

Socialist Challenge

London

BRIGHTON — Coach leaves St Peters Church at 11am.

BARNSELY — Coach leaves Railway Station at 7.30am.

BEDFORD — Coach leaves St Paul's Square at 10am.

BIRMINGHAM — Coaches leave Hall of Memory at 9am.

CANTERBURY — Coach leaves University at 10am.

Coaches to

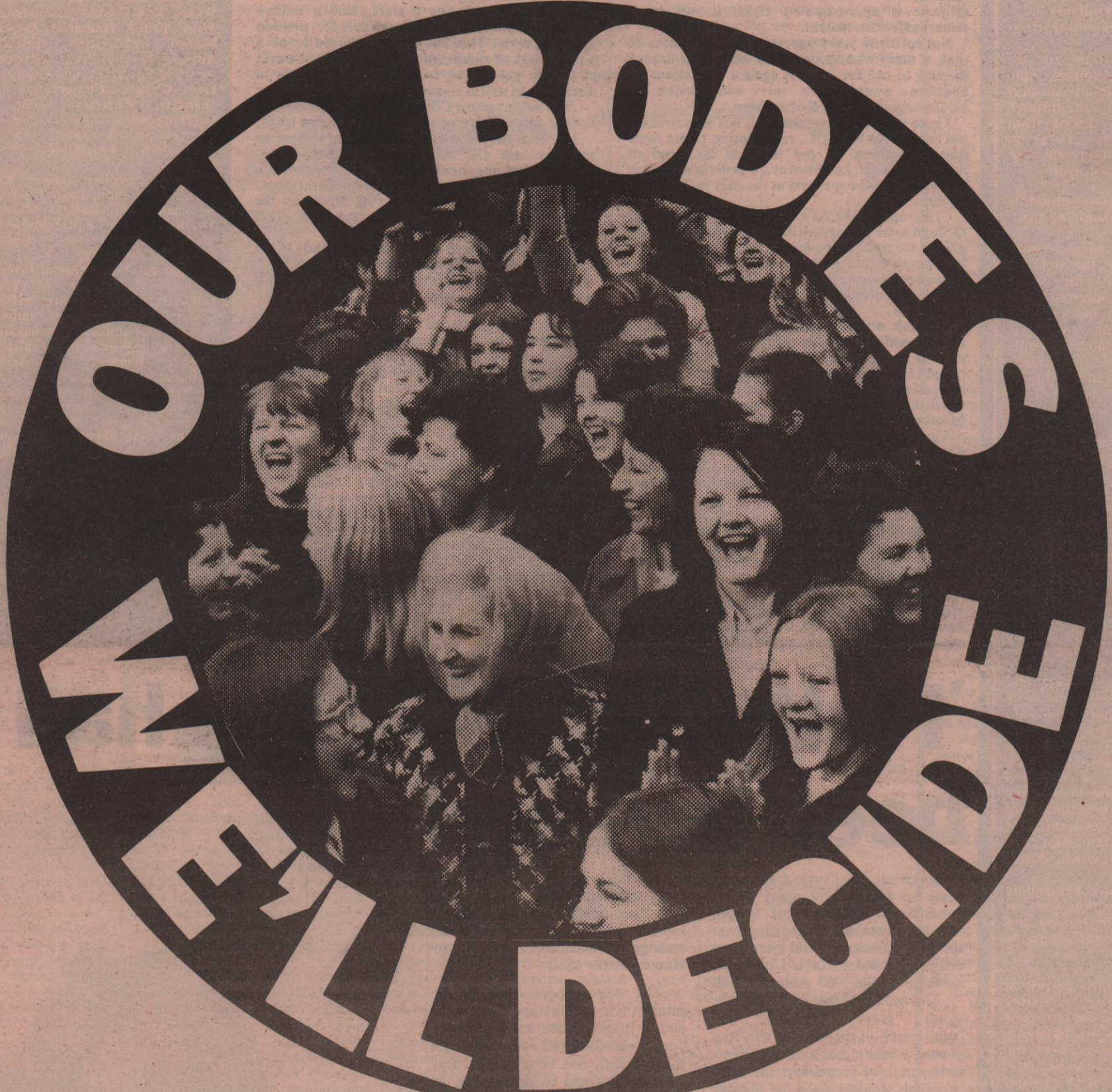
LIVERPOOL — Special train leaves from Lime Street Station at 7.30am. Tickets from the Trades Council, Victoria Street.

LEEDS — Coach leaves from University steps at 7.30am.

HARLOW — Coach leaves from Town Hall at 11.30am.

GLOUCESTER — Coach leaves from Gloucester Tech at 7.30am.

EDINBURGH — Coach leaves from Waverley Bridge at 10.30pm, Sat 27th.



PORTSMOUTH — Coaches leave Polytechnic Student Union at 9am.
NEWCASTLE — Train leaves from Central Station at 6.30am.

a train leaving from Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow on Sat night. Book through your trade union branch or contact Joanna Blithman,

FIGHT CORRIE'S ABORTION BILL

NOTTINGHAM — Coach leaves from Salutation Inn, 8am.

NORWICH — Coach leaves from Theatre Royal at 8am.

SCOTLAND — the STUC has booked

c/o Women's Aid on 031-229 2656.
SWANSEA — Coach leaves Central Library at 7.30am.
SHEFFIELD — Coach leaves from Pond Street at 8.30am.
WAKEFIELD — for details of coach phone Wakefield 890649.

CARDIFF — Coaches leave from Central Station and Parks Place at 8am.

COVENTRY — Coaches leave from Pool Meadow at 9.30am.

CRAWLEY — Coaches leave from Bus Station at 10.15am.

CLEVELAND — for details phone Middlesbrough 87616.

CHELTENHAM — Coach leaves Town Hall at 8am.

DERBY — Coach leaves the Council House at 7.30am.

DEMONSTRATE SUNDAY 28 OCTOBER/ASSEMBLE 12.00 SPEAKERS CORNER, HYDE PARK

OUR POLICIES

...sis. The leaders... Party and the trade... conditions that are in... of the workers... capitalist class.

... challenge believes that... vital tasks confronting... socialist 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)

Address.....

EDITORIAL

Parliament is nearly deaf to abortion rights. Shout loudly, and act now

THE TUC has told the press that it expects up to 40,000 people on Sunday's demonstration against John Corrie's Bill to amend — or more precisely to virtually axe — the 1967 Abortion Act. If that estimate is approximately right, it will be a remarkable achievement.

Not so many years ago, a woman (or come to that, a man) who stood up at her union branch meeting to call for support against restrictions on abortion would have met with looks of astonishment and howls of derision.

Those attitudes have changed, not substantially but enough for the TUC, representing 12.5m trade union members, to put itself at the head of Sunday's march. Len Murray, its general secretary, will be among the speakers at the rally in Trafalgar Square.

This opposition to Corrie hasn't come about through some far-sighted liberal mindedness on the part of the trade union leadership. It has been won by the patient and persistent activities of thousands of women and men on street corners, in meeting rooms, at conferences, and through public protests of all kinds.

It is this activity which has built for Sunday's march, and not just in the past few weeks and months but ever since the women's movement called for free abortion on demand, and a succession of MPs have tried to add to the restrictions on abortion through their Private Members' Bills.

The National Abortion Campaign has to take much of the credit for making millions of people realise that the time has come to stop talking about abortion in furtive whispers, and that the time when every woman should demand the right to control her own fertility is now.

To the Campaign Against Corrie should go the credit for mobilising much of the opposition to the present Bill, expected to receive its third reading in Parliament on 8 February.

Readers will not need to be told that when everyone has gone home on Sunday the battle will be far from over. John Corrie can count on the most vicious Tory government this side of the '30s

to help his Bill, and far too many MPs on the opposition benches are too worried about their Catholic constituents to go into the 'No' lobby. Parliament also happens to be male dominated.

So what's next? For a start, half a million signatures should be the target for the petition against Corrie. This has already proved to be a positive way of campaigning. Petitioning at work, at factory gates, and from street stalls leads to discussion as well as signatures.

The battle against Corrie and his co-thinkers has to take place where people live, work, and learn.

Teachers should organise to get pro-abortion speakers into the schools. Journalists should demand that the newspapers give pro-abortion arguments a fair presentation. Health workers and those campaigning against the cuts should let the authorities know that it's abortion and other facilities that are needed, not the axe.

The build up of activity should be for early in the new year, with 5 February already set aside for a mass lobby of Parliament, and a women's assembly to be held three days later.

For the third reading of the Bill to meet with mass opposition, the labour movement will need to weigh in against it. So a major task now is to take the campaign into the heart of the movement. The Scottish TUC has already called a conference for 1 December to oppose Corrie. The SE Region TUC is considering a conference. Pro-abortionists should aim to ensure that one is held in each region.

One thing more. The mass lobby of Parliament could be more than that. Strike action on 5 February would let Thatcher know that the working class will not passively accept any of her policies, no matter which section of that class is directly affected. The TUC and union executives should be called on to support such action.

And if at the end of the day Corrie's Bill becomes law, then doctors and other health workers should simply refuse to implement it. That way the anti-abortion MPs — Tory and Labour — will find out that in reality we don't depend on them for any of our rights.

Drop it, Corrie!

DROP it, Corrie! That's the message from the following organisations which are all opposed to the Tory MP's anti-abortion Bill:

- Abortion Law Reform Association; Association of Community Health Council England & Wales; Birth Control Campaign; Birth Control Trust; British Humanist Association; British Medical Association; British Pregnancy Advisory Service; Brook Advisory Service; Child Poverty Action Group; Christians for Free Choice; Conservation Society; Co-operative Women's Guild; Doctors & Overpopulation Group; Doctors for a Woman's Choice on Abortion; Family Planning Association; Federation of Conservative Students; Haldane Society; Labour Abortion Rights Campaign; Labour Party Conference; London Association of Radical Midwives; London Youth Advisory Centre; Marie Stopes House; Medical Practitioners' Union; National Abortion Campaign; National Association of Probation Officers; National Association of Young People's Counselling & Advisory Services; National Council for Civil Liberties; National Council for One Parent Families; National Joint Committee of Working Women's Organisations; National Labour Women's Advisory Committee; National Secular Society; National Union of Journalists Equality Working Party; National Union of School Students; National Union of Students; National Women's Aid Federation; Northern Ireland Abortion Law Reform Association; Pregnancy Advisory Service; Rationalist Press Association; Release; Scottish Women's Aid; Six-Point Group; Socialist Educational Association; Socialist Medical Association; SW Herts Joint Committee on Abortion Rights; Tories for Free Choice; TUC; Ulster Pregnancy Advisory Service; Union of Liberal Students; Women's Abortion & Contraception Campaign [Merseyside]; Women in Media; Women's Liberation Movement; Women's Therapy Centre; Young Communist League.

'I felt that my body had been invaded'

ONE statistic that Corrie & Co won't come up with is how many of the hundreds of thousands of women who have obtained an abortion over the past 12 years would have been denied one under Corrie's proposed carve up of the 1967 Abortion Act.

The answer is that by adding the words 'grave', 'serious', and 'substantial' to the kind of risk to a woman's health that would justify a termination of pregnancy, the Bill's proposals would reduce the number of abortions by two-thirds — and that's quite apart from Corrie's plans to axe the abortion charities and the like.

SARAH ROELOFS is among those who have the existing legislation to thank for their safe, legal abortion. This is her account of how it happened and what it was like.

“ I was nine weeks' pregnant when I had the abortion. I had it at Professor Huntingford's day-care clinic at the Mile End Hospital in Tower Hamlets.

I was lucky to have a regular menstrual cycle. I knew I was pregnant when my period was a week late. A pregnancy test at six weeks was positive. My immediate reaction was horror.

Since I was 17 I had been terrified of becoming pregnant, even though I was on the pill. I had never had unprotected intercourse. After nine years I came off the pill, and the FPA prescribed a diaphragm for me.

I used it properly, I had followed every instruction and now I found that I was pregnant. I was lucky to have a sympathetic doctor and he arranged immediate referral to Huntingford's clinic.

The three weeks between the positive test and the operation were awful. It was a very hot and sticky June. I was tired and nauseous. I felt that my body had been invaded and violated. I would sit on my bed at night and look at my puffy stomach which had been so flat and wonder if I'd ever get my own body back.

The counselling session a week before the operation was informative, supportive, and non-judgemental. The only question I was asked was whether to have a local or general anaesthetic. I was given all the relevant information and decided to go ahead with a local.

I was lucky to be surrounded by supportive women friends. One of them took the afternoon off work and went with me to the clinic. The atmosphere was relaxed and friendly. I was slightly apprehensive but did not have to wait long. In the theatre a nurse stood on one side and my counsellor on the other side, holding my hand.

Throughout the 10 minute operation I was told exactly what was happening. The pain was minimal. The staff were particularly supportive, I was not a lump of interesting flesh but a human being to be treated with kindness and respect.

Afterwards, aside from a slight



Sarah Roelofs: 'I was given all the relevant information...'

shakiness, I felt fine. My friend came to the recovery room and we were given tea and biscuits. The cramps eased off. The doctor came in to check on me and to discuss contraception. I had reluctantly decided to go back on the pill. I was

not going to risk another pregnancy.

Half an hour later I left the clinic. I felt euphoric relief. I was free. I had my body back. A day later I was back at work.”

Abortion internationally

The battle for womb control

By Geoffrey Sheridan

JOHN Corrie's proposals for enforced childbirth will affect women beyond Britain's shores. Each year thousands of women come to Britain for an abortion, for the simple reason that the laws on abortion and contraception in their own country are even more restrictive than they are here.

Throughout West Europe, the Church, the state, and much of the medical profession delight in women remaining prisoners of childbirth and

the family. It's not simply that these institutions are male dominated. Capitalism needs the family to churn out workers for the production lines. It's crude but effective.

The 1967 Abortion Act, in spite of its limitations, has established Britain as one of the West Europe's most liberal countries when it comes to statutory pregnancy.

That's why women come to Britain for a safe and legal abortion from virtually every country in West Europe. In 1977, the latest year for which figures are available, 10,171 women came from

Spain; 7,849 from Italy; 4,201 from France; 2,183 from the south of Ireland; 1,732 from West Germany; and 1,255 from the north of Ireland. The total figure was 35,000 women.

Corrie's Bill would effectively close charities such as the British Pregnancy Advisory Service — the organisations that many foreign as well as British women turn to for an abortion. Here's what that would mean for women in just two countries where the barbarism of the Papacy reigns.

In Spain . . .

Tomorrow, 11 women in Bilbao in northern Spain are due to stand trial. Their crime? Eight of them are accused of having had an abortion; one of having tried to procure an abortion, and the other two of having carried out abortions.

Take the case of one of the women accused of doing abortions. She told the police that she had been helping women since 1970, charging them from 800 to 9,000 pesetas (£5.50 to £64) for an abortion — unless they were poor, in which case the operation was free.

The court prosecutor is nothing but generous, demanding six years' imprisonment for each abortion the woman conducted. That makes 60 years in jail. In fact she spent over seven months behind bars following her arrest.

Refused

And why was it necessary for women to turn to the back-streets? The women who go on trial tomorrow for having had an abortion are aged from 24 to 44. All but one is married, with two or three children and very low incomes. They had asked doctors for contraceptives and had been refused.

The prosecutor wants six months' imprisonment for each abortion. As if this grotesque denial of liberty for avoiding the chains of unwanted motherhood were not enough, the prosecutor is also demanding that the women should be deprived of the right to vote or be elected for public office for a period of 11 years.

No doubt the wizened celibates of the Vatican will have a little chuckle at that. Quite amusing, really, that the denial of a democratic right — a woman's right to choose — should be met with the deprivation of yet other rights.

No doubt, too, Pope John and his chums don't lose any sleep over the fact that 3,000 women a year in Spain die from illegal abortions.

It so happens that the date set



for the trial is when the referendum on the Statute of Euskadi — the Spanish government's proposals for devolution in the Basque country — will be held. Since the arrests took place three years ago, the timing of the trial could be said to be an attempt to divert attention from it.

Feminists are upsetting those plans.

Last weekend three hundred feminists who occupied the Palace of Justice in Madrid in solidarity with the women on trial were driven out in a police baton charge. As the *Guardian* reported it: 'The national police behaved with unusual brutality reminiscent of the days of the Franco regime.'

One of those assaulted by the

police was a former Socialist deputy, Carlota Bustelo, sister of the Minister of Industry.

Sit-in protests have also been held in Barcelona, Bilbao, San Sebastian and many other cities. On Sunday, police forcibly ejected 500 women from the College of Medicine, Madrid.

About 1,300 women, many of them actresses, writers, lawyers, doctors and politicians have signed a document confessing that they have had an abortion.

They say: 'It is obvious that Spanish justice is condemning women because they do not have the £250 which it costs to go to England for an abortion.'

Demonstrations will take place in several Euskadi towns

tomorrow, and on the weekend a campaign of leafleting and street meetings will culminate in the occupation of Bilbao's town hall.

Women's organisations in Euskadi are raising demands which include: the removal of abortion from the penal code; an immediate amnesty for the women on trial and for all those who have been imprisoned for abortions; and the setting up of municipal centres for contraception.

The battle is being supported by the International Contraception Abortion Sterilisation Campaign (ICASC). Information from: Isabel Ochoa, Garcia Salazar 12, 1^o dcha, Bilbao, Spain.

. . . and Portugal

Another trial, this time of a woman accused of having an abortion. She is Conceição Massano, who became pregnant in 1974 when she was a student nurse in Porte Allegro, in Portugal. Her 'mistake' was to record in her diary that she went to Lisbon for an abortion. She is liable to between two and eight years' imprisonment.

Also on trial is her husband who provided the money for the abortion, and a friend who gave the address of an abortionist. They each face a six-year sentence.

The trial, to be held on 29 October, has been dragging on for five years. It will not go unmarked. A national demonstration is to take place in Lisbon, and a petition signed by 17,000 women will be handed in to the prime minister, who is a woman.

Behind these activities is the National Campaign for Abortion and Contraception in Portugal, which earlier this year successfully campaigned for the acquittal of Marie Antonia Palla, a journalist taken to court for making a film about abortion. ICASC helped to organise the international protest at Palla's trial. Two thousand women a year die from illegal abortions in Portugal — and that's just the official figure.

Information from: CNAC, Rua Guiomar Torresao, Lote 37 3^o dto, Carnide, 1500 Lisboa, Portugal.

Why women reject their 'proper sphere'

By Celia Pugh

'THE DUTY of men and husbands is to bring about a condition of things when their wives should be in their proper sphere at home instead of being dragged into competition of livelihood with the great and strong men of the world.'

Thankfully, much has changed since the TUC made this statement in 1877. Across the globe women have asserted that we, too, want to be strong and independent people of the world. We have said No to the subservience, dependence and discrimination bound up with our 'proper sphere' in the home.

In our millions we have thrown off a role of passive self-sacrifice to the needs of husbands and children in the Vallium-coated isolation of the family.

We have taken to the streets against the butchery of the back-street abortion, to assert our right to control our life and body as we choose, and to create the conditions where we can walk the streets without fear of sexual assault.

Potential

We have taken strike action against discrimination in the workplace and have joined in a movement of women to forge a new, confident identity, free from images of passivity and dependence foisted on us by society.

The media churn out a picture of revolutionary socialists as maniac disciples of destruction. In reality it is capitalism which destroys our potential of human creativity and liberation. As socialists we seek to create a society in which everyone can have a life free from the distortion, degradation, and deprivation forced on us by class society.

This socialist struggle for human liberation is not worthy of its name if it ignores or belittles our fight as women for our own liberation. Indeed, the society we are striving for is enriched by the relations which movements for women's liberation show to be possible.

'Ah, but hold on comrades. We have to destroy capitalism before we can talk of a fight for women's liberation.' How many times have we heard this in the socialist movement?

Who are the 'we' who will destroy capitalist power? 'We' just happens to include millions of women who cannot afford to wait to remove the crushing weight of oppression we face in our daily lives.

Natural

If this struggle is so secondary, why does the ruling class try every trick in the book to thrust us back behind the kitchen sink and on to sexist advertising hoardings? Dare we suggest that the ruling class has something to gain from our continued oppression. By this means, our exploitation can be pushed aside as natural, inevitable and even commendable.

Let's look more closely at what the TUC had to say in 1877. Men's difficulty in sustaining a livelihood is put down to competition from women workers. And of course the same can be argued about black and Jewish people.

How pleased the ruling class must be when it sees the working class dividing in battle against these scape-goats. Or when workers march down blind alleys to defend jobs and living conditions under the banner of immigration controls, keeping women in the home, or protecting the British nation and products against 'foreigners'.

The real roots of unemployment and deprived living conditions — the capitalist system — is shrouded in a mist of political confusion.

Over a hundred years after the TUC statement, these attitudes still prevail. We are told that equal pay brings down male wages, so long live male differentials. Ignored is the fact that women's fight for a decent living wage strengthens the struggle of the whole working class for a wage to live by.

We are told that women's jobs, nurseries, and safe fertility control are dispensable when we have to tighten our belts. After all, everyone has to make sacrifices; the country can't afford women the luxury of escaping their 'natural' position in the family.

So the battle against capitalist domination is diffused. How can we possibly tackle the real enemy when it's not clear who this enemy is?

Our response must be to disperse the mist. Sure, there will be no women's liberation without revolution — but there's no chance of a successful revolution without a fight for women's liberation.

Do we need a 'communist' women's movement today?

By Valerie Coultas

'WORKING women are the weakest of their sex. Their lives were too hard and their education too meagre to equip them for the contest. Surely it is a mistake to use the weakest for the struggle! We want picked women, the very strongest and the most intelligent! You have your own ideas. We do not want that; we want all our women to take their instructions and walk in step like an army.'

So spoke Christobel Pankhurst in 1914 expelling her sister Sylvia from the 'official' Suffragette movement, The Women's Social and Political Union.

History never repeats itself in exactly the same way. While there are lessons that we can learn from the Suffrage movement about the need to build a democratic Women's Liberation Movement today that takes up the concerns of all women — particularly working class women — we have not got a great deal of evidence to support the view that the modern British women's movement has the same ideas as Christobel.

Unfortunately, the Socialist Workers Party gives us the impression that it has.

Having neglected the Women's Liberation movement for several years, without once attempting to participate in an ongoing way in the debates and local groups of the WLM, this organisation, of some 3,000 people, has decided to build its own 'communist women's movement'.

At its conference a couple of weeks ago a resolution was passed saying Women's Voice 'supports the aims of the Socialist Workers Party. It is organisationally independent, but based on the politics of the SWP'.

If the SWP want to organise their own women members and supporters in a periphery organisation — fine. They'll probably find that women get a bit fed up with this ghetto but that's their business. What we object to is

the ambiguity of the formula and the suggestion that revolutionary socialists in Britain today should build their own movement in contrast to building the campaigns and initiatives of the existing women's movement.

If the SWP had been expelled, like Sylvia, we could understand it. But this is not the case.

If the Women's Liberation Movement was completely moribund and doing absolutely nothing we could understand it. But in the light of the anti-Corrie campaign this just does not stand up.

Hectic

If the Women's Liberation Movement did not allow the SWP to fight for its own ideas we could sympathise. But the women's movement is broad and heterogenous and allows anyone who has a view to put forward in a written and an oral form [It does get a bit hectic sometimes of course due to lack of structure].

If socialist ideas were unpopular as indeed they are in the movement in the United States it would seem a more reasonable course of action. But at the last Socialist Feminist Conference, 2,000 women came, so that one doesn't rub either.

So perhaps the problem is the class base of the WLM. Well, why should working class women be persuaded to join a revolutionary socialist Womens Voice rather than a broad-based women's movement that does not demand that they're revolutionary before they can fight against their own oppression?

That's all very well, the sisters of the SWP say, but the WLM is not well organised. It's not fighting hard enough against the Corrie Bill, against the cuts, against the new technology.

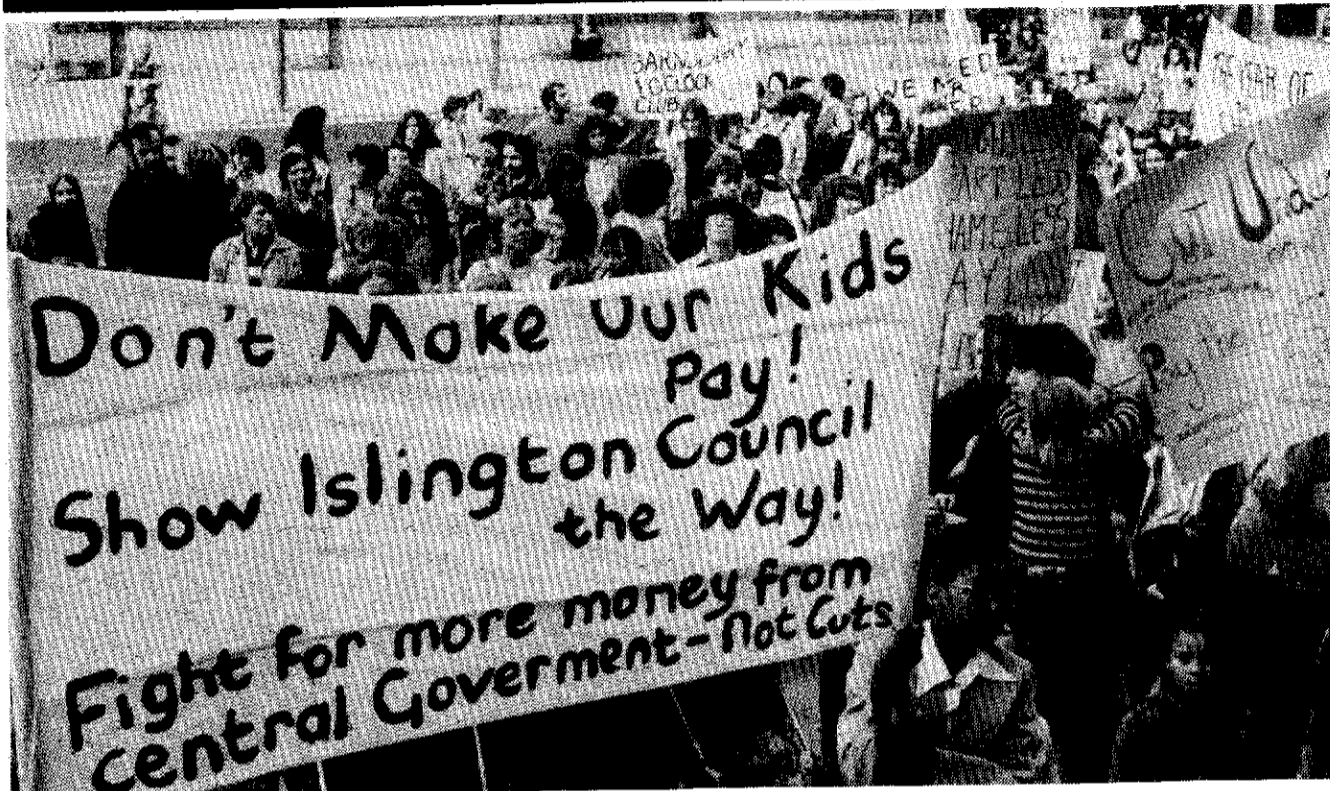
Our answer is simple - get involved and make sure it is then.

*We welcome contributions on his topic from the Womens Voice supporters.



Sylvia Pankhurst — expelled from the 'official' Suffragette movement

MARGARET No 1 ENEMY



Victory for Under 5's

By Islington Under Fives Action Group

On 10 September Islington Social Services Committee decided to cut grant aid to the Under Fives project by 53 per cent. In response a meeting was called of parents, workers and local people which became the Islington Under Fives Action Group.

We decided to lobby the council, leaflet all houses in the borough, organise petitions and planned a demonstration. Six hundred people, mostly women and children, came to the demo.

Women were affected by these cuts as parents and as paid workers. Many of us had never been involved in this kind of fight before and felt powerless in the face of council bureaucracy. We were all really encouraged by the numbers of

women willing to do the necessary work.

We have only won a temporary reprieve. Our grants for next year are going to be decided by November. The battle has only just begun.

The fact that the social services committee were forced by the full council to back down at all is entirely due to the fantastic amount of pressure put on councillors by parents and workers from all groups in the borough.

All cuts in welfare provision hit women hardest. Women have to stay at home, caring for children, the sick and the elderly when welfare provisions are cut. Most workers in these jobs are also women. All these cuts force women back into the home and as women we are determined to fight them.

Liverpool women fight back

JANET POTTER is a member of the Liverpool Women's Action Group. She talked to Socialist Challenge about the activities of her group in Merseyside.

“It's a broadly socialist feminist group and we're particularly concerned with practical issues — be it jobs, nurseries, cuts or anything else that affects women at home or at work.

Any woman can join who wants to fight against her oppression. Before I joined there was a campaign to stop the Mill Lane maternity wing closing. The group leafleted, contacted the labour movement and eventually the hospital was occupied to stop the closure.

Over 100 women were faced with redundancy in Kirby at the FD Centre — an international company — and they occupied it in protest. Our group publicised the issue and raised funds. We put out a special leaflet outlining different solutions, including the suggestion of a workers co-operative. In the end a buyer was found and some of the women got their jobs back.

More recently we've been involved in fighting the threatened closure of St Monica's battered women's refuge in Croxteth Road. Now the local authority is planning to make it a single homeless unit with women having priority.

We also got involved in the dispute at the Leonard Cheshire Home. Women nurses were sacked for trying to form a union. We helped with picketing and leafleting. The case went to a tribunal and the women got compensation.

We see ourselves as part and parcel of the women's liberation movement. We want to take a feminist perspective into the economic struggles. We think it's very important for women to be supported by other women.

There's two socialist feminist groups in Liverpool. One concentrates on all aspects of socialist feminist theory whereas we concentrate on theory insofar as it applies to the specific struggles that we feel are relevant to women in Liverpool. The two groups overlap a great deal. I think you've got to have both theory and practice to build a strong women's movement.”

'Women in Action', the newspaper for action in the unions on women's rights. Regular production starts in new year, 1980.

Interested? Contact the editorial group for orders and info. Send us articles and letters. Contribute to the £1,000 launching appeal.

You'll be in good company. Support has come so far from union branches and members, trades councils, women's campaigns, Women in NUT, Civil Service Women's Rights Group, and the Working Women's Charter Campaign.

WOMEN IN ACTION Box 2, 190 Upper St, London N1

A MASSIVE SCOTLAND

By Pauline Tierney, Edinburgh NAC

WE'RE going to be bringing a massive contingent from Scotland on the anti-Corrie demonstration. Both James White and John Corrie are west of Scotland MPs and it's almost impossible to get an abortion on the NHS in their constituencies under the '67 Act — let alone if Corrie's Bill was passed.

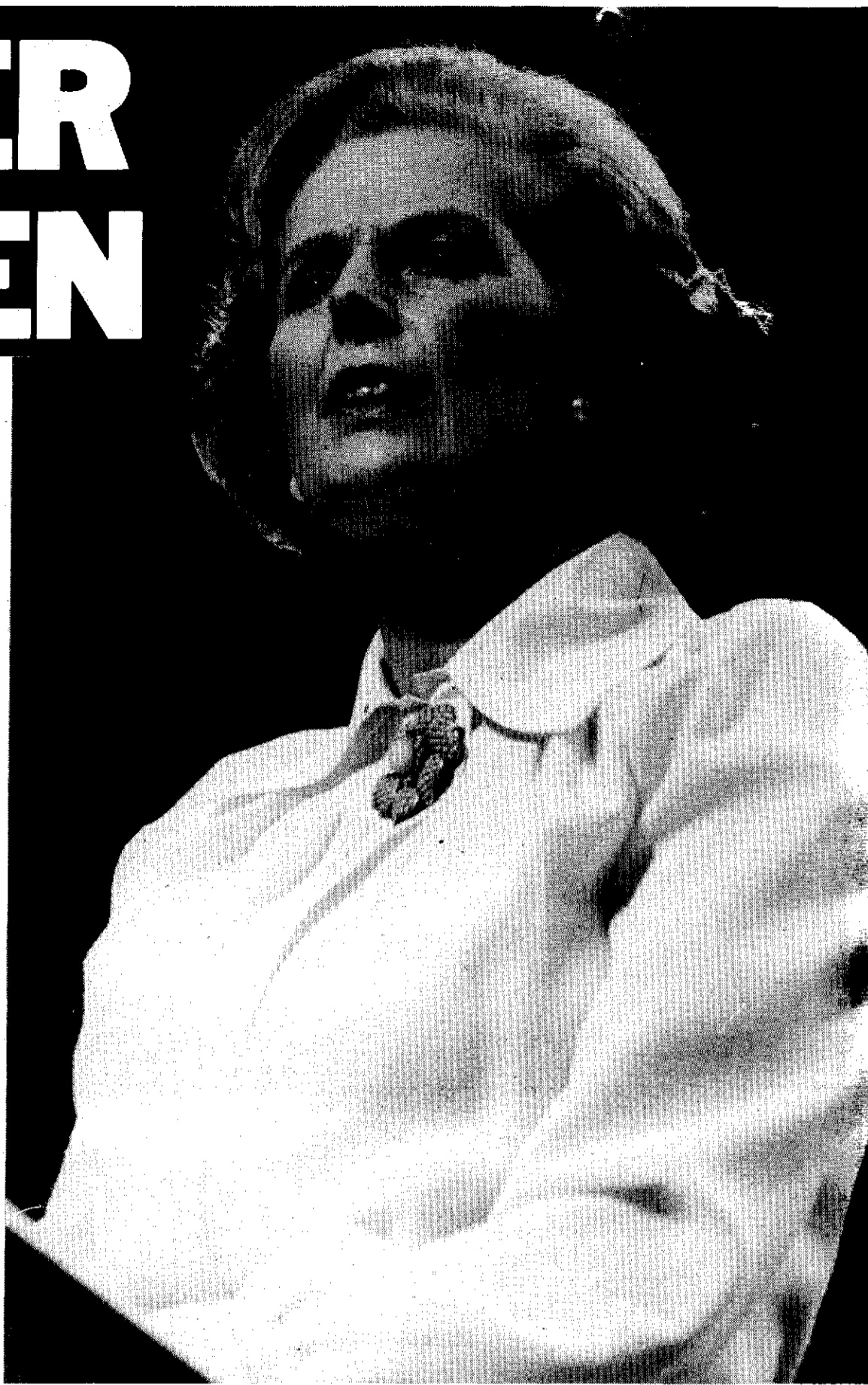
The campaign is gaining support in leaps and bounds. Even James White is feeling the heat. Recently, his Glasgow Pollok constituency Labour party decided, despite opposition from a well-organised SPUC lobby, to endorse the Labour Party's pro-abortion policy and to instruct him to vote in accordance with it.

Success

The organised women's movement hasn't been involved in NAC as much as in the past, particularly in Edinburgh. We held a one-day women's liberation conference in April to discuss fighting Corrie and taking up other issues, but it was women in Women's Voice and other left-wing groups who agreed to build the anti-Corrie campaign. Our first public meeting was a massive success with 100 people attending. The main speaker was Margaret Wilson from the STUC.

The involvement of women from the STUC has been a great boost to the campaign. For years they've worked in the trade union

THATCHER OF WOMEN



IT IS ironic that the first British government to be headed by a woman is also unleashing a violent assault on women's rights and liberties. If any feminists in this country ever thought that all women were necessarily on the same side, Maggie Thatcher should have dispelled the illusion.

All women are oppressed as a sex. But this does not stop some women, like Thatcher, being willing to exploit others as representatives of the ruling class.

Thatcher's main aim is to save British capitalism. She'll trample on anyone who gets in her way. In the last five months she's not only proved to be an enemy of the working class. She and her Cabinet are also the number one enemy of women.

Let's look at the government's record...

***Abortion:** the Tories imposed a one line whip in support of Corrie's Bill. Thousands voted for it. If the Bill becomes law thousands of women will be forced to return to the backstreet abortionists; particularly working class women.

***Social Services:** the Tories' June Budget demanded £4,000m worth of public spending cuts. David Blunkett, deputy leader of the Labour Group on the Association of Metropolitan Authorities social service committee, forecast: 'It will mean 70,000 old or disabled people being deprived of home help'.

There will be sackings in homes for the old and handicapped and 3,500 places in children's homes will go as will 2,800 nursery places. Four million meals on wheels will disappear.

Who, by and large, staffs these institutions? Who, by and large, looks after the young, old and sick, when the state refuses? Women do.

***Education:** the proposed cut of £550 million in the education budget means a total loss of over 100,000 teaching, administrative, clerical and manual jobs. The cuts also mean fewer nurseries, less special education, less adult education.

Milk chop

School meals and milk also face the chop. In higher education a six per cent cut means chopping courses which attract most women — arts, humanities, social sciences.

All this means that working mothers, women teachers, and 'dinner ladies' are the Tories' special targets.

***Health:** already many hospitals in the NHS have been forced to close. The Tories are promoting private medicine through tax concessions for private health insurance. They are encouraging voluntary funding of hospitals and say NHS premises will be shared by private charities.

Women will have to shoulder a large burden of these cuts — both as producers and consumers. Whether the target is safe abortions or anti-natal care, women's health will suffer.

***Women's rights:** the Tories want to pass legislation abolishing social security for strikers. As it is often women who are expected to manage the family budget, it is they who will bear the biggest brunt of this attack. The same can be said if the threatened increases in council rents go through.

Dubious

If the Tories repeal protective legislation on working conditions women will have the dubious benefit of shift work. Although James Prior has hacked down on his proposals to allow small, fit firms to sack women who become pregnant, if he has his way it will be easier to refuse women maternity benefits and redundancy payments.

***Unemployment:** women face the loss of their financial independence as their jobs in health, education and local government start to disappear. The post-war white blouse army is under attack from the cuts and the new technology. The unemployment rate for women is double that of men, and for women leaving school between 1974 and 1978 the unemployment rate increased by 1,110 per cent. Under the Tories things can only get worse — unless there is a fight back.

***Back to the family:** the president of the Law Society, John Stebbings, recently said that women who go out to work are responsible for juvenile delinquency. Patrick Jenkin, Tory Minister for Social Services, has said it was the separation of children from their mothers during the war that is responsible for the violence of the modern age.

The same theme is common to both. Women should accept the sackings and the attacks on their rights and return quietly to the home where they can fulfil their role as loving wives and full-time mothers.

For the Tories the attacks on women are not just economic necessities for the stability of British capitalism: they are part and parcel of reactionary ideology.

CONTINGENT FROM ON 28 OCTOBER

movement generally and now they're really excited about campaigning on an issue that affects women directly. There are already several motions down for the STUC women's conference on abortion.

Crux

Scottish NAC has been meeting in Dundee regularly and from it we have projected a one-day anti-Corrie conference in December. We're going to get the STUC women's conference to sponsor it.

The crux of our whole campaign is to get the abortion issue raised in the trade union branches, workplaces and schools. We're working with the National Union of School Students to try to get the whole discussion about abortion into the schools as part of social education.

We're also aiming to get to housewives on this issue through street meetings, petitioning, etc.

On the train from Glasgow and Edinburgh coming down on Sunday we'll be bringing miners, firefighters, hospital workers, and representatives from many white collar unions in Scotland.

Whole

We're hoping they come back from the demonstration committed to winning the whole of the trade union movement in Scotland to use their power to stop Corrie's pernicious Bill.



Education cuts give women the chop



by Carole Regan, NUT

THE effect of the education cuts on women will be devastating. Axing school meals will mean massive problems for working mums and unemployment for 'dinner ladies'. Part-time teachers in schools and colleges will come in for the chop and most of them are women. Less frequent cleaning of schools will mean redundancies for the mainly female cleaning staff.

Shifts in school hours and terms to save on heating bills will mean that some mothers, who cannot find or afford the extra child care facilities, will have to give up work.

Adult education and discretionary awards are to be cut back — another area where women predominate. The cut in service training means that the teaching careers of many women will be damaged.

Women teachers, despite our union's

disgraceful policy, are also alive to the dangers of the Corrie Bill. Not only will many women teachers have to give up their jobs, but the young women we teach are often made to feel so guilty about pregnancy that they are forced into having late abortions or wrecking their lives.

If the Corrie Bill goes through we won't even be able to give advice to students about abortion because it will be illegal. We're going to wage a massive battle in the NUT on this issue. It's high time the male-dominated executive, who think their 'professional' image would be damaged if the NUT had a pro-abortion policy, were reminded of their responsibilities to their largely female members.

Women in the NUT was launched last year to raise women's demands within the NUT. Local groups have mushroomed — there are now 39 groups outside London and we have our own newsletter.

The NUT should be at the centre of the fightback against the cuts. We're going to ensure that it does not limit this fight to defending full-time jobs but that the concerns of its women members, and women in general, are at the centre of its activity.

Nursery demand takes flight

HEATHROW Airport will have a nursery for its 57,000 employees if women workers have their way.

A public meeting last week, attended by 50 people [45 of them women], decided to put a resolution to all union branches at the airport.

The demand for one is to be assessed by a survey among the entire workforce. The British Airport Authority is to sponsor the scheme.



生命

廿一週歲的嬰兒
活生生的出世了
攝於三月間



或

死亡

廿一週歲的嬰兒
因墮胎而被殺了



LEVEN

Een baby van 4 1/2 maand
(21 weken) zwangerschap
levend geboren.
(foto, drie weken later)



of

DOOD

Een baby van 4 1/2 maand
(21 weken) gedood door
abortus.

NOT the size of the vast majority of fetuses when they are aborted, but the kind of propaganda that the anti-abortionists spread throughout the world

Exposed—

The world-wide anti-abortion lie machine

By Rose Knight, National Abortion Campaign

LOOK at the photographs illustrated on this page. The pictures are identical. Only the languages used in the captions are different. One is Dutch, the other Japanese.

The pictures are taken from identical leaflets circulating in the two countries — two countries which are thousands of miles apart, which have entirely different cultures. What is the connection?

And what is the connection between Margaret Thatcher, Labour MP Leo Abse, and the North of Ireland Loyalist leader Ian Paisley?

The answer to both questions is the same. These two countries and many others are targets of an international conspiracy aimed at denying women the right to control their own bodies. And all three politicians named above are part of it.

Central to this conspiracy is the Catholic Church. Since the early 1970s the Vatican has carried out a full scale, co-ordinated, international campaign against abortion. Directives are sent through papal nuncios and apostolic delegates who act as channels of communication between the Vatican, the bishops conferences in each country, and the organisations of Catholic lay members.

The Church operates its campaign in three ways: direct propaganda, for example the Pope's recent speeches attacking 'the abomination of abortion'; through groups in this country like the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) and 'Life', and international groups such as the 'International Federation of Doctors who Respect Human Life'; and finally through support for right-wing anti-abortion politicians and parties.

An instance of this third tactic was the intervention of the Catholic Church in Britain's May general election, when it attempted to win votes for anti-abortion candidates — in most cases Tories.

Thousands of leaflets are circulated through Catholic organisations. An example is 'Life or Death', from which the pictures on this page are taken.

Bogus

Over a million copies of this leaflet, with its gory pictures and bogus science, were given out in Scotland during the last election. The leaflet is available in Dutch, Japanese, Chinese, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Polish, Hungarian and Portuguese.

Not many institutions have establishments in all these countries. And what other organisation apart from the Catholic Church has the funding, the uniformity of approach, and the ideological commitment necessary to sponsor such world-wide propaganda?

The propaganda is assisted by 'experts' who travel the world attacking a woman's right to choose. An example is Sir William Liley, a founding president of SPUC. Sir William is a member of the papacy's

Pontifical Academy of Scientists.

In Britain, where Catholics are in a minority, the Church works through SPUC and Life, the latter having a specifically Catholic position on abortion. It is common for Catholic congregations and lay groups to join these organisations en masse, to organise buses to demonstrations, and to provide the main speakers.

Most of the money for these activities is either collected at chapel gates or donated by Catholic lay organisations. Meeting places and free publicity in the Catholic press are also provided.

Invention

A specific example is the role the Catholic Church has played in the campaign for the Corrie Bill. Cardinal Gordon Grey, leader of the Church in Scotland, organised an open letter to Scottish MPs in support of Corrie. Priests like Father Hugh Byron at Wisbech Catholic Church asked their congregations to write to their MPs in support of the legislation.

The same advice was offered by hospital chaplains, and recently SPUC announced it was setting up a network of hospital chaplains to receive 'complaints' from doctors and nurses about abortion cases. This move coincided with a number of abortion 'horror stories' appearing in the popular press around the time of the second reading of the Corrie Bill.

These horror stories have often been pure invention. For example, the case of Zabudah Ahmed which was 'reported' in the press this January. Zabudah had started to bleed after 29 weeks of pregnancy. If she had not had a caesarian operation she would probably have died. She and her husband agreed to the operation and both her and the baby's lives were saved.

But when the story appeared in the press it was portrayed as a 'late abortion', 'live baby born' shock horror story. Perfect propaganda for those who said that Corrie's Bill was necessary to 'amend the abuses'.

The Bill itself was drafted by George Crozier, a member of the Labour Party and a Catholic lawyer.

Crozier is also vice-chairperson of the Scottish Lay Apostolate Council, and as such is deeply involved in the structures of the Catholic Church.

Recently he sent a letter to all Labour MPs on behalf of organisations such as the Guild of Catholic Doctors, the Knights of St Columba, the Catholic Social Welfare Commission, the Catholic Parents and Electors Association, Life and SPUC.

The Catholic lobby has never had much trouble influencing the Tory Party. Anti-abortionism fits neatly into Conservative philosophy. Tory MP Michael Ancram, alias Michael Kerr, Earl of Ancram and heir to the Marquess of Lothian, argued during the second reading of the Corrie Bill that its opponents were 'many strange bedfellows... practitioners, purveyors of contraceptives and humanists'.

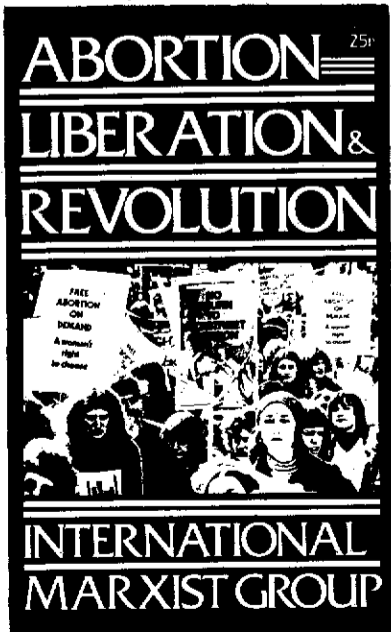
In the United States, anti-abortion is equally part of the conservative caucus which opposes sex education, the bussing of black children and a graduated income tax.

But what about the masses of

ordinary people who are constantly battered with well-funded anti-abortion propaganda? In a recent article in the Catholic Universe the right-wing anti-abortionist Mary Kenny maintained that 'the section of the population most in favour of abortion is upper class men; the section of the population most opposed is working class women'.

Not one shred of evidence was produced in support of this 'fact'. And if it is only upper class men who are in favour of abortion, then there must be an awful lot of them. A National Opinion Poll published in March this year showed that 55 per cent of those questioned supported the idea that 'abortion should be made legally available for all who want it'.

But if Kenny and the rest of the anti-abortion lie machine really do believe that working class women oppose abortion, then they should have no objection to leaving the choice to the individual woman concerned. Yet that simple democratic right is what these people have spent billions of pounds opposing.



Abortion: Liberation and Revolution is a new pamphlet from the International Marxist Group. Available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1 the pamphlet costs 25p. Add 15 p for p&p.

Battered woman trial review

By Aileen Mitchell

The campaign to free June Greig — the battered woman from Edinburgh jailed for six years for killing her violent husband — notched up a small victory on 27 September when three appeal judges decided that the evidence from the trial should be reviewed.

Donald MacAuley QC, acting for June, submitted that the trial judge, Lord Dunpark, had misdirected the jury by withdrawing the plea of self-defence from their consideration.

Many friends and relatives assembled outside the court to demand June's release. In defiance of the weather 50 women had camped out all night for a torchlight vigil.

Ron Brown, Labour MP for Edinburgh, Leigh, said on the Nationwide TV programme that 'justice had not been done' and pointed to the crying need for a Domestic Violence Act in Scotland.

Extensive support for June's case has come from trade unions, women's groups and individual women. The women's conference of the Scottish TUC is discussing a resolution calling for June's release in November. She has been in prison for over seven months and will now have to wait another three to five weeks before the appeal is heard.

Women obviously feel strongly about this issue and identify with June. Donations have even been received from abroad. Here in Scotland we are determined that the delay will not defuse the campaign to ensure that June Greig walks out of the court a free woman.

Where the cops bring out guns on International Women's Day



ELEVEN women face a North of Ireland court this week for daring to demonstrate on International Women's Day earlier this year.

The 11 were victims of a sudden swoop by the Royal Ulster Constabulary after they had demonstrated outside Armagh prison where 70 women political prisoners are held.

One of those charged has described what happened: 'We were suddenly attacked by four jeep loads of the RUC armed with sub-machine guns...They began beating us and

dragging us to the jeeps. Some of the women were carrying babies and these seemed to be singled out by the police for rough treatment.'

The women arbitrarily selected for arrest were held for five hours and subsequently charged with obstruction, disorderly conduct and assault.

A campaign of solidarity with the 'Armagh 11' has been launched in Britain. A public meeting/social will be held soon in London. Details in subsequent issues of Socialist Challenge.



1969-1979. 'The missing element'

A PEOPLE UNDEFEATED is a new pamphlet produced by the Irish revolutionary organisation Peoples Democracy. Author John McNulty analyses the last ten years of struggle in the North of Ireland and examines the roles played by the various organisations in the anti-imperialist movement.

The following extract from the pamphlet — its conclusion — gives a sense of its general flavour. A People Undeclared costs 50p and is available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XQ (add 20p for p&p).

“What conclusions can be drawn from over ten years of struggle in the North? The first and most obvious conclusion is that the Northern state is inherently irreformable and that any 'solution' that involves the continuation of partition in any guise — be it 'devolution' or an 'independent Ulster' — will involve a continuation of injustice and oppression.

It also needs to be said that imperialism has no progressive role to play in Ireland. Its 'peacekeeping' role means in reality bloodshed and death, its reforming role means poverty and destitution for the Irish people. The pressures of the struggle have also demonstrated clearly the client nature of the 26 counties and the bankruptcy of successive Dublin governments' claims to a political independence of imperialism.

We must also say firmly and clearly that today, as at the beginning of the struggle, all the elements exist for a successful revolutionary overthrow of imperialism and capitalism — bar one. The missing element is a revolutionary workers' party that in grasping the entwined character of the struggles for national liberation and socialism will be able to mobilise

the Irish working class throughout the 32 counties.

Despite tactical gains the imperialists are as far as ever from any solution — in fact, the overthrow of Stormont represents a strategic defeat that they have not yet recovered from. Both North and South the economic system is in crisis — a crisis that imperialism hopes to solve by gutting social services, cutting back wages and crushing the defensive organisations of the working class. In this area also the imperialists have not been successful and Irish workers show a willingness to fight back that offers great opportunities for a revolutionary movement.

Learn

The resistance movement has not been defeated and continues to lead the fightback in many areas of struggle. But the situation is one of stalemate. If imperialism has no answers the anti-imperialist movement as it is presently constructed has no programme or strategy that will lead to victory.

This programmatic lack does not come from imperialist repression but from internal contradictions within the movement and can be traced back to a failure to link up with the organisations of the working class in the early 1970s. However, objective conditions have changed and the economic and political crises are beginning to 'march in step' and offer the opportunity of making those links and building a mass movement in all 32 counties.

There are other causes for optimism. The Irish struggle has not occurred in isolation but against a background of the mass upsurges against capitalism that took place all over the world beginning in 1968. These youthful

struggles have fallen away to reveal a deeper and more determined movement. After defeats in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and deepening struggles with the working class world-wide, imperialism today is a weaker animal than it was ten years ago. Ireland's strategic position gives us the opportunity to be in the lead in the coming upsurges all over Europe.

Peoples Democracy is proud of its history in the struggle and we feel that by continued analysis, discussion and self-criticism, as well as through bitter experience, we have avoided stagnation and the dangers of political sectarianism. We feel we have the elements of a programme and strategy for the Irish revolution and that our members and supporters will not only have the opportunity to help close the long and bloody chapter of imperialist domination but also to take part in the world-wide struggle of the classes that will decide the future of all humanity.”

It has been widely reported that Princess Margaret has called the Irish 'pigs', though later it was reported that she only called the IRA 'pigs'...

'PIGS' AND POTATOES

What British pride with Christian breath Can call the Irish 'pigs' today, When once the Irish starved to death While Britain took the food away.

[Records exist proving that Britain exported food from Ireland during the Great Potato Famine in which a million Irish people perished.]

WHAT'S LEFT

'FREE ABORTION on Demand' and 'No means No' badges are again available from The Week, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Single 25p each, bulk 12p each. Make cheques or POs out to 'The Week'.

OTELO Saraiva de Carvalho leads political discussion Fri 26 Oct, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1. Also songs of struggle from Portugal and South Africa. Organized by PWCC. Adm. £1 (60p unwaged).

IMPERIALISM IN AFRICA — Extend the struggle to Britain. First public meeting, Revolutionary Communist Tendency, Manchester branch. Speaker: Frank Richards. Star and Garter Pub, Fairfield St., Manchester 1. Fri 2 Nov. 7.30pm. Adm: 20p.

PROTEST AGAINST Nuclear weapons: UN Disarmament Week. Sat 27 Oct at St Martin in the Field, Trafalgar Square, 2pm-6pm. Songs, films, exhibitions. Teams will be sent out to leaflet all over Central London. Protests at political party HQs, Downing Street, Ministry of Defence, Nuclear Embassies. Evening Rally at Central Hall Westminster, 6.30pm. Organized by CND.

IT'S BACK!

Belt 'n' Braces
'Accidental Death of an Assassin'

'Simply brilliant' — Terry All

From 15 Oct, bookings 01-267 6222
Party and wageless reductions

WORKERS ACTION meeting: Fightback for women's rights. 8pm Fri 26 Oct, General Post, Caledonian Road, London N1. Tube: King's Cross.

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST Tendency public meeting: The recession: can the Tories win? Speaker: Keith Thompson. Thurs 1 Nov. 7.30pm, Holborn Library, 32 Theobalds Road, London WC1. Holborn tube.

TOWERHAMLETS Against Corrie meeting. Fri 26 Oct, 6pm, Dame Cook House, 100 Johnson Rd, E1.
BRENT Against Corrie fund-raising. Sat 27 Oct, 8pm, 36A Dean Rd, Willesden Green, W9.

Front-line states force retreat on land reform

By Richard Carver

THE Tory government — which once threatened to bludgeon its way towards recognition of the white regime — has now made greater progress than any of its predecessors in its search for a negotiated settlement in Zimbabwe. But if the British solution is imposed, history will assign the credit — or blame — not to Lord Carrington's diplomatic wizardry, but to the collaboration of the leaders of the 'front-line' states.

They were the ones largely responsible for the constitutional conference taking place at all, and now they have delivered the Patriotic Front negotiators back to the conference table.

The fate of the talks was decided not in the hotel rooms of ZANU and ZAPU in London but at the front-line summit in Dar es Salaam. Yet even before the summit Tanzanian President Nyerere had announced the formula which would allow the Patriotic Front to back down on the disputed question of compensation for expropriated land:

'The only real problem is the issue of who provides the money for compensation to settler farmers. This is not a constitutional question but a simple policy question, and it could be easily resolved by Britain and her allies.'

The Front's statement on returning to the conference mirrors this exactly: 'We have obtained assurances that, depending on a successful outcome of the conference, Britain, the United States and other countries will participate in a multinational financial donor effort to assist in land, agricultural and economic development programmes'.

But this is not an adequate explanation. The plan for such an international fund has been known since the Lusaka Commonwealth conference. Nyerere referred to it then by quoting the example of the compensation of white Kenyan settlers. Margaret Thatcher mentioned it too under the name of the 'Commonwealth Resettlement Fund'.

Indeed a 'Zimbabwe Development Fund' or something similar — a multinational effort to compensate the whites and underwrite a new black ruling class — has been a feature of every British scheme since the days of Crosland and Kissinger.

The Patriotic Front's position on land reform has been inconsistent in the past. On occasions leading members have suggested that it would nationalise only uncultivated or abandoned settler land, rather as in post-independence Angola, leaving multinational agribusiness untouched.

Yet the dispossession of African land — which a compensation fund would not redress — is at the root of Zimbabwean politics, since the very basis of the Rhodesian state is the defence of white settler interests. It was in recognition of this that the Patriotic Front decided to make its stand on the land issue.

The statistics on land tenure in Zimbabwe speak for themselves. The six million Africans and 200,000 whites are each assigned almost exactly 45 million acres of land. In late 1976 there were about 680,000 African farmers and 6,682 Europeans.

Hands Off Zimbabwe!

WHEN the Zimbabwe Emergency Campaign Committee called its national demonstration on 11 November it was timed to coincide with the debate on the renewal of Rhodesian sanctions. But with the Lancaster House conference and the success so far of Tory manoeuvres it becomes even more important.

The representatives of the liberation struggle now in London spend much of their time with their hands tied by Britain and its clients in Africa. The British labour movement could play a vital role in saying: untie their hands. Let the people of Zimbabwe determine their own future!

The legal abolition of racial discrimination in land in March 1977 made no difference, since, of course, only those with money can buy new farms. By late 1977 only two Africans had bought farms in the European areas while plots in the African Purchase Areas remain vacant because of the poor quality of the soil.

What the bare statistics cannot convey is the misery and near starvation caused by this allocation of land. The division of land was not arbitrary — all the best farming land went to the whites. And the inferior African land has to support 80 per cent of the rural population compared to 20 per cent in the white areas.

White land produces the overwhelming bulk of crops for export. The average size of farms in more than 77 per cent of the European areas is 16,000 acres, compared with ten acres on the 'tribal trust lands' which comprise most of the African area. Without a radical land reform white interests will continue to maintain a stranglehold on the rural economy.

Compensation of the former white owners is the last thing that scarce development funds should be spent on. Far more urgent is the resettlement of the black population on land that can support them. The result of overcrowded and sub-standard soil in many areas has been the virtual exhaustion of the earth's agricultural potential. Natural disasters, such as a poor harvest caused by low rainfall this year, only add to the problem.

On top of all this comes the war. About 95 per cent of the tribal trust lands are under martial law. The white troops have the legal power to destroy crops, livestock and homes, to uproot whole populations and to recruit them for forced labour. They don't hesitate to use it.

Undernourishment and the absence of veterinary services have left livestock vulnerable to disease. An estimated 30 per cent of the cattle in the tribal trust lands has already died this year.

In these circumstances the land question becomes more than a debate about the country's future — the question is whether large sections of the population will even live to see a new Zimbabwe. Famine has already hit areas in the north of the country and without drastic measures it will spread.

Land reform, therefore, cannot be postponed for ten years (or for ever) as in the Carrington constitution. It is one of the two crucial questions facing the Zimbabwean struggle.

The other, unsurprisingly, is who controls the security forces. The present incumbent, Lieutenant-General Peter Walls, has arrived in London to boost Bishop Muzorewa's flagging morale, as well as to establish privately with the British delegation a joint approach to the security issue.

Carrington must be pleased with progress so far. There will be no problem agreeing a common formula on the transitional period with Walls, so the next step will be to repeat his brinkmanship over the land issue on control of the army. No doubt the telephone lines to Dar es Salaam and Lusaka have been left open.



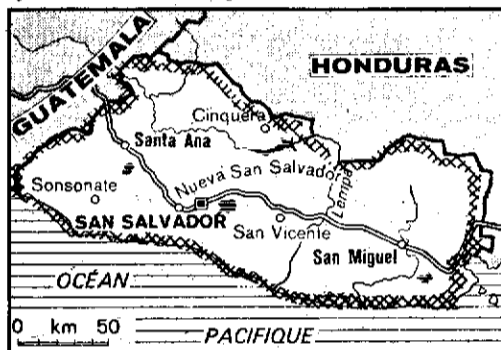
Zimbabwean girls at Victory Camp, Zambia. Inset: Thatcher and Zambia's President Kaunda

NEW UPHEAVAL

'Moderates' ousted El Salvador dictator

By Dave Kellaway

THE SHOCK WAVES from Nicaragua have topped the dictator of neighbouring El Salvador, General Carlos Humberto Romero. But the coup of 15 October was, as predicted by a spokesperson of the opposition United Peoples Action Front [FAPU] in Socialist Challenge three weeks ago, 'one intended to speed up imperialism's favoured 'democratic' opening'.



The coup leaders, Colonel Abdul Gutierrez and Colonel Arnolda Mejano, declared that the reason for their action was 'the inability of Romero to control the wave of violence unleashed by the subversive organisations'. Portraying themselves as 'moderates', they called on Romero's opponents to lay down their arms.

The new regime has promised presidential elections next year, freedom for political parties, the disbanding of fascist paramilitaries, an amnesty for political prisoners and exiles, a clean-up of fascists in the army, and a non-aligned foreign policy.

But at the same time it has instituted martial law and a curfew from 10pm to 5am, and banned political meetings of more than three people. By Thursday of last week 28 people had been killed and 72 wounded as the army moved against left-wing strongholds.

The directing hand of US imperialism was obvious from a State Department admission that the coup 'certainly did not take us by surprise'. It fits in with the 'Carter Plan' being carried out by US representatives Vance, Vaky and Browder under the suspicious eyes of the CIA and the Pentagon.

Direct US military intervention to prop up dictatorships is almost ruled out at the moment in the wake of Vietnam and setbacks such as Angola and Iran. Instead the aim is to secure imperialism's interests through 'cleansing' operations which maintain the unity and effectiveness of the armed forces while at the same time integrating moderate opposition forces.

Events in Dominica, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru have all reflected this plan. Nicaragua upset its progress in Central America — and the coup in El Salvador has the additional aim of trying to isolate the Sandinista-led revolution.

But the new junta faces problems in implementing even partial reforms. The hardline right prevented Romero's predecessor, Molina, from pushing through a limited land reform in 1976. What is more, reforms cost money — US money. And the present economic situation is hardly helpful in that respect.

The other precondition is to quell the mass mobilisations by splitting off the reformist opposition and isolating the revolutionary left. Already the parties of the United National Opposition [UNO], who 'lost' the last two fraudulent elections, seem to be giving the new regime their guarded support.

Indeed, one of the junta's civilian members is Guillermo Ungo, head of the National Revolutionary Movement [MNR], which has links with the Socialist International. Morales Earlich, Christian Democrat leader, has commented on national radio that the new regime's aims are the same as his party. Most significant, because of its trade union support, is the Communist Party's endorsement of the junta.

The response of the 'revolutionary' movements and the guerrilla groups outside UNO has been different. Ana Martin representing the allegedly 20,000-strong Revolutionary Peoples Bloc (BPR), denounced the coup as 'one more example of the handiwork of American imperialism', and called for 'increased insurrection'.

Latest news suggests, however, that a popular uprising against the coup is not materialising. The emphasis placed by these groups on armed action means that they have not developed a rounded political alternative to the electoral and pressure politics of the reformists, which means that there could be many illusions in a new junta.

Premature calls for insurrection cannot substitute for a political fight with the reformists around demands that mobilise the masses in a struggle for a genuine land reform, the disbanding of the repressive forces, complete amnesty, and immediate elections to a constituent assembly. In this process, of course, the people must hold on to their arms.

More is at stake than the revolution in El Salvador. The fight to turn this opening into a struggle to overthrow the 50 families who own El Salvador and their imperialist backers is the best possible way to defend and strengthen revolutionary gains in Nicaragua.

Solidarity with the revolutionary mobilisations in El Salvador must be added to the agenda of all meetings and events organised in solidarity with Nicaragua. For further information contact: Latin American Bureau, 1 Cambridge Terrace, London NW1; and Central American Human Rights Committee, 59a High Street, Acton, Isleworth, Middlesex.

Aid for Nicaragua

By Clive Turnbull

THE revolution which overthrew Somoza was not just a victory for the Nicaraguan workers and peasants, it was a victory for the exploited and oppressed the world over.

Today the struggle continues. As the FSLN says: 'We have overthrown Somoza, but the revolution has only just begun.'

Somoza extracted a bitter price from the Nicaraguan people for their victory:

*35,000 dead in the last year alone, with over 100,000 wounded.

*40 per cent of the population left without adequate food.

*More than 25 per cent of industry severely damaged by bombing.

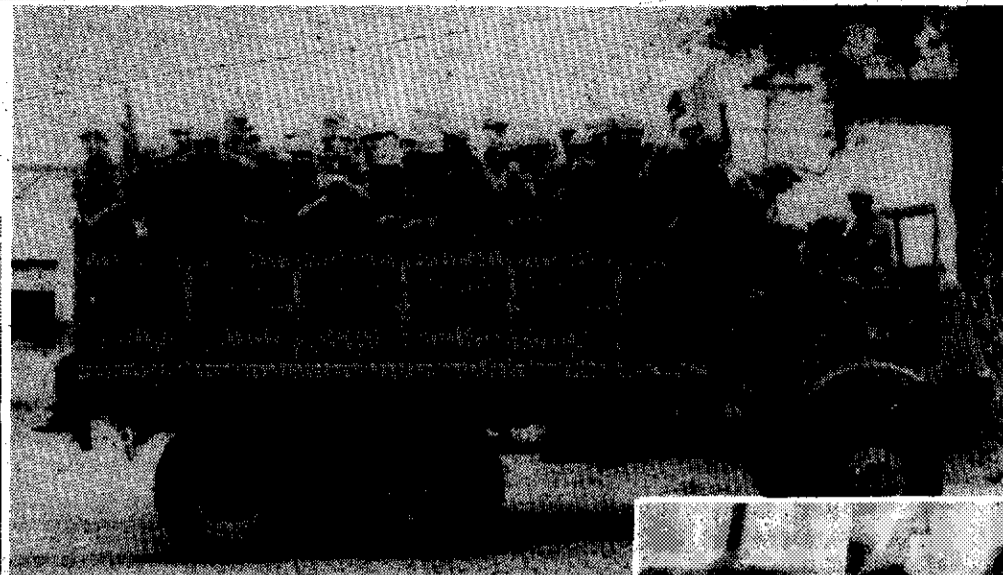
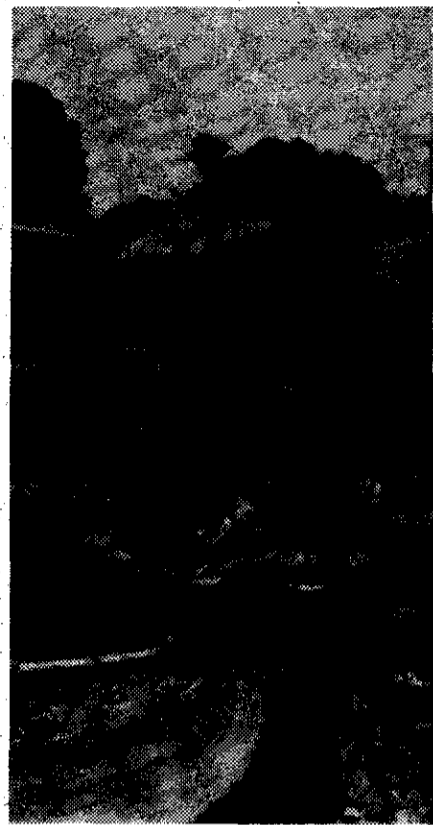
*Over half the active population unemployed.

Already there has been a strong international response to the needs of the Nicaraguan people. Despite its limited resources, Cuba has sent large quantities of foodstuffs, including milk for babies, agricultural and medical sup-

plies, teaching materials. In Canada, solidarity had been shown by the Canadian people. The first plane dispatched to Nicaragua was the first plane to land in Nicaragua. A recent fact-finding mission to Nicaragua. A recent German solidarity mission. European solidarity. A list was the long-term from international and government reconstruction. A number of projects with solidarity in the country to undertake. Britain the committee campaign Esteli. Solidarity organised. Coordinating which pro Nicaragua committee can Compton N1. Ther

PALLAIS

New FSLN measures to counter rightists



Above: Managua's Santa Rosa neighbourhood in August. Below: An FSLN demonstration.



By Fred Murphy

THE Nicaraguan government and mass organisations have redoubled their efforts to put a stop to counter-revolutionary terrorism following the murder on 4 October of FSLN militant Marcel Pallais Checa. Pallais's bullet-riddled body was found near the Central American University campus in Managua.

Pallais had been in charge of an effort to stop sabotage at the Villa Fontana Telecommunications Complex. It is thought that supporters of the Somoza dictatorship whom Pallais had dismissed from their posts may have had a hand in his death.

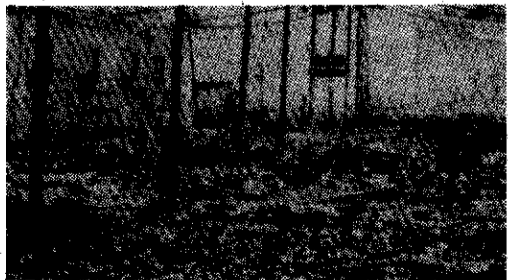
The Pallais assassination is the most recent incident in a resurgence of counter-revolutionary terrorist activity since late September. On 24 September an armed rightist group shouting pro-Somoza slogans ambushed a militia patrol in Managua and killed 19-year-old Oscar Rivas Gallard. Over the previous few days, snipers had fired on the headquarters of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) and Nicaraguan Film Institute in Managua.

In response, the FSLN has launched a 'Control Somocismo, Defend the Revolution' campaign through the Sandinista Defence Committees (CDS) — 'the eyes and ears of the revolution'. The CDS are being organised on a block-by-block basis to gather data on suspicious incidents and on the whereabouts and activities of known Somocistas who may be involved in counter-revolutionary crimes.

In the face of internal and external threats to the revolution, the FSLN has also announced its intention to expand the militia to increase the masses' preparedness for self-defence.

As Interior Minister Tomas Borge explained at the Rivas funeral: 'Those who killed a militiaman do not know that the revolution gives concrete answers to each problem... Instead of destroying the militias, we'll multiply them. So in three months there will be 300,000 militia in Nicaragua. The workers, the students, the high schools, and the neighbourhoods should be prepared.'

In a population of about 2.3 million, with 700,000 economically active, the project of a 300,000-person militia shows the seriousness



San Antonio sugar mill — an example of reconstruction needs.



Above: Their aim is a 300,000 strong militia alongside a regular army (top) to discourage counter-revolutionary invasions. Below: Their aim is a 300,000 strong militia alongside a regular army (top) to discourage counter-revolutionary invasions.

with which the FSLN is responding to the rightist terror.

FSLN Comandante Jaime Wheelock explained at a rally in Managua on 3 October that the efforts of the army and the Ministry of Interior are 'not enough' to defeat the counter-revolution. Victory will come only if the workers and peasants 'prepare themselves to control the productive wealth of our country'.

In the workplaces confiscated from the Somocistas, Wheelock said, 'we need to have unions with full participation in power... There must be neither exploiters nor exploited. There must be just and equitable relations. The workers must know their jobs in order to govern their production. The task of the state is solely that of administration. The workers are the true owners of the national wealth.'

There are growing signs that the bourgeois forces are looking for ways to put a brake on the revolution. The Chamber of Commerce has organised several meetings to press for convoking the 'Council of State', a legislative body called for in the programme of the Government of National Reconstruction published just prior to Somoza's fall.

This council was to be made up of 33 representatives from the bourgeois parties, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, FSLN, trade unions, the Catholic Church, and other groups. Its proposed composition was disproportionately weighted towards the most conservative sectors of the anti-Somoza front. The bourgeois forces hoped it would serve as a check on the social and economic measures taken after Somoza's fall.

Since that time, however, the Sandinista-led government has charted a course that shows it to

be far more representative of the interests of the workers and peasants than the forces that were to have made up the 'Council of State'.

No date has been set for the convocation of the 'Council of State'. Junta member Moises Hassan pointed out on 5 October that in any event its composition would have to be reconsidered, since a number of groups that were to have seats no longer exist.



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nd doctors. Operation Soli- launched by the Congress and lead of supplies in a month of fall. Operation the product of a legation sent to meeting in West d to coordinate ts. Top of the y the FSLN for without strings onal agencies ents to start work. of specific discussed that ittees in each region could example, in ern Nicaragua been asked to a hospital in Britain is being the Nicaragua Committee. s a bulletin e. The Com- nted at 20 ce, London also local

- 24 Oct. Oxford, 29 Oct. Stirling, 30 Oct. Edinburgh, 31 Oct. Aberdeen, 1 Nov. Glasgow, 6 Nov. Wolverhampton, 13 Nov. Coventry, 17 Nov. Birmingham, 8 Nov. Brighton, 11 Nov. Hull, 15 Nov. Leeds, 16 Nov. Sheffield, 19 Nov. Preston, 22 Nov. Huddersfield

IN CENTRAL AMERICA

FOR TROTSKY

Trotsky: A Study in the Dynamic of His Thought by Ernest Mandel, New Left Books, £2.95p

Revolutionary Marxism Today by Ernest Mandel, New Left Books, £4.75p.

TROTSKY'S centenary will not be celebrated this year in Moscow or Peking, Hanoi or Havana, Tirana or Belgrade. Whatever else divides the old Stalinist family, the thought of Trotsky unites them. The founder of the Red Army, organiser of the October insurrection, historian of the Revolution's rise, decline and ultimate degeneration will be totally ignored in the land of his birth.

And yet it is Trotsky who is victorious. It is his ideas (rather than those of his principal adversary Stalin) which continue to fascinate bourgeois historians and inspire revolutionaries to this very day. It is his theoretical and political analyses which continue to guide the activities of revolutionary Marxists on a world scale. It is this fact (the decision taken by Trotsky to organise and fight back) that distinguishes him from all the other opponents of Stalinism.

Ernest Mandel's two new books, produced by NLB to coincide with the centenary of Trotsky's birth, seek to accomplish a dual task. The *Trotsky* is an introductory work, designed to stimulate the reader's appetite, to serve as a footpath to Trotsky's own writings. *Revolutionary Marxism Today* is a set of critical interviews with Mandel conducted by some of the terriers of the Fourth International: Henri Weber and Denis Berger from France, Robin Blackburn and Quintin Hoare from Britain and Jon Rothschild from the United States.

Mandel's response to the questions forces him to develop the ideas of Lenin and Trotsky. His interviewers refuse to let him retreat into the Marxist classics. And the combination is both stimulating and provocative, even iconoclastic. Even those who disagree with Mandel will be forced to concede that his arguments cannot be ignored or dismissed out of hand.

Mandel's *Trotsky* is compared on the bookjacket by NLB to Lukacs' *Lenin*. In one sense this is not a false analogy. Both books represent an assessment of Lenin and Trotsky as seen through the very special spectacles of their respective authors. Mandel is not a disinterested analyst. He is one of the central leaders of the Fourth International and its foremost theoretician.

He certainly celebrates the theoretical audacity of the young Trotsky who produced *Results and Prospects*. Before any other Marxist Trotsky realised that imperialism had created an economic Chinese Wall between nations, that no further country could join the imperialist world. It was Trotsky who understood before anyone else that accelerating technological and military advances had created inequality on a planetary scale. The circle could only be broken by proletarian revolutions.

It was not pre-ordained that the less developed countries would follow the same path as the developed capitalist states. This was in sharp contrast to the 'Father of Russian Marxism', G.V. Plekhanov, who wrote at the same time: 'Russia stands at a crossroad on the way to capitalism and all other avenues are closed to her. In order to fight capitalism only one way is left... to help it grow as fast as possible.'

But Mandel refuses to endorse any attempt to justify Trotsky's pre-Bolshevik organisational concepts: 'In and of itself, there is nothing positive in Trotsky's stubborn opposition to Lenin's organisational concept of 1902-3; and the recent, belated attempts to rehabilitate it are ahistorical and sterile in character. Indeed the long-term consequences of Trotsky's "non-Bolshevism" between 1903 and 1917 appear even more tragic today than they did at the time. They certainly made it much more difficult, between 1923 and 1928, to win the Bolshevik cadre to the key planks of his struggle against the bureaucracy. And if that cadre had gone over in its majority to the Left Opposition, it would have made a great difference to world history.'

Mandel's *Trotsky* is certainly the homage of

a disciple, but it is not uncritical. He refuses to accept the notion of infallibility as far as any of the classical Marxists are concerned. The end result is a compact and valuable introduction to the central ideas of Trotsky.

Revolutionary Marxism Today shows the vitality of non-dogmatic Trotskyism. Mandel's views are his own. They remain the subject of polemics (sometimes fierce) both inside and outside the Fourth International, but that in no way detracts from their value. Two of the interviews were originally published in *New Left Review* (*Socialist Strategy in the West and The Transitional Regimes in the East*), but even these have been improved by the addition of supplementary questions and answers.

In his discussion of a revolutionary strategy in the West, Mandel refuses to accept that the defeats of the revolution are due solely to the betrayals by bureaucrats:

'In most cases after the First World War, and sometimes even later in the 1930s or 1940s, the masses began to identify their *democratic freedoms* — which are an absolute gain that we aim not merely to defend but to consolidate and deepen within the workers' state — with *bourgeois-democratic, parliamentary state institutions*. Although it is true that reformist leaderships bear overwhelming responsibility for this, they could nevertheless not have had the effect they did without a specific conjunction of historical circumstances. Of major importance was the experience of fascism; so too was that of Stalinism, both through the reformist turn of the Comintern in 1934 and through the repulsive examples of the regimes of Eastern Europe and the USSR.'

He argues that the experience of Portugal demonstrates, apart from other things, the central importance of socialist democracy and insists that it has to form part of any viable revolutionary strategy in the West.

The book contains two new interviews: *Permanent Revolution in the Third World* and *The Politics of Contemporary Internationalism*. The first consists of a sustained attempt by the interviewers to challenge the theses of the Permanent Revolution. They argue that the collapse of the European colonial empires and

the establishment of juridically independent states compelled the national bourgeoisies to force through a limited industrialisation.

Thus some of the tasks ascribed by Trotsky to the proletariat have been carried through by the post-colonial bourgeoisie. What follows is an extremely useful and *concrete* discussion.

Mandel clarifies and enriches some of the postulates of Trotsky's theses. He charts the changes that have occurred on a world scale. He accepts that there have been important structural changes in Brazil, India, South Korea, Hong Kong, Mexico, Argentina. The process of industrialisation in Brazil, for example, has created in Sao Paulo more industrial workers than in most industrial concentrations in the advanced capitalist countries.

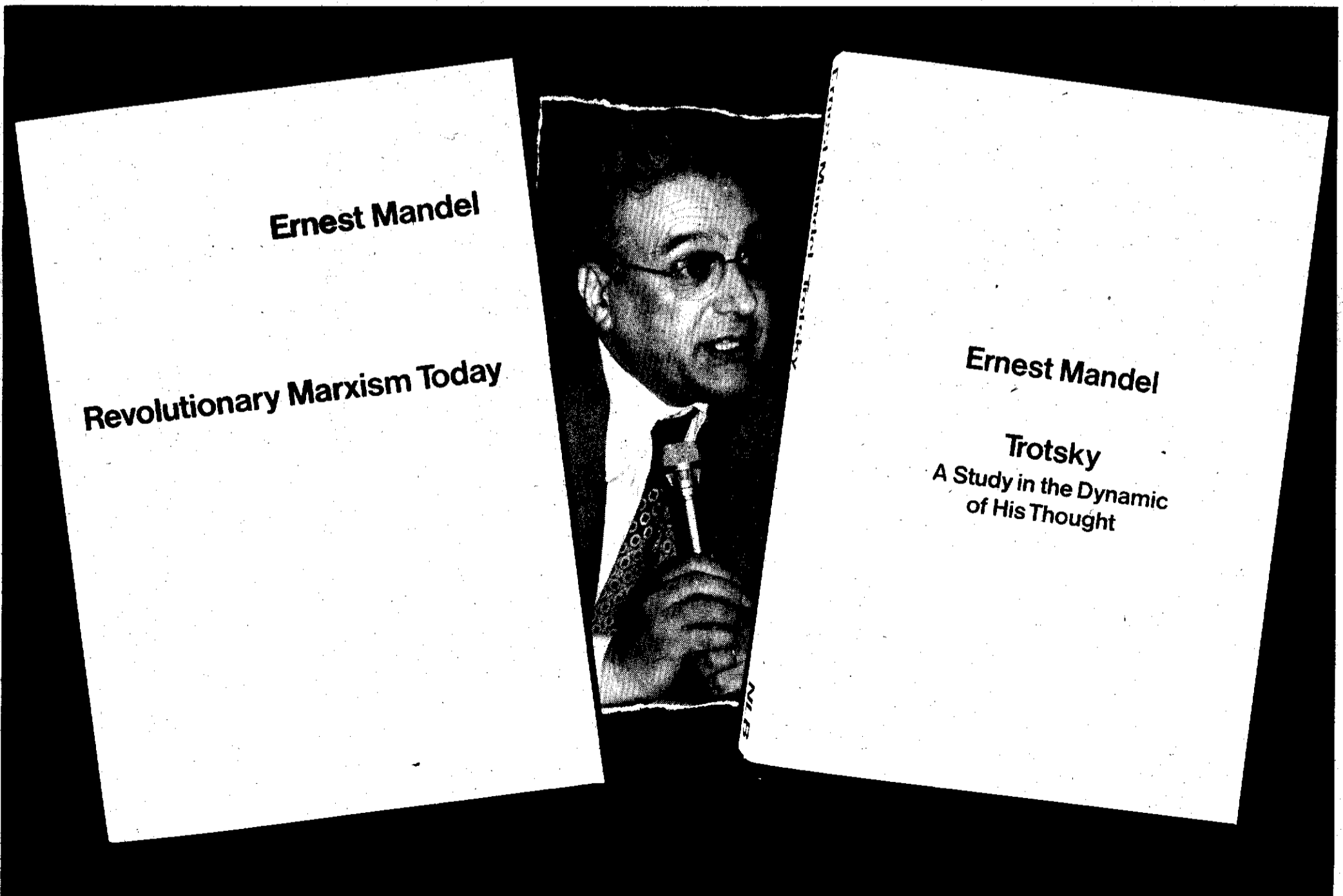
Mandel describes these countries as semi-industrialised rather than semi-colonial, but despite the persistence of his interlocutors, stubbornly insists that they remain dependent countries. The bulk of their populations remain excluded from the process of industrialisation. The objective limits to further industrialisation lie in the structure of the world market.

The semi-industrialised countries remain subjected to the institutions and technology of the major imperialist states. The *strategy* of the permanent revolution remains totally valid. The increased weight of the proletariat in the 'third world' aids the transformation of struggles for national-democratic tasks into struggles for proletarian power.

Mandel is at his best when he is engaged in a polemic. The sharp questioning therefore results in forcing him to confront issues not encompassed by 'orthodoxy'. Whether he does so successfully depends on whether one agrees with his political outlook.

But even those who do not will find *Revolutionary Marxism Today* a unique compilation. For it is the only sustained attempt to provide an internationalist understanding of world politics.

Both of these books should be bought, read and studied. I think they will stand the test of time.



British Leyland closures Paying the price for 'participation'

By Pat Hickey

THE RESPONSE of the trade union leadership in British Leyland to Edwardes' plan for a massive round of redundancies and plant closures has clearly shown the need for a fight to change the leadership at every level. A new round of redundancies, following on the 20,000 jobs already lost in the last eighteen months, was clearly on the cards for some time. The Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee had advance notice that this was pending, but they did nothing until Edwardes made the formal announcement.

British Oxygen's exemplary claim...

By Tessa Van Gelderen

THE BRITISH Oxygen workers' pay claim is the first in the round of winter claims — and the BOC workers look set to take on the company.

The main element of the claim is for £25 on their basic wage. They have already rejected management's derisory offer of £7.

Management has tried to turn the emphasis of the increases towards the shift allowances, but this has been rejected as divisive — splitting those who do shift work from those who don't.

The workers' claim is clearly around increases in the basic wage. This becomes even more important with redundancies and loss of overtime already threatened for early next year.

Micky Boulter, secretary of the Transport Union at BOC Hackney, sees the struggle for a 35 hour week — without loss of pay — assuming a major role in the fight against redundancies.

'We will have to go for 35 hours for 48 hours pay if we're not to lose any jobs. And that also means pushing up the basic rate now.'

The unions at BOC have won the right to examine the company's books, and their claim is based on an assessment of the company's ability to pay. Predictably BOC deny that this assessment is correct.

The BOC claim is an example to other workers of how to build a united fight to defeat the bosses and the Tories' reactionary policies.

When the details became clear, the LCJNC set up an emergency committee to prepare opposition to the plan. This committee consisted of officials and senior stewards and convenors. So thoroughgoing was the opposition prepared by the committee that Edwardes emerged from the first meeting declaring that he had the amber light to go ahead!

Within days the leading convenors were backtracking and declaring their opposition to the plan and their readiness to fight. The unofficial British Leyland Combine Committee met in Birmingham and also came out in opposition to the proposals, but they drew up no plan of campaign to turn this opposition into action.

Many plants did not send any delegation to the meeting, and two of the major plants faced with closure — Castle Bromwich and Canley — did not speak.

The Combine's opposition consisted of calls for blacking of transfer of work and resistance in the threatened plants. This is exactly the formula which failed so dismally at Speke. The alternative to the Edwardes plan put forward was a call for more investment, an expansion of production, and import controls.

The inability of the Combine Committee to put forward any real plan of action left the initiative in the hands of the bureaucracy. The executive of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions met Edwardes last week and endorsed his plan. They completely ignored the Combine Committee, the lay delegates on the LCJNC, and the plant leaderships from convenors to shop stewards.

There can be no more convincing demonstration of the complete impotence of the present leadership faced with management's attacks.

There is no doubt that Edwardes will get the endorsement he seeks in the ballot. The membership have no viable alternative to management's rationalisation plan, and there is no prospective leadership in BL with sufficient support on the shopfloor to combat the sell-out of the bureaucracy.

The responsibility for this situation lies with the Communist Party. The CP has been the dominant political force among plant leaderships throughout the last ten years. Since the Ryder report, introducing participation, the party has gone along with scheme after scheme to make BL viable. Every scheme has meant more job loss, more speed-up, and so on.

Through their leadership at Longbridge, the biggest BL plant, the CP won acceptance for the participation proposals. Participation meant unions and management together ensuring the future of Leyland. It meant the unions surrendering their independence in return for involvement in bodies such as the

Cars Council, which was used to rubber-stamp management decisions.

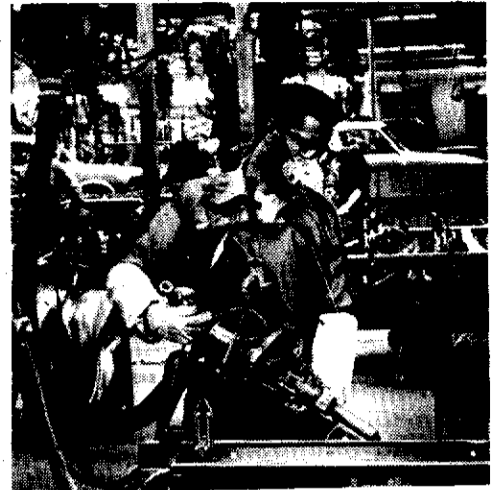
The bureaucracy was strongly in favour of participation because it allowed the officials to become fully involved in the affairs of BL, thus undermining the independence of shopfloor organisation. In particular, it weakened the position of the shop stewards, who had led the resistance to speed-up and redundancies.

The plant leaderships were so strongly involved in participation that when Edwardes announced his first job-cutting plan they gave him a standing ovation. And the unions and management together voted for management's plan to cut 20,000 jobs.

They went along with management again in establishing corporate bargaining in the LCJNC, which is dominated by the bureaucracy. As a result independent structures based on the shopfloor have been completely neglected. The Combine Committee has become a rump, with only limited attendance from the plants and no authority on the shopfloor.

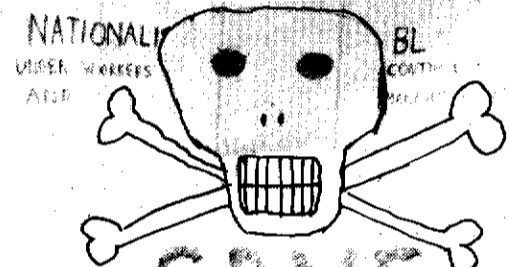
In the present ballot, agreed to by the Confed bureaucrats, everyone from the sweeper to Edwardes himself will be voting. One section of the membership will be voting to do away with the jobs of another section. There is no doubt that the result of the ballot will make it very difficult to develop a fightback. But these problems must be faced.

The only current capable of starting a fightback in BL today is the far left. To date, unfortunately, it has worked together too little. The decision to set up the Leyland Action Committee, involving people from Solihull, Longbridge, Cowley, and Jaguar, was a step in the right direction.



The Leyland Action Committee will be concentrating its attention on the main plants faced with closure. But it also needs a broader perspective of developing a BL-wide fight for the replacement of the present leadership. For this a BL bulletin is needed which goes into all the main plants on a regular basis. It needs to develop a programme around the nationalisation of the car and components industry, for opening the books, against redundancies and speed-up, for the independence of the shopfloor organisations and the strengthening of trade union democracy.

The far left has considerably increased its strength over the past few years in BL and has established itself in most of the major plants. It is time to turn that strength towards a fight for leadership in BL.



CANLEY workers demonstrating on 9 October against redundancies

... and Ford's lousy one

By James Drake

THIS time last year Ford workers had already been on strike for over four weeks for a £20 a week increase and a 35 hour week. This year the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee is in the process of presenting the claim and 57,000 Ford workers don't even know what's in it.

There has been no discussion in the trade union branches, and even the shop stewards committees have had only token discussions — their decisions have been ignored.

No notification of the claim has been issued to the shopfloor. The most diligent of noticeboard scourers might have found the 'guidelines' for the claim — a 'substantial' increase, 35 hours, a cost of living agreement, a lineworkers' allowance and improvements in pensions.

Unless there is some strong pressure put on the negotiators we can expect a flabby deal — perhaps like the Vauxhall's deal where the 'cost of living agreement' means talks cannot be reopened until inflation has risen by at least 16 per cent.

The stewards at Dagenham called a 'B' shift shop meeting on 27 September to endorse the 'guidelines', but supporters of the Ford Workers Group called for a figure of £125 basic to 'be named and put forward in the claim' and for a national shop



WORKERS at Fords on strike for a decent wage last year.

stewards conference to meet to discuss and unite to fight for the claim. These proposals were carried unanimously.

There have been calls from various shops stewards committees for the reconvening of the Coventry shop stewards conference which determined the claim last year.

We have to build on the feeling that exists already against the way the claim is being handled. A lobby of the talks when the company replies in mid-November is the minimum requirement to keep up pressure. This is what the Ford Workers Group and other rank and file militants will be arguing and building for.

STOP PRESS: Just four days before the claim is to be submitted, Ford workers have finally found out what's being demanded on their behalf.

Their leaders are demanding a £26 increase plus cost-of-living agreement. And despite all the demagoguery over the last year about the importance of fighting for a 35-hour week, it's not even in the claim!

Instead what's proposed is paid time off (amount still unknown) for every full week worked. This is not too different from a productivity deal, since any week disrupted by disputes or other factors would mean no time off.

More details next week.



TRUE, Our Times only appeared on our pages, and there wasn't a work-in in New Printing House Square. But there was Times Challenger, which helped to launch the press freedom debate within the labour movement, and the Thomson management has emerged from the 11-month fiasco looking remarkably stupid.

Having locked-out its 4,300 employees when the print unions refused to accept big job cuts in the shape of new technology, management has now settled without a plus sign to its balance sheet.

It has bought out a few jobs, but at the price of large wage rises which will now ricochet around Fleet Street. It has obtained guarantees of continuous production, which may well be worthless.

And the crucial issues — the direct input of copy by journalists, and manning levels in the machine room — remain unresolved.

So the ruling class at breakfast have got back Bernard Levin (and their welcome), while the craft unions have proved they can hold out against American-style confrontations, and Lord Thomson's antics have helped the labour movement on its way to a mass daily paper (at least we think so).

By Sally Feldman

Mainstream BBC 1— Zip up an arts programme

THE SCENE: A board meeting, somewhere at the BBC

Bright young producer (BYP): Hey, I know. Let's do another arts programme!

All (groans): Oh, come on. Not another arts programme!

BYP: No, no — not like the others. This is a brand new concept I'm talking about — an arts programme for the masses!

All (eyebrows raised amid mutters of disbelief): Come on, you can't be serious. What do the masses know about art?

BYP: Well, that's exactly it. Nothing. So this will be an introduction to what is meaningful, relevant, valid in the modern arts world. You know — so everyone can be in touch with the vibrant artistic forces in our society.

Ordinary people will be able to talk about what's being talked about, and know all the right names. And we'll cover all the subjects that...

Hardnosed executive: ...That make money. Is that what you mean?

BYP: Well, yes. Money and taste — what better definition of artistic endeavour and motivation could there possibly be?

Scriptwriter: Maybe you've got something there, but I see a problem in presentation. I mean, what papers do the masses read?

All (in chorus): The Sun. The Daily Star. The —

Scriptwriter: Exactly. So how can you get people who read big headlines and no words interested in serious aesthetic enterprise, critical reviews, intellectual debate..?

BYP: Ah, I was coming to that. That's one of the features that'll be different about this programme. No item will be more than three minutes long — the average concentration span of the working class man.

Female studio manager (dutifully): What about woman?

BYP: Yes, you're right. Better make half the items two minutes long.

All (except female studio manager): Guffaw, guffaw! Ho, ho, ho!

Scriptwriter (puzzled): But what can you say in three minutes?

BYP: Well, I thought we could begin with something about the Bugatti car exhibition. I mean, working class people like cars, don't they?

Established director: What about Shakespeare? Can't have the arts without a bit of Shakespeare.



All this experimental nonsense is all very well, but imagine what a service we'd be doing bringing the voice of the golden bard to the crude ears of the lower classes.

BYP: You want Shakespeare, I'll give you Shakespeare. Here we are — two minutes of three plainly-clad conspirators from Julius Caesar sounding like a local Labour Party

branch meeting, just to show the old boy writes for everyone.

Then add a bit about the Royal Shakespeare Company being in

trouble — to show that art and money don't always go hand in hand...

Female (a little wearily): What about women?

BYP: A lady interviewer I think.

Hardnosed executive: Someone to turn on the men...

Female: And that the women will like...

BYP: I know — how about giving them a touch of royal. Jane'd love to do something for the masses. I'm sure she would.

She met a dustman once and just loved him...

Hardnosed executive: Lady Jane Wellesley! Are you kidding? Even Radio 4 think she's too highbrow for them!

BYP: Nonsense. She's the perfect girl for the part. Beautiful, hard to get, a trifle classy — that's what the man in the street wants!

Scriptwriter: Okay, how about classical music. Now that's something I just can't see you slipping through to them while they're swigging their pale ale and eating their winkles.

BYP: Well, everyone's heard of the London Symphony Orchestra, haven't they? And I don't mean we have to play music — not at all. Let's just have that new wop conductor on, and Jane can talk to him.

Established director (scoffing): What about? Stravinski? The woodwind section? Modern versus baroque?

BYP: Of course not. We want something that will appeal directly to the masses. That everyone can identify with. We must bring the arts right to their own front doors. I've got it!

All (sighing): Don't tell us! You're going to ask him about football...

FADE

JEAN SEBERG

THE CIA have admitted that they ran a campaign of slander against Jean Seberg, the French actress who committed suicide recently...

The brash and ruthless CIA Should scrape and clean away the rust And take the deadly dirty away — So Truth and Justice in the dust, And Faith and Freedom in decay, Can read the text 'In God We Trust' Throughout the plastic USA.

N. Racine-Jaques, 1979

Nicos Poulantzas: An appreciation



By Robin Blackburn

NICOS POULANTZAS, the Marxist political scientist, died in Paris on 3 October at the age of 43. A prolific writer, he wrote books on the Marxist theory of the capitalist state, on fascism and Nazism, on the class formation of contemporary capitalism and, most recently, on socialist strategy in the advanced countries.

Poulantzas was a member of the 'Eurocommunist' Greek Communist Party 'of the interior'. For most of the last decade he lived in France, where he was associated at various times with the disciples of Louis Althusser in the French Communist Party, and with the left-wing CERES group in the French Socialist Party.

A refreshing feature of Poulantzas' approach to politics was his willingness to engage in discussion and debates with those who rejected his own 'left Eurocommunism' perspectives: as, for example, at the Marxist Symposium sponsored by Socialist Challenge in 1978, or in the exchange with Henri Weber published in International.

Orthodox

Poulantzas' earlier writings, such as Political Power and Social Class, are couched in terms of an orthodox Marxism and Leninism. They have filled an important gap in Marxist theory and contain useful criticisms of bourgeois political science. However they were not directed to resolving immediate questions of political strategy, and to some extent have been absorbed by a predominantly academic Marxist discourse.

Fascism and Dictatorship contains an examination of the fascist movements in Germany and Italy, underlying the tragic failure of the workers movement in those countries to form an anti-fascist workers united front.

With Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, Poulantzas tackled the thorny question of establishing the real social boundaries of the working class, differentiating the latter from the 'old' and 'new' petty bourgeoisie. Poulantzas insisted that only those who were involved in the sphere of material production

could properly be considered members of the proletariat.

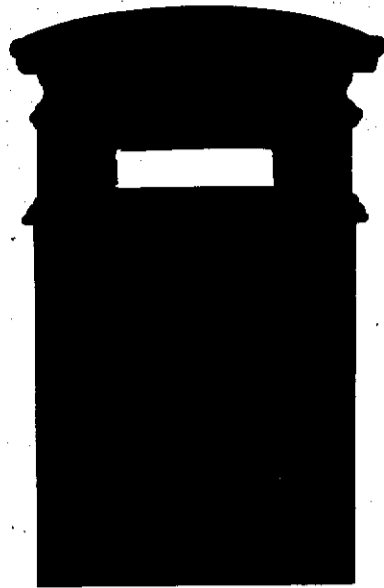
Poulantzas' resolution of these questions of class analysis might seem to embody a strict Marxist purism. Paradoxically this paved the way for a move away from Leninism in his last book, State, Power and Socialism. The narrowly defined proletariat of Classes in Contemporary Capitalism was evidently too slender a social force to be capable of throwing up new ruling institutions; the best that it could do was to develop factory councils which would be a valuable complement to the activities of the workers parties in parliamentary assemblies.

Missing

A missing concept in Poulantzas' later work is that of the 'collective worker', the social basis for the strategy of revolutionary socialism. Indeed, by allowing too much weight to 'authority relations' within the capitalist factory, Poulantzas was led to exclude many skilled and semi-privileged layers from his concept of the working class; he also excluded workers in the sphere of social reproduction from the proletariat, again with the consequence of underestimating the potential collective political capacity of the proletarian movement.

But although State, Power and Socialism embodies some highly erroneous political conclusions, it is, at the same time, the most original and challenging work by Poulantzas. It is more clearly and simply written than his other books, and contains much stimulating discussion of such topics as the principles of bourgeois legality, and the role of ideology in cementing social relations.

The early death of Nicos Poulantzas is a sad loss for the left; even though revolutionary Marxists were obliged to differ with many of his conclusions, his work as a whole helped to encourage a new interest in Marxist investigation of the political domain and to combat the all too frequent resort to militant economism as a substitute for socialist politics. He will be sorely missed both as an unsectarian theoretical antagonist and as a highly productive Marxist writer.



Bizarre state systems

TARIQ ALI'S description of Kampuchea as neither fish nor fowl seems quite apt, but only with respect to Kampuchea.

All the states we bracket together as 'deformed workers states' share this designation. So far, wherever capitalist production has been overthrown the form of the state that was toppled with it was not capitalist but some form of pre-capitalist absolutism.

Lenin made this clear with regard to Russia.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that this political inheritance, in all circumstances, should leave its mark on the resulting 'workers state'. The absolutist fish mixing with the socialist fowl in fact (Trotsky himself drew attention to certain resemblances between Stalin and an old fashioned Asiatic despot).

If this notion of a mix is accepted then one which is nearly all fish and virtually no fowl is a real possibility in extreme circumstances.

Marx always accepted that when the working class overthrew the capitalist state there would be inherited hangovers from it that would take time to eliminate. As no truly capitalist state formation has yet been overthrown we should adjust ideas to account for this. This idea is implicit in the theory of permanent revolution.

Some further points:

Socialism shares with pre-capitalist — but not capitalist — modes of production the fact that its economic motivation is the production of use value not exchange value. The difference is in who uses it.

Another parallel between socialist and, at least some, forms of pre-capitalist states is that neither permit individual private ownership of, at least, the land, which in the pre-capitalist economy is the major means of production.

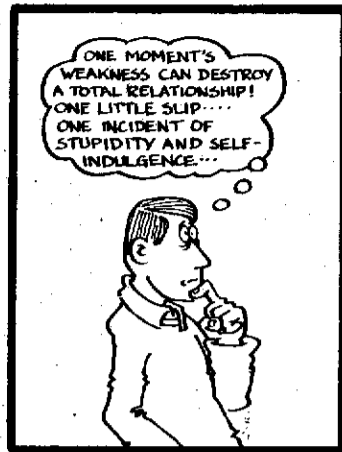
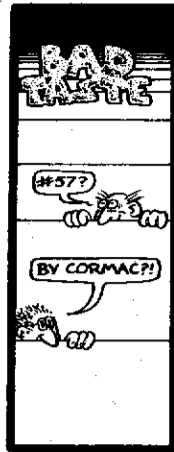
Within this brief and crude model we can locate Kampuchea and other 'deformed workers states'. That is, they will be marked with traces perhaps overwhelming ones, of social formations more primitive and more authoritarian than capitalism. It is always necessary to evaluate each one in actuality before deciding our attitude towards it.

Further, in exceptional circumstances, the overthrow of a capitalist mode of production may mean, on balance, not a social advance but a retrogression. The exceptional circumstances are most likely to be in areas where the antagonisms between world capitalism and the existing Stalinist states tend to cancel each other out, creating a 'dead zone', free from the usual pressures.

The model might also account for some other bizarre state systems, like Burma, for which we have never had a convincing explanation.

Finally, it would seem that these bizarre social formations could become anyone's pawn, depending on a temporary balance of forces, and inevitably they are most unlikely to have anything but a short term existence.

HUGH LOWE; London W4



Neither victory nor defeat

IT WOULD be inaccurate to describe the settlement in the engineering industry as a defeat for the workers (although the point is certainly debatable). However to describe it as a victory as *Socialist Challenge* did last week is absurd.

What did we gain from this 'victory'? First, in terms of wages, precisely nothing. The increase in skilled Minimum Time Rate to £73 will benefit only a very small low paid section of the workers in the industry apart from small increases in overtime premiums.

Semi-skilled workers in the industry feel particularly grieved since they don't even get the same percentage increase as the skilled workers. The increase in Minimum Time Rates are not even large enough to have a significant effect on local bargaining.

The only material gain, therefore, is a week's extra holiday in four years time, and one hour off the working week in two years' time. Even without any strings this should hardly be lauded as a victory considering that most of the original claim was abandoned during the struggle.

However, there are not only strings but chains attached to the settlement. Rich Palsler describes the four year clause as a 'weakness'. No-one should be under the illusion that this is something which will gradually be forgotten about while the workers, filled with confidence, renew the struggle for 35 hours.

The settlement effectively amounts to a deal between the employers and the trade union bureaucracy to jointly oppose any attempt to reduce the working week further within the next four years.

This does not necessarily mean that there will be no such attempt but it does mean that such struggles will remain local and isolated and will face huge obstacles that didn't previously exist. There is a real danger that the settlement will actually defuse the struggle for shorter hours and more holidays.

As far as one hour in two years, is concerned it should be pointed out that shift workers who already work 37½ hours will receive no reduction in working hours at all. That effectively excludes large sectors of the industry.

Undoubtedly, the concession of one hour was an indication that the employers were weakening. That was precisely the point at which the morale of the workers was raised and the possibility of an all-out onslaught to win the full claim seemed real. That was also the point that Duffy chose to call off the struggle.

The fact is that Duffy stabbed us in the back at just the right time for the employers. It is scandalous that *Socialist Challenge* actually quotes the man who put the knife in as their own assessment of the impact of the settlement.

Statements such as 'The membership go back to work full of confidence that their action won a decisive breakthrough on hours' could only be written by someone who viewed the struggle from the windows of *Socialist Challenge* offices.

To the thousands of workers who are pissed off at having gained so little after two months of struggle, it doesn't seem quite like that.

RAB BIRD
RON THOMPSON; AUEW shop
stewards, Sheffield

Politics in film

IT WAS very nice to leaf through the 6 Sept. issue of *Socialist Challenge* to find that you had reprinted my article on women in the Hollywood cinema. When it was first printed in Canada during the summer, it sparked off a rather lively exchange of views, two of which I thought I would just pass on to you as well.

First, a number of people felt that I had been too hard on *Norma Rae*. They pointed out that the very existence of the film, laundered as it might be, was a victory for socialist-feminists, and that its impact was very positive indeed. Some people even thought that I underestimated or ignored positive aspects of the struggle portrayed in the film itself.

I certainly did not mean to give the impression that I thought *Norma Rae* negative in overall terms. Many working women saw the film (working men as well) and recognised in *Norma Rae*'s fight and vitality their own best desires and capacities.

However, I don't think that I overestimated the revisionist screening of the film. The obscuring of issues — such as women organising, extreme violence, indeed armed, and the problems of bureaucratic mis-leadership — I believe to have been quite purposeful.

We shall have an opportunity to test this hypothesis in the near future.

Barbara Koppel, the woman who made *Harlan County USA*, is in the process of making a film about the real *Norma Rae*, a textile worker in the JP Stevens mills and the bitter struggles fought there. We shall be able to test the reality of the different versions (and visions) — one class struggle feminist, the other Hollywood capitalist, one documenting reality, the other fictionalising it.

Second, the particular line of criticism I took towards the films I reviewed came under some scrutiny. Did all films, various people asked, have to have 'political' content? Should we always judge films by 'political' criteria?

Isn't there an element of censorship implied, which leads to supporting socialist-realism as the favoured 'art form', ultimately leading to denying the important and separate role art must play both today and in revolutionary societies?

Every society has its own particular culture which is shaped by, among other important things, the political character of that society. This is what allows us to analyse art — whether films, paintings, dance — politically as well as shall we say, poetically — the use of image, symbol, metaphor, form.

But this does not mean that all art should have a political subject matter. Heaven help us! Human beings do not live by politics alone. In fact films which are successful in really showing the nature of life situations and issues confronting human beings have scenarios conspicuously devoid of things like demonstrations, meetings, and words like patriarchy and capitalism.

But the films which I singled out for review, especially the feminist ones, were consciously conceived in political terms, by both creators and producers. They owe their existence to the woman's movement. Likewise, *Blue Collar*, *FIST* and *Norma Rae* owe their existence to the growing presence of the working class in the US today.

In this sense I think it fair and necessary to judge them on the basis of the criteria suggested by the movements to whom they owe thanks.

VARDA BURSTYN, Quebec, Canada

The 'Alien' stinks

'I WAS doing this whole bloody thing as a vagina [inside the alien ship], going right through. And at the bottom is this membrane. It's like a virgin. I was going to have him [an earth man] slit the membrane and then gas or air or whatever would come wafting out.' [Ridley Scott, *Alien* director, interview in *Fantastic Films* No 11]

Yes, the 'alien' stinks. It's the same social stigma, the same label of repulsion as 'blacks stink' and 'women stink', the 'bad' odour of otherness. We ask, who is the 'alien'?

'I wanted to use these sort of characters from the Sudan, very tall, very black and very strong people... the man who played the alien, a fellow called Balagi, looked exactly like that.' (R. Scott, as above)

Scott, motivated by 'insecurity' wants to make films of 'staggering obscenity', similar to the illustrations in *Heavy Metal* magazine. He wants 'fantasy' to become 'reality'. He wants the audience to 'identify' with the 'earth people'.

The 'alien' in the film is 'blasted to fuck' by Ripley! Woman is hero — sole survivor! *Alien* it 'seems possible' is 'splendidly subversive'! (see *Socialist Challenge* 4 Oct) 'Where woman functions with freedom!' *Alien* 'a tremendous film'! [*Socialist Worker* 13 Oct]

For our left reviewers Scott has achieved his ambition — fantasy has become reality. By 'describing' our aspirations in a fantastic form, by playing with our fears and prejudices, imperialism attempts to divert attention away from the real struggles against its rule.

Woman in *Alien* is not only 'star', but bitch, griper, mother, cool, hard, liberated, intuitive, whore. She becomes an ultimate symbol, she is anything to anybody. To be idolised, used and disposed.

Black man in *Alien* is a moaner, a cheat, stupid and disposable.

The 'alien' is the black, powerful, phallic/vaginal, raping and butchering, terrorist monster. He/she is the 'hidden' parasite in the social host, the 'great plague', the 'black death', the 'evil' within, devil, yes, the very 'fuck' in hell. It's 'filthy' communism, it's the nation wreckers.

Alien, the film, is for immigration controls, to stop the 'rot'. It is for mass mobilisation of labour in defence of imperialism. It is for buckle down, productivity up. *Alien* is for national, racial and sexual paranoia.

The sophistication of the capitalist social relationship has to be understood. The spirit of solidarity must not blind us to the real dangers we face.

ROBERT KRUM
RICHARD KRUM London SE10

Socialist Challenge events

We are trying to restart this column, which stopped during the summer because of the limitations of the 12-page paper. Listings are free. Phone or write to arrive by Friday lunchtime the week before publication.

ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside C&As — for more info phone Colin, 574068.

ABERDEEN: SC meeting on Nicaragua with Clive Turnbull Wed 31 Oct, 7.30pm, Trades Council Rooms, Adelphi (off Union St by ABC).

BATH: SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20298 for more details.

BIRMINGHAM: SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.30, Sat. 10-4. For more info phone 643-9209.

BRIGHTON: For more info phone Nick, 605052.

BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. For more info contact Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Road, Montpellier, Bristol 6.

BRADFORD: SC available from Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.

COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138.

EDINBURGH: SC on sale every Sat, Princes Street, 12.30-2.00. For more info phone 554-1096 or write: Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, 45 Niddry Street.

EDINBURGH: meeting on Nicaragua, Tues 30 Oct, 7.30pm, Trades Council Rooms, Picardy Place. Speakers: Clive Turnbull and a MIR member.

GRAVESEND: SC Group meets regularly. Details from Gravesend Tigers, Box 13, Gravesend.

HACKNEY: SC meeting on Zimbabwe, Thur 1 Nov, 7.30pm, Britannia pub, Mare Street, E8.

LIVERPOOL: SC group has recently obtained premises for SC centre on Merseyside. Donations towards cost of rent, rates, security, etc., gratefully received — send to Socialist Challenge (Box 64), PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

OLDHAM: SC group — anti-racist film, 'Divide and Rule, Never' and speaker, Thur 25 Oct, 8pm, Sergeant At Arms Pub, King St, Oldham (opp Co-op).

OXFORD: SC sold Fri, Kings Arms, 12-2, Sat, Cornmarket, 10-2. For more info phone 47624.

S.W. LONDON: SC on sale at Oval tube kiosk, Herne Hill BR kiosk, Tetric Books (Clapham High St.). Also on sale Sat 11-1, and Thur/Fri mornings at Brixton tube.

IMG TRADE UNION Fractions: 3/4 Nov, NALGO; 10 Nov, CPSA; 17 Nov, Rail. For details write to Centre or phone 01-359 8371.

Sales drive

THIS week's *Socialist Challenge* carries six pages on the struggle for abortion rights and women's liberation.

In the weekend of the TUC sponsored demonstration against the Corrie Bill such extensive coverage is not just a political necessity, it gives increased opportunities for sales of the paper.

With such coverage where should a sales drive concentrate? The obvious answer is at the demonstration itself, on the coaches, at meetings of the Campaign Against Corrie and the National Abortion Campaign.

But while such sales should be promoted remember the main aim of our coverage on women's liberation both in this and other weeks is to take the issues into the broad working class movement. We want to insist that the struggle for women's rights is part of the struggle of the working class generally and that the male dominated labour movement should see it as such.

So this week, especially because of the emphasis in the paper on women's rights, make a special effort to sell the paper at factory gates and at meetings of the labour movement. The demonstration and the coverage in this week's paper gives us an unrivalled opportunity to insist that women's liberation is not a 'peripheral' issue for the working class, but that it is central. Take that opportunity and increase the sales of *Socialist Challenge* while you are doing so.

As redundancies hit Manchester engineering Dukinfield votes to resist closures!

THROUGHOUT the Manchester area the engineering employers have been quick to take advantage of the demoralisation now spreading following the national engineers' settlement. On the day they returned to work, engineering workers at Mather & Platt's were greeted with the news that they faced 500 redundancies. On the Thursday the management of International Computers Ltd [ICL] announced 1,200 redundancies, including the closure of their plant at Dukinfield near Manchester.

Where other closure announcements have led the unions to scramble for the best deal on redundancy pay, a mass meeting of ICL workers has decided to resist the closure at Dukinfield. MARTIN COLLINS reports.

In 1976 ICL workers fought successfully to retain ICL's Winsford plant. That memory has helped give confidence that victory may again be possible. A number of things about ICL's operations have also aroused the anger of the workforce.

The first has been a management tour of South Africa with a view to opening a plant there. As the unions pointed out when bringing this to light, the closure of Dukinfield could have more to do with anti-unionism than outdated plant and equipment. Manchester ICL workers have been campaigning against the company's decision to supply the South African police with a computer to run the country's Pass Laws, and will not take kindly to an investment by ICL further boosting the racist regime.

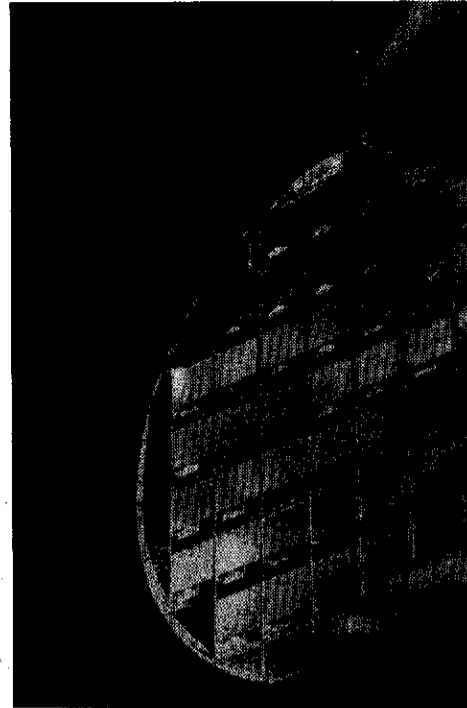
This, coupled with the appearance in Manchester of Don Fraser, ICL's hatchet man who directed 8,000 redundancies in Dundee recently, has increased suspicion among the workers. As Don Black, secretary of the Dukinfield joint union committees, puts it: 'For management this thing hasn't come out of the blue — it is obvious that a firm like ICL must have a forward plan of at least five years.'

Right: a magnetic bubble memory. Each of the squares can carry a million bits of information — the latest in computer technology. Now it's computer workers who face the axe



The significance of these leaks has been pointed out in a Socialist Challenge leaflet we distributed to workers in the factory: 'Because we found out about the South Africa connection we feel we are in a better position to fight redundancy. But how much better our position would be if we got access to all management's secrets. We demand an end to business secrets and an opening of all the books to trade union inspection.'

The immediate problem for the stewards, however, is channelling this will to resist into a series of practical steps which involve the membership in mass action to prevent closure. In this situation the employers must be convinced that it will prove more expensive to close the factory because of lost production than it would be to share the work available without any loss in pay.



A ban on overtime working started by the workers at Dukinfield has begun to spread nationally through ICL. Solidarity strike action — even if it starts with one day actions — is vital. It can be a real tonic to workers at Dukinfield and strengthen the resolve to fight back against the closure. Perhaps most important of all is to create links between all those facing redundancies.

Meanwhile a campaign of solidarity action is already under way. Leaflets and appeals are being drafted and a joint meeting of Engineers' Charter and Red Collar (rank and file groupings in engineering and ASTMS) is already planned to take the issue deeper into the unions. Emergency resolutions are being put to the local trades councils. We cannot let Dukinfield fight this closure alone.

North Nuclear Line

By Jenny Flintoft
North London Anti-nuclear Group

'DO YOU live within ten miles of the North London line? If so, your life is in danger.' That's the campaigning slogan of the North London Anti-Nuclear Group.

Three times a week flasks containing carcinogenic ruthenium-106, caesium-137 and plutonium-239 travel through densely-populated north London en route for Windscale.

Some radiation actually penetrates the flasks, so that BR workers handling them receive an hourly radiation dose of 10 millirems. This is four times the permitted maximum dosage for radiation workers in nuclear power stations.

A Boilermakers' Union report (Guardian, 3 July) also cast doubt on the safety of the containers, stating that the welds did not meet required specifications.

'Sooner or later there will be a crash, I suppose,' said one of the officials at British Nuclear Fuels' prestigious exhibition at Central Hall Westminster. A burst flask would contaminate an area of about 40 square miles, containing one million people, for up to 100 years. The containers have been inadequately tested — in crashes at only 30 mph and in fires lasting a mere 30 minutes.

Evacuation plans in case of a disaster are also inadequate because of the high value of the property involved.

The North London Health & Safety and Anti-Nuclear Groups are organising a joint meeting on nuclear waste transport at Camden Town Hall, 7.30, 6 November.

FIGHTING THE CUTS — ROUND-UP

Rats to rate rises

By Dave Burn, Islington NALGO

NO to the cuts and no to the rate increases — that is the message from the newly formed Islington Campaign Against the Cuts set up from a conference involving two constituency Labour parties, the trades council, and a number of public sector unions.

Whilst the aim of all delegates at the conference was broadly similar — that of promoting a series of demonstrations and other actions against cuts in health, education and local authority services — tactical differences arose over whether to support rate rises as a means of protecting council spending.

A statement prepared by the sponsoring organisations included a declaration of support for rate increases, defended on the grounds that rates are a 'progressive tax'. But delegates from NALGO, ACTSS, NUJ and the Labour Party Young Socialists attacked this, arguing that in a predominantly working class area like Islington rates are already too high. It would mean an extra bill of £5 a week for every working class tenant!

Calls were made to abolish the cash limits system and to remove the burden of interest payment which councils face. This was clearly seen as part of a national fight.

Action plan

By Carl Brecker, Chairperson, Health Stewards Committee for Hammersmith, Ealing and Hounslow

ON 24 OCTOBER our area health authority is voting on a proposed cut in health services of £3.7 million — which includes six hospital closures. When the area stewards committee met last week we decided our next steps in fighting these cuts.

WEDNESDAY 28 NOVEMBER promises to be the next most important date in the fight against cuts in public services. Sheffield city council has decided to allow its 30,000 council workers a day off in order to attend the mass lobby of Parliament called by the Labour Party NEC for that day. A special 800 seat train has been booked for the day by Sheffield NALGO, and shop stewards at the Daniel Doncasters engineering factory have booked a coach for workers attending the lobby.

Throughout London anti-cuts campaigners will be supporting the lobby called by Lambeth council for 7 November. Lambeth National Union of Teachers will be striking on that day.

First we have been building for a mass lobby of the health authority meeting to demand a vote against any cuts at all. In Ealing afternoon strike action is planned in the works department with partial strikes in other departments; in Hounslow NALGO is giving union cover for those attending the lobby; and there will be a picket of the district office in Hammersmith earlier in the day.

A delegation is to meet the health authority, and they have been given a clear mandate to tell them: 'If you vote against all cuts and help us in our campaign to expose the misery these cuts will cause, we will support you by refusing to co-operate with any commissioners appointed in your place.'

But we are not relying on the health authority voting against cuts — that would only postpone the fight anyway. The area stewards committee came out for occupations and work-ins by those hospitals facing closure, and for full solidarity action in the event of any threat to those work-ins by management. That includes mobilising workers in private industry to strike in our support.

We are not fighting health cuts

alone. At the lobby of the health authority there will be speakers from the Fulham baths campaign, a teacher, and a local government worker.

Reading entrails

By Julian Atkinson, NATFHE

THE MAJOR device used to call off the public sector struggles earlier this year was the reference of pay claims to the Clegg Commission — with the inference that lots of money would be paid out.

NUPE members were the first to suffer, with a sell-out of their lowest paid members. Now teachers are going to get a dose of the same medicine as Clegg moves to examine their case.

In olden times professional deceivers used to chant spells to impress the ignorant — now they mutter about multi-variant analysis. They claim this to be an 'objective' and 'scientific' comparability study. To produce such wonders an expensive consultancy agency, IN-BUCON, has been brought in.

They intend to examine a number of random and representative

job-holders, establish job specifications, and then compare these with roughly comparable jobs in industry and the civil service. After a lot of computer time a new pay scale is projected, which is then presented to a judgement panel of job-holders, management and some 'independents'.

The result must achieve 83 per cent agreement on the panel, and be 'felt to be fair' by job-holders. Asked about any drawbacks to this procedure, an INBUCON representative admitted: 'Perhaps there is one. It sometimes doesn't work.'

The drawbacks for trade unionists are greater. The first is that the more credulous union leaders believe in the mumbo jumbo of modern management, and forget that they are in a good old-fashioned bargaining situation. Secondly there is a danger that any old job-holders will be allowed to sit on the panel — rather than union representatives elected by the rank and file membership.

Finally, whatever figure comes out of the computer print-out, there remain the same old methods of trade union struggle as the only guarantee that the most complicated wage equations are large enough to defend living standards.

Robbers and cops

By Fred Leplat

THE implementation of the latest round of increases in student fees and rents at the Polytechnic of North London (PNL) has provoked a militant response from the students. Miller, the Director of PNL, started off the term by intimidation; self-financing students who could not pay the whole year's fees immediately (between £800 and £1200) were told they must sign post-dated cheques or register as temporary students.

Combined with the drastic 33 per cent increase in fees from last year is an increase in hall rents from £12 to £17. The hall residents are now on rent

strike.

Most hard hit by this are the overseas students who are forced to pay higher fees anyway which, along with the quota system, are aimed at reducing their numbers.

Last Thursday the Annual General Meeting of the student union at PNL, attended by 330 students, voted by two to one to occupy the college against the increases. The authorities obviously knew that the students would favour such action, since they secured the administration block and gave a half day off to the staff.

An attempt to occupy the computer room also failed, and when students attempted to occupy the rest of that floor a coachload of police arrived. They charged up the stairs, through the makeshift barriers, and threatened the arrest of the students under the Criminal Trespass Law.

The students decided on a tactical withdrawal, but the determination to fight is still high.

Fightback in Robin Hood country

FOUR thousand people lobbied the Nottingham County Council meeting on Tuesday 16 October to demand 'no cuts'. They included representation from the Fire Brigades Union (in uniform), from the Mineworkers Union in the form of Don Concannon MP, children and mothers from the nursery campaign, as well as supporters of adult education.

The next steps planned in the campaign are to hold a labour movement conference on 17 November, and a mass picket of the Sherwood rooms that same day when Margaret Thatcher will be meeting a 'small and unrepresentative group' of Tory trade unionists.

A unified demonstration against all cuts is planned for 8 December, and a further lobby of the County Council in January, when it is hoped support can be won for industrial action.

Southall show trials

Defence serves witness summons to police boss David Helm

IT WAS THE MORNING OF Monday, 22 October, at Barnet magistrates' court in North London. There was more 'excitement' than usual because a new stipendiary magistrate was expected in court. After the terror of Canham and the vindictiveness of McDermott could Mr C Burke be any worse?

This was not an unimportant question for the six men on trial — including Gurmil Brard, a central leader of the Southall Youth Movement — were all charged with assault. One of them, Aulak, had four separate assault charges. He is the person you can see in the logo above the appeal for the defence fund being held by four policemen!

Burke enters the court. He is wearing a three-piece suit, navy blue with thin white stripes. A whiter-than-white handkerchief sticks out of his jacket pocket. He is balding and wears spectacles. It could be any magistrate.

David Harvey, the defence lawyer, delays the proceedings by announcing that the case against the six is so vital that he needs the operational orders and radio logs of the police for 23 April. Surprisingly, the magistrate hears the argument.

The prosecution counsel is sent to ring the Chief Solicitor for the Metropolitan police, to inquire what was in these orders. She returns and announces that there is no mention of 'snatch squads' in the orders.

Harvey reluctantly accepts this information. He then asks the magistrate to insist that David Helm, the 'Butcher of Southall' and McNee's assistant in charge of operations on 23 April, appears as a witness.

Helm has refused to accept a summons served on him. The magistrate does not dismiss

the idea out of hand. If the trial necessitates Helm's presence he will consider it seriously.

The trial starts. Harvey tears the police evidence apart, reveals sharp inconsistencies between the evidence offered by different police officers, and it soon becomes clear that the police are lying. Nothing unusual about that, but in this case it is extremely blatant.

The question is whether magistrate Burke will do as McDermott and Canham and the other magistrates at Barnet have done and disregard defence witnesses and photographic evidence.

The trial is expected to last for at least three days. As Socialist Challenge goes to press there is no way in which we can foretell the verdict. But given the seriousness of the charges it is likely that some of the defendants will receive heavy prison sentences.

In such an event a mass picket of the courts will become a necessity. Balraj Purewal of the Southall Youth Movement told Socialist Challenge: 'We are considering the matter very seriously, as are other organisations in Southall.'

Meanwhile in many localities the plans to burn the Barnet magistrates and collect money for the Southall Defence Fund are going ahead. Money is now drying up. More has to be raised. Please raise the matter in trades unions and students unions. Even modest donations will help.

Southall on Trial: a showing of the Open Door programme on Southall followed by a discussion led by M Asghar and Suresh Grover, Institute of Race Relations, 247 Pentonville Rd, London N1, 6.30pm, Thursday 1 November.

The magistrates

EDMOND MACDERMOTT served in the office of the DPP for over 25 years and from 1968-72 was Asst DPP, before becoming a stipendiary in 1972. On the London court circuit he is known as a man of politically reactionary views.

JOHN CANHAM (with a 93 per cent conviction rate at Barnet) is generally known to have little sympathy for social security defendants. After legal service in the army during the 1950s Canham was in private practice on the SE circuit handling police prosecutions almost exclusively. He has rarely been known to acquit as a magistrate.

KENNETH COOKE (84 per cent conviction rate) worked his way up via a number of jobs such as clerk to magistrates in Lancashire and Yorkshire. He has been a stipendiary since 1970 and was made a recorder in the Crown Court in 1972. An ex-RAF volunteer reserve squadron leader, he has a reputation as something of an unpredictable character in court.

Finally PETER BADGE (77 per cent conviction rate) worked for a time at the solicitors' department at Scotland Yard. For two years before his appointment as a stipendiary in 1975 he was senior solicitor to the commissioner in N' Ireland and presented the state's case at the Detention Appeals Tribunal, where Ulster detainees contested the state's right to intern without trial.



SOUTHALL DEFENCE FUND

- 700 people were arrested on 23rd April; 342, mainly young Asians, were charged.
- 70 are likely to be jailed if the present trends continue.
- In cases heard so far very few defendants have received legal aid.
- Fines, costs and expenses are expected to exceed £100,000.

I enclose £ for the Southall Defence Fund.

Name

Address

Send to: PO Box 151, London WC2.

Victory in ITV strike

By an ACTT member at London Weekend TV MEMBERS of the three big TV unions — NATTKE, EETPU and most importantly ACTT — return to work this week confident after an 11-week struggle that has ended in a major victory over the employers.

The pay offer is worth 25 per cent over the next 12 months, and almost 45 per cent over two years.

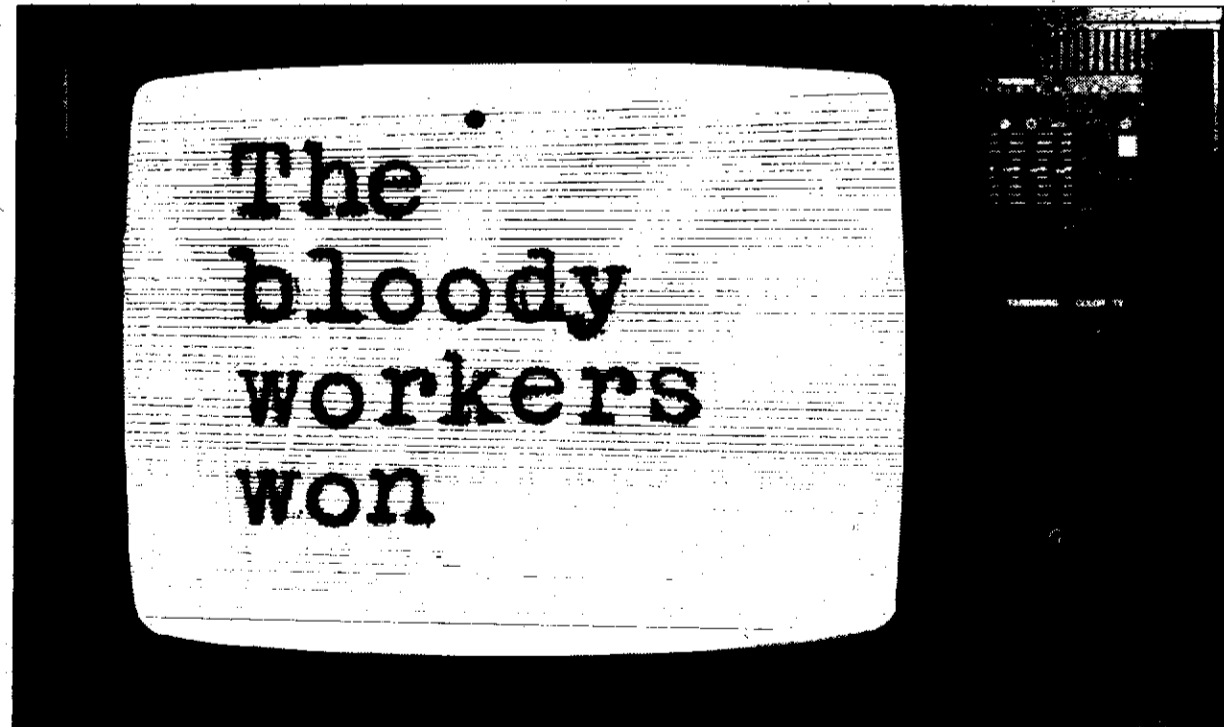
By forcing a show-down in mid-August, the ITCA — the employers' organisation — escalated the annual pay talks into a virtual lock-out. Its aim was to demoralise the unions and push through unacceptable changes: rapid and uncontrolled introduction of new technology; a low pay deal; and erosion of the high degree of union control over staffing levels and working conditions.

What neither the bosses nor the union leaderships had anticipated was the strength of resistance of the rank and file which brought about this week's victory. Both NATTKE and the EETPU negotiators had recommended the original 15 per cent offer to their members, who turned it down. At the end of July the offer was withdrawn and all ACTT members in the 'independent' TV companies were threatened with suspension unless they resumed 'normal working'.

This meant working alongside management scabs doing the jobs of other union members in dispute. ACTT general secretary Alan Sapper felt he had no option but to call out all ACTT members. Within days all the members of the other two unions were locked out.

What the companies did next is very revealing. They did nothing. And they did it for a month.

In early September they made no improvement on the 15 per cent offer,



but added two major penalties: local deals, and a commitment to introduce new technology.

Four years of the Labour government's pay restraint had led to pay improvements coming through local bargaining, and a consequent increase in the power of shop stewards.

The unique technology of TV puts into the hands of small highly-skilled groups of technicians the ability to turn off the profit machine at the flick of a switch. But new technology could lead to a job massacre.

The companies' gamble — that the unions, with no strike pay, would be unable to sustain a long battle — proved to be a major mistake. An improved offer in mid-September was

rejected by an astonishing 85 per cent of union members in shop meetings throughout the network. Then the advertisers began to put pressure on management.

The deal finally accepted gives 17.5 per cent now, backdated to 1 July, another 7.5 per cent in January, and a further 15 per cent in July 1980. There are no prohibitions on local deals, and the introduction of electronic news gathering has a protracted schedule involving an arbitration procedure.

With a wide variety of technological changes in the offing — glass fibre optics, video-cassettes and records, cable TV, satellite TV, and others — the whole character of the television industry is about to change

radically in ways no one has thought through properly.

There will be a vast expansion of TV, and TV-related outlets, and consequently enormous new areas for profit-making.

The companies want to enter this new territory unencumbered by the degree of union workplace control they have had to face in the past. The ITV dispute was basically about that, not money.

Happily, the union rank and file scotched the companies' plans by a magnificent display of strength. The nature of the final agreement shows the companies eager to continue that fight. It will be up to the rank and file to see that they don't win it.

No to Tory nationality laws

By Davy Jones

THE DATE has been set for a massive anti-racist demonstration in London — 25 November. The march has been called by a 200-strong organising conference which met last weekend to oppose the new Tory proposals on immigration and nationality, as well as the existing 1971 Immigration Act.

It promises to be the largest mainly black demonstration in Britain for years. At the conference all the major black peoples' organisations were represented, as well as the anti-racist and labour movement, and it was agreed that regional mobilising committees should be established to mobilise support and transport for the demonstration.

Many delegates clearly wanted to see an ongoing campaign coming out of the conference. The Campaign Against the Immigration Laws (CAIL) argued for a further meeting after the demonstration to plan further actions. The Asian Youth Movement successfully argued for the conference to support further marches in the North and Midlands, as well as demonstrations in the West Indies and Asian sub-continent to coincide with the London demonstration.

A national steering committee was elected to organise the demonstration, and a broader co-ordinating council open to every supporting organisation was promised.

The latest bulletin from the Campaign Against the Immigration Laws has been published. It includes analysis of the Tory proposals on immigration and nationality, the French immigration laws, deportation threats against blacks in Oxford and London and many other topics. It can be obtained for 10p per issue, or 25 for £2. Write to: CAIL, c/o Lansbury House, Camberwell Grove, London SE5.

Socialist Challenge

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PRAGUE TRIAL OPENS

By Oliver MacDonald

THE TRIAL of Petr Uhl and five other leading Czechoslovak civil rights campaigners opened in Prague on Monday morning. The six, and another four still awaiting trial, all face between three and ten years in prison for subversion, supposedly because of their work in the Committee to Defend the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS).

The prosecution has singled out Petr Uhl, a revolutionary Marxist and the editor of the Charter 77 Information Bulletin, as the main accused. The other five defendants are: Jiri Dienstbier, a Eurocommunist and Charter 77 spokesperson; Otka Bednarova, a veteran Communist of 25 years standing and a leading Czech journalist in the 1960s; Vaclav Havel, a former Charter 77 spokesperson and world famous playwright; Vaclav Benda, a Catholic philosopher and Charter 77 spokesperson; and Dana Nemcova, a psychologist who is prominent in the cultural underground in Czechoslovakia.

The trial is the most sweeping crackdown against domestic critics to have been carried out in any East European country for over a decade. It is also an event of great political importance in the unfolding crisis of Czechoslovak Stalinism, and could have far reaching international repercussions.

The ten Chartists were rounded up by police at the end of May under cover of the Pope's visit to Poland. But the Charter movement and VONS held firm and continued their activities, while the labour movements of the West were enraged by this repression. A split opened up in the party leadership and at the end of July the trial was postponed.

The regime then scrapped any pretence of legal consistency and offered to free the best-known of the ten, Havel, on condition that he went to the USA for a year. But Havel refused to go unless the others were released.

Finally the trial began. But even now the black farce continues. Some Western correspondents have called it



ANNA SABATOVA in front of the court building

a 'show trial' reminiscent of the Stalin period. But it's the very opposite of those earlier filmed and broadcast spectacles.

This time a ring of steel has been thrown round the court-room to prevent news of the proceedings leaking out. On the first day Ana Sabatova, Petr Uhl's wife, was removed from court on a charge of assaulting a policeman for taking some notes of what was happening.

Yet the regime has heard that fair trials are supposed to be open. So, with meticulous attention to detail, the police have chosen the smallest court room in Prague's city courts as the

most suitable place for the event.

The Czechoslovak diplomatic service has been in disarray. Eminent French Communist lawyers were refused visas to attend the trial by the Paris Embassy, as was the Labour Party's Peter Archer QC. The Canadian lawyer Gordon Wright, however, was given a visa to attend the trial, but then barred from the court-room when the hearing began on Monday.

The official indictment of the six accused proudly declares that it is based on 22 volumes of evidence. But these volumes of evidence merely confirm what we already know: that as

members of VONS the accused met together and worked together to vigorously expose what they considered to be gross breaches of the law by the police and the courts; that

Human Rights in Czechoslovakia

First six members of Charter 77 now on trial in Prague. Help their families. Send donations to: Charter 77 Defence Fund [SC], c/o Reg Race MP, 133 Grierson Road, London SE23.

THIS Sunday's demonstration against Corrie's anti-abortion Bill was called by the TUC. But it wasn't the TUC that mainly built this demonstration. That was left up to pro-choice campaigners in NAC and anti-Corrie campaigns all round the country.

Socialist Challenge has participated fully in this campaign. We've explained why and how Corrie's Bill has to be fought. Socialist Challenge supporters in every locality have participated in local campaigning activities. We've reported the local and national initiatives against the Bill

in the build-up to this demonstration.

Our coverage and campaigning won't stop after this demonstration any more than the campaign against Corrie's Bill will end then. At least, we hope it won't. But there's the small question of money.

Without telephones to get the news in, without printing, postage, rail transport to get the papers out, we couldn't provide the information and ideas which help militants to mobilise for the campaign against Corrie. Or for any of the other struggles we fight to build either. We don't make a profit. We need £2,500 every quarter from our supporters to stay afloat.

So far our quarterly fund drive has been going fairly well (the figures are printed below). This is because of another event this autumn. All our readers who work are getting tax rebates.

Several people have used this bribe from Thatcher's Budget not to drown their sorrows at Tory policies but to carry the fight forward by donating all or part of it to Socialist Challenge. Why don't you do the same? Your money will be put to good use. Just fill in the form below and return it to us with a cheque or PO....

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VONS tried to arouse public opinion against such acts of bureaucratic repression; that it provided financial aid to the families of political prisoners; and that it allowed its activities to be publicised internationally.

The indictment can produce not one single fact that would earn VONS criticism from socialists in the West. But what it does unwittingly bring to light is the fact that the Czechoslovak authorities consider any challenge to any state decision as being an unpardonable act of subversion.

The Husak regime's entire conduct of this affair shows that it has been unable to gain a stable hold on Czechoslovakia during the decade since Russian tanks rolled into Prague.

The best hope for the regime would be a return to the Cold War, which would allow it to cover up its own political bankruptcy by pointing to the dangers posed by the growing militarist bandwagon in the West. Thatcher's vicious speech last weekend, threatening to inflict worse suffering on the peoples of the Soviet Union than Hitler did, will alarm people throughout Eastern Europe, and will be used by the Stalinist bureaucracy to justify the stepping up of repression.

The task of socialists is to fight the new militarism in the West all the way down the line, doing everything in their power to destroy the NATO menace. But they must also step up practical solidarity with those like the Czechoslovak civil rights activists who are struggling for basic working class rights in the countries of Eastern Europe.

The mass working class organisations in the West should respond to the Prague trial by strengthening their links with those struggling for socialist democracy in Czechoslovakia and by relentlessly campaigning for the immediate release of the jailed Charter 77 activists.

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'SOME countries possess abundant resources, others have nothing. What is their fate? To starve? To be eternally poor? Why then civilisation? Why then the conscience of man? Why then the United Nations? Why then the world?'

These words are from Fidel Castro's speech at the UN General Assembly, which is reprinted in full in the latest issue of the weekly Intercontinental Press/Inprecor [Vol 17, No 38]. Also featured in this 40-page issue is a statement, 'Nicaragua: Revolution on the March', adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

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