

Socialist Challenge

KEEP BRITISH TROOPS OUT OF ZIMBABWE

WHATEVER the outcome of the Lancaster House constitutional conference, the Tory government plans to send British troops to Zimbabwe for a 'transitional' period.

It has also decided to lift economic sanctions even before the talks have ended. The Labour leadership was unhappy at the tactlessness of such a decision, but has nevertheless agreed not to disrupt the government's parliamentary timetable.

Both moves are an attempt to force the nationalists of the Patriotic Front into an unacceptable settlement. At the time of writing it is unclear whether the Front will fall in with British plans. But that is now of secondary importance, since, whether or not the Patriotic Front is involved, the Lancaster House agreement will include:

*retention of the bulk of the white security forces and the existing police, judiciary and civil service;

*40 per cent white parliamentary representation;

*a guarantee against expropriation of white land and property.

These provisions run directly counter to the interests of the people of Zimbabwe — who of course will not be consulted about them. Instead a British Governor will be sent to impose this solution as titular head of the existing security forces.

According to plans leaked over the weekend he is to be accompanied by a Commonwealth force in which the largest contingent will be British. This means that the British army could quickly become involved in an open war against the Patriotic Front — or at least those substantial sections of it who will not accept a racist settlement.

Sanctions must stay, until there is a settlement acceptable to the people of Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Emergency Campaign Committee has already produced a statement of intent pledging direct action to impose sanctions in the event of a parliamentary decision to lift them. This must be given the widest circulation among trade unionists to ensure the immediate imposition of labour movement sanctions.

No British troops in Zimbabwe. They will be going with one aim only: to impose an undemocratic settlement which favours British capital. Two thousand people marched in London last Sunday to demand 'Hands Off Zimbabwe'. That has to be transformed into a massive, nationwide campaign against the presence of Commonwealth troops and the British Governor. Zimbabwe must not become another Ireland.

Stop Tory plan for racist settlement

INSIDE: THE SPLIT IN THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL - 7, 8, 9 & 10 / PETER HAIN: MY KIND OF LABOUR PARTY - 6
CHRISTOPHER PRICE: THE NEW OFFICIAL SECRECY BILL - 12 / LAMBETH FIGHTS THE CUTS - 5

OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

3 The interests of workers and capitalists are irreconcilable on a world scale. Capitalism has not only created a world market, it has created world politics. Thus we fight for working class unity on an international scale. This unity will in the long run be decisive in defeating both the imperialist regimes in the West and the brutal dictatorships they sustain in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

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

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

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

- I am interested in more information about activities in my area.
- I would like additional literature and enclose 50p to cover costs. (Delete if not applicable)

Address.....

EDITORIAL

Let women decide

IT SEEMS likely that the Select Committee that has been set up to discuss John Corrie's anti-abortion Bill may make the time limit 24 weeks rather than 20 weeks as originally proposed. The National Abortion Campaign is writing to the pro-choice MPs who are members of the Select Committee urging them to oppose strongly any reductions in the present time limit of 28 weeks.

Jean Saint, a member of the NAC steering committee, told Socialist Challenge why:

'Any reduction in the time limit can only cause suffering to the tiny proportion of women (often young women who are too frightened to deal with the problem quickly) who seek abortion at a late stage. NAC feels that, in any situation where a woman is seeking an abortion, the responsibility and therefore the choice should lie with the woman herself. Any restriction on the time limit is a further attack on women's already limited rights.'

Dr Gerard Vaughan, the Minister of State at the Department of Health and member of the Select

Committee, is anxious to stop abortions on foetuses that are capable of life. Clearly he is not so concerned about the lives of women forced to choose between unwanted babies or the backstreet butchers.

When will this male dominated parliament realise that women are not stupid. We do not terminate pregnancy light-heartedly. We are quite capable of making this decision for ourselves.

And no law on earth — be it in ancient Egypt or modern day Spain — has ever stopped women trying to control their fertility. The question is are women going to be forced to risk their lives in the process. John Corrie says Yes. We say No.

NAC Public Meeting: 'What a woman's right to choose means'. ULU, Malet St. 20 November at 7pm.

Of ponds and principles

IN France, a leading bourgeois politician has

caused considerable ripples in ruling circles by immersing himself in two feet of brackish water and thereby escaping from a scandal over the purchase of a country house. The problem for the rest of the Giscard-Gaullist government is simple: since they all get up to these capers, how do they resist pressures to find their own pond?

In Britain things might seem a little different. After all, the media of late have been full of disgust for a leading bourgeois politician who played an unsavoury role in a drowning and who is accused of having driven his wife to drink.

An exemplary exposé by journalists who put principles first? Not quite. If principles counted for anything in the mass media, the muck-raking campaign against Teddy Kennedy could be joined by exposés of countless crooks in government across the capitalist world.

There is just one reason why the British media loathe Kennedy. He has dared to suggest that unity of the Irish nation is a desirable aim and that the policy of the British government in relation to its war in Ireland is getting nowhere.

Teddy Kennedy is a liar, a crook, and on such issues as abortion an out-and-out reactionary. That he can pose as a progressive on Ireland, in contrast to Britain's policy there, says more about that policy than it does about Kennedy.



CELIA PUGH, in the Brent branch of the International Marxist Group and a Central Committee member told Socialist Challenge how last week's paper went down on the 5,000 strong anti-cuts demonstration in Lambeth last Wednesday.

Our 1,000 sales target gave us the added incentive we needed to sell Socialist Challenge despite all the odds.

The demonstration began in torrential rain. Waving soggy copies of the paper was no advert for our press.

At first, many people thought we were selling it for 5p because we were trying to get rid of wet copies!

But when we explained that the cut in price from 20p to 5p was a cut worth supporting many marchers bought willingly.

A disturbing thing about the demonstration was the high profile of the police who were used as stewards throughout.

Whilst selling outside Central Hall a cop moved me on remarking: 'This is about the twentieth time I've had to move you'. This was a bit of an exaggeration as I had only really been moved on twelve times!

The police were refusing to allow people to sell on the kerbside as the

demonstration passed and were forcing sellers to stand in the dark on the opposite side of the road.

I told the cop it was impossible to sell in these conditions. He said that this was tough. When I asked him if we still had the right to sell newspapers he replied that we did not!

In the same hall there was a business men's meeting with Geoffrey Howe. Unlike the marchers who appreciated our 'Chop Thatcher' cover one of these characters took great offence and stabbed his cigarette out on the cover.

I found another use for Socialist Challenge — and socked him one with it.

Despite all these interruptions I managed to sell 80 papers as my contribution to the 600 sold on the day.

THE LAMBETH comrades have shown that it is possible to boost sales and win new readers. We want every area to adopt the same attitude to the paper.

On every demo, picket and sit-in you should be there selling Socialist Challenge. Every Saturday Socialist Challenge should be seen in shopping precincts. Once a week, at least, you should be visiting local factories to win new readers.

Make sure you play your part in reaching our 5,000 street sales target.

Phone in details of your Socialist Challenge activities to Mike on 01-8371.

A savage paper seller hits Central Hall

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

DUNDEE — SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, every Thursday 4-5.30pm, Friday 4-5.30pm, Saturday 11-4pm.

GLASGOW — SC on sale Sats 11-1 outside Central Station, Thurs, Fri 5-6pm same place.

LEEDS — SC on sale Sat 11-1am Shopping Precinct, Armdale Centre Headingley, Harehills Shopping Centre. Public meeting 15 Nov Trades Club on Nicaragua with speaker: Clive Turnbull.

HACKNEY — SC on sale every Sat, Sainsbury's Kingland Hight St, 11-2.

OLDHAM — SC Public meeting: 'Revolution in Nicaragua' — Eyewitness account. Speaker: Clive Turnbull. Thur 29 Nov 7.8pm, Sergeant-at-Arms Pub, King Street (opposite Co-op)

HAMILTON — supporters sell SC every Saturday in the Hamilton shopping centre, 1-5pm. For details of local activities contact John Ford, 53 Elliott Crescent, Hamilton.

TEESSIDE — SC sales: at Newstare shops in Cleveland Centre and on Linsthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and at Greens Bookstall, upstairs in Spencer Market, Stockton High Street.

TEESSIDE SC GROUP — Public Meeting: 'Nicaragua: An eyewitness account of the Revolution. Speaker: Clive Turnbull. Tues 20 Nov at 7.30pm, Teesside Polytechnic Clarendon Building.

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.

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.

LIVERPOOL: SC forums every fortnight on Thursday. 8 Nov: Trotsky. 22 Nov: Zimbabwe. 6 Dec: The Cuts. 20 Dec: Immigration Laws. All at 7.30pm at 15A Richmond St (off Williamson Sq).

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.

HACKNEY SC group meeting on 'Beyond the Fragments', with Lynne Segal, Judy Watson and Jo O'Brien. Thur 15 Nov, 7.30pm, Britannia pub, Mare St, London E8.

PADDINGTON SC group forum Tues 24 November 'The Tory Attacks — How should trade unionists respond?' with Carl Brecker 8pm, Meeting Room, 1 Thorpe Close, under Westway Flower, London W10. SC on sale every Saturday 11.30-12.30 at the Westbourne Park Road Junction, and every Thursday at 5.15 at Ladbroke Grove tube station.

LEICESTER SC group meeting, 21 Nov, Highfields Community Centre 8pm: 'Why the Fourth International?'

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.

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.

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

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

BOOST YOUR SALES

'Fight the racist immigration laws'. Meeting on Tuesday, 20 November, at 7.30pm, Central Hall, Oldham St, Manchester. Speakers from IWA, Nasera Begun and Said Bibi Defence Committees.

BRITAIN IS BARRED TO BLACKS In Dacca as at Heathrow

By Steve Cohen

IMMIGRATION cases only hit the headlines when they are particularly 'dramatic'. But the day in day out operation of the immigration laws very rarely involves people being dragged off the street and deported. They mainly concern the daily battles that black people face to get into this country in the first place — battles that often take several years and span the world from Britain to the sub-continent.

Here is one example: the history of Bashir Uddin, Ashique Uddin and Alia Miah is taken from a Home Office Report.

Bashir, Ashique and Alia are the sons of Ibrahim Ali who has lived in Manchester since 1958. They applied to come here with their mother Marfush Bibi, and sister Saysta Miah, in early 1972. The whole family, apart from Ibrahim, live in the village of Hamidpur in Sylhet, Bangladesh.

Lost

They were eventually called for interview at the British High Commission in Dacca in October 1972. It was a 200 mile journey over difficult country and they all had to attend in person. The interview was long, but had to be continued two days later forcing them to find accommodation in Dacca.

At the end of it all they were told the Ibrahim would have to be interviewed in Britain.

Ibrahim was interviewed in March 1973, and was told there were still doubts, so his family would have to go to Dacca again. They went to Dacca in July 1973, and were told Ibrahim would have to be interviewed again in Britain!

At this point the Nationality section of the Home Office in Croydon informed Dacca that Ibrahim had become a UK citizen in 1963 and his statement about his family at that time coincided exactly with what his family were saying now.

Delay

However, they still waited to interview Ibrahim again, this time in September 1973. It was accepted that his family situation was as he had stated but all the details were sent to Croydon to be looked at again.

Then, according to the Entry



Certificate Officer's report: 'Unfortunately the Home Office file went astray and was not located until August, 1974.' Finally in September 1974 the precious Entry Certificate was issued to the whole family...and immediately withdrawn. The Home Office said it had received two anonymous letters saying that the family was lying — these letters have never been seen.

A new interview with Ibrahim was set up for January 1975 but he had moved and the interview did not eventually take place until March.

All promises to issue Entry

Certificates were retracted at this interview and it was decided to visit the family in Hamidpur — apparently to interrogate other villagers.

The journey was put off until January 1977 'to avoid the wet season', although the family had been forced to Dacca at all times of the year. This section of the Home Office report reads like something out of Rudyard Kipling, the Great White Hunters setting out for the unknown. The fact that the family had done the journey twice in the opposite direction in the rainy season is not commented on.

The officials flew to Sylhet Town, where they met a Landrover 'with enough provisions for the week and the necessary camping equipment'. They travelled nervously as they had been warned that 'to avoid the wet be hostile towards people driving over newly ploughed paddy fields'.

The officials thought it worth reporting such details as: 'Our Landrover slipped into the ditch and it was a miracle it did not turn over'; 'Some children threw half and quarter bricks at our Landrover and nearly smashed our rear window'; a spade was to be their 'saving grace later on in the journey' as when they came to a

steep sided stream they 'managed to build up a ramp in places'.

At the health centre where they stayed the night they were shocked: 'The rooms were filthy and the windows had no glass or curtains'. They don't comment on how this affected patients. The canoe they used to cross the river also disturbed them, its waterproofing consisted of 'dung, straw and earth'.

When they reached their destination a very odd thing happened. Several villagers approached them and without any prompting said that Ibrahim was a liar, and not related to the people in the village.

Without being devoured by tigers, the officials returned and the family was once more called to Dacca (not in the dry season), and Entry Certificates were issued to the mother and daughter but not to the three brothers.

Appeal

The brothers appealed and have received an appeal date of December 1979 — two years after the discussion was made and seven years after the original application. The case will be heard in Manchester in the boys' absence — the report that this article quotes is from the Home Office submission to the appeal.

In the interim Bashir Uddin has died — his death certificate shows Ibrahim is his father.

Ashique Uddin will be too old to come even if he wins the appeal. A recent court decision has said that the effective date on whether a child is admitted to Britain is the date an Entry Certificate is granted not the date of application.

If this appeal fails then almost certainly Alia will also be over-age by the time he applies again.

ALL OUT ON 25 NOVEMBER

AFTER reading the article on this page you are probably horrified by the attitude of the immigration authorities and because of the personal suffering for those who wish to come here. This is the situation under the present immigration laws — if the Tories' new Nationality Bill becomes law it will make things ten times worse for black immigrants, both before they come and when they are here.

It would mean a significant step towards establishing the 'migrant labour' system that exists in much of the EEC. It would mean immigrant workers in this country may be denied 'citizenship' and hence lose substantial democratic rights.

This is why it is vital that every socialist is out on the streets of London on 25 November to protest against the Tories' reactionary plans. We have to show how disgusted we are with the Tories' plans for black people in this country.

This means beginning to build for the demonstration in the localities, being involved in local anti-racist committees or campaigns to help gather strong local support. We have to take the campaign into the labour movement and women's movement to ensure the biggest possible weight on the side of those who oppose the Bill and those who have most to lose from it.

The International Marxist Group is calling a national mobilisation for the demonstration, asking members to take their banners and march behind their local anti-racist campaigns.

STOP THE TORY RACIST LAWS

**REPEAL THE 1971
IMMIGRATION ACT**
Demonstrate Sunday 25 November
Assemble 12 noon Speakers Corner,
Hyde Park. March to Trafalgar Sq.
p&p Campaign Against Racist Laws, PO Box 151, London W C2

CAMPAIGNING IN COVENTRY

ANNA REESE describes how Coventry is building for the Nationality Bill demonstration in London on 25 November.

'A Coventry Campaign against Racist Laws has been set up with affiliation from IWAs, West Indians organisation and many others. We are leafletting the temples; posters are going up in all the Asian shops; and we are leafletting factories. A public meeting is being organised with speakers from the black organisations, Asian women and the Southall Campaign.

'Coaches have been booked from Coventry, Leamington and Nuneaton to take people down to the demo. Letters have gone out to all trade union bodies seeking affiliation, sponsorship and support. This week, on the buses, £145 was collected for the campaign. The Latin American community in the town is also backing the demonstration and sending people down to London. Whitelaw's axing of the refugee programme means that their future in this country is insecure. Political refugees from other countries in Latin America will no longer be able to come.

'In Coventry we plan to keep our committee going after the demonstration; in particular we see it as crucial to begin taking up the arguments about racism, nationality and immigration inside the trade unions and the Labour Party. The demonstration on the 25 November as the first step in that campaign.'

HOMENEWS

As Ford workers await wages offer— Union leaders bow to picketing laws

By a Ford worker

ON FRIDAY 16 November the Ford Motor Company will reply to the 1979 wage claim of its 59,000 manual workers. While the claim itself is a good one, both its preparation, and the recent events around lay-offs at Dagenham, show that the officials and convenors have little intention of seriously fighting for it. Furthermore they seem intent on implementing the Tory anti-union policies for them — by preventing effective picketing.

In preparing the claim all discussion on the shop floor and in the union branches has been blocked or dismissed. There has been no Coventry conference of Ford shop stewards this year.

On 26 October, when the claim was submitted, the convenor of Ford Langley was instructed by national official Ron Todd to keep the union leaflet outlining the claim under lock and key till 11.30am. Union members were deliberately kept in the dark till after both management and the press had been informed!

However, it is the atrocious scabbing of the officials on the struggle for 80 per cent lay-off pay by Assembly Plant workers at Dagenham which speaks louder than a million leaflets.

Picket

On 25 October catering supervisory staff at Dagenham picketed the estate for one day in pursuit of a wage demand. The picket was respected by Toleman Transport drivers who shift the finished cars out of the Assembly plant car park. Next day they were informed by their own management that they would not be paid for the day as the picket was of Gardner Merchant employees and not Ford workers. The Toleman drivers struck demanding picketing guarantees.

The Assembly Plant was soon clogged with finished cars and Ford was faced with the prospect of a lay-off on 80 per cent pay. Instead they tried to round up volunteers in the Assembly plant to do Toleman's work. When the stewards put a stop to this both shifts were laid off without pay on Wednesday 31 October.

In response a mass meeting of 'B' shift voted to picket the whole estate. That, in a phrase, is when the shit hit the fan.

Next morning Communist Party member and convenor of the Body Plant, Dan Connors, was out telling pickets to let trucks through to his plant. They didn't. On Friday senior stewards in the Engine Plant were accepting the lay-off of 2,000 assembly workers, one third of the plant, while machining areas came in to work weekend overtime.

