

# Socialist Challenge

## STOP THE SELL-OUT AT LEYLAND

ON TUESDAY afternoon Terry Duffy, president of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, and the rest of his union executive sabotaged the defence of their own member, Derek Robinson, the convenor at British Leyland's Longbridge plant.

They agreed to the demands of Leyland boss Michael Edwardes and instructed their members at Leyland to go back to work — without securing the re-instatement of Robinson, who had been victimised the previous week for his union activity.

Instead the union has decided to launch its own 'inquiry' into Robinson's activities. In other words, at the behest of the Leyland bosses, Robinson's own union is to put him on trial.

Even if Robinson is declared 'innocent', Edwardes has said that he will not necessarily accept the verdict, and that Robinson will not automatically be re-instated.

What is sure is that if the inquiry goes Robinson's way it will be much more difficult to mobilise Leyland workers in his defence at some later date.

All who have agreed to this 'compromise' have compromised one of the basic tenets of the trade union movement — the defence of its members. Any political organisation which agrees to the inquiry will be committing political suicide.

Now it is important to rebuild the struggle against the victimisation and press for all-out Leyland strike action; to demand the inquiry is boycotted, to organise and explain to the Leyland workforce what the real issues are.

Ever since trade unions were formed in this country the ruling class have tried to smash them. Through the years they deported trade unionists, banned unions, ordered their police to attack pickets. As recently as the Heath government trade unionists were locked up in Pentonville jail.

The sacking of British Leyland convenor Derek Robinson brought that tradition up to date. The Leyland issue is not a personal power struggle between Robinson and Edwardes. Nor is it a conflict between one



anti-union management and a single shop stewards' organisation. At issue is the matter of class against class.

All the usual ruling class rabble rallied behind Edwardes. The Daily Mail described him as 'a man with the guts to fight'; the Tories let it be known that if Robinson was re-instated and Edwardes resigned then the government would make Leyland bankrupt and sack 100,000 workers.

Adding insult to injury those who made such threats then had the nerve to turn around and accuse the Leyland workers of 'blackmail'.

The mass sacking threat is a bluff, but that it has been made shows how seriously

the ruling class views the Leyland struggle. They know that if Edwardes can get away with sacking a union convenor, then every union convenor in the country will be ripe for attack.

And now more than at any time since the war, the bosses and their political representatives are out to attack the right of working people to organise; because British capitalism is heading for a massive crisis and it needs to make workers pay for that crisis.

To quote the Daily Mirror again: 'What happens to British Leyland in the next few days could well be symbolic of what happens to all of us in the years that lie ahead.'

Absolutely right. The ruling class knows what is at stake at Leyland. So should we.

## US HANDS OFF IRAN



AS WE go to press Washington continues to rattle its sabres. The leaders of US imperialism confront a real dilemma. They have been publicly humiliated and insulted by the leaders of Iran, who have called their bluff by refusing to capitulate to US pressure as long as the Shah remains in the United States.

If the United States intervenes militarily, even for the purpose of a limited raid, the consequences would be far-reaching. The whole region could witness mass mobilisations demanding an oil blockade of the West. But if the US does not intervene, its credibility both at home and abroad will be further reduced.

For us the choice in this conflict is clear. In any clash with imperialism we stand with the people of Iran. This support is and must remain unconditional.

Our task in the event of any outside intervention will be to help mobilise the broadest possible solidarity against the United States. We will do so despite our strong disagreements with Khomeini and the Islamic Republic. For at the present time there is room for only one slogan: US HANDS OFF IRAN!



## 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.....  
 .....  
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## EDITORIAL

# Requiem for the NEB— the passing of a lap-dog

ONE set of industrial barons have replaced another on the National Enterprise Board. Rolls Royce has passed from NEB control to the department of Industry. Is this anything to be excited about?

It was Tony Benn who set up the NEB in the heady days of the Labour government in 1974-5. It was, and remains, a central part of the strategy of Labour's left wing. The bosses were unwilling to invest, the NEB would provide the money and make sure that the grateful bosses were accountable to 'the public'. Key sectors of British industry would flourish. Unemployment would decline as the whole economy started to take off.

There was one small problem with this schema and that was profits. The low level of profitability on capital invested in British manufacturing industry remains the fundamental reason why the bosses get cold feet and take their money elsewhere. To reverse that situation the employers have to jack up productivity and in a situation of no growth in

the British economy that meant speed-up and sackings. The NEB's money was welcome but it did not meet the bosses' central need — an all out attack on the working class.

But whatever the prospects for the NEB in its early days, they were never given the chance to be tested. Benn's Industry Bill was gutted in the Labour cabinet and Benn himself was replaced by Eric Varley in the post of Industry minister.

The NEB changed its nature. It became a combination of a butcher's shop and laboratory. 'Lame duck' firms like British Leyland, Alfred Herbert (the machine tool manufacturers) and Rolls Royce were to be rationalised in a programme of closures, redundancies and speed up.

British Leyland in particular was to be parcelled up in lots and some of it sold off, like the MG plant in Oxford, others simply thrown in the dustbin as with the Triumph plant in Speke. Large holdings in companies like Ferranti obtained in exchange for

cash would be progressively sold off. At the same time a puny attempt was made to keep up with the technological advances in the silicon chip industry with a number of small research firms being set up.

The more the project progressed the less the need for the NEB. So now British Leyland will follow Rolls Royce out of the NEB fold. Socialists should not mourn what amounts to the passing of the NEB under its new lap-dog management, but understand what it means.

The Tory attack on living standards is reaching top gear. There will be no honeymoon period under this government. They have dealt with the vacillating bosses of the NEB with contempt. Shop stewards whom they consider an obstacle will be under ferocious pressure at Leyland.

The NEB was never a solution to unemployment either in its pink or blue cloaks. The solution rests in resisting the Tory offensive starting with mass action to defend Derek Robinson.



## The paper needs more guts

STEVE GRIFFITHS works at Rover Solihull. Here are his views on Socialist Challenge.

I think Socialist Challenge could be more agitational. We're often spot on with the issues — as in the Dobson scandal and the recent centre page spread about Tony Benn at the Labour Party conference — but the we don't always put them over in quite the right way. The paper needs more guts.

I've enjoyed reading the Battle of Ideas supplements in the past particularly the debates on Faction and Party because it gives you an overview of what kind of socialist organisation we're trying to build.

It's surprising the issues you get feedback on in the factory. The photo that Socialist Challenge printed of a woman having a backstreet abortion

created a stir. Somebody pinned it up on the wall next to all the pornographic pictures of women. For the whole week an argument raged about the rights and wrongs of pornography and abortion. The article with it was clear and hard and provoked such arguments.

The women's question is always a source of controversy. Should women be on the line? (A third of the workforce building cars are women at Rover.) When it comes to layoffs women come under fire.

We sell Socialist Challenge outside the confed as people leave the meeting. In the factory we sell mainly to Labour Party members and other workers who are interested in socialist ideas.

The numbers we sell depend on our strength in the factory. Since Pat Hickey's been a senior steward we've

increased our sales. It's very important to be regular with sales and chase people up.

A paper like Socialist Challenge is important when the whole trade union movement is being threatened as it is at the moment at Leyland. You need to know the facts about what's happening in other plants and details of what management and the Tories are up to.

We have inside information that the management's already got Tory finance and support for what they're up to and that's why they dare to take us on.

We sold dozens of papers in the town centre on Saturday afternoon. The headline grabbed peoples attention and they decided to buy. The dispute at Leyland is polarising the city. People want to know what's going on.

## SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

LEEDS SC on sale Sats 11-1 Shopping Precinct, Armdale Centre Headingley, Harehills Shopping Centre.

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.

PADDINGTON SC on sale every Sat 11.30-12.30pm at the Westbourne Park Road Junction, and every Thursday at 5.15pm at Ladbroke Grove Tube Station.

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

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.

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 IMG public meeting: 'Defending abortion rights and the fight against the Tories'. Wed 5 Dec, 7.30pm, Trades Council Rooms, Picardy Place, Edinburgh. Speaker Penny Duggan (NAC steering committee).

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

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.

LEICESTER SC group meeting 12 Dec, Highfields Community Centre 8pm: 'Marxism Today'.

HACKNEY SC meeting on The Police, Thur 29 Nov, 7.30pm, Britannia pub, Mare St, E8. Speaker Richard Kirkwood (Chairperson, Hackney Campaign Against Racism).

HACKNEY — SC on sale every Sat, Sainsbury's Kingland High 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 Newsfare shops in Cleveland Centre and on Linsthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and at Greens Bookstall, upstairs in Spencer Market, Stockton High Street.

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.

PADDINGTON Socialist Challenge group can be contacted at PO Box 50, London N1.

IMG TRADE union fractions 3/4 Nov NALGO, 10 Nov CPSA, 17 Nov Rail. For details: tel. 01-359 8371.

IMG TRADE Union Fraction 1 Dec, Fords, POEU. For details tel 01-359 8371.

NORTH WEST IMG trade union school. Topics: building a national opposition workshop and union branch organisation; New technology and unemployment. For details contact Manchester Centre.

LONDON IMG events: 3rd Dec London District Committee, 7pm; Sun 9 Dec, London Aggregate for all members Report back from World Congress, 10.30am-5pm. For venues and further details tel. London office.

## HOMENEWS

# Has 'Mick the Knife' gone too far this time?

THE sacking of Derek Robinson, a shop steward and a Communist Party member at Longbridge, has plunged British Leyland into a massive crisis.

Having won a seven to one vote in the ballot for his plan to 'save British Leyland' by making 25,000 workers redundant, Michael Edwardes obviously reckoned it was time to stick the knife into the shop stewards movement to ensure the smooth implementation of his plan.

But Edwardes seems to have been foolish enough to believe his own propaganda about militant minorities.

Not only the workforce but even trade union officials have been outraged by such a calculated victimisation. Here we look at some of the major figures in the dispute.



MOSS EVANS — pragmatic leadership

## Evans — will he survive when things get too hot?

MOSS Evans, the £7,000 a year leader of the Transport and General Workers Union, has shown a greater willingness to stick his neck out in this dispute than Terry Duffy, even though Derek Robinson is a member of the AUEW and not the TGWU.

The West Midlands regional committee of the Transport Workers union has voted to make the strike official. Evans says he is merely waiting for the AUEW to meet 'out of courtesy' before he gives the go ahead to official action.

A Welshman who grew up in Methyr Tydfil during the years of the depression, Evans came to power in the Transport Union in 1977 and is gaining a reputation for being a 'left wing' trade union leader because of his support for the lorry drivers and now for Robinson.

### Footsteps

Rather than following in the footsteps of his all powerful predecessors, Ernest Bevin and Jack Jones, he has adopted a more open, quiet style of rule.

This stand has not been unambiguous, however. When elected to the post of general secretary he

supported the social contract. He issued a code of practice to stop secondary picketing during the lorry drivers strike, although he did not discipline members who disobeyed the code.

### Pragmatic

His position on democracy in the Labour Party was also rather 'pragmatic'.

Moss Evans was not prepared to challenge Callaghan head on because as he said at the time 'Callaghan has to do his job and I have to do mine'.

Trade union leaders like Evans may back all-out strike action in this dispute because if Edwardes can do this to Robinson he can do it to any trade unionist. Evans can't stand by and watch his base get smashed.

But when things get too hot and the preb starts to accuse Evans of 'challenging parliamentary rule' he'll back down.

That's why workers at Leyland should welcome official support but keep the pressure on Evans all the way along the line.

MICHAEL Edwardes, the £50,000 a year boss of British Leyland, has threatened to resign rather than see Derek Robinson reinstated.

He knows what's at stake in this dispute. He doesn't want a strong shop stewards movement in British Leyland to muck up his plans for 'streamlining' the car industry and making the workers pay for the problems of the bosses.

Sir Michael Edwardes, knighted by a Labour government for his heroic services to capital not labour, is no newcomer to trade union bashing.

### Chloride

As head of Chloride Batteries in 1977 he attempted to sack one in ten of the workers despite the fact that the company made a profit of £20 million the previous year. The company was also secretly trading with South African subsidiaries. Edwardes, of course, comes from South Africa. His membership of the Rand club, 'very rich, very exclusive' is a fitting symbol of his years serving the apartheid regime.

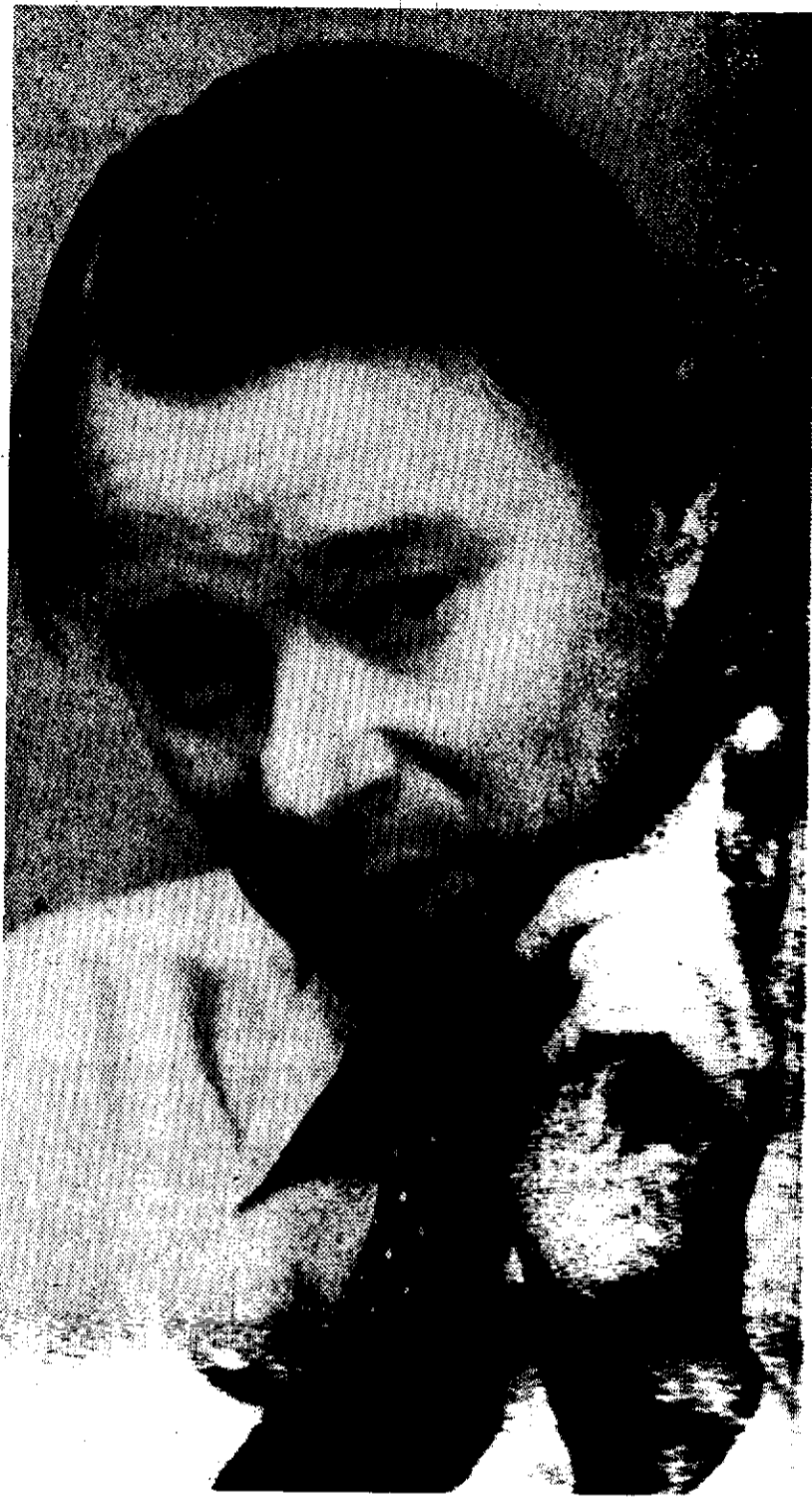
The solution Edwardes has for British Leyland is a simple one. Everytime the workers cause 'trouble' you threaten them with more sackings. He closed down Speke in Liverpool, he threatened to cancel £32 million worth of investment at Bathgate Lothian truck plant, he dealt with the toolmakers by denouncing Fraser as a 'wrecker'.

### Jeopardy

Now he hopes to isolate Robinson in a similar fashion by putting the £300 million loan from the government in jeopardy.

He's not prepared to skimp and save himself, though. He told the Sun in January that if the top rates of tax were not changed he might become a tax exile after his three year contract was up. No wonder he is Keith Joseph's blue eyed boy!

*But, even with Tory backing and a cashless reputation, it seems that this man Edwardes has gone too far. It looks as if he may be the next to go but the security of the trade unions are going to call his bluff. It's only time he got snatched in the neck.*



MICHAEL EDWARDS — no intention to resign

## Duffy — snuggling up to the Tories



TERRY DUFFY — no surprise that he's the media's darling

By Pat Kane

TERRY Duffy, a Roman Catholic from the black country, reacted in a characteristic fashion to Derek Robinson's sacking. 'It looks very dark for Leyland. I am disappointed that we have this disruption at a time when everything was beginning to go right'.

This 'disruption' is one of his own members being sacked for daring to speak out against management. By 'going right' he presumably feels fairly happy with the 25,000 redundancies and the pathetic pay offer proposed by Edwardes.

### Notorious

By Monday he was still vacillating about whether or not to defend his membership.

Sir John Boyd, general secretary of the AUEW, was advising him not to rush into a hasty decision!

Duffy's reputation as a right winger is notorious. He settled for a useless offer from the employers in the recent engineering dispute when he could have got far more.

He tried, unsuccessfully, to merge his union with the EPTU led by Frank Chapple, another right-wing trade union leader.

### Boot

The vote to elect the leader of the Labour Party by the conference was lost due to Duffy's presence of mind — despite strong feelings among his members about Labour Party democracy. He wants to snuggle up to the Tories. It's not surprising he's the darling of the press.

Thankfully Duffy comes up for election next year. Let's hope his membership see sense and give him the boot this time.



# Derek Robinson: a fight

BRITISH LEYLAND management last week issued a summary dismissal to Derek Robinson, senior convenor at BL's Longbridge plant. This is not a decision that was made lightmindedly.

Derek Robinson, whom the popular press have dubbed 'Red Robbo', is certainly the most powerful shop steward in BL, and arguably the most powerful shop steward in British industry.

Robinson is the elected leader of Longbridge, the second largest factory in the country, with 18,000 workers following him. He is recognised as unofficial lay leader of the whole of BL through his position on the British Leyland Shop Stewards Combine Committee — an unofficial body of all BL shop stewards and convenors of which Robinson is chairperson.

The ostensible reason for Edwardes' move in sacking him was the production of the

Combine Committee pamphlet 'The Edwardes' Plan and Your Job', with its somewhat belated calls for militant action to defend jobs. The offending paragraphs are on page 13 entitled 'What can you do?' What upset BL management no doubt were the references to the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders with calls for similar 'Work-ins and occupations... to prevent closure'.

But Robinson himself has indicated that the pamphlet was not the real reason for the sacking, and he is right. The decision to sack him was clearly not a spontaneous reaction to the appearance of the pamphlet; Robinson is far too big a fish to take on in such an ad hoc manner.

The decision to sack him must have been taken at the highest management level — by Edwardes himself — and almost certainly with

government backing. The battle over Robinson's reinstatement will not only determine the future of the unions in BL for the next period but represents the first fierce blow in the Tories' attacks on the trade unions.

That is why it is not just the task of BL workers to ensure that Edwardes and the Tories don't get away with it.

There is now tremendous pressure on both the main unions involved in BL to make the walk-outs and shut-downs official.

Edwardes would prefer it if they didn't — he may even have had high hopes that Terry Duffy, the right-wing president of the AUEW, would refuse. But Edwardes is not depending on it.

What Edwardes is depending on is his assessment of the state of shop floor organisation in BL. He is hoping to turn his 7 to

1 ballot victory on the 'survival' plan into a victory in an all-out confrontation with the shopfloor union organisation.

That's what he needs to impose the rest of his plans on the BL workforce, the 'yes' vote in the ballot does not mean that shopfloor union organisation won't resist speed up and job mobility at plant level and make them impossible to impose.

If Robinson goes, then no shop steward in the land would feel safe. It would open up a major assault on the shopfloor across manufacturing industry.

The BL workforce appears to be rising to the challenge, but they will need all the support they can get. It's time to reassert a fundamental principle of the trade union movement — one out, all out — because in this particular game the stakes are very high indeed.

## Count down to an official strike

By Pat Kane and  
Jude Woodward

### MONDAY 19

BL management announces the sacking of Derek Robinson and the disciplining of three other members of the unofficial BL shop stewards Combine Committee.

There is an immediate response in Longbridge, Robinson's own plant, where 7,000 day-shift workers walk out demanding his reinstatement. The shop stewards meet and decide to mount pickets of the entire plant to ensure that there would be no nightshift.

The company is well prepared, and is soon distributing leaflets throughout the BL plants explaining its actions.

The first of Edwardes' divisive arguments is wheeled out: the pamphlet was in the name of the Combine Committee, not an officially recognised union body, so the sacking was not as a result of union activities.

That night the pickets are solid; only a handful of workers report for work. Eleven thousand workers are now on strike to defend Robinson.

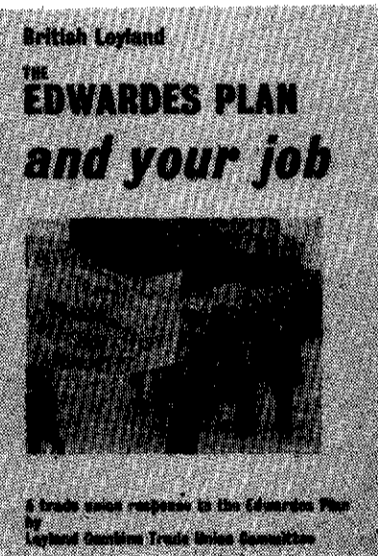
The Leyland Action Committee, with socialist militants from several BL plants, meets in Birmingham to discuss the situation. It considers that the fight to defend Robinson has to be linked to a fightback against the Edwardes' plan.

### TUESDAY 20

The Leyland Action Committee has produced 4,000 printed leaflets calling for all-out strike action in BL. By 6.30am they are being handed out on the picket lines and receive an enthusiastic response.

A meeting of BL shop stewards had already been planned to be held today to discuss the company's wage offer. There's little doubt that Edwardes timed the sacking of Robinson to coincide with this meeting.

The wage offer is 5 per cent with numerous strings, including complete mobility of labour. If it is accepted it would remove all powers from BL shop stewards.



Robinson himself attempts to attend the meeting, but BL security guards refuse him entry to company property on the grounds that he is no longer a BL employee.

The stewards meeting is lobbied by hundreds of BL employees calling for rejection of the offer and reinstatement for Robinson.

Both the wage offer and the conditions that go along with it are rejected by the senior stewards at the meeting. They also demand Robinson's immediate reinstatement, but they do not call for all-out strike action to defend him. The senior stewards leave it up to the leadership of each plant to organise whatever action they can.

The pressure for organised BL-wide action is building up. A mass meeting of 6,000 workers at Canley votes to take indefinite strike action — Canley would be one of the first plants to close under the next stage of the Edwardes' plan.

At about the same time, 6,000 Jaguar workers in Coventry down tools, bringing the total number on strike to 24,000. Robinson tells the press that 'this is a dispute we intend to win', but he makes no mention of all-out strike action in BL.

In London, the executive of the Engineering Union — Robinson's union — is discussing his case. It



PICKETS at Pressed Steel Fisher plant Castle Bromwich, Birmingham

demand his reinstatement, but holds back from making the strikes official.

Terry Duffy, president of the AUEW, says that this is because BL management won't send a 'strong enough team' to negotiate with him. The executive's statements imply that it is more concerned about the 'future of the company' than in defending the leading steward in the AUEW.

### Discipline

Pat Hickey, a senior steward at the Rover plant in Birmingham, returns from the meeting on pay with 700 copies of the offending pamphlet on the Edwardes' plan which he then distributes on the line. The workforce, Hickey considers, should at least know what Robinson was sacked for.

At 3pm Hickey is called in by the works manager for a disciplinary hearing. Management quickly instructs foremen to stop sales of the pamphlet. Workers in the plant are threatened with the sack for reading the pamphlet in their breaks. But management is forced to back down. Hickey's disciplinary hearing is first postponed, then dropped altogether.

That evening Derek Robinson shares the platform with Gordon McLennan, general secretary of the Communist Party, at a public meeting held by the local CP. Robinson makes a somewhat uninspired speech about himself, calling for 'whatever support is necessary'.

### Unreasonable

He denies that his sacking is due to the pamphlet, explaining that it has a lot more to do with Edwardes' plans for productivity deals and job mobility. To show that management is being unreasonable, Robinson points out that he had gone to them himself two years ago with similar proposals.

### WEDNESDAY 21

By this morning the company is shocked by the strength of support that Robinson has received, announcing: 'We sacked Derek Robinson in the full knowledge of the consequences, and we are now riding out the storm.'

The Birmingham Post estimates that the company has already lost £5 million in production through the dispute.

At the Castle Bromwich Press Steel Fisher plant, Edwardes maintains his tough line by sacking Keyworth, the plant director, for drawing up a plan to save the plant. Castle Bromwich is another plant to be closed under the Edwardes' plan.

After a stewards meeting, the plant walks out. Alf Wood, the convenor, says: 'These sackings have unleashed all the anger and frustration built up over the Edwardes' plan.' The workforce proceeds to vote for indefinite strike action.

A meeting of the Combine Committee that afternoon calls for a day of action on the following Monday with a demonstration in Birmingham. But the senior stewards have to tell their members that there is still no clear national line for action to unite BL workers behind Longbridge.

That evening the AUEW West district committee calls for the strike to be made official, as does the TGWU Region 5 cars committee. With 139 Labour MPs calling for immediate reinstatement, there is mounting pressure on Terry Duffy and Moss Evans to make the strikes official, but they have yet to make a move.

At the Rover plant, the senior stewards call a mass meeting with a resolution for a token stoppage only.

They have avoided holding any sort of meeting where a proposal for all-out strike could be put forward. A 24-hour strike is supported.

### THURSDAY 22

Today dawn with the Birmingham Evening Mail continuing its support for Edwardes by running a front page story on Derek Robinson's brother who has continued working. The paper fails to mention that he has said he will stop work as soon as the strike is made official.

By now 37,000 BL workers are on strike and many thousands more laid off.

The Leyland Action Committee issues another leaflet calling for an extension of the strike action, and a mass meeting at Longbridge to turn it into the centre of opposition to Edwardes. It also calls for flying pickets to shut down the rest of BL.

Messages of support are flooding in from all sections of the trade union movement.

Len Brindle, vice chairperson of the Combine Committee, narrowly loses a vote for immediate action at his plant in Preston. The lack of clear leadership from the Combine Committee or the unions nationally is paying dividends for management.

The company is taking every opportunity to get its message over. It's pay day, and, Ken King — until recently a steward at Longbridge — describes what happens when the workers go to collect their money. 'All the plant gates were locked and we were sent to the West works canteen for the pay out.'

'The directors were there giving each and every one of us a load of pamphlets and a pep talk on the BL happy family. They only took in six at a time and the queue stretched a mile or two down the road.'

### Our mistake

LAST week an article by Pat Hickey appeared on the front page of Socialist Challenge. At the head of the article he was erroneously described as deputy convenor at Rover Solihull. He is in fact deputy senior steward at that plant. We apologise to those who were misled by our error.

# t we mean to win

ENTRIES are 5p a word; semi-display £2 a column inch. Deadline: 5pm Friday before publication. All payments in advance.



WAITING to hear whether the TGWU district will make the strike official at Longbridge on Friday



IT IS official, so the 'official strike' placards are rapidly made



Duffy can carry on ignoring hundreds of his members outside his own front door.

**DEFEND OUR UNIONS.....**

**PUBLIC MEETING**

PAT HICKEY  
DEPUTY SENIOR STEWARD, BRISTOL

ALAN THORNETT  
DEPUTY SENIOR STEWARD, COVENTRY

PAUL SHEVLIN  
SHOP STEWARD, JAGUAR COVENTRY

7.30

THURSDAY 22nd  
LABOUR CLUB  
(BRISTOL STREET)

The LEYLAND ACTION COMMITTEE is a National Organisation of militant stewards formed to fight the Edwards' Plan. We are opposed to all plant closures and redundancies for a wage settlement in local inflation and against all productivity deals. We support national strike action to kick out the Edwards Plan and for the defence of all Trade Union rights.

**...KICK OUT EDWARDS.**

## Edwardes- super-democrat

THE SENIOR stewards in the BL Jaguar plant in Coventry have been under pressure to hold a mass meeting so that the workforce could reject Edwardes' measly 5 per cent pay offer. They knew the workforce would reject it, but they thought the BL management would not accept the decision of a mass meeting. So they decided to hold their own secret ballot.

Management were approached for help, but they refused to provide any facilities. The stewards even had to make their own ballot boxes. Numbered papers were issued and scrutineers were appointed to oversee the distribution and count so that management could not discredit the result.

The result was a 92 per cent rejection of the pay offer — 5023 against and only 448 for. Michael Edwardes is taking out adverts in national newspapers explaining he is justified in sacking Robinson as he opposes a plan that 82 per cent had voted in favour of. Doubtless this new champion of democracy will ignore the Jaguar ballot result!

## FRIDAY 23

Everyone is waiting to see what the decision of the TGWU regional committee will be.

At lunchtime the pickets hear on the radio that it has made the strike official. A cheer goes up on the picket line at Longbridge. Several people rush off to the stewards hut to start making 'official picket' placards.

## MONDAY 26

This is the day of the demonstration in Birmingham, and over four thousand trade unionists arrive to show their solidarity with the victimised BL steward. Delegations come from all over the country.

At a packed rally in Birmingham town hall, Derek Robinson, along with speakers from the TGWU, the French CGT, and AUEW/TASS, calls for official backing to fight for reinstatement.

Robinson says: 'This is not just a fight between Edwardes and myself. I am just a victim of an attack on the trade unions from the highest level.'

Despite the tremendous show of solidarity at the rally, two problems remain.

Many militants want to know why Terry Duffy isn't there and why the AUEW executive is not represented. Len Brindley, convenor at the BL plant in Leyland, Preston, says 'If Duffy doesn't make this official he's even more stupid than I thought.'

## Maximum

The second argument is that the TGWU does not go to a clear end. The maximum that the TGWU can do is to get the maximum support from other trade unions and for the return to be made official. It doesn't prevent work being done if necessary.

Leyland workers have to receive the maximum solidarity from all other trade unionists. At the moment they stand between the Tories' anti-working class offensive and every one of us.

They are fighting for the right of different political currents to clearly express their views within the broad trade union movement. They are striking for the right of elected representatives to fight for the interests of the workforce and not kow-tow to the bosses.

That's why every section of the trade union movement has to bring pressure to make the strikes official and keep them that way. No sell-out!

Leyland has to be brought to a complete standstill and that means boycotting all goods to and from BL plants. Every trade unionist should find a way to support the BL strikers.

Messages of support and financial contributions to: Jack Adams, Secretary Leyland Combine TU Committee, 4 Lea Lane, Cookley, Nr Kidderminster, Worcs.

LAMBETH Fightback Campaign: public meeting to discuss the cuts being made locally. Lambeth Town Hall, 5 December, 7.30pm. Speakers: Lou Lewis, Bill Bouring, Vanessa Wiseman and others from NALGO, FBV and Campaign Against Health Cuts.

TOWER Hamlets Campaign Against Cuts: Public meeting with Ian Mikardo MP, Professor Huntingford, Rose Knight (NAC). Tues 4 Dec. 7.30pm. City of London Poly Students Union, Fairholt House, Whitechapel High St. E1. Nearest tube Aldgate East.

A LUTA CONTINUA. One-day conference on Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau. Contributions include Basil Davidson, Laurence Harris and Chris Searle. Sat 3 Dec. 10am-5.30pm at Birbeck College, Malet St. London W1. Advance registration £2. OAPs and unemployed £1. (£2.50 at the door). Organised by: Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Information Centre, 34 Percy St. London W1. (Tel: 01-636 7108).

'NICARAGUA: Another Cuba?' Special Public Forum, Birmingham, 7.30pm, Fri 7 Dec. Labour Club, Bristol St. (For further information ring 021-472 7726).

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**INTERNATIONAL**

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INTERNATIONAL: theoretical journal of the International Marxist Group. For sale available from The Group, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Other bookshops, PO Box 50, London N1.

WHAT'S LEFT of the... (text partially obscured)

NICARAGUA BENEFIT. Tue 11 Dec. 7.30pm. Art College, Lauriston Place, Edinburgh. Film: 'Nicaragua - Free Country or Death'. Sponsored by Art College Socialist Action Group, MIR, IMG, WEA.

EDINBURGH IMG public meeting: 'Defending abortion rights and the fight against the Tories'. Wed 5 Dec, 7.30pm. Trades Council Rooms, Picardy Place, Edinburgh. Speaker Penny Duggan (NAC steering committee).

PLUTO PRESS is looking for outside editors to enrich its current range and to extend into related fields. Candidates need to share a general socialist commitment, be alert to changing currents in intellectual and political life, confident in dealing with people and scripts, and able to write simply. Editors would work on a commission basis. Contact Michael Kidron, Pluