These accusations, which were never substantiated, have become the means by which the RCG seeks to discredit its political opponents.

We draw your attention to these incidents not merely to refute the allegations against the RCT, but also to publicise this method of slander which can only undermine discussion and debate in the workers movement.

PAT ROBERTS [Revolutionary Communist Tendency]

*This correspondence is now closed. — Eds.

Are appearances revealing?

I HAVE to tell Alexander Musgrave (16 August) that I waged a bitter fight in the New York branch of the Communist League against admitting a man to membership on the sole ground of his appearance and dress. They asked: 'What have you against him?' I said: 'He wears a corduroy suit up and down Greenwich Village, with a trick moustache and long hair. There is something wrong with this guy.'

I wasn't making a joke either. I said people of this type are not going to be suitable for approaching the ordinary American worker. They are going to mark our organisation as something freakish, abnormal, exotic; something that has nothing to do with the normal life of the American worker. I was dead right in general, and in this mentioned case in particular. Our corduroy suit lad, after making all kinds of trouble in the organisation, eventually became an Oehlerite.

The Ghost of James P. Cannon [London NI]

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.

Zimbabwe picket

THE talks which open in London next month will see a concerted bid by the British Foreign Office to try and isolate the Patriotic Front. Thatcher's partial retreat at Lusaka, forced on her by the need to protect British interests, in no way indicates that the Tories are prepared to maintain sanctions till the white settler regime is dismantled.

The Tories will now aim to introduce a few cosmetic changes in the constitution to acknowledge Lusaka, isolate the Patriotic Front and try and carry the front line states with them. The front line states also retreated at Lusaka by agreeing to put the Patriotic Front on a par with the puppet parties who signed the 'internal settlement'.

Any notion that Lusaka resolved anything would be extremely dangerous. There is no mention in the Lusaka Communiqué of the white power structure or how the ceasefire will be supervised. In reality there are no grounds for believing that the Thatcher administration will be prepared to hand over power to a black majority if the latter is dominated by the Patriotic Front.

The Patriotic Front will be attending the London talks. But the

Front has a right to supervise elections, negotiations or a ceasefire. The Front argues that elections can only be supervised by 'persons or groups of persons who possess an objectivity and impartiality which is beyond question'. This would tend to exclude the present British government!

We urge all supporters of the liberation struggle to support the following actions over the next period:

Mon 3 September: Picket of Downing Street to protest against death sentences on two brothers found guilty of possessing firearms. 9.30am.

Mon 10 September: Picket of London conference at Lancaster House. Assembly 9am at Rothman Corner (corner of St James and Pall Mall, north side). Picket ends at 10am. Another picket at 5pm till 6.30pm and then marching to Central Hall, Westminster for rally at 7.30pm (Speakers to include Patriotic Front leaders).

Sat 15 September: Teach-in on Zimbabwe, 10.30am, NUR, Euston Road.

21-23 September 1979

MARXIST SYMPOSIUM

DAY ONE

10.30-1.30pm
CURRENT ISSUES OF MARXISM
Perry Anderson

2.30-5.00pm
Workshops
The Debate on English History, Alternative Economic Strategy, Bahro's Marxism
Speakers include: Perry Anderson, John Ross, Alan Freeman, Gunther Minnerup

7.30-10.00pm
RALLY
100th ANNIVERSARY OF TROTSKY'S BIRTH
Speakers include: Pierre Frank, Tariq Ali, the Voice of Leon Trotsky

DAY TWO

10.00-1.00pm
IS LENINISM OBSOLETE?
Dodie Wepler and two of the authors of Beyond the Fragments

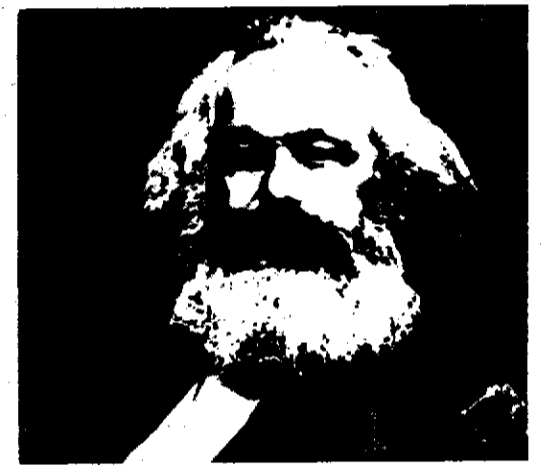
Workshops
Class Analysis and Political Strategy, Kautsky and Eurocommunism, The Communist International
Speakers include: Robin Blackburn, Pierre Frank

2.00-5.00pm
CULTURE AND POLITICS
Francis Mulhern
THE TRADE UNIONS TODAY
Richard Hyman, Steve Jefferys SWP, IMG speaker
Workshops include youth and revolution

Make Cheques and Postal Orders out to 'Socialist Challenge'
Fill in the form below:

Name.....

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DAY THREE

10.00-1.00pm
TWO TRADITIONS OF MARXISM IN BRITAIN
John Ross

Workshops
Workers Plans and Workers Control, Women in Eastern Europe.
Speakers include: Hilary Wainwright, Dave Bailey

2.00-5.00pm
THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT IN EUROPE
Chris Harman [SWP], Tariq Ali [IMG]

Creche facilities
Refreshments available

£1 a session.
£5.50 six sessions excluding the rally
£1 for rally.
£5 for all the sessions except the rally [£6 including the rally] if paid before 1 September.

VENUE: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London

Internationalist, feminist and trade unionist

Eleanor Marx
By Yvonne Kapp
Virago 1979
Two Volumes: £3.95 and £4.95

THESE two books are, quite simply, a magnificent achievement.

Yvonne Kapp has a keen grasp of the political issues at stake in the period of the book, which she couples with an ability to bring her personalities to life.

With Engels in Manchester in particular the descriptions, mainly taken from Eleanor's letters home, present a picture of warmth, affection and humour.

She describes lying on the floor with Lizzie Burns, Engels' companion, drinking all day in her chemise. And carrying Engels to bed when he passed out through drunkenness.

There is quite a bit of drunkenness in the two households, and no one seems particularly perturbed that the 'General' (Engels) should drink himself under the table.

Money is a constant problem, the Marx family can never meet their bills, and their clothes are often in pawn, having to be redeemed before they can leave the house.

Karl Marx looms as an affectionate, yet distant, husband and father throughout Eleanor's childhood, constantly encouraging his daughters to become involved in the politics of the day.

From Eleanor's early youth, when

she was moved by the fight of the Fenians in Britain, she became an ardent supporter of Irish self-rule. Even in later life she nearly always wore green when appearing on a public platform, to show where her sympathies lay.

Later she became involved in the plight of the exiled Communards, and for a long period was 'engaged' to Lissagaray, author of the definitive history of the Paris Commune.

She helped her father in his research in the British Museum, wrote articles for newspapers on the international labour movement and translated political and cultural works from several European languages into English.

After the death of her father, whom she adored, her personal life went into a decline from which it never recovered. Bereft of all the close family and friends of her youth — with the exception of Engels — she threw herself into her relationship with Edward Aveling.

Even the most sympathetic reader cannot help feeling Eleanor made a huge mistake in her choice of lover. There is no doubt that, particularly after the death of Engels, the worthless personal activities of Aveling contributed to the depression that led to her suicide.

Yvonne Kapp certainly provokes a close involvement with Eleanor as an individual personality, but she also brings to life the political atmosphere

of the period, explains the debates and describes Eleanor's role within events.

The major debate is with the tradition of British Marxism associated with Hyndman, founder of the first Marxist organisation in Britain — the Social Democratic Federation.

Eleanor, Aveling, and a handful of other Marxists, split from the Federation as it degenerated into national chauvinism, economism and sectarianism.

Through their internationalism, and well-rounded political activity, Eleanor, Aveling, Engels and their supporters understood the strategic line of march of the working class in Britain far more clearly than anyone else.

They agitated for the eight hour day as a central campaign, for mass trade unionism, for an independent labour party and for an international workers' organisation.

Practical

Eleanor herself made a practical link between this current and a section of the working class during the upsurge of struggle in 1889.

During the fight to create mass trade unions she helped organise the Gas-workers and General Labourers' Union — the ancestor of today's GMWU.

She took part in mass activities, was a branch officer, was regularly elected to conferences and became a well-known national figure in the union.

She was forced to relinquish this position during the period of reaction in the 1890s, and her political isolation after this also contributed to her suicide.

This book is an absolute must for every feminist and revolutionary; it is a book completely worthy of its subject.

JUDE WOODWARD



Bolivian tin miner's wife speaks out

Let Me Speak
By Domitila Barrios de Chungara
with Moema Viezzer.
Published by stage 1, pbk £2.95

THIS review is late. I read the book all at one go, it is one of the most exciting books I have read in years, then I lent it to a friend.

I ordered some more copies and we discussed it in the Latin American Women's Group. I lent it to another friend, and another, and sold all the copies I'd ordered.

So at last a review — or really just some ideas, coming out of our discussion. Not all of them said by me.

Fighting

Firstly this book should be produced in a shorter version with pictures to give our daughters. It presents a strong fighting woman living her life, in her own words, with courage, conviction and a lot of laughs. At 12 I needed an image like that.

'Tell me how Domitila started in politics?' said someone. Her husband was on strike. He didn't come home at night. She went to the union offices to look for him, and he complained that she fussed while he was getting on with the political struggle of the miners.

A woman from the Housewives Committee asked Domitila if she knew about the committee and whether she'd like to get involved. Domitila said 'Yes' (to spite her husband perhaps?) and did get involved.

Hostages

The committee, with the kids, is left to defend the building, and some hostages that the miners have taken, against the Bolivian army.

They tie dynamite to themselves, the children and to the building and dare the army to come closer. It doesn't.

Someone who saw Domitila two years ago told me of her incredible story. How she bore a dead baby after being tortured in a Bolivian jail — she woke up and found the baby and afterbirth frozen to the floor.

She had another miscarriage after hiding down a mine after soldiers had militarised the area. 'Now they owe

me two sons,' she said. She knew that more repression would follow the publication of the book in the West, but she wanted the book to reach as many people as possible to present the cause of her people.

We all felt stronger for reading Domitila's book, but there are also many contradictions.

Huddled

She goes to an International Women's Year conference in Mexico. She presents a picture of herself and her friend huddled in ponchos on the steps watching all the world's rich women float by, talking about 'common problems'.

That's fine. But then she goes to a workshop on prostitution and lesbianism at the conference. 'What have these women to do with me?' she asks.

Domitila, strong and committed, the miner's wife, is horrified by any struggles that take women beyond and out of their roles as supporters of their menfolk.

Sometimes she is even in favour of dividing the women of her mining community. The Housewives Committee proposes that widows of miners should be given jobs at the mine — by sacking the single women who work there.

Contradiction

That is the contradiction of this book. Domitila fights not as a woman, nor as a feminist, nor as a person, but as a 'miner's wife, the daughter of a miner'.

For those of us who are trying to identify ourselves as women, as sisters, much of what she says is like a blow to the face.

But we have to recommend the book as a way of showing the reality of the lives of Latin American women. We are trying to analyse and change that reality. Domitila describes it better than anyone else has done.

Read the book, buy it, give it to your friends. Put it on bookstalls. But above all discuss it.

Advance beyond horror and pity to solidarity with Latin American sisters.

ESPERANZA

Advertising women's role

Gender Advertisements
By Erving Goffman
Macmillan Hbk £7.95 Pbk £2.95

GENDER Advertisements is a new book about the appearance of women in advertising posters.

It is not a committedly anti-sexist book and some readers may find it irritating to find a male academic 'neutrally' pontificating on an area in which the exploitation of women is so blatantly reinforced.

However, Goffman is an interesting figure, and is not blind to the subordination of women, so the book is worth a second look.