Directive

Down at Bayswater House an emergency meeting of the National Joint Negotiating Committee, comprised of officials and convenors from all Ford plants and management, were passing a directive. It instructed Toleman drivers only to picket their own compound — which can be by-passed; directed Assembly plant stewards to lift their pickets at once; told them to return to normal working — which meant accepting the lay-off without pay if the Toleman's dispute continued unless Ford workers scabbed on their strike and shifted cars.

Conference to discuss new technology/alternative plans

17 November — N.E. London Polytechnic

Separate workshops on GEC, heavy engineering, aerospace, telecommunications

Details and credentials from N.E. London Poly Resources Centre or phone Tammy White, 01-597 4630. Sponsored by Lucas, NEI Parsons, T&G Speke



Ford's Bayswater House — a picket of last year's pay negotiations. This year's offer comes next Friday

As the final straw it was argued that the pickets were grist to the mill of the Tory campaign against picketing rights! So the officials decided to do the Tories' dirty work for them.



RON TODD — national union official who has been browbeating stewards

In fact the restrictions they want to place on picketing at Dagenham — only picket the plant or compound from which you work — go further than anything the Tories are proposing and would make picketing ineffective. The question of 80 per cent lay-off pay was not even

discussed at the NJNC meeting. But the pickets remained. By the end of the Friday night shift the Body plant, Foundry and Engine Plant assembly areas were laid off.

So on Monday 5 November the Assembly Plant stewards were browbeaten for four and a half hours by Ron Todd.

Warning

He warned that the union would find it difficult to defend them against victimisation if the picketing continued. The stewards finally caved in and a mass meeting on Wednesday morning had little option but to return to work. Ron Todd told them that the NJNC would not even pursue their claim for lay-off pay.

This Friday these same people will be receiving the company's reply on our wage claim. It may well be time for the officials and convenors to appear 'militant'. What rank and file militants in the Ford Workers Group ('The Combine') fear is that a couple of weeks before Xmas the officials will come back with a recommendation to reject the offer and take immediate strike action — knowing full well it would be rejected.

Instead in a massive leafleting campaign we are arguing for the use of other tactics — work to rule, overtime ban, token one day strikes if the offer is derisory — with the prospect of all out action in the New Year. Our slogan is 'Don't decide

before Yuletide!'

There's a sting in the tail of this sorry tale. Toleman drivers also returned to work on Wednesday 7 November having previously rejected an offer which would have given them £100 every time they crossed any

Fraud NEWS

BULLETIN OF THE FORD WORKERS GROUP 'THE COMBINE'

HOW TO WIN THE 1979 WAGE CLAIM

DON'T SETTLE BEFORE XMAS

The Ford Motor Company will reply on Friday 16 November to the 1979 wage claim of its 59,000 manual workers. The claim itself is a good one, both its preparation, and the recent events around lay-offs at Dagenham, show that the officials and convenors have little intention of seriously fighting for it. Furthermore they seem intent on implementing the Tory anti-union policies for them — by preventing effective picketing.

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DON'T DECIDE BEFORE YULETIDE

LOBBY THE TALKS FRIDAY 16 NOVEMBER 9.15am SHARP

Dagenham and Langley workers will be lobbying the national negotiations on Friday 16 November in support of the full claim and a serious fight to win it. Make sure you're there!

BAYSWATER HOUSE, MINGHAM PLACE, LONDON W2 at 9.15am. (Near St. James' Park, Queensway and Bayswater.)

For more information contact: 01-225 1234 (Ford Workers Group)

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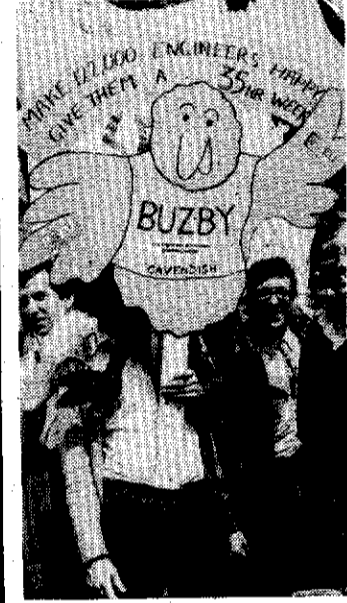
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POEU reject secret ballots

'The decision will disappoint the government'. That was how the Financial Times reported the decision of the Post Office Engineers Union (POEU) conference to throw out right-wing attempts to introduce postal ballots.



Thatcher's government wants to see postal ballots become standard practice in the trade unions. It would have been a great boost to them if the 'moderates' in an important union like the POEU could have won voluntary acceptance of these measures.

In fact, four different resolutions before the conference tried to impose postal ballots as the means of deciding on industrial action. They were all soundly defeated.

The conference went on to make rule changes which provided for more direct democracy, through POEU branches, and greater involvement of the membership in deciding on pay claims and action.

Leyland pay offer

By Pat Hickey, Deputy Senior Steward at Rover Solihull

FOLLOWING his 9-1 victory in the ballot over plans to axe 25,000 jobs, Edwardes has shown his gratitude to the 'moderate and sensible' majority by offering a 5 per cent increase in the annual wage negotiations.

The 5 per cent is tied to an 85 page document which includes such conditions as automatic acceptance of industrial engineering standards (time study), continuous auditing of staffing levels, full

mobility of labour, an end to demarcation lines and a good deal more. Also tied into the offer is a bonus scheme which could mean another 15,000 jobs disappearing in the next 12 months.

BL management are confident that their victory in the ballot has prepared the ground for pushing through another attack on wages and staffing levels. But indications are that they may well have miscalculated.

Already Longbridge shop stewards have rejected the offer. Rover shop stewards will follow suit and the membership are increasingly angry with the never ending threats of closure if management does not get their way. The Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee and the Combine Committee are at last preparing some opposition to Edwardes.

It is easier to fight on wages that on redundancies, but a Combine wide fight on wages would prepare the way for opposition to other aspects of management's attacks.

Draftex women win

By Anna Reese, Coventry

WOMEN at the Draftex factory in Coventry have won their 3 week long strike aimed at retaining average earnings. They have beaten off the attempt by management to reduce their average pay by as much as £15 per month.

The solidarity shown by other workers and students in the city was quite remarkable. It is the first victory for some time for the unions in Coventry.

Furthermore the Draftex women now see it as their job to reshape their local TGWU branch. Like many others it has had meetings rarely, often at only half a day's notice making attendance difficult. They want to see the branch playing a role in organising, and fighting for the interests of, its members — holding regular, well publicised meetings. With elections coming up for the branch

committee, the Draftex women will hopefully nominate candidates from amongst their ranks.

It was through the strike that they came into contact with the problems of organising in the union. Whilst union procedures are complicated and often bureaucratic, the union is vital for effective organisation.

Redundancy and pay cuts are problems facing many women workers in Coventry. The successes of the Draftex women in organising to make the union serve their interests can be an inspiration to others.

Oldham engineers strike

By Pete Clifford

WHITE COLLAR workers at the engineering firm of Crane Fruehauf in Oldham are now in their fifth week of strike action to prevent management divid-

ing them from shop floor workers.

A new bonus scheme for the mainly women office workers is calculated according to productivity on the shopfloor — so that they only start benefiting after the shopfloor had made £18. This scheme also works in reverse. As one union member put it: 'We can be working harder in the office and have our wages cut.'

To get rid of this divisive scheme the 130 members of TASS, the white collar section of the engineering union, have put in a claim for a 25 per cent increase in basic pay to compensate for inflation. When the employers offered 13 per cent the strike started.

Twenty-four hour pickets have successfully closed the plant, but management resistance is stubborn. With the employers on the offensive throughout the Manchester area, and 4,500 redundancies over the last few months, solidarity needs to be built across the district. Support and Donations to: Alan Clarke, TASS chairperson, Crane Fruehauf, 35 Patterdale Close, Royton, Oldham.

Never mind the speeches, where's the action?

THE mass media are determined to draw blood from health workers. On television news last week, for example, a strike by engineers at a London hospital led the TV reporter to ask pickets: 'So you don't mind if patients die?' He managed to ask this question no less than three times.

That's part of the opposition faced by health workers battling against the cuts. Eve Bryczkowski asked BERT ELLICOTT, chairperson of NUPE's North Manchester health services district committee, about the state of cuts in the hospitals and the action that's necessary.

We are short of nurses, especially geriatric ones. Management tell us they can't recruit, so we've produced a bulletin in response to their excuses.

Our basic demands include:
*Members of the appropriate trade union to see all applicants and sit in on interviews.

*Successful applicants to be guaranteed accommodation, nursery facilities, removal, and settling-in expenses — extend the perks the higher grades get to the lower grades, it would be a real boost to recruitment.

*Regular information to be distributed to the staff about underspending, wages, and staff shortages.

*An overall increase in the number of trained staff.

On the fightback generally, Tameside Trades Council has formed an anti-cuts committee. But it has Labour councillors on its leadership and they have already admitted that they intend to make cuts.

Then there's the union leadership. Many people think Alan Fisher and others on the NUPE executive are left wing. They can be left wing in their speeches.

Yet they have reneged on their commitment, voted on at national conference, to campaign to abolish private practice in the NHS. They've simply asked for branches to organise locally if they feel like it. That's just one example.

They keep mouthing about fighting cuts, but when it comes to action they don't want to know. The important point is: Will the union leadership bring out the membership in defence of victimised workers?

That's the way to fight the cuts. There are still members who are being sacked, or have been disciplined for taking part in the low pay campaign last winter, and they've received minimal or no support.

As far as I'm concerned, the left in the Labour Party today are the right wing of tomorrow. We have to fundamentally change things. Fighting policies and actions are needed. Half measures are not the answer.

Now for 28 November demo 'No cuts' Lambeth takes to the streets

By Geoffrey Sheridan

IT'S not every day that a local council leads a march on Parliament with the message: 'We're not implementing your cuts'. That's what Lambeth's Labour council and the local trade unions did on Wednesday of last week, and ten thousand people from the South London borough joined in the lobby of MPs and sat in the rally which followed.

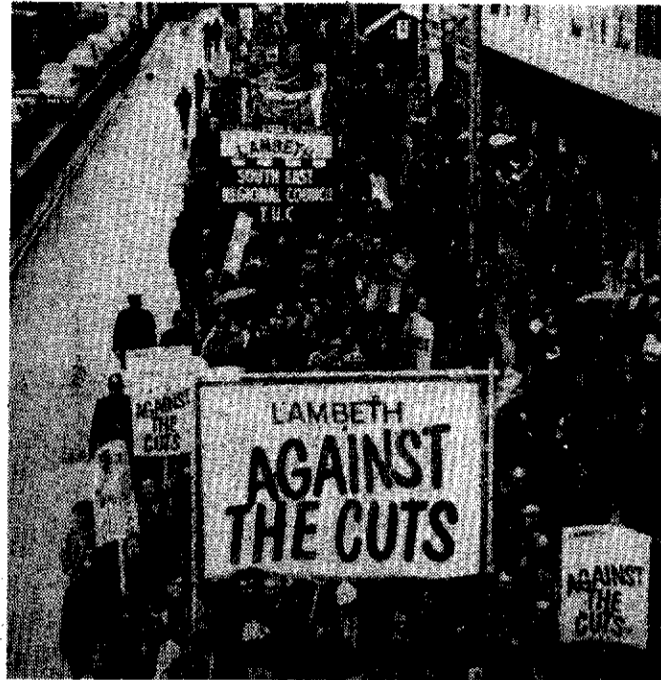
The banners of all the unions representing the council workers were there, together with a large proportion of those workers.

So, too, were members of the Labour Parties in Lambeth and Wandsworth, a delegation of Kent miners in their orange safety clothes and helmets, firefighters in uniform, health workers, some five hundred local teachers and as many school students. The SE Regional TUC added its banner and voice.

Three quotes. At the rally, Lambeth council leader Ted Knight said: 'We've decided to make no cuts whatsoever under the direction of the Tory government. (Sustained applause.) Every Labour councillor was elected on a mandate to defend the working class, not to attack it.

'We must not be permitted to stand alone,' Knight added. 'The official leaders of the labour movement deserted the Clay Cross councillors. Every Labour councillor must take the same stand as Lambeth, and we must have the support of the movement.' (Lengthy applause.)

Denise and Esther from Priory Park School, who were among the NUSS contingent at the front of the demo, said: 'There's no chance of equality of opportunity when half the schools are closing and you don't get enough books.



'We've tried petitioning and that, but this type of action on the streets is the only way to influence the government, unless you have contacts in high places.'

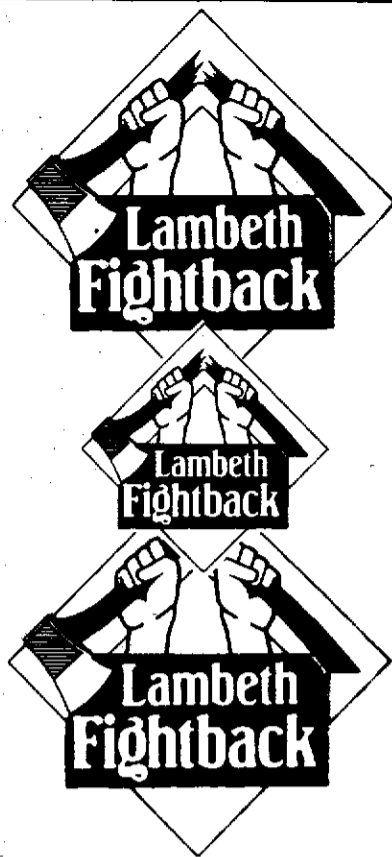
Mencielita Manning, who spoke during the demo on behalf of the 50 students from Vauxhall Manor School, who had walked out during the break to join it, said that the cuts were not simply a local issue. The only way to solve that problem, she considered, was to get rid of the Tory government.

Some two thousand leaflets handed out by Socialist Challenge supporters carried a similar message. It added that the national

mobilisation for the demonstration in London against the cuts on Wednesday, 28 November, called by the Labour Party, should be a step towards the one-day strikes needed to build for the measure that can really hurt the Tories in their tracks: an all-out strike.

And among the marchers who received copies of Lambeth Fightback's well produced 8-page paper headlined 'Cuts will kill' were five hundred who bought copies of Socialist Challenge.

Details of Lambeth Fightback, formed by Lambeth Trades Council, from: John Yates, 17 Helix Gardens, Brixton, London SW9.



ON THE KNIFE EDGE

Your services, your struggles — send us your news

Liverpool demonstrates

By Graham Burgess, chairperson, Liverpool NALGO (personal capacity)

OVER five thousand trades unionists, tenants, and other working class people marched through Liverpool in opposition to the cuts on Wednesday of last week.

The protest caused several sections of the council to be closed. Included were the rents and rates offices, the housing and social service departments, the district works, the parks and gardens department, and refuse collection.

Public sector workers from NALGO, UCATT and the GMWU were joined by delegates from shop stewards committees of the Transport and General Workers, Engineers and the National Union of Seamen.

The broad-based Merseyside Anti-Cuts Committee, which called the demonstration, is now building for the 28 November march in

London.

The city council, dominated by a Liberal-Tory coalition, last week voted against giving workers the day off with pay to attend the London action. But hundreds are expected to travel to the march in the train chartered by the anti-cuts committee.

NALGO members in Liverpool have received official backing for strike action on 28 November.

While it's vital to gain support for this lobby of Parliament, we need to call for a one-day strike or day of action backed by the TUC and the Labour Party. A combination of local and national action, co-ordinating all sections of the labour movement, is essential.

Students occupy in Manchester

By Ann Henderson, convenor, Manchester area NUS

THE level of opposition to the increases in fees for overseas students, who will be obliged to pay over £3,000 a year, has exceeded the expectations of the NUS leadership.

Over two thousand students lobbied their MPs and the Department of Education on Wednesday of last week, and colleges all over the country were occupied during the week of action.

Supporters of the Socialist Students Alliance aim to ensure that action continues, and to link it to the fight against public expenditure cuts.

Seven colleges have already been occupied in the Manchester area and a 1,500-strong demonstration took place on 31 October — with some success.

Administrators at Manchester Poly have refused to implement the immediate 23 per cent increase. A fees strike by overseas students at Manchester University has secured an extension of their registration date. And at Bolton Institute of Technology, the principal has said that no overseas students will be suspended.

An important development is the

level of activity by students in further education colleges. Worsley FE college, for example, at which over three-fifths of the students are from overseas, is among the first in the country to take direct action against the fees increase and other cutbacks in education.

Another demonstration on these issues took place in Manchester yesterday.

...and in Bristol

By John Lovibond, convenor, Bristol area NUS

STUDENTS, angry over the cuts and the fees increase for overseas students [itself a cut by another name], are occupying higher education institutions in the Avon area.

A two-day occupation took place at Bristol poly at the end of last week. Students at Weston-super-Mare technical college occupied last Friday, and another two-day occupation took place at Bristol university at the beginning of this week.

Our main aim is to close the colleges today, to coincide with a half-day strike against the cuts by National Union of Teachers members in Avon. Meetings are being held in all the colleges to argue for this.

The area is a focus for the NUT's anti-cuts campaign, because of the way the axe is falling here. Public service spending is to drop by £8m, half of which is scheduled to come off the education budget. Meanwhile police spending is to rise by £2m.

The architect of this monstrosity is Jervais Walker, chairperson of Avon's Tory county council, who is also chairperson of the committee of local education authorities — local illiteracy authorities would be a better title in the present context.

Among the active anti-cuts campaigns are groups in schools, made up of school students, teachers, and parents. The NUS objective is to establish joint student-trade union groups in the colleges.

The events on 15 November

include a march on Avon House and a rally at 2pm at Central Hall, Old Market, Bristol.

Barts gains jobs

ADMINISTRATORS at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London have unfrozen vacancies for ancillary staff previously left unfilled due to spending cuts. This followed an overtime ban and work to rule in the portering and catering departments.