The format is a brief, mainly methodological, introduction, followed by pages of black and white advertising posters with attached analytical text.

Gestures

Goffman is a pioneer and prime exponent of a field of 'micro sociology' — concentrating on face to face encounters and 'small behaviours' such as gestures, direction of gaze and so on.

This is more interesting than it sounds, involving all the theatrical hypocrisies of individuals and groups staging the impressions they make on one another.

In an earlier book, Asylums, Goffman shows how prisoners, mental patients, soldiers and children all undergo rather similar humiliating denials of personal autonomy and identity in the 'total



'Puckish poses' which equate women with children in social life.

institutions' they inhabit.

Goffman sees ads as highly edited displays serving to 'ritualise' certain social ideals, and he quickly observes: '...ritually speaking, females are equivalent to subordinate males and both are equivalent to children.'

He categorises these displays in ads rather arbitrarily but nonetheless in a way which does express the subordination of women in social life.

A whole range of postures of female submission are examined. The 'bashful knee bend' for example is a pose peculiar to women.

Others include the 'puckish pose' which equates a woman with a child; the broader smiles than ever worn by men, which serve to ingratiate; the tilt of head or body expressing vulnerability; the proprietorial touching or holding of women by men in public situations; mock assaults by men on women or children, which Goffman observes 'in-

volve a deeper display of what he could do if he got serious about it.' All of these are carefully illustrated.

A further concept employed in the book is that of 'licensed withdrawal'. This is applied to the common submissively lowered gaze, but more particularly when women are shown as withdrawn from social situations. Women are shown utterly absorbed by glee, pleasure or delight, 'like a child with an ice-cream cone' or immersed in a dreamy and prolonged way in a telephone conversation.

In addition 'women are shown mentally drifting from the physical scene around them (that is going "away") while in close physical touch with a male.'

Goffman points to the identification of height with social weight. Men are only ever shorter than women in ads when they are clearly socially inferior, leading to elaborate arrangements of figures in ads so that foreshortening

does not allow the man to appear shorter.

But in many aspects of the book the absence of a powerful analysis of women's oppression leads to weaknesses.

Shallow

There is very shallow treatment of the presentation of women as sex objects to be manipulated and violated by men. Goffman does not fail to comment on this in conjunction with an obvious picture of a woman on her back with her legs apart, but far more prevalent and subtle manifestations escape notice.

When examining 'licensed withdrawal' he misses the fact that women 'drifting off' frequently look as though they are being sexually aroused by someone out of the picture.

The proportion of blatantly sexually exploitative ads is also remarkably low in the collection and many more examples of sexual ambivalence could easily have been found.

It is a pity that Goffman's insight should be so artificially narrowed by the academic discipline he chooses to remain in.

But, despite the confines of the approach, he does document a fascinating range of the forms taken by the ideological reproduction of women's oppression, not only in advertising but also in all the rituals which exist in real social life and are simply selected as 'ideals' for advertising.

DAVID HOLLAND

Socialist Challenge



WHITE TERROR IN IRAN EXECUTION THREAT TO 14 SOCIALISTS

Khomeini has become the Shah of Iran. His government has declared war on the national minorities. The Kurdish fighters are being attacked by the army. Nine militants were publicly executed as revealed in the photograph above.

14 members of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (Iranian section of the Fourth International) face execution for defending the rights of women, national minorities and the working class. The Fedayeen and Mojahedeen are also facing repression. All left-wing papers have been banned.

The US State Department, currently defending human rights of a Soviet ballerina, has defended Khomeini's offensive and offered to resume the sale of arms so that 'the authority and effectiveness of the Bazargan government be strengthened'.

PROTEST PICKET: Saturday 1 September, 12-1pm, at Iranian Embassy, 16 Prince's Gate, London SW7

INSIDE: Fred Halliday on Iran today/interview with Hojabr Khosravi of Iranian SWP pp 10 & 11
Clive Turnbull reports from Nicaragua on the state of the revolution, pp 8 & 9