Management has agreed with NUPE officials to return to the position before cutbacks of £2m were announced in the City and Hackney health district in September.

In a joint statement with management, NUPE confirms its view that as well as unfilled vacancies being filled, the level of patient services at the hospital should be restored. Seventy-eight beds have been removed in recent weeks by hospital administrators.

NUPE area officer Ian Barber says: 'We want to guarantee proper levels of service to patients at the hospital and detailed discussions will now commence within each department at Barts to make sure this can be done not only for the immediate period but for the financial year 1980-81.'

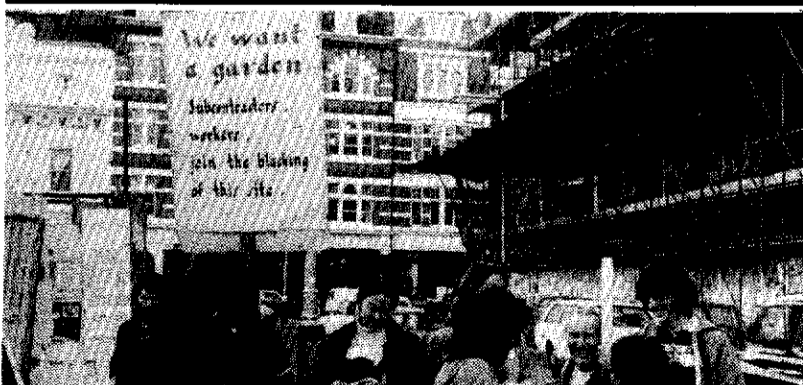
An acrostic poem written on watching a television report showing severely disabled patients protesting against government cuts at their hospital in Stoke Mandeville. One patient in a wheel-chair even claimed that these cuts put them in fear of their lives...

THE WEAKEST TO THE TORY WALL

Conservatives and Unionists, with Thatcher, seem to be Sadistic to the weak and sick.

© N. Racine-Jaques, 1979

Photo: GEOFFREY SHERIDAN



'LONDON needs another office block like it needs another plague' — that's one of the slogans adorning what's now an excavation site in Covent Garden.

Until a few weeks ago the site was a splendidly laid-out garden, built and maintained by local residents and people who work nearby, in an area where the only other place to grow flowers is a window ledge, and with

nowhere for children to play. There's a fight to stop the bulldozers, brought in by MEPC.

Reed, a multinational property outfit. Already pickets have forced the withdrawal of one building firm, Bovis, who complained of 'aggravation'. Pickets are every Friday at lunchtime. Phone 01-836 9960 for details.

Peter Hain speaks

My kind of Labour Party

PETER HAIN joined the Labour Party under two years ago. He came from the Liberal Party and from campaigning activity in the Anti-Apartheid Movement. He was one of the founding members of the Anti-Nazi League and is a currently a leading member of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee.

The LCC has become the new umbrella under which many in the left of the Labour Party have gathered. Hain talked to Socialist Challenge about the kind of Labour Party he would like to see.

He began by discussing the role of the LCC:

PH: I would like to see the LCC co-ordinating the left in the party. In the past the non-militant left has not been given any serious direction on an activist level.

That criticism is less true in terms of getting policies through to Labour's national executive, but socialist politics ought not to be about feeding policies through to get stitched into manifestos.

Rather, it is a question of developing a proper campaigning, activist movement which can begin to rally the working class on a serious basis.

SC: What sort of issues do you see this campaigning activity developing around?

This is obviously important because the turnout at the LCC conference [200] was less than many expected. Accordingly there hasn't been an influx into the Labour Party.

'In a nutshell what I want to see is a concentration on politics which aren't exclusively geared to electoralism, but which intervenes as well in an extra-parliamentary arena.'

or into the LCC, which is necessary to make this mass active Labour Party a reality.

PH: I think that is true. There are stirrings locally but the LCC and its general perspective is still in its infancy in terms of attracting people.

As to issues, these range from specific struggles at the moment, such as that against the Corrie anti-abortion Bill, to more general campaigns such as against the cuts, supporting industrial action, fighting against redundancies and resistance to Tory attacks on trade union rights. All of these the LCC and the Labour left ought to be intervening in on an activist basis and not just sending round MPs to decorate struggles.

SC: But the LCC has yet to prove that it is capable of doing this.

Let's take an example. At the LCC rally both Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn attacked the Leyland ballot. But neither Benn or the LCC held factory gate meetings while the ballot was taking place.

PH: I don't know about the specific example you mention; Labour leaders descending from on high and depositing themselves outside factory gates in the Midlands where they have no base.

But yes, I do think that in the future this should be the sort of role of the LCC and its supporting leadership like Tony Benn. If it is not then I don't see any possibility of creating the kind of backdrop against which the next Labour Government could perform anything useful at all.

In a nutshell what I want to see is a concentration on politics which aren't exclusively geared to electoralism, but which intervenes as well in an extra-parliamentary arena. A politics which recognises this is a priority rather than the formulation of neat and tidy politics and theory; important though these are.

I would also say that I think the alternatives are non-existent. There



Peter Hain at the head of an Anti-Nazi League carnival march: 'The Labour left ought to be intervening on an activist basis, and not just sending round MPs to decorate struggles.'

has been a general crisis of the left of which the Labour Party's dilemmas are just an example.

There should have been an explosive growth of the left in the last few years. It hasn't happened. In fact there have been serious retreats.

PH: A millstone.

SC: So how important is the question of changing that leadership?

PH: It is crucial, and the need to create an alternative to that leadership is crucial.

But I also think there is a tendency on the part of Labour left activists to indulge in symbolic politics. In the sense that most of what you do is confined to berating and denouncing a right wing leadership and that all your politics are geared towards ritual denunciations rather than recognising that the leadership is only in the saddle because of the failings of the Labour Party.

Obviously the present leadership is an obstacle but it is misconceived to think you can graft a left leadership onto a party whose politics may not be ready for it.

That is what we have to put right, starting at the rank and file level. It's a question of campaigning for, and linking up with, struggles outside and creating the conditions whereby an alternative left leadership emerges, with roots firmly based locally.

SC: Attracting people to the Labour Party raises the questions of bans and proscriptions.

PH: I am not in favour of bans and proscriptions but neither am I in favour of affiliations of other left groups. What I am in favour of is left unity in terms of agreeing on specific issues — whether it's the cuts, the ANL, the attack on trade union rights.

This does not mean finding a basis for agreement which is the lowest

have been so discredited.

SC: But it's a chicken and egg situation. You want to attract those left socialists who could help to rejuvenate the Labour Party but those people are liable to hold back until they see the signs of this rejuvenation.

PH: Yes, I think it is a chicken and egg situation. But it is our responsibility to show there is a point in joining the Labour Party. If you come in without any illusions then you don't get disillusioned because you weren't expecting a mass vibrant, dynamic working class party; only the opportunity to try and build one.



Jonathan Dimbleby, the TV producer, and Peter Hain at a 'No plugs for Nazis' meeting.

SC: But why should the LCC offer a way out? For instance, one of the major failures of the traditional Labour left in the last few years has been its silence and inaction on Ireland. But the LCC hasn't said a word on Ireland.

PH: The LCC hasn't said anything on a lot of issues. But I agree with you, the LCC should have a policy on Ireland and I think in time it will have. The Labour left has to grapple with the issue of Ireland which it has shamefully neglected. I think, in the end, we will have to rally around the withdrawal position.

Campaigning activity is one dimension. Another is the industrial and more directly economic struggles. Instead of leaving the politics of trade unionism to the trade union leaders the Labour left should see as one of its

'But I also think there is a tendency on the part of Labour left activists to indulge in symbolic politics. In the sense that most of what you do is confined to berating and denouncing a right wing leadership'

primary roles to help and co-ordinate the rank and file of the trade union movement politically.

This means linking up much more closely with those at the shop steward level and the combine committees.

SC: The obvious problem the Labour Party has when campaigning on such issues as the cuts is the record of the last Labour Government. So is the present Labour Party leadership not an obstacle to the type of party you would like to see.

common denominator, the sense in which the Communist Party projects unity so that it almost becomes anti-political.

But I am in favour of co-operation and I think if the Labour Party develops that kind of unity other socialists on the left will be drawn into it. Particularly at this time other socialist on the left could play an enormous part in rejuvenating the party precisely because all the social democratic options and ideologies

SCLV meets

By Celia Pugh

THE ANGER and resistance of the working class is finding an echo inside the Labour Party. Last winter's public sector strikes against the five per cent pay norm forced many in the Labour Party to openly question the policies and leadership of Callaghan and the Labour right.

Now, as thousands take to the streets against the cuts, unemployment, abortion restrictions and immigration laws some on the Labour left have stated a commitment to link up with such struggles.

The Scottish and Manchester conferences of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee showed an openness to consider links with those outside the confines of Parliament and the Labour Party. These stated intentions

have still to be tested, but the LCC has shown a potential as a forum for debate and action on the Labour left.

On 24 November supporters of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory will be meeting in London. The SCLV was set up to fight for socialist policies in the general election. This fight for socialism has not ended with the election.

Supporters of the SCLV should now turn their attention to what is going on in the LCC. This offers the best opportunity for seeing whether the Labour left will live up to their promises to unite with all those struggling against the Tories.

The SCLV conference starts at 10am at the Central Library, Holloway Rd, London N1. It will be followed at 3pm by a rally in support of Lambeth's fight against the cuts.

battle of ideas



WHY WE OPPOSE THE SPLIT IN THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

A TRAGIC event for world Trotskyism took place on the weekend of 28 to 29 October, the eve of the 11th World Congress of the Fourth International.

Leaders of two currents inside the FI — the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency, and the Bolshevik

Faction led by Nahuel Moreno — broke the discipline of the FI and provoked their own expulsion. It appears that 25 per cent of the militants of the FI, many of whom are Latin American, will follow their leaders out of the ranks of the International.

An unprincipled split heading for nowhere

By John Ross, member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International

THE ORIGINS of this split go back some time. The reasons given by the LTT and Bolshevik Faction — differences over the Nicaraguan revolution — were a pretext for a split and not the cause.

It was the decision of these currents to form organised relations with the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International — a grouping outside the FI led by Pierre Lambert — that forced their expulsion.

The Bolshevik Faction had been flouting the discipline of the FI for some time by attempting to sabotage and destroy other sections of the FI in Mexico and Columbia. This made democratic debate with the Bolshevik Faction very difficult. These developments were brought to a head by the events in Nicaragua.

Many different positions on Nicaragua have been expressed inside the International —

over the characterisation of the new government, the correct attitude of Trotskyists to the FSLN leadership, the method of building a section of the FI in Nicaragua and so on.

The last meeting of the United Secretariat (the elected leadership of the FI) debated Nicaragua and took various positions.

The FSLN's expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade from Nicaragua was condemned. The Brigade was initiated by the Columbian Trotskyists of the PST (Socialist Workers Party) — supporters of the Bolshevik Faction — and volunteers were sent to Nicaragua. It was later expelled by the FSLN.

A resolution on Nicaragua was also approved at the USEC meeting, but various amendments to it were moved by the British leadership.

Individual sections have also been debating Nicaragua in the run up to the World Congress and many different positions have been expressed.

In Sweden for example their conference voted by 30 delegates to 3 in favour of amendments to the USEC position stressing that Trotskyists should characterise the Nicaraguan government as a bourgeois coalition and that a situation of dual power existed in Nicaragua. It also called for the FI to explain the need for a workers and peasants government. This is similar to the positions supported overwhelmingly by the British

section, and also similar to positions supported by 45 per cent of the French section.

Prior to the split it seemed extremely likely that the world congress would have endorsed this view. The debate was continuing. Yet the Bolshevik Faction claims to have split due to a 'Castroist' tendency that had developed inside the International, and also claimed the International had taken 'liquidationist' positions on Nicaragua.

The British section of the FI rejects the accusation that the FI has adopted the policies of Castroism and broken from the fundamental principles of our movement. Therefore we characterise the split as both unprincipled and unnecessary.

Clearly the assessment has to be that the Bolshevik Faction and some of the LTT leaders were no longer interested in political debate. They simply wanted to escape from any international discipline.

Two weeks before the 11th World Congress of the FI, where their allegations could have been clarified and refuted, they, jointly with the OCRFI in France, called an 'Open Conference of the Trotskyist Movement'. This was not supported by all members of the LTT — a statement from the British members of this tendency appears in these four pages.

This open conference would make decisions that are binding on no one, and which entail no obligations from the participants.

There can be no other assessment than that it is the comrades who support this conference who are the 'liquidationists' — in practice they are 'liquidating' the FI, the only international revolutionary organisation struggling to build a world party of socialist revolution.

An international 'Open Conference' without any agreement to campaign internationally, debate democratically and build parties with a commitment to building a world party of revolution, is just the kind of organisation that Trotsky fought against.

The militants who have followed these leaders face a dismal future unless they rejoin the FI, for the road of 'national Trotskyism' is littered with corpses. The experience of groups like the Militant, the Workers' Revolutionary Party and Spartacist League show the ultimate fate that awaits them.

Despite the tragedy of the loss of these militants — especially when the FI had deliberately opened its debates to the OCRFI and many other revolutionaries world wide — there was no option for the FI but to expel those leading comrades who were campaigning within the ranks of the FI for this 'regroupment' conference.

The demoralisation of thousands of Trotskyist militants lies in the hands of the irresponsible leaders of the Bolshevik Faction and the LTT who provoked an unprincipled split.

Why the International

LEON TROTSKY spent the last years of his life attempting to build the Fourth International. He described this as the most important mission he had undertaken in his whole life. Why did he hold this view?

The necessity of international organisation had been built into the Marxist movement from its earliest days. Marx and Engels summed up this necessity in the famous words 'Workers of the World Unite' and in their practical struggle to construct the first International.

This struggle expressed the reality of the class struggle within capitalism — a world system of domination and exploitation.

The imperialist war of 1914-18 put this internationalism to its first decisive test and, at the same time, was a convincing proof of the international character of the class struggle. Lenin, Trotsky, and Rosa Luxemburg had no hesitation in pronouncing the Second International a corpse when its leaders called on workers of different countries to shoot each other for the sake of imperial colonies and profits.

The betrayal of the Second International signified for the Bolshevik leaders the necessity

of building the Third. For Trotsky, the transformation of the Third International into nothing more than an instrument of Stalinist counter-revolutionary diplomacy, which eventually enabled fascism to win in Germany, signalled the need to construct the Fourth International.

Trotsky was well aware of the magnitude of the task he had set himself. An entire generation of militants had lost all hope with the victory of Stalinism in the USSR and the advance of fascism in Europe.

Trotsky's optimism was based on the reality of the class struggle on a world scale. As World War Two approached, he summed up the choice facing humanity as 'Socialism or Barbarism'.

The struggle to build the Fourth International was the struggle to keep alight the flame of classical Marxism through the darkest days. For Trotsky only this could allow the reconstruction of mass revolutionary parties capable of leading the working class to power.

There existed in the '30s organisations like the Independent Labour Party in Britain and the POUM in Spain which counted tens of thousands of revolutionaries in their ranks. These parties denied the necessity or possibility of constructing a new international. Their virtual disappearance today is eloquent

testimony to their error.

In the age of imperialism it is impossible to build parties 'defending the interests of the working class as a whole' on a purely national basis.

The world which emerged from the Second World War put internationalism to its hardest test. Unexpected twists in the class struggle — the consolidation of Stalinism in East Europe and the capitalist 'boom' in the West — meant that the Fourth International, founded in 1938, went through an internal crisis.

Nevertheless, throughout the 1950s and '60s, only the Trotskyists were able to consistently defend the interests of the working class as a whole — supporting the struggles against Stalinism as in Hungary in 1956 and the new rise of the colonial revolution from China, through Cuba to Vietnam.

1968 marked a turning point in world politics, indicated by the general strike in France, the Tet offensive in Vietnam and Czechoslovakia's 'Prague Spring'.

The Fourth International was able to mobilise a new generation of youth in solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution. Its militants today stand trial as part of the opposition in East Europe. In the imperialist countries, the Fourth International is on the road to building strong working class organisations

armed with the lessons of the '20s and '30s.

Today in its activity the Fourth International can demonstrate the unity of the world revolutionary process. This is only possible on the basis of an international party.

All attempts at an alternative route to mass parties have resulted either in a retreat into national insularity — which in the case of the 'Militant' tendency in Britain has resulted in adaptations to the Labour leadership — or adapting to one or other aspect of the world process, as in the case of the European Maoists who emerged in the post '68 period.

The Fourth International is still a relatively small organisation. It is not yet the 'general staff of world revolution' fought for by Lenin, Luxemburg and Trotsky. Not all revolutionaries are within its ranks.

But it is the only organisation struggling for socialism on a world scale. Like Trotsky, we are confident that only such an organisation can aspire to lead the working class and keep its bearings in the era of world politics and economics.

The last forty years and especially those since 1968 have proven both the possibility and the vitality of Trotsky's mission.

The comrades' attempt to splinter the world Trotskyist movement is a serious blow to the building of such a world party of revolution.

THE NICARAGUA QUESTION

THE debate in the Fourth International on Nicaragua concerns the dynamic of an unfolding revolution — the FSLN; the role of the Government of National Reconstruction (GRNN); as well as the role of imperialism and the need for international solidarity.

It is not an abstract question. We are concerned with very practical questions of how revolutionaries try to build socialism in other Latin American countries.

In order to understand the debate on the way forward in Nicaragua we have to make a distinction between strategy and tactics.

In imperialist and semi-colonial countries

alike, history has shown that revolutionary crises pose the question of power; which class rules?

At a critical stage in this revolutionary process the question of government becomes crucial. Who forms the government? Is it a government which represents the interests of the working class and is based on the organisations of that class, or is it a bourgeois government based on the institutions of the bourgeois state?

The differences in the FI do not focus on these fundamental questions of strategy, the need for a workers and peasants government

and class independence, but rather on tactical questions, assessment of the balance of class forces, the centrality of this or that slogan at any given time in the unfolding revolutionary process.

These tactical questions are of course very important and at times crucial. But even a mass revolutionary party, with a large proletarian base, like the Bolsheviks, found it difficult to avoid making mistakes of this character.

The article printed below, 'The gains of the toiling masses', summarises the positions of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. In 'The revolution has only just begun' we

outline the position adopted by the International Marxist Group World Congress conference.

The unfolding revolutionary process in Nicaragua is not only rich in experience for all revolutionaries, but its outcome will have a profound effect on the class struggle internationally.

The essential task for us now is building the biggest possible solidarity movement and attempting to counteract the manoeuvres of imperialism. The central themes for a solidarity movement must be aid to Nicaragua with no strings and US hands off Nicaragua.

The Gains of the Toiling Masses

FOLLOWING the defeated uprising of September 1978 a deep-going process of self-organisation was started in Nicaragua.

In the neighbourhoods Civil Defence Committees (CDCs) were built in each block, organising arms, medical care, food supplies, and bomb shelters. The armed units of the FSLN were strengthened by the hundreds of youth fleeing from the murderous National Guard.

During the insurrection popular militias were formed, not only in the cities, but also in some rural areas. The CDCs became organs of people's power in the areas from which Somoza's forces had been driven.

This led to a situation of dual power. In the final offensive the population of Managua rose up en masse to capture Somoza's fortified 'bunker', seizing thousands of weapons: The undisputed leadership of this struggle was the FSLN.

The CDCs have become Sandinista Defence Committees elected by the people in each neighbourhood. Their function has been extended to all aspects of social welfare, jobs, reconstruction, repair work, and vigilance against pro-Somoza forces.

In the countryside the peasants are organising in the Association of Field Workers. Trade unions are being built in every workplace, and centralised through the Sandinista Workers Federation. AMPRO-NAC, the women's organisation that played a central role in the struggle, is continuing to fight for women's rights as the Association of Nicaraguan Women. The youth are also building their own organisation, the 19 July Sandinista Youth.

A Sandinista army has been established. It has drawn into its ranks many of the militias which arose in the civil war. In addition to this a national militia is being built, 300,000 strong, to be based in the factories, neighbourhoods, and rural areas.

The new Government of National Reconstruction announced a series of radical measures on coming to power.

*The nationalisation of all Somocista property, a staggering 60% of the economy.

*A land reform, giving land to the peasants, and establishing cooperatives on the big estates.

*The nationalisation of the banks, all air, maritime, and essential land transport, and a monopoly of foreign trade.

*An education programme to eradicate illiteracy.

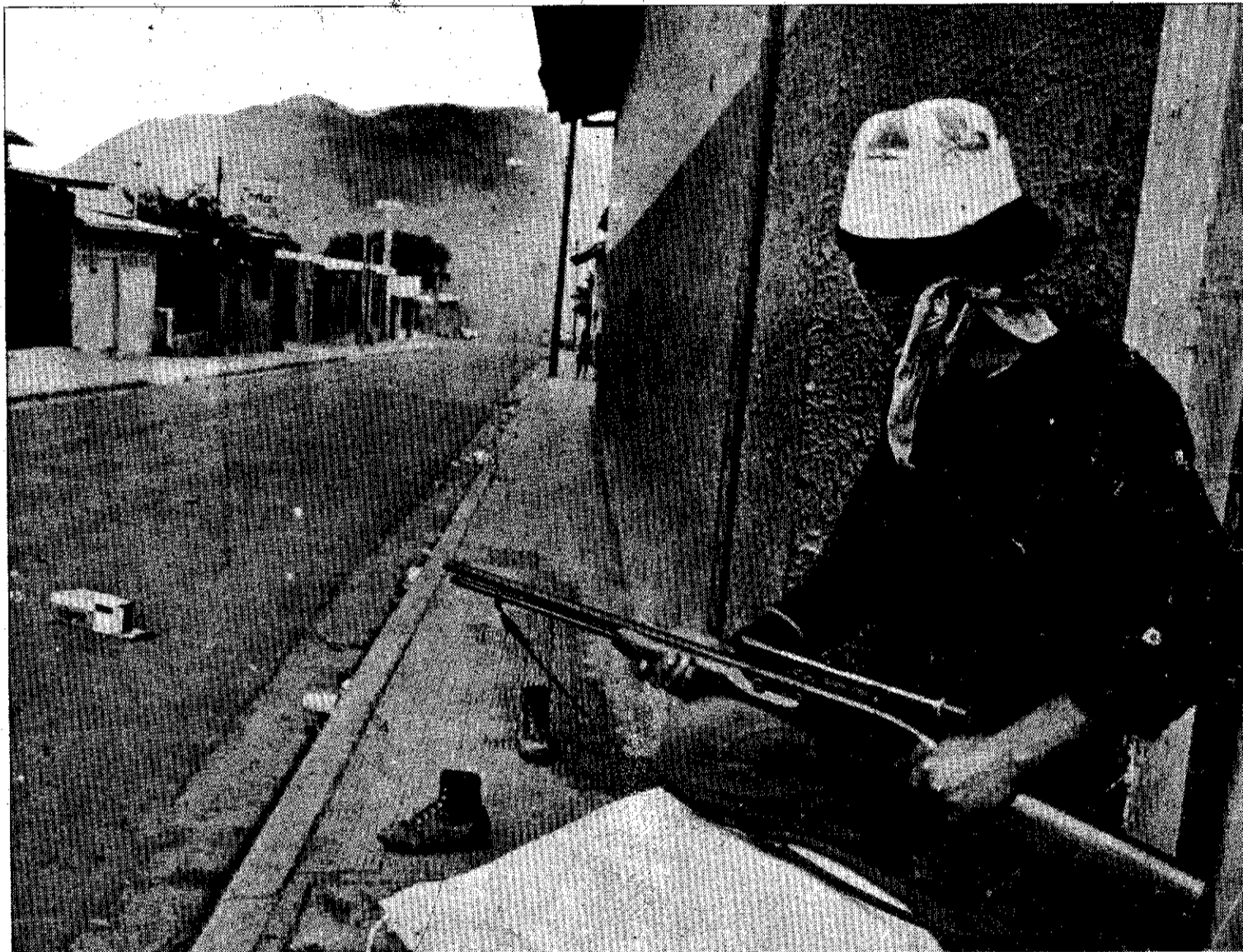
Employers are forbidden to sack any workers without the permission of the Ministry of Labour, and have been forced to pay two months back wages for the period of the general strike and insurrection!

But although the victorious insurrection tore apart the old bourgeois state structure and destroyed its central prop, the National Guard, there are still guarantees for capitalist property. The new government takes the form of a coalition with bourgeois figures who opposed the Somoza regime.

It is this which has led to a debate in the Fourth International and with other Trotskyist organisations. Critics of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International have centred on the character of the FSLN leadership, and its setting up of a coalition government with the bourgeoisie.

For the comrades of the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency the government's intentions were to safeguard the interests of the national bourgeoisie and imperialism, and maintain the subjection of the masses to poverty and exploitation. The Bolshevik Faction had a similar position, claiming that Fidel Castro also backed the government taking such a course.

The OCI in France, the main organisation of the OCRFI, stated that the FSLN were



'The Fourth International places itself firmly on the side of the FSLN's battle to ensure the victory of the socialist revolution in Nicaragua.'

conciliationist and that the government had been supported by the imperialists and the Kremlin bureaucracy because of its "counter-revolutionary" role.

These three currents share a common method — that of abstract schemas. The fact that the FSLN led the revolution against Somoza, carried through a radical programme, and fights continuously to organise the masses is overshadowed for them by the presence of the bourgeois ministers.

Of course we cannot support the presence of such forces in the government. The carrying through of the revolution to its conclusion must at some point come into conflict with the bourgeois ministers.

The FSLN does not use the presence of bourgeois figures in the same way as the Communist Parties did in the Popular Fronts of the 1930s — to hold back the mobilisation of the masses. Far from it, the FSLN is leading the fight for self-organisation of the workers, peasants, militias, women, and youth.

The OCI's description of the government's actions as 'counter-revolutionary' is no surprise. To this day they argue that Cuba remains a bourgeois state!

Just two months before the overthrow of Somoza, leaders of the LTT in Costa Rica wrote that: 'The class struggle is going through an acute downturn, however temporary', and denounced the FSLN for launching another offensive!

The same comrades, and the Bolshevik Faction, claimed that the militias were being dissolved and the workers disarmed. In fact the FSLN was setting up an army trained in the use of rockets, tanks, and artillery, to guard against any Somocista attacks from neighbouring Honduras.

Far from dissolving the militias, on 9 October FSLN leader Tomas Borge announced 'the workers in the factories themselves will be

the militias. They will have their weapons'; they 'will of course be controlled by the workers' who 'will also have military training at least one day a week'.

The Bolshevik Faction, and Leninist Trotskyist Tendency, have called for the removal of the bourgeois ministers, and for elections to a constituent assembly. Concentration on removing the bourgeois ministers would be to completely mis-estimate the far reaching break that has taken place in terms of military power, the location of the real centre of power, the character of the government measures up to now, and the experiences necessary for the consciousness and organisation of the masses to develop.

The demand for a constituent assembly, also raised by the OCI, is to counter-pose bourgeois parliamentary institutions to the development and national centralisation of the organs of power of the masses, such as the neighbourhood and union committees.

It is on the tasks of the Fourth International in Nicaragua that the differences have been sharpest.

The resolution of the United Secretariat spelt out that 'the "reconstruction of Nicaragua" in the interests of the workers and poor peasants makes it necessary to extend workers control of production; expropriate the imperialist banks and enterprises; repulse the attempts of the imperialist financial institutions to use the foreign debt as a means of pressure; nationalise the remaining privately owned industries and large firms; and begin overall economic planning. Along this path, the system of capitalist accumulation will be destroyed.

In other words, the tasks before the Nicaraguan masses and their leadership require resolutely continuing along the road opened twenty years ago by the Cuban revolution.

'Today, to prepare to carry out these tasks means strengthening all the organisations the

toiling masses began building during their struggle against the dictatorship and in the first months of their revolution.

'By explaining its programme and ideas the Fourth International places itself firmly on the side of the FSLN's battle to ensure the victory of the socialist revolution. By acting as loyal militants in the framework of the organisation which led the overthrow of Somoza and leads this revolution, the members of the Fourth International in Nicaragua will defend the ideas of revolutionary Marxism.

'The consolidation of the gains of the toiling masses in a workers state based on centralised workers, soldiers, and peasants committees is intimately connected to progress in the construction of a revolutionary socialist proletarian party within which the political vanguard of the Nicaraguan working class can debate out and decide the most important questions facing the revolution.

'The character and history of the leadership of the FSLN as well as its role in the first phase of the revolution show that it would be an error to place any a priori limit beyond which decisive sectors of the FSLN cannot go as the process of permanent revolution unfolds.'

The idea that these positions are 'liquidationist', as the Bolshevik Faction and LTT charge, is absurd. The Bolshevik Faction themselves operated in Nicaragua as the Simon Bolivar Brigade of the FSLN, whose stated 'only programmatic point' was, 'to support the struggle of the Sandinista people'.

Nor is the line for Trotskyists in Nicaragua any break with principle. We need only recall James P. Cannon, leader of the American Trotskyists, describing their entry line into the Socialist Party, supported by Trotsky, in which they were forced to give up their paper. 'We enter the Socialist Party as we are, with our ideas.'

THE NICARAGUA QUESTION

The Revolution has only just begun

AT its conference leading up to the World Congress the International Marxist Group adopted a number of amendments to the position of the United Secretariat. These can be summarised as follows:

In the words of a Sandinista leader, 'We have overthrown Somoza, but the revolution has only just begun.' The armed forces of the dictatorship may have been destroyed, but political power doesn't just grow from the barrel of a gun.

Despite the nationalisations there is still a large part of the economy in the hands of imperialist and anti-Somoza forces. The bourgeoisie has economic organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce and employers associations. It has the main daily paper *La Prensa*, radio stations, support from the Catholic hierarchy, and a presence in the government.

This gives rise to a situation of dual power, in which the decisive confrontation has yet to come. Any advance for the revolution inevitably entails a clash with the bourgeoisie, both internally and externally. It is for this clash that the Nicaraguan masses have to prepare.

Government

From this characterisation of the situation as one of dual power flows the need to fight for a workers and peasants government. Such a government would base itself and derive its authority from the mass organisations of the toilers and the oppressed. Its objective would be the favourable resolution of the situation of dual power through a victory of the workers' and peasants organisations over the remaining capitalist bastions.

The tasks of such a workers' and peasants' government would involve the centralisation of the Sandinista Defence Committees and so on, the building of youth and women's organisations, the arming of the masses through workers' militias, land reform, the generalisation of workers' control, working out a national economic plan and so on.

The present Government of National Reconstruction is not such a government. It is a bourgeois coalition government involving



'We can't give the FSLN a blank cheque.'

bourgeois ministers. Whilst this government has not acted as an obstacle to the radical measures proposed by the Sandinista leadership as yet, we cannot support the presence of such forces within the government.

The bourgeois ministers have been given an authority quite out of keeping with their actual role in the class struggle through their presence in the government. They act as go-betweens with imperialism, using the threat of withholding cooperation, finance and aid to hold back the revolution. At the first opportunity they will try to split off forces from the FSLN to build a counter-revolutionary base.

Whilst we reject the slogans of the sectarians who today shout 'down with the capitalist government' or 'Out with the capitalist ministers' we must be continually aware that the fight for a workers' and peasants' government will inevitably involve a clash with the bourgeois forces in the government.

This is exactly what happened in Cuba, where capitalist ministers

were also put in office after Castro's victory over Batista. At the time leaders of the Fourth International were clear that this was a 'grave and costly error'. The capitalist ministers had to be driven out by mass mobilisations, along with a section of the guerrilla movement that had sided with them.

The best defence against counter-revolution is the forces that made the revolution, the Nicaraguan masses who overthrew the murderous Somoza dictatorship.

It is correct to note the massive material aid that Cuba has given to the Nicaraguan revolution, but the policy of the Cuban leadership over the last period has been one of supporting radical bourgeois nationalist regimes. Such a policy which rejects a break with the bourgeoisie, would be fatal for the Nicaraguan revolution.

Party

Whilst the FSLN has led the revolutionary overthrow of Somoza and pushed through a

series of radical measures, it has not declared that its goal is socialism. In fact the programme of the Reconstruction Government is for an anti-Somocista revolution, in which private property will have its place.

The FSLN is today a centrist current which contains forces from those supporting a popular front alliance with the bourgeoisie, to revolutionary forces seeking the overthrow of capitalism. It is true that we can't say in advance what limits there are to the evolution of the FSLN, but nor can we give them a blank cheque.

It is this which makes vital the construction of a revolutionary democracy centralist party by the FSLN, in which militants of the Fourth International would also take their place as a definite organised tendency. The Fourth International's position reflecting the interests of the workers and poor peasants lead to the establishment of a workers state based on organisations of the masses and are therefore fully in accord with the aims of revolutionaries in the FSLN.

Simon Bolivar Brigade — effective solidarity?

THE Simon Bolivar Brigade was launched by the comrades of the Bolshevik Faction in Colombia to send militants to fight with the FSLN in Nicaragua. The initiative was opposed by the FSLN and the solidarity committee in Colombia, and was taken without consulting the leadership of the Fourth International.

It was not opposed in principle, but because the most effective form of support was political solidarity. In Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, and Mexico, large demonstrations and campaigns were built, involving Fourth International militants in their leadership.

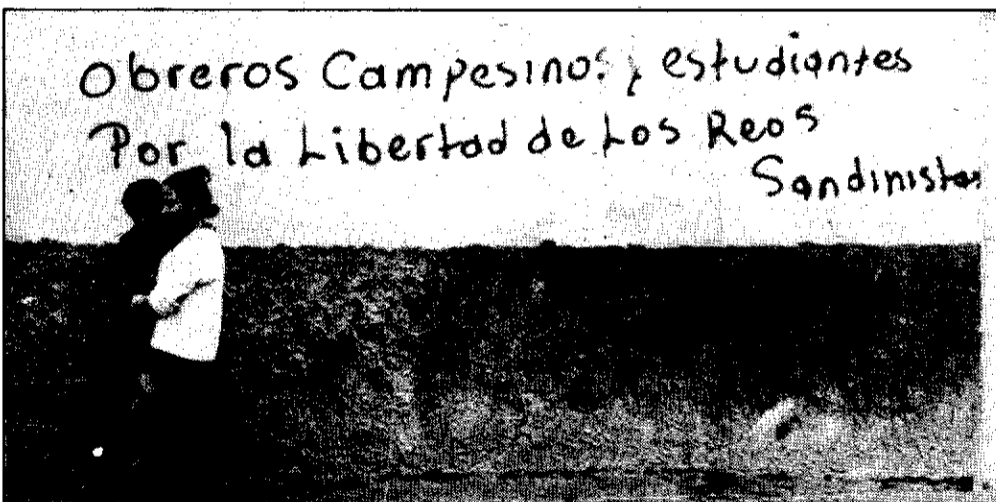
These campaigns helped to channel the massive support in these countries for the Nicaraguan revolution, and were undoubtedly a factor in the Organisation of American States refusing to support a US proposal for a 'peace keeping' force to take over from Somoza's National Guard.

The Simon Bolivar Brigade as such never fought in Nicaragua, although some of its militants saw action in regular units of the FSLN. The Brigade as a unit only entered Nicaragua after the fall of Managua.

The Brigade masqueraded as a part of the FSLN, and endeavoured to impose its own leadership on workers involved in organising unions in various factories, in some cases through authoritarian and manipulative methods. It even introduced the outrageous rule of 'dual affiliation' of these unions to both the Sandinista Workers Federation and the Simon Bolivar Brigade!

This activity received broad notoriety in Nicaragua. In Bluefields, a town on the east coast largely cut off from the rest of the country where there were few FSLN cadres, the brigade presented itself as the FSLN leadership of the city and surrounding area. The FSLN was obliged to send in an armed unit into Bluefields to establish its authority.

Faced with this situation, the FSLN leadership publicly called for a meeting with the Simon Bolivar Brigade. The Brigade responded



'The Colombian PST placed its own factional interests above those of the Nicaraguan revolution.'

by organising a demonstration of workers near the meeting site.

The workers involved were brought to this demonstration under the false pretense that they were there to discuss their problems with the FSLN leadership.

The FSLN leadership held two meetings with the Simon Bolivar Brigade, lasting many hours, to try to resolve the situation. They proposed that the brigade become a disciplined and loyal part of the FSLN, as an international brigade.

But the brigade leadership refused to place itself under the discipline of the FSLN, despite its public stance that it is a military, and not political organization. Consequently, the FSLN leadership expelled the brigade's non-Nicaraguan members. They were sent to Panama, as a first step on their way.

When the Torrijos regime utilized the opportunity to arrest and beat members of the brigade before sending them on, which we condemn, the FSLN leadership issued a statement that it had not arrested or mistreated any member of the brigade, and that its intention was solely to expel them from Nicaragua.

Documents of the Colombian PST state that the project of the Simon Bolivar Brigade was largely conceived and executed as a factional operation against the FSLN and the majority of the Fourth International. The Colombian PST placed its own factional interests above those of the Nicaraguan revolution.

This behaviour of the brigade could provide a pretext to forces opposed to the advance of the revolution to advocate the use of repression in the workers movement to settle political differences, against the policy of the FSLN.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International condemns and repudiates the Simon Bolivar Brigade and its activities.

At the same time, the Fourth International considers the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade from Nicaragua to be a mistake. We don't want to minimise the fraudulent and irresponsible character of the Simon Bolivar Brigade operation.

But we believe that the prestige and political authority of the FSLN are sufficiently great to have enabled it to solve the problem of the Simon Bolivar Brigade by using public criticism and condemnation rather than expulsion.

British Comrades refuse to split

THE majority of the members of the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency Steering Committee on Sunday 28 Oct decided to issue a joint appeal with the Bolshevik Faction and Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International calling for an open conference of all organisations claiming to adhere to the Trotskyist Programme with the aim of fighting revisionism and 'recomposing' the Trotskyist movement.

To issue such an appeal is to say that the Fourth International as presently organised, its sections, its World Congress, its International Executive Committee and its Secretariat are dead from the point of view of the world revolution. There can be no other meaning for such an appeal. It is a splitting act.

The Declaration of the LTT states and the Steering Committee earlier voted that all members of the LTT must be loyal members of the Fourth International. We stand by this Declaration.

The International is not dead from the point of view of the world revolution. To split the Fourth International, to issue such an appeal, as decided by the majority of members of the Steering Committee, is therefore an unprincipled and criminally irresponsible split.

We, British members of the LTT Steering Committee, condemn this course of action. It is a break with the principles on which the tendency was formed.

We appeal to all members of the FI adhering to the LTT to stand by the Declaration of the LTT, to remain as loyal members of the Fourth International, to repudiate the proposed Appeal.

The fight continues within the Fourth International. With the FI, within the FI, our politics can win. Outside of it there is no future, future.

Signed by three leading members of the British LTT.



'Lenin split from the Second International only after its historic betrayal of the world proletariat in 1914.' The Fourth International has committed no such betrayal

THE TRAGIC split which has just taken place in the Fourth International has serious consequences for the revolutionary movement and the tasks that confronts us in building a world party of socialist revolution.

Since 1938, the year in which Leon Trotsky founded the FI, this objective has been confronted with many difficulties, not the least of which is the heritage of Stalinism and its organisational norms. The widespread confusion in the Marxist left over what constitutes the basis for splits and fusions has its origins in the dissemination of the Stalinist myth of the 'monolithic' party, and is an expression of a 'sect' mentality.

This mentality has its material roots in the isolation of those groups from the broad masses and their consequent remoteness from the immediate problems of constructing a mass party. Although the revolutionary movement has long ago passed through the 'dark tunnel' of retrenchment, during the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, the dead still weigh heavily on the living.

It is a tragedy that many currents, today and in the past, have justified their separation from the Fourth International by invoking Lenin's name and what they assume to be his and Trotsky's organisational methods. But the conception they hold of Lenin and Trotsky as inveterate 'splitters' cannot be upheld in any serious study of the fight by these leaders of the Russian revolution to establish a revolutionary party in Russia itself and internationally.

In the Trotskyist movement these wrong conceptions have been most systematically peddled by the 'Workers Revolutionary Party' in Britain, led by Gerry Healy; by Pierre Lambert's OCI (International Communist Organisation) in France; and Moreno's PST (Socialist Workers Party) in Argentina.

Tendencies

These tendencies have established a tradition of splitting on the basis of internal organisational sectarianism and tactical questions. They confuse all the distinctions drawn by Lenin and Trotsky between parties, factions and tendencies. The consequence of the unprincipled activities of these currents has been a serious fragmentation of the revolutionary movement and a weakening of the FI.

For its part, the International Marxist Group — the British section of the FI — has waged a struggle for an understanding of the programmatic basis of the party; for the principled fusion of all revolutionaries (that is, those who defend the historic interests of the working class in practice) into a single international democratic centralist organisation, no matter what positions are held on secondary questions or on tactics.

We are only in favour of parting company, if necessary by splitting, with those who definitively overturn these programmatic tenets, and who fail to defend the historic interests of the working class. This is not the nature of the differences in the FI over Nicaragua; therefore we characterise the split as unprincipled.

A failure to defend these Leninist principles of organisation both undermines the basis of unity of the party, and inevitably leads to a

SPLITS & FUSIONS

In what circumstances is it correct for revolutionaries to split from or to expel a political current?

DAVE PACKER and PHIL HEARSE examine the positions of Lenin and Trotsky, together with the historical experience of the world revolutionary movement, to argue that the recent split in the Fourth International was unprincipled.

degeneration of internal democracy. If tendencies and factions are the basis for separation into different parties, then the result will be monolithic sects.

It is no accident that these organisations, which customarily react with mirth at the tendency and factional struggles inside the Fourth International, misunderstand such struggles within an organisation which has a living relationship to the world revolution, and habitually construct tin-pot monolithic regimes in their own (tiny) organisations.

As Trotsky once put it: 'Whoever prohibits factions thereby liquidates party democracy and takes the first step towards a totalitarian regime' ('Leon Trotsky on France').

Lenin himself was absolutely clear on the necessity of preserving party unity even where there were major disagreements of a tactical or even programmatic nature. Contrary, for example, to the popular misunderstanding that Lenin split with the Mensheviks in 1903, he in fact insisted on the Bolshevik faction maintaining unity in the same party with the Mensheviks until 1912.

This was despite the fact that the Mensheviks called for a vote for a bourgeois party (the Cadets) in elections. When the Bolsheviks did accept the split with the Mensheviks in 1912, this was because the Mensheviks announced that the Russian Social Democratic party was dead and actively disrupted it.

Re-unification

Politically, Lenin held the door open for re-unification with the Mensheviks until 1914; that is, until it had been shown in practice, through their support for the imperialist war, that the Mensheviks betrayed the historic interests of the working class.

Those who deride the Fourth International's conception of freedom for factions within a single party or international, also frequently challenge its conception of international democratic centralism. Organisations like Lutte Ouvriere in France and the International Communist League in Britain argue that in a real international the leadership would have authority over every aspect of the political life of all the national sections.

We disagree. The World Congress of the Fourth International decides the general political framework within which the sections work out their tactics, but the tactical line

decided in each country cannot be overturned by the international leadership.

Democratic centralism in a particular revolutionary party derives from the need to take power. It poses the need for a party to be able to act against the capitalist state with the utmost unity and effectiveness, while basing its internal debates and election of leadership on the experience of struggle of all sections of the working class and oppressed people.

The task of a revolutionary programme involves the elaboration of the programme of revolutionary Marxism, co-ordinating and unifying actions on an international scale, building new sections, and seeing that the interests of the movement as a whole prevail over national peculiarities.

Monolithic

Since it is impossible to take political power in every country simultaneously, the task of an international leadership is different from that of a national leadership; and it is inevitable that international democratic centralism will function in a far less immediate and rigorous way than democratic centralism on a national scale.

Once again, those who challenge the FI's conception of international democratic centralism in reality want a homogeneous and monolithic international, just as they want monolithic national parties. With such a conception perhaps an international sect like the Spartacist League is possible. Any steps towards a mass revolutionary international are impossible with such sect-like conceptions.

How do these positions relate to the disputes in the Fourth International over Nicaragua?

In Nicaragua a revolution is in the process of development. In such situations extremely complicated analytical questions are posed for revolutionaries, and it is not at all unusual to have disputes about the precise tasks to be carried out.

For example, in Russia between February and August 1917, Lenin held the position that the call for the immediate overthrow of the provisional government was ultra-left. He argued this despite the fact that the government was a bourgeois government; that the Bolsheviks were opposed to it; and that the government would ultimately be forced into repressive counter-revolutionary acts.

Lenin took the view that it was not yet

possible to overthrow the provisional government, despite the existence of dual power in the form of soviets. He fought a dual battle against both the ultra-lefts in the working class base of the Bolsheviks who wanted the immediate overthrow of the government, and against the conciliators in his own party who wanted to give critical support to the government.

Indeed, before Lenin arrived in Petrograd in April 1917 the Bolsheviks did in fact adopt a conciliatory attitude to the government. But at no time did Lenin urge a split because wrong positions had been taken.

Tactical

In Nicaragua at the present time there is a government, the GRNN, which does indeed include bourgeois ministers, but the most powerful political force, which makes its own laws and gives its own directives, is the FSLN, based on local committees. Such a situation imposes massive tactical problems.

However, there is no doubt that before the split of the Bolshevik Faction and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency, a clear majority of the membership of the Fourth International — as expressed through the recent voting at the pre-World Congress conferences by the national sections of the FI — was in favour of characterising the Nicaraguan government as a bourgeois government.

There was no possibility of 'betraying' the Nicaraguan revolution. These differences of assessment, even differences on the nature of the Nicaraguan government, do not at all amount to anything like the massive betrayal of the revolution in practice which is the only basis for splitting an international.

Lenin split from the Second International only after its historic betrayal of the world proletariat in 1914. Trotsky split from the Third International only when it had clearly in practice betrayed the German revolution in 1933, a decisive event determining the future of politics on an international scale.

Dead

The split from the Fourth International is to signify that from the viewpoint of revolutionary struggle it is a dead organisation. No such position can be sustained in relation to the FI's role over Nicaragua — on the contrary it is one of the forces which recognises a real revolution in the making, and responded rapidly to intervening within it. Thus the splitters are lightminded and irresponsible.

Despite these grave errors, we refuse to characterise either the BF or the LTT — or for that matter the factional plotters in the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International — as having gone over to alien class forces.

The overwhelming majority of the forces of the Fourth International have stayed loyal. We shall continue our fight for the Leninist position on the programmatic basis for unity. To all those forces who stand for the historic interests of the working class, and who are willing to participate in the framework of a democratic centralist international, the doors of the Fourth International remain open.

IRELAND

Why the British Army shot one of their own

By Geoff Bell

IN the early hours of 18 August 1972, William Black and his wife were awakened by four men attempting to steal two vans outside their house in Black's Rd, Belfast. As a member of the British Army controlled-Ulster Defence Regiment, Black went outside and tried to arrest the thieves.

This, after a skirmish, he successfully did. William Black was later to wish he had never been so 'security' conscious.

The men he had arrested were undercover agents of the British Army and from that day on the Army's 'Special Investigation Branch', which includes members of the SAS, decided they would teach Black a lesson. In short they decided to kill him.

The story of William Black is told in a book published last week, *Ambush at Tully West: The British Intelligence Service in Action*. The book is written by Kennedy Lindsay, a former Loyalist member of the Northern Ireland Assembly, and someone who would not normally go out of his way to criticise the British Army. Lindsay's decision to tell the tale of William Black is probably motivated by the fact that Black was a proven and reliable Loyalist.

Official Secrets

It was this Loyalism which caused Black to become indignant once he had learned that those he had arrested were in fact members of the British Army.

Although, as a member of the UDR, he was told that he had to say nothing about the incident under the terms of the Official Secrets Act, Black did tell a number of people. It was probably when the Army heard of this that it decided to kill him.

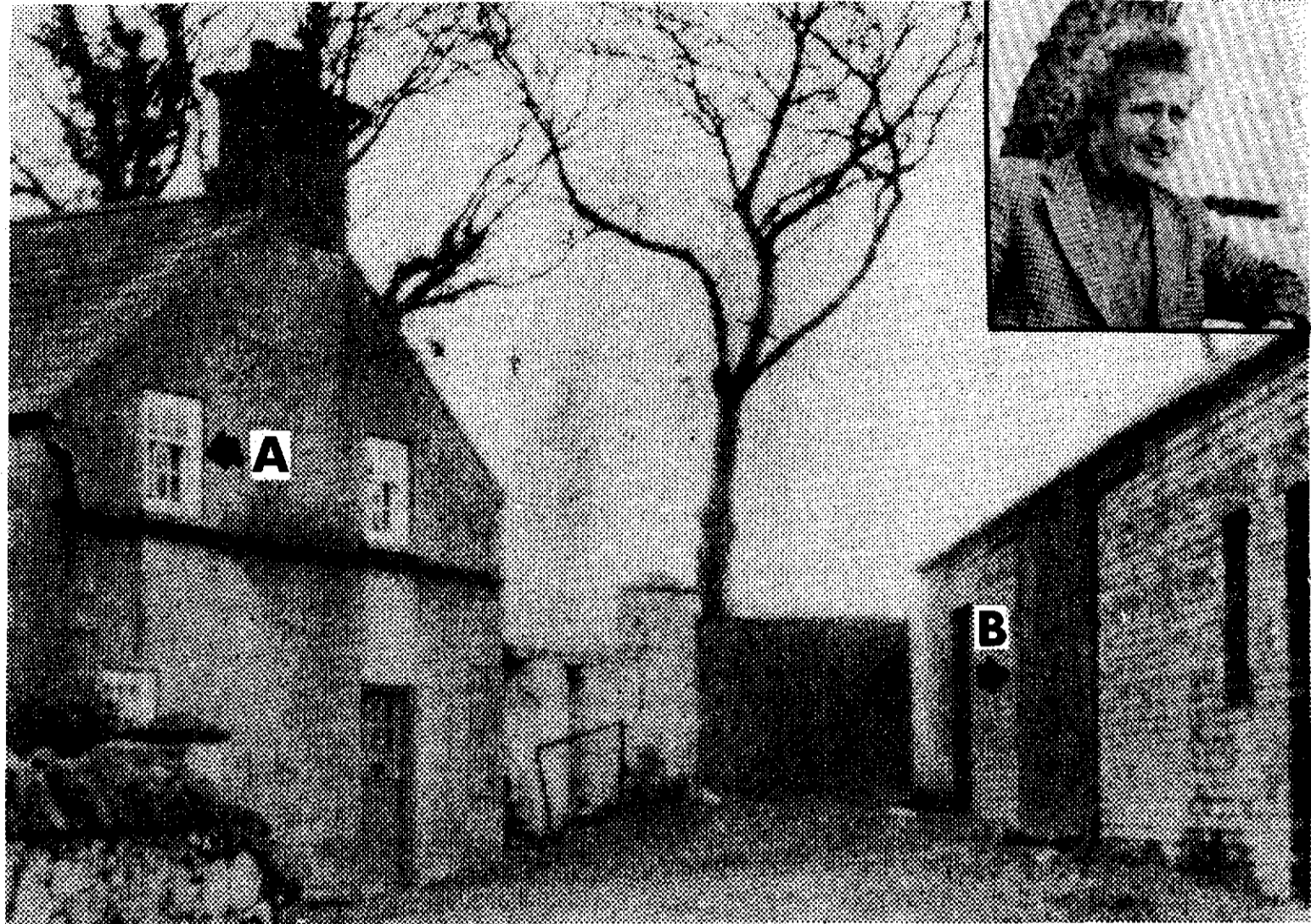
What also disturbed the British forces was that Black knew the theft he had prevented was of two vans, and that another car had been stolen nearby shortly before. Two vans and car are what are usually used in IRA bombing operations, and one of the vans the Army was trying to steal belonged to a prominent Republican.

In other words, the evidence suggested that Black had interrupted an Army bombing unit which had the intention of framing the Republican movement for the crime.

Eleven days after Black's 'arrest' of the soldiers, the first attack on his life was made. He was shot at as he was about to answer a ring at his door. Within seconds a Saracen-load of soldiers appeared at his door.

They claimed to have been 'passing' when they heard the shot. Because Black knew the heavy sound of a Saracen and that he had not heard that sound when he had gone to answer the door, he knew the Army's story was a lie. The soldiers could not possibly have heard the shot.

A few days later Black was sacked from the UDR on a trumped-up charge. He decided it would be safer to move to a new area.



Black's rented cottage and outhouses showing: A, the window of the bedroom where the Special Investigation Branch man waited with a silenced sub-machine gun and; B, the outhouse.

Four months later the house opposite his new address was machine-gunned. When Black examined the empty cartridge cases left by the attackers he discovered they were standard British Army issue. Next day the police informed him they had received information that it was Black's house that had been the target for the attack and that a mistake had been made.

Black finally went to Kennedy Lindsay and told him the story. Lindsay started making inquiries with a number of lawyers. A few weeks later someone attempted to assassinate Black's son. Lindsay considers it was 'improbable' that the attacker was a member of the IRA. More disturbed than ever, Lindsay then related the Black story in a speech in the Northern Ireland Assembly. It was largely ignored by the media.

Then, on 26 January 1974, William Black and three workmates arrived at a cottage Black had rented in County Down. Black was carrying a sporting rifle under his arm. Six soldiers were waiting for him. Without warning they opened up with a machine gun fitted with a silencer.

Only Black was shot at. Two bullets passed through his neck; two others ripped through his chest and stomach. One struck him in his back. Incredibly, he survived.

Stolen property was found in an outhouse adjacent to Black's cottage. The Army was to claim they knew this to be the case before the attack was mounted. But the outhouse had been hired from Black by a mysterious 'J Thompson', and it was heavily padlocked with no windows, so only the person who had fitted the padlock could have known the goods were there.

A pistol 'found' by the Army in Black's cottage, it was later discovered, was a UDR weapon which had been lost when the UDR member concerned had been on patrol with the Army a year before.

At any rate, no charges were ever brought against Black. Indeed he was later awarded £16,700 damages by the Ministry of Defence. The soldiers who tried to kill him were arrested but later released.

A member of the SAS later told Kennedy Lindsay that it was known in SAS headquarters in England that a 'hit' squad had been sent from England to kill Black. They had been told, said the SAS member, that Black was a 'terrorist'.

In fact, Black's crime was that by chance he had discovered just how 'terrorist' was the British Army. And that is why they tried to frame and kill him.

British media and Ireland, part 193

THE ruling class press screamed for censorship last Friday. The filming by BBC's Panorama of the IRA liberating the Northern Irish village of Carrickmore produced the predictable howls of outrage. The film was immediately banned, and the editorial columns of the press fell over themselves to demand more and more censorship of news from Ireland.

The same day the press exercised their own bit of censorship. Fleet Street gave little or no coverage to the sectarian killings of two Catholics in Belfast which occurred around the time the Panorama storm broke.

Those that did cover these deaths were not too concerned. The Daily Telegraph, for instance, described them as a 'reprisal raid'. For those interested in the standards of the 'free press', the following is a run down of how many inches of copy Fleet Street gave to the Carrickmore incident [in which nobody died] and the Belfast killings [two Catholics dead]:

	Inches of copy Carrickmore	Sectarian killings
Daily Mail	24.5	0
Financial Times	15	0.75
Guardian	9.5	1
Daily Star	23.0	0
Sun	45.0	0
Daily Express	36	0
Daily Telegraph	21	1.75
Daily Mirror	19	0
TOTAL:	193	3.5



Army 'occupies' factory

THE British Army occupied an industrial estate in the Catholic ghetto district of Whiterock, Belfast, last week, and immediately ordered two small firms operating there to get out within 14 days.

This new version of factory occupation was spearheaded by the Royal Engineers who, backed up by infantry units, moved into the industrial estate in the early hours of last Tuesday. When workers arrived at the two small factories — The North Candle Co and the A-Town Welding Co — they were sent home by the Army, who intend to use the site as a new Army/RUC base.

Unemployment

The Whiterock district of Belfast already suffers from an atrocious level of unemployment — one estimate puts the figure as high as 50 per cent — and although the two companies only employed about 15 workers the industrial estate did at last make available premises for other companies to set up factories in the area. In the past a number of

co-operative concerns have operated from the estate.

But now the Government — the factories were leased by the Department of Commerce — and the British Army have decided that 'security' will take priority over employment. As a decision it can hardly be taken as a change of policy by the Government.

Free speech trial

AS SOCIALIST CHALLENGE went to press, a member of Provisional Sinn Fein and two supporters of the magazine Hands Off Ireland were due to appear in court in Cardiff for having the audacity to sell their magazine and copies of Sinn Fein's An Phoblacht/Republican News in Cardiff's market place.

They were arrested when selling on 15 September at a street meeting on political prisoners. For selling the journals, the three were charged with 'insulting' and 'abusive' behaviour.

Should the three be found guilty it will further attack on the right to speak out on Ireland. In a joint press statement Hands Off Ireland and Sinn Fein have pledged: 'We will not be silenced. We will not be driven off the streets.'

PUBLISH, AND GO TO JAIL

New official secrecy Bill

THE Protection of Information Bill, just introduced in Parliament, should more properly be called the 'Withholding of Public Information from the Public Bill'.

The last Labour government, committed but its manifesto to repeal the Official Secrets Act, tried to endear itself to the CIA and the establishment by expelling Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball from Britain, and using the Act to prosecute Aubrey, Berry and Campbell.

With increasing demands for freedom of information legislation, which would make many government documents available to the public, Thatcher is treading the path of her predecessor at 10 Downing Street — with a vengeance.

CHRISTOPHER PRICE, Labour MP for Lewisham West, is a leading campaigner against the Official Secrets Act. Here he describes what's in store with the Tories' new Bill.

The Protection of Official Information Bill, introduced by the back door into the House of Lords on 25 October, is the most serious long-term threat to freedom of expression in Britain this century. The Bill is not about spies, but it could be used against every single alternative paper in this country.

It replaces section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, which the authorities made so wide in the anti-German hysteria of 1911, and which has recently proved to be ineffective in efforts by the state to prevent discussion of the security and intelligence services.

The Tories have drawn up the Bill on the basis of a White Paper produced by the last Labour government, following the Franks Report.

Intimidate

This report came from a committee set up by the Tories in 1971 following the prosecution of the *Daily Telegraph* over its use of supposedly secret documents on the Biafra war, and the remarks of Mr Justice Caufield, who said that section 2 should be 'put out to grass'.

The Protection of Official Information Bill is being represented as a liberalising reform of the law. In fact, it will make convictions easier to

obtain, intimidate authors and journalists, and prevent discussions on the whole area of public expenditure which ought to come under public scrutiny.

It has many unsatisfactory features, but the following are the most serious:

1. The Bill separates protection of information concerning defence and international relations from the classification of documents and articles, contrary to the recommendations of the Franks Committee.

'Classification' in this Bill is only an indication that information may be protected. No one can therefore be certain that a document which is not classified does not contain information which a Minister may decide is protected by criminal sanctions.

2. The Minister's certificate that unauthorised disclosure may cause serious damage to the nation is conclusive and cannot be challenged in the courts.

3. The Bill creates a separate category of information relating to security or intelligence, which is not subject to any test of serious injury or otherwise. Any information about security or intelligence is protected, whether or not it is already common knowledge.

The burden of proof is on the defendant to show that disclosure could not lead to unauthorised access to other protected information. This precludes public discussion of security matters.

Categories

4. A new category of information relating to the interception of mail and telephone tapping is created. This, too, is subject to no test of injury, and covers not only information gained by these methods but information about the methods themselves.

It would be an offence for anyone to complain publicly that his or her telephone was being tapped.

5. Information received by the government in confidence or 'in circumstances requiring it to be held in confidence or in circumstances in which it would be reasonable to expect it to be held in confidence' from a wide range of sources — corporate bodies, international organisations, and individuals — is also protected.

6. Defences against prosecution put the burden of proof on the defendant, and include an objective test of 'no reasonable cause' — both contrary to the normal practice in British criminal law.

7. The system of classification is not to be the responsibility of individual Ministers, but of the Prime Minister, and she may delegate the job of classification to 'responsible authorities' which may not be within government departments proper.

8. The definitions of defence, international relations, security and intelligence are all very general, and in the case of security and intelligence would cover practically any information.

The Bill must be opposed in the House of Lords and when it comes to the House of Commons later this year.

A national campaign must be mobilised to draw the attention of the media and the public to the sort of offences it would create and the discussion it would prevent. I hope such a campaign can be mounted as soon as possible.

*The Campaign for Press Freedom is contacting various organisations, including the print and journalists' unions, to co-ordinate a campaign against the Bill.

Details from John Jennings, 274-288 London Road, Hadleigh, Essex. Tel 0702 553131

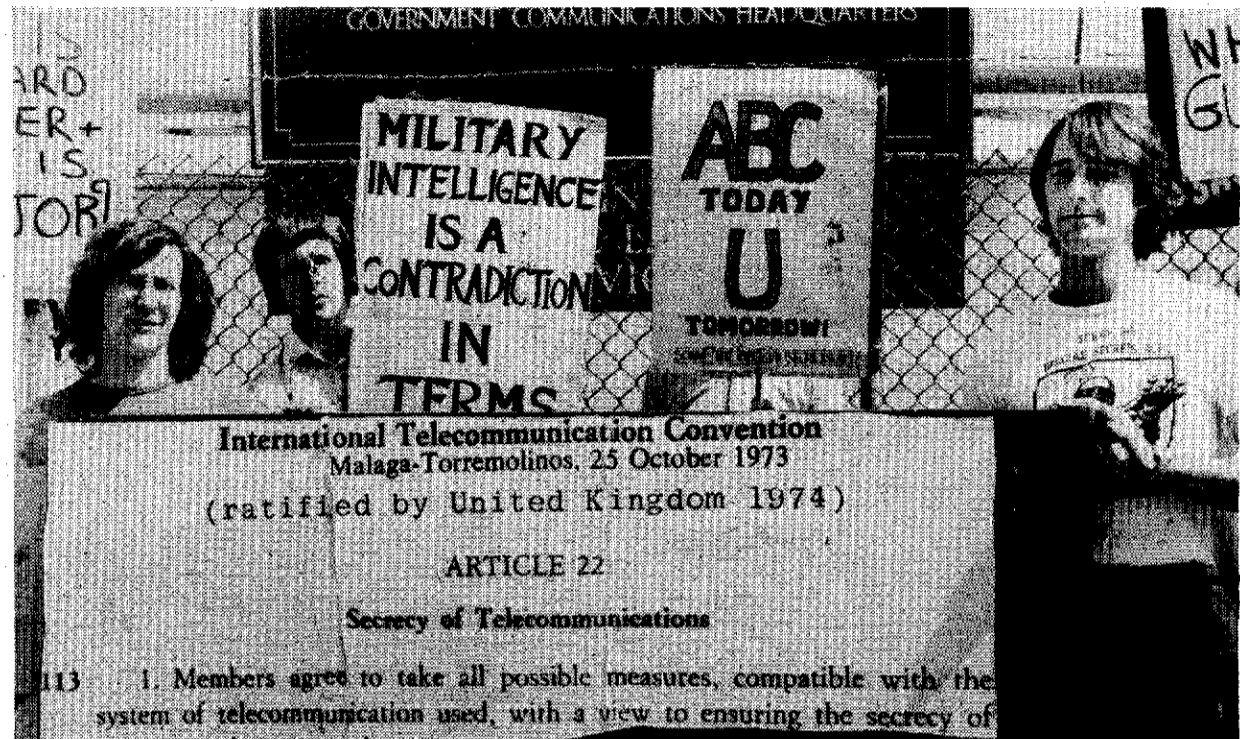
Women in entertainment conference

HOW women in the entertainment industry can best challenge the sexual stereotyping which denigrates them both as workers and in the sort of roles they are expected to portray is one of the aims of a conference to be held by the Women in Entertainment group on 25 November.

Another aim is to ensure that it is possible for women to work in the industry by providing adequate nursery, contraceptive, and abortion facilities.

The group includes members of the BBC nursery campaign, the Feminist Theatre Group, ex-members of the National Theatre women's group, the Equity women's sub-committee, the Theatre Writers Union, and Rock Against Sexism, as well as individual women designers, film makers, dancers, agents, and casting directors.

The conference, for women only, is at the Architectural Association, Bedford Square, London WC1, from 10am to 6pm. There will be a creche. Adm £2 (£1 for the unwaged). Further details from: Women in Entertainment, 8 Sutherland Grove, London SW18.



Left: Aubrey; right: Berry, during the ABC trial. With the Tories' new Bill such prosecutions could be everyday events

International Telecommunication Convention
Malaga-Torremolinos, 25 October 1973
(ratified by United Kingdom 1974)

ARTICLE 22
Secrecy of Telecommunications

1. Members agree to take all possible measures, compatible with the system of telecommunication used, with a view to ensuring the secrecy of

ARGUMENTS FOR



SOCIALISM

IT IS argued that the cuts proposed in the recent Tory White Paper on government spending are necessary to control inflation — but is this true?

In fact, the White Paper is itself inflationary. It increases spending on defence and the police — areas which don't produce anything while cutting thousands of productive jobs at Corby and BL.

Resources allocated to armaments and defence simply drop out of circulation. The 'products' — guns, tanks and so on — sit idly in army bases until they're outdated, or are used against Irish people.

The money that's paid for them increases spending power in the armaments industry, but decreases the amount of goods and services that could otherwise be produced.

The same is true of the pay rises for soldiers and the police, which increase the purchasing power of a section of the population without any corresponding increase in production at all.

But the most alarming thing about the figures in the White Paper is that they are all based on the assumption that inflation will be running at 11.5 per cent per year, despite the fact that even official estimates put it at 20 per cent before the end of the year.

In other words, to get a real idea of the extent of the cuts you have to add about 10 per cent to each of them.

Undoubtedly, when it becomes obvious that inflation is running much higher than the Tories pretend,

during the course of next year, the government will blame wage rises.

But the rate of inflation has nothing to do with wage rises — trade unions do not cause inflation and never have.

Since the war governments have used Keynesian economics and hence continually increased the money supply. Keynes argued that whereas workers resist cuts in their money wages, it is a lot more difficult to resist cuts in the purchasing power of money wages caused by rising prices.

So inflation is a policy, and it has

Why governments like inflation... up to a point

By Marcella Fitzgerald

been used by successive governments to reduce the real value of wages by printing more money. More money allows capitalists to put up prices so that the real value of wages is continually falling back.

But now inflation is creating more problems than it solves for the capitalist class. Workers are not so gullible as Keynes made out. And because nothing has been keeping its value, long-term investment is very risky. With money losing its value all the time, no one wants to lend it

because by the time it's paid back it's worth a lot less.

This is the case unless the rate of interest is greater than the rate at which money is losing its value. But with high interest rates it is expensive to borrow money for the long periods required for investment — so profits suffer.

Increasing the price of everything else, the state has been unable to prevent the price of capital (money for investment) from also spiralling upwards. This explains the Tories' fetish for controlling the money supply so as to keep interest rates down — though they actually blame it on the need to finance high public spending.

Putting the blame on government spending is not accidental. Inflation is destabilising the whole system, but direct cuts in wages are politically impossible (as yet), so there has to be another way to reduce the standard of living of working people sufficiently to increase the rate of profit. The aim of this exercise is to 'persuade' those with capital to invest it.

The 'other way' is the public spending cuts. Once those goods and services produced and distributed by the state and financed by tax revenue are cut back, people will have to pay for them individually. This means a cut in real wages.

The difficulty for the Snatcherites is that millions of working people are by no means blind to this connection, or passive about its consequences.

TO UNDERSTAND Strauss's candidacy and its importance, one has to grasp the class basis of the contending political parties. The essence of the 1980 elections will not be the contest between Schmidt and Strauss, but a confrontation of classes.

The CDU/CSU and the FDP (liberals — currently part of the coalition government with the SPD) are the traditional parties of the employers, with structural and personal ties to the bourgeois class.

For its part the social-democratic SPD is the traditional party of the (West) German working class. It is supported — especially at election time — by a big majority of the workers, especially the working class vanguard. It has close structural and personal ties to the trade union federation, the DGB.

Consequently the sharpening of class conflict over the last twelve years has also been expressed in increased (electoral) support for the SPD in the working class, its highest scores being achieved in the industrial concentrations of the Ruhr.

Class

In the course of the last ten years this underlying class polarisation has been partially concealed. The main reason for this has been the crisis of the main bourgeois party, the CDU/CSU.

After Adenauer's resignation as chancellor in 1963 the Christian Democrats were unable to put forward a credible perspective to match the new demands of the bourgeoisie.

The candidacy of Strauss alters this situation: the CDU/CSU has pulled itself together and is putting forward a clear capitalist alternative. The previously latent class polarisation is thus sharpening dramatically.

What Strauss's candidacy reflects is that decisive sections of the German bourgeoisie are prepared to go for a firm policy (as is confirmed by inside commentators). The reasons for this choice can be summarised in three basic features of the present situation, even if one can't talk about a 'united aim' of the whole bourgeois class here:

*First, the prospect of a new economic crisis. The bourgeoisie's awareness that a new crisis is on the way has been expressed since the beginning of the year — its key institution, the Bundesbank, has even been carrying out a monetary and credit policy in line with this.

The bosses regard a CDU/CSU government, not to mention Strauss, as a more effective means of blocking trade union demands and even taking the offensive with a new policy intended to make the workers bear the cost of the crisis.

*Secondly, the growing energy crisis, and especially the aim of the most important capitalist sectors to carry out a nuclear programme. Of course, on this point (which, by no accident, is at the heart of Strauss's domestic policy) Schmidt is regarded as the 'nuclear chancellor' and has been applauded as such by the bourgeoisie, including Strauss.

But the bourgeoisie cannot be sure of the SPD. The SPD has already had to drop important points of its nuclear programme, and there could be further cuts at the congress which is due to take place in December. The future here is therefore too uncertain.

*Thirdly, Strauss as de facto leader of the CDU/CSU is the most

IS STRAUSS WEST GERMANY'S THATCHER?

WITH West Germany's image of 'social peace' badly dented by a series of major strikes, the main capitalist party, the Christian Democrats [CDU], has decided that its election campaign next year will be led by noted right-winger Franz-Josef Strauss.

Strauss is currently prime minister of Bavaria, where the Christian Democrats are organised separately

as the Christian Social Union [CSU] — although the two generally run together in national elections. A victory for the CDU/CSU would mean that he would become chancellor of West Germany.

Below WINFRIED WOLF, a member of the Germany section of the Fourth International [GIM], looks at the developing class polarisation in West Germany today.



'Strauss knows that the hour has not yet sounded for the realisation of his whole programme.'

fitting representative of the bosses' interests in Christian Democratic circles, even if the SPD wins the 1980 elections. Strauss offers an alternative solution to an SPD government, even within the life of the next parliament (majority through realignments, provocative constitutional judgements, early elections).

Strauss as an individual stands for a strong state, a policy which he has clearly sketched out in several speeches. As head of government, of course, he would modify this in some respects — if for no other reason than that he himself remains tied to the existing relation of social forces.

This does not (yet) permit an open

strong state policy, an open and massive confrontation in pursuit of the bosses' interests. So, like other conservative government programmes (Heath then Thatcher, Giscard d'Estaing), that of a Strauss government would first attack the weak points of the workers movement. Its immediate programme

would therefore be along the following lines:

1. A rigorous budgetary policy, with consequent effects in the public sector (job cuts, partial return of state enterprises to the private sector) and reductions in social provision.

2. An ideological offensive in the realm of the family (the paper Bild says: 'under Strauss, the number of births will rise again...') and the strengthening of paragraph 218 against the right to abortion.

3. Opening the floodgates to a racist and chauvinist campaign against foreign workers in preparation for increased unemployment.

4. A concrete threat to ban the radical left, particularly if there are new 'terrorist' actions (which a Strauss candidacy — and even more his election — would make more likely).

But Strauss will put off as long as possible any direct confrontation with the decisive sections of the workers movement — above all IG Metall (the metal workers union). If such a policy was called for, however, Strauss would be the most suitable person to carry it out.

The 1980 elections will therefore express a class polarisation unprecedented since 1952.

Crisis

In 1972, when there was last an open polarisation around elections, it was expressed above all in a choice for the reform policy of Willy Brandt. An economic crisis then seemed far off.

Today, however, it's a matter first and foremost of coming out against the bosses' policy as summed up in Strauss's candidacy. It's a matter of clearly taking a position for the SPD as the only alternative which can prevent a Strauss victory — in the knowledge that there are fewer illusions in a Schmidt government and growing criticisms of its policy of capitalist stabilisation.

This class polarisation will become so strong that it will cut the ground from under the feet of any alternative left candidature which does not take a clear position in this confrontation. Indeed, the extent of the polarisation could even squeeze out the FDP, opening up the possibility of an absolute SPD or CDU/CSU majority.

The SPD and trade union leaders are, like Strauss, trying to limit this confrontation — though their motives are different.

Hour

Strauss knows that the hour has not yet sounded for the realisation of his whole programme. Already he is letting it be known that he can arrange things — at least to the point of inviting union leaders like Loderer and Vetter for discussions instead of squaring up to them straight away.

As for the SPD and the unions, they fear a class polarisation and mobilisation like the 'plague'. It wouldn't merely be a movement against Strauss — it would also open the way to a growing criticism of the SPD and union leaders.

What it would mean would be a change in the policy followed till now by important sections of these organisations, helping to restore the idea that they should once more act as organisations of struggle for a policy defending the interests of the workers.

WHAT'S LEFT

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

CONFERENCE on 'Workers' Plans' — Cutting Edge or Slippery Slope? 10am-6pm, West Ham Precinct, North East London Polytechnic, Romford Road, London E15. 17 Nov. Papers & registration £5. TU delegates priority. Workshops on Heavy Ind., Power, Engineering, Motor Industry, Telecoms, Aerospace, etc. Ring: Tammy Walker 597 4630 or 599 5141 x 86.

IRANIAN socialist seeks room urgently. North London preferred. Please contact by phoning Socialist Challenge. Tel: 01-359 8180. Or write to Iranian fraction, PO Box 50, London N1.

TWO DANISH Trotskyists need a room during a study tour of London (24 Nov — 20 Dec 1979). We would prefer a collective or the like. Please write as soon as possible to: Poul-Erik Philbert, Holsteinsgade 7, 3, 2100 Copenhagen, Denmark.

BSSRS 1979 annual conference. Sat 24 Nov, 10.30am to 5.30pm. Workshops include: Nuclear power, sociobiology, hazards (asbestos), radical statistics, agricultural, local groups, Science for People and review of year's work.

TEN YEARS of the Irish war: Five years of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Meeting to build for 24 Nov Smash the PTA — Troops our now demonstration. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London WC1. Fri 16 Nov, 7.30pm prompt. Speaker: Phil Murphy, Revolutionary Communist Tendency.

BSSRS 10th Anniversary meeting, Fri 23 Nov, 7.30-10.30pm, The New Theatre, LSE, Houghton St, London WC2. Speakers inc: Maurice Wilkins FRS (Pres BSSRS), Joseph Needham, Dorothy Griffiths, Mike Cooley. Adm: 75p, 40p wageless.

BSSRS and the New Technology. Sun 25 Nov, 11am-2pm. Both days' events at Imperial College SU, Central London.

RED LADDER is a socialist collective theatre company touring regionally. We are looking for: Performers — preferably with musical skills — one to start in Jan, another in summer.

LONG term (5 years) socialist squat, Brixton/Camberwell, suit child, contact Socialist Challenge PO Box 50, London N1.

THE NEW BELT and Braces Band are playing City Poly Students Union, 102 Whitechapel High Rd, (Aldgate East tube) on Fri 16 Nov, 9pm. In support of Tower Hamlets Campaign against Corrie. Bar and disco. Adm: £1.50, £1 wageless.

OLDHAM public meeting against Immigration Laws, Sun 18 Nov, 4pm, Greenhill Community Centre, Glodwick. Speaker: Ian Martin (Gen Sec ICWI) and local speakers. Organised by Oldham Committee Against Immigration Laws supported by Oldham TC.

COLLEGE Rank and File London groups. Venue: Prince Albert, Wharfdale Rd, Kings Cross. Sun 18 Nov. Outer London, 7pm, all-London, 8pm. Topic: A united front in 1980?

Writer — possibly with directing or performing skills to start in April. Write giving references, experience and examples of work to: Red Ladder Theatre, Cobden Ave, Leeds 12. Tel: 0532 792228-9. Closing date 8 Dec.

CHILE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN presents

INTILLIMANI

In Concert for Chile

with ADRIAN MITCHELL

Saturday December 1st at 5pm and 8pm

Logan Hall, University of London, Bedford Way, London WC1

Tickets £2 from CSC, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7, 01-272-4298

Free Catalonia

THE WEEK of the Spanish abortion trial, as you said in your article, was also the week the Basques voted for a statute of autonomy. Also voting for autonomy were 8 million Catalans, 3 million of whom abstained because the offered 'home rule' included neither education, police, taxation or law. In fact it meant no more than bilingualisation of Catalonia.

From 1932 to 1938, the Catalans had a proper autonomy, during which they replaced Castilian law with the latest version of separately developed Catalan law. Catalan law gave full rights to women and legalised abortion for those six years. Catalonia is the only part of Spain in which these measures have been legally instituted throughout all Spanish history up to the present day.

The Catalans have a stronger case than the Basques for independence, consequently they don't throw bombs and miss a lot of publicity. They continue to fight through demonstrations (in 1977 there was one of 2 million people), through their culture and through elected politicians.

If the Catalans were allowed to go forty years back they could show Spain the way a hundred years forward certainly as regards abortion and the legal status of women. MATTHEW TREE, Oxford

Revolutionary

Unity

OF COURSE revolutionary unity is not dead! All that's dead, for the time being anyway, is the IMG's attempt to unite groups around Socialist Challenge, the IMG and under the general auspices of the Fourth International.

Meanwhile, socialist unity in action is healthier than ever. Campaigns like the Zimbabwe Emergency Campaign, Campaign Against the Corrie Bill/NAC, the various anti-Cuts campaigns and Troops Out involve a whole range of forces from the far left through — in most cases — to the Labour left. The only socialist organisations not involved are the ones we can happily ignore — the super-dogmatists and sectarians of the WRP, WSL and the like.

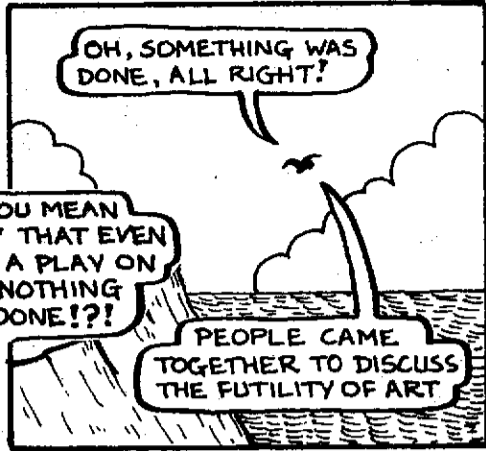
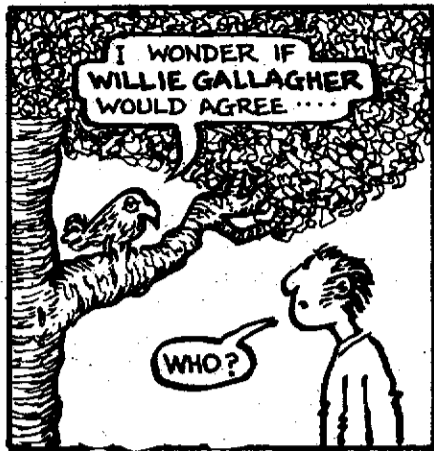
And if you looked at Big Flame with eyes other than those of a scorned lover (which is the impression you give), you would see that our policy on the left unity has not changed. In fact, our policy on building the various movements (through unity in action) rather than simple party-building (sectarianism in action) has been vindicated in the present period — if the aforementioned campaigns are anything to judge by — and even the IMG seems to have moved some way in that direction.

The left will not unite by simply becoming part of the same organisation. Meaningful unity will only come after a long process of joint-work, interaction of ideas, and consistent testing of ideas in practice. This has always been Big Flame's argument, and was our argument in talks with the IMG. Perhaps your scorned-lover pique is a direct result of your hurried approach, with your main concern being to get us down the aisle (and into bed?) and with far too little attention paid to getting our relationship sorted out first!

As for the 'anti-Leninist' ideas in *Beyond the Fragments*, I suggest you re-read the Richard Kuper article you published a while back. You might see that there's something more to the book than the straw man you're attacking. BEN JOHNSON, London SW2

Beyond Leninism

PHIL HEARSES'S account of the final conference of the ISA was depressingly predictable (*Socialist Challenge*, 1 November), but, unwittingly, provides a good illustration of that 'dogmatism' in the IMG which Big Flame and some members of the ISA have criticized, and which proved a stumbling block in discussions about regroupment.



Phil Hearse lays the blame for the temporary setback for left regroupment squarely on the shoulders of Big Flame and the ISA. Big Flame is denounced for its 'unprincipled manoeuvres' and 'anti-Leninism', and the unwillingness of the ISA to fuse with the IMG is seen as a consequence of its failure to become a 'properly structured organisation with its own programme'.

These criticisms reflect a very particular, orthodox-Leninist conception of politics and organisation, and it is because Big Flame and some ISA members have dared to question it that they now stand accused of libertarianism, revisionism and all manner of opportunism.

Phil Hearse says we are refusing to come to terms with the question of building a Leninist party in the conditions of late capitalism. Touché! That is precisely what many ISA comrades felt about the IMG and — needless to say — the SWP.

For the IMG, 'building a Leninist party' today is simply a matter of applying the ready-made model developed by the Bolsheviks to fit the conditions of Tsarist Russia. Even to suggest that the conditions we are operating in are very different and that, consequently, the traditional model might require modification is to be heaped with opprobrium by the keepers of the Leninist tablets of stone.

To put the record straight. I personally do not advocate junking Leninism. The whole idea of 'starting afresh' seems absurd. Any attempt to build a revolutionary organisation in advanced capitalist societies in the 1980s must begin with Lenin — but it cannot end there. This is why *Beyond the Fragments* is so vitally important.

It points to crucial weaknesses in orthodox definitions of politics and organisation, although it fails to put forward any clear alternative to some kind of revolutionary party. Phil Hearse can fulminate against its 'anti-Leninism', but he ought first to listen to what its authors and countless other socialists are saying.

I believe that there is an enormous wealth of revolutionary experience in the Leninist tradition, but to persuade those who are sceptical of its claims and, far more importantly, make that experience relevant to the job of building a revolutionary organisation in today's conditions, then we must be open to new ideas in feminism, libertarianism, working class struggle or whatever.

In other words, we have humbly to recognise that we have a lot to learn before we can claim to teach. STEVE SMITH, Colchester

'They' and 'we'

OF COURSE black immigrants must have the right to settle in this country and marry whom they choose and I would not argue that your headline 'They are here because we were there' sums up the reasons why immigration resulted from imperialism.

It strikes a bitter note when British blacks hear white revolutionary socialists addressing their black readership as 'they' while referring to themselves as 'we'. It must make Thatcher, Whitelaw and Webster all splutter with delight to hear the divisions that they struggle to perpetuate echoed on the left.

Valerie Coultas is right to say that the women's movement must be particularly responsible for building

opposition to the Tories' Nationalities Bill, but so too must blacks. BISI WILLIAMS, London N10

Castration

IN THEIR report on the anti-Corrie demonstration Val Coultas and Tariq Ali mentioned that a number of women chanted the slogan 'Free Castration on Demand'. I am disappointed that they made no further comment on this.

Since when has the mutilation of people been a demand of the women's movement? If the chant was meant to be a joke I can only say that it was an extremely poor one.

The humane and democratic society the women's movement strives for will never be achieved if its supporters emulate the cynical values of capitalism. EDMURPHY, London E5

Veracity ignored?

TONY SOUTHALL'S review of *Year of Fire, Year of Ash*, in *Socialist Challenge* (18 October), suggests that the primary consideration of any critical appraisal, veracity, has been sorely ignored.

In his strictures Tony states that 'the only evidence given for ANC involvement (in the Soweto revolt) is one anonymously distributed leaflet'. In fact, as I stated, that leaflet was issued in the name of the ANC to call the first stay-at-home on 23 August (p 245). It was because this was done with student knowledge that I said that Tsietisi Mashinini's statement from exile was incomprehensible. He knew about ANC cells, and it was absurd of him to say in London that they were 'extinct internally'.

I also listed other ANC involvement. The meeting of student leaders with ANC leader Moses Mabhida in Swaziland at a secret rendezvous; the passage of arms and ammunition and the formation (together with members of the clandestine ANC) of a sabotage group; the distribution of ANC newsletters and leaflets; and above all the fact that leading members of the Soweto Students Representative Council were members of clandestine ANC cells.

I could have added other involvement, but my object was not to claim that the ANC organised the revolt, nor that it controlled events. ANC cells existed in Soweto and they responded to the events of the day. I do object to those books which have been written which ignore this fact — or deliberately suppress the information. This is in the tradition of the books on the 1917 revolution which exclude all reference to Leon Trotsky and his comrades.

I tried to give accounts of the involvement of the PAC (pp 202-3), and also stated that there were other groups involved of which we had no information to date. It cannot be adduced from such inclusions that I approve of such groups. I criticised the ANC (as the review says), and in fact went further than Tony could mention. Nevertheless I recognise that the ANC in exile now has the initiative in its hands. The stream of youth who escaped South Africa and joined its ranks outnumber those who sought other groupings.

Finally I must express my distress at the partiality shown by the left in

the UK for the Black Consciousness groups. Many of its leaders are anti-Marxist, proclaim their adherence to 'communalism', to 'black' enterprise and 'black' banks, and are committed to church movements which will fight the left. I have tried to show the extent to which they lean to the right — and this aspect of 'political consciousness' is ignored in the review.

If my book has not helped the reader understand the forces of socialism and liberation, as Tony says, I will have to try again. It is important that these forces be made known to those involved in the Southern African struggle. BARUCH HIRSON, London N2

Laws and Southall

I REALLY must disagree strongly with Mark Turnbull on the subject of public enquiries and so on. (*Letters, Socialist Challenge* 1 November). He says it is a matter of principle that we do not utilise every possible loophole offered by existing bourgeois-democratic laws to defend ourselves.

Turnbull mocks at the idea of filing a writ to challenge the

competence of the Barnet magistrates in the High Court. This goes against 'class independence'. So the decision of the ANL and the Blair Peach family lawyers to seek a writ to demand a jury at the inquest was equally useless, was it?

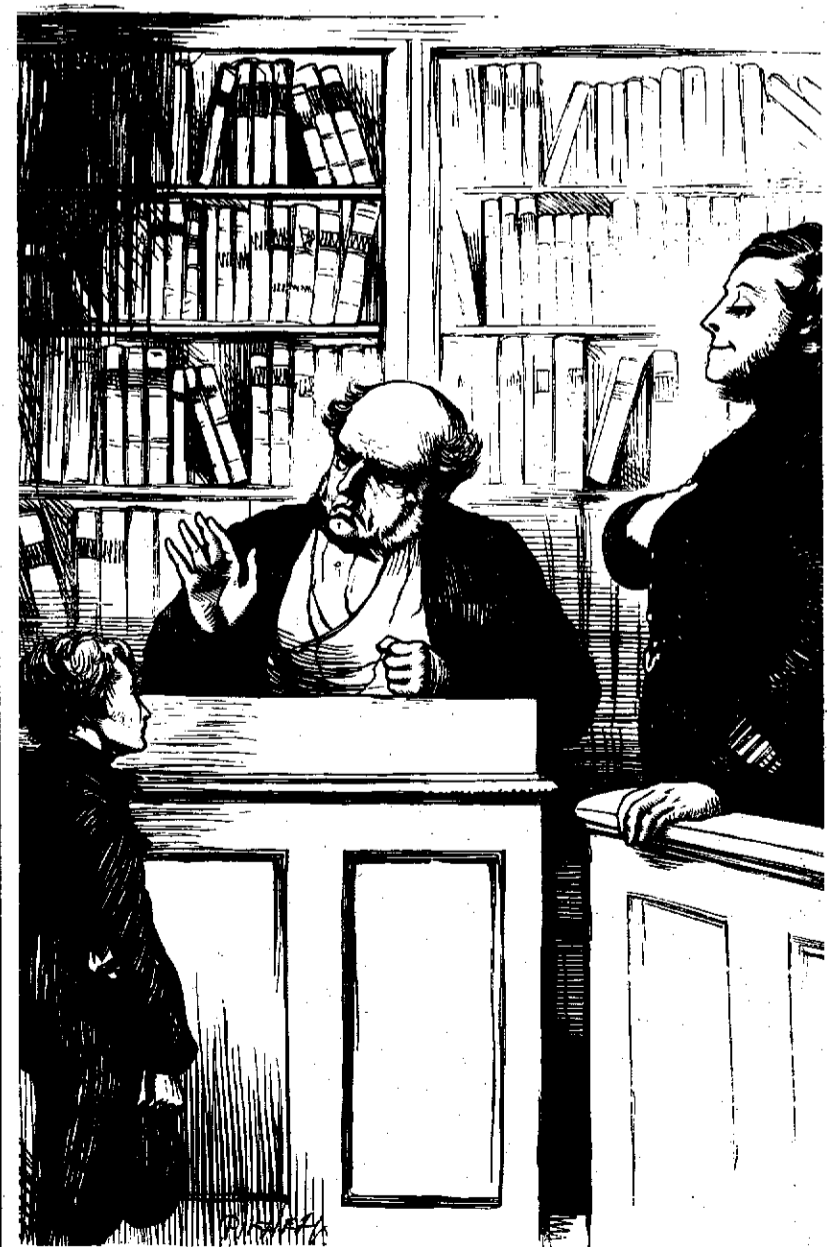
Turnbull's principles are fine, but till the British labour movement (whose record on defending the Southall prisoners is atrocious) builds a mass campaign strong enough to stop the show trials, I'm afraid we will have to use every weapon (however blunted) that is available to defend ourselves.

Yes, all courts are bourgeois. Yes, British society is divided into two classes.

But the trials are taking place every single day at Barnet magistrates' court. Black workers are being victimised. They await eagerly for further instructions on how to defend themselves. They would like nothing better than a mass struggle to end the trials.

Possibly Mark Turnbull and his friends could set one up. To counterpose the possibilities of such a struggle to what can be done within the law today is infantile phrase-mongering. SHIRAZ KHAMIS, North London

F U N.—OCTOBER 13, 1966.



NUPKINS'S JUSTICE.

Learned Magistrate: "HEAR THE EVIDENCE FOR THE DEFENCE? NONSENSE! I WON'T HEAR A WORD OF IT! WHAT'S THE USE?"—I COULD NOT THINK OF DOUBTING A POLICEMAN'S WORD."

UNDER REVIEW

WHILE Chairman Hua was 'meeting all the right people' (BBC TV news), lunching on lobster, chicken and bombe glacé with the Queen, John Pilger was telling us on ITV that thousands of Kampuchean children are dying of starvation because of the West's failure to provide aid — precisely because of this very same Chinese arse-licking.

China supports Pol Pot, therefore Britain must support Pol Pot and shut its ears to the screams of starving babies.

Unfortunately, the connections which Pilger was trying to make between British and American foreign policy and the death and destruction of the Kampuchean people got lost in a week full of images of Chairman Hua and Margaret Thatcher smiling cosily at each other, stepping on and off red carpets and generally 'hitting it off'.

Parading

The week's viewing also included a Panorama programme on the show trial of Wei Jingsheng to remind us that Chinese democracy is not all it might be, and a BBC2 number for the cultured to remind us of China's great 'civilisation' by parading its art treasures on the screen.

Pilger's documentary — Year Zero: The Silent Death of Cambodia — was the most reviewed programme of the week. But there was something disturbing about the reviews; each one had its regulation photo of a sad, dying Kampuchean child to adorn its columns; each reviewer professed him or herself moved by the extremity of suffering Pilger revealed.

Yet the political realities which had caused this pain and suffering hardly got a mention. Yes, we should be sending aid, and surely we can overcome a few little political wrangles that are getting in the way?

Most of the reviewers probably watched the news on television the same evening, yet they didn't appear to notice one little item which reported Chairman Hua's declaration that Mrs. Thatcher was a second Churchill, a leader who could spearhead the fight against the 'global threat' posed by the 'hegemonist expansionism' of the USSR. In other words, on no account should Thatcher recognise the Heng Samrin government which is, as everyone knows, a 'puppet' of Vietnam and the USSR...

Fail-safe

A couple of days later, Thatcher was asked a Parliamentary question about why aid was not going to Kampuchea and why she continued to recognise the defunct Pol Pot regime. She employed her usual fail-safe method of shutting her eyes to reality, taking a



John Pilger with a victim of Pol Pot and the West

TV's 'Year Zero' on Kampuchea Humanity is not enough

By Sue Aspinall

deep breath, and enunciating clearly that aid was now getting through and she recognised Pol Pot because there was no 'real' alternative as yet.

The point is that in the end Pilger's documentary could only evoke the standard moral responses to documentaries about human misery, despite his bold attempts to break out of the naturalistic mould of television

documentaries and to pin the blame firmly at the door of Western imperialism.

His was a moral analysis, not a political one. How could two human beings decide to bomb a country out of existence? How could Khmer Rouge soldiers massacre their fellow countrymen, women, and children? Without a more profound political analysis than Pilger offered, the answers to such questions

inevitably remain comments about good and evil, about morality.

How Kampuchea should be reconstructed; the role of its government and masses — were not mentioned at all.

The film was clearly an attempt to stir the slumbering conscience of the West by an appeal to humanitarian values (which failed dismally in Thatcher's case). Its appeal was to the emotions, and it came out of emotion. Pilger's anger forced him to search for the causes and it was focussed on Nixon and Kissinger.

Destroyed

Pilger's grief forced him to search for solutions and he loudly demanded aid and denounced those who are withholding it. The camera dwelt on the faces of the tortured, dying faces of children, empty streets, destroyed buildings, human bones — employing the emotional rhetoric of horror.

At the same time, within the context of British television, Pilger's film was an achievement. That he was allowed to go so far as to call Nixon and Kissinger murderers (of a country) was remarkable, and was probably only made possible by Pilger's own unique personal journalistic reputation. His attempts to analyse the causes of Kampuchea's destruction and its present plight was a first step away from the naturalist tradition of merely 'showing' how things look without explaining how they got to be that way.

Pilger refused to avoid making judgements; he had a point of view and he did not try to anaesthetise it beneath the mask of 'balance'. Also, the fact that Year Zero was shown on ITV at peak viewing hours and must have been watched by millions of working people, is not a negligible victory.

Average

But, inevitably, Year Zero did not go far enough. Its reliance on appeals to humanity made it too easily assimilable into the mainstream of bourgeois conscience-purging. And in the context of the week's TV viewing as a whole, it could not compete with the bombardment of counter images and messages of warmth and friendship towards China.

Pilger's film was too self-contained, a cameo of 'a murdered society', looking on the outside much like other television documentaries.

It failed to use the potentialities of film to reach out to its audience in new ways which might take more account of the real political context in which it would be seen, including the torpor induced by the TV screen in the average British living room.

Please applaud the audience

By Geoffrey Sheridan

THE Guardian's theatre critic, Nicholas de Jongh, has just had what he describes as 'one of the most unusual and exciting theatrical experiences in nearly 10 years' professional theatre-going.

Since this experience took place in Pasadena, California, we have only his review to go on. But the message comes across reasonably clearly.

The play he saw is called *Fefu And Her Friends*, which is written by Maria Irene Fornes, a Cuban-born American. Fefu's opening remark sets the pace for succeeding developments. She says: 'My husband married me as a constant reminder of how loathsome women are.'

It's the staging which gripped de Jongh. The play is being performed in a large house, and at the end of the first act the audience is divided into four groups and told that each of them will be taken to watch four scenes which take place in rooms or gardens of the house.

Each group sees the scenes in a different order.

'In each scene there is a revelation,' de Jongh writes. 'This

technique of making us ambulant voyeurs is very strange and rewarding. It gives a new sense of theatrical life — interpreted not as a single action watched by an audience but as interconnecting experiences...'

A similar thing happened to me 10 years ago. It occurred at what was the Arts Lab in Covent Garden, in London, which its devotees now badly miss.

Or rather it occurred a couple of doors down the road in Drury Lane, for when a dozen of us had paid 10 bob to see the *The Mother* we were led out of the Arts Lab and into an adjacent tenement building, up several flights of stairs, passed bicycles and cooking smells on the landings, and into a flat at the top.

We found ourselves in a bedroom and were pleasantly told by its incumbent, a heavily made-up woman in her sixties, 'Welcome to my home'. As far as one could judge from the old theatrical pictures decorating the room, it was her home.

And there, for about an hour, as we sat in some embarrassment on a sofa and armchairs, she told us about the terrible trouble she was having with her son. At the end of *The Mother*, it was exceedingly difficult not to say: 'I'm very sorry. Is there anything I can do?'

Instead, we smiled pleasantly, thanked her, and made our way down the stairs. I've never felt quite the same way about sitting in an ordinary theatre since.

A few years ago a theatre group in Paris called La Grande Cirque Magique took over an empty warehouse in a suburb of the city and performed the 1789 French revolution. The audience occupied the centre of the 'stage', becoming the masses, while monarchists, Jacobins, and the other contestants charged back and forth, making their appeals.

What is altered is the presentation of a drama, which is normally 'out there', running its pre-written course from beginning to end, with no demands made on the audience save that we pay for our tickets, don't interrupt, and dutifully clap at the end.

Fragmenting that relationship, by switching scenes so that the audience is left to piece things together for itself, or staging a play in circumstances where reality and drama are not readily separable, or forcefully confronting an audience with choices that history actually presented, whithers the protective space between our seat and the performers.

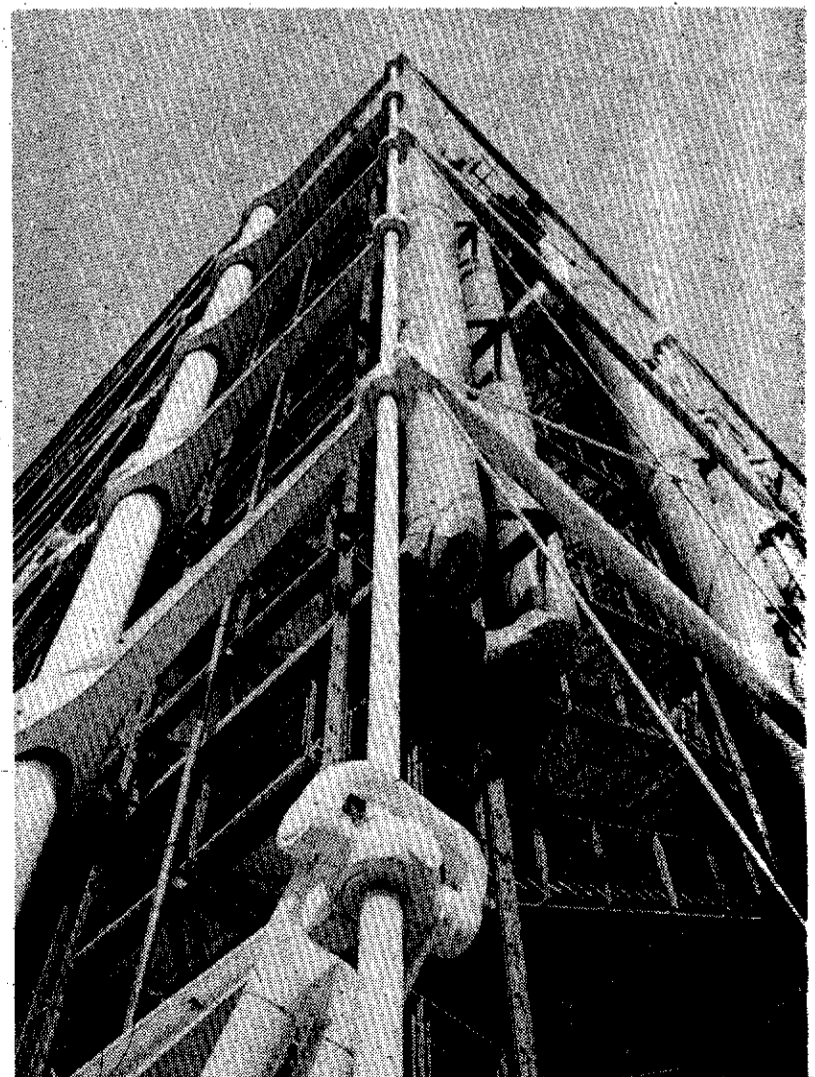
The demands that this makes reach beyond the escapism or relatively comfortable associations that the bourgeois theatre usually has to offer.

Displacing the traditional relationship between performers and the audience potentially opens up brand new connections, and it is making connections — in economics, politics, the social sphere, in everything — that is a principle strength of Marxism.

It is the inability, if not the refusal, of bourgeois culture to make connections of much consequence that so often leaves it in the realm of 'entertainment', or merely sterile when it attempts something more serious.

This is true not only of the theatre, but of just about every aspect of culture.

What makes the new Pompidou Centre in Paris so exciting to visit, for example, is that its large number of galleries and simultaneous events suggest what exhibition centres, art galleries, and theatres in Britain rarely come near to: the possibility of making experiences and ideas come to life.



Inside out — the exterior of the Pompidou Centre in Paris: 'Making experience and ideas come to life'

The excitement lies in the fact that connections are for everyone to make, given half a chance.

And the Pompidou Centre, with its daring, modernistic architecture, which houses a panoply of cultural

productions and devices — film, video, exhibitions, records, paintings, sculpture, books, live performances and debate; frequently combined on particular themes — has managed to attract real live proletarians.

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SEND BACK THE SHAH!



By Rich Palsler

THE POPE received a curt reply to his appeal for the release of the hostages being held at the American Embassy in Tehran — go and speak to President Carter, it's in his hands to send the Shah back to Iran.

Many column inches in the press have been devoted to the suffering of the American hostages. But that pales into insignificance when compared to the tens of thousands tortured and killed at the hands of the Shah.

Much has been said of American feelings running high, and of the danger of retaliation against Iranians in the United States. But Carter's policy of hounding Iranians as 'illegal immigrants' reinforced by the boycott on Iranian oil is the biggest encouragement he could give to the mobs intent on attacking Iranian protestors.

Contrast

In contrast, little has been said in the British media in support of extraditing the Shah, yet these same newspapers, TV, and radio stations fervently attack the American authorities for not extraditing Irish republicans. They are only interested in extradition when it suits the British state. When Carter harbours a mass murderer they remain silent.

It is the Iranian people who suffered decades of repression under the Shah — it is for them to decide what penalty he now pays for those crimes.

Certainly, the Shah should be extradited, and in that way Carter can free the American hostages.

But behind the headlines on the embassy occupation lies another story — the growing crisis of Khomeini and his regime in Iran.

About Turn

While Khomeini today is denouncing Carter and American imperialism, and refusing to meet American representatives, only two weeks ago his foreign minister was meeting with Carter's national security advisor, Brzezinski, in Algiers.

Only two days before the occupation of the embassy, which was carried out on 4 November by unarmed demonstrators and met no resistance from the Islamic guards, permission for a demonstration to the embassy had been denied by Islamic authorities.

Then on 6 November the government led by Mehdi Bazargan



resigned, leaving the Islamic Revolutionary Council to govern the country.

Underlying the sudden anti-American stance of Khomeini is his inability to meet the needs and aspirations of the Iranian people who faced torture and death to bring down the Shah.

Despite Khomeini's attempts to deny the right of self-determination to the national minorities in Iran, the remnants of the Shah's shattered army and the Islamic Guards have been unable to crush the resistance of the Kurdish people. Khomeini's regime has been forced to negotiate with Kurdish leaders who previously were attacked as 'enemies of God'.

Despite the imprisonment of socialists who protested against the denial of the Kurds' demand for autonomy — militants of the Fourth International — an international campaign of protest has forced the Islamic courts to draw back from executing them.

Nearly a fifth of the working population is unemployed and oil production is at less than two-thirds the output achieved under the Shah. The oil workers whose strikes brought down the Shah are not pleased with Bazargan and the threat of wage cuts, and fishers in the Caspian Sea recently took strike action.

The women who were previously forced off the streets by Islamic Guards for demanding their rights, have again marched in the past two weeks.

What finally finished off the Bazargan government, however, was the pressure placed upon it by the Iranian people for a firm anti-imperialist stance. They remember only too well Carter's backing for the Shah, and how the Shah looked after American interests in Iran.

That has been reinforced by a memo found in the occupied embassy, showing that the US State Department was considering admitting the Shah even before his illness.

The Bazargan government was trying to find a way out of its problems by beginning to negotiate a new relationship with US imperialism. The recent upsurge in popular sentiment, focused on the demand for the Shah's extradition, has for the moment blocked that road.

While we must solidarise with the people of Iran by demanding the Shah's extradition, we can also show our solidarity another way.

We have to continue to campaign for support for those fighting for democratic, national, and women's rights in Iran today. That is the only sure means by which we can help keep imperialist hands off Iran for good.

FUND DRIVE

THIS week we had a nice surprise when we received £10 from Bob Pennington who, as was reported in last week's paper, is in hospital after being hit by a car a couple of weeks ago. If Bob can be motivated to keep the paper in the black from his sick bed then surely some of our more healthy readers can match his contribution.

Equally encouraging is the example of Lawrie White, who has given his tax rebate to Socialist Challenge.

This week's income was a welcome increase on recent weeks, however we still didn't cross the £100 barrier. We are running seriously behind our

target of £2500 per quarter and it needs a concerted effort by all our supporters over the next six weeks to ensure that we meet our target.

It's still not too late — simply fill in the form below and send to Socialist Challenge; PO. Box 50; London, N1.

Received this week:	
Ed Mahood	10.00
Dean Sinnott	20.82
D Stevens	5.00
IMG A/Racist Fraction	0.71
B Pennington	10.00
Lawrie White	50.00
Week's total	£96.53
Grand total	£572.53

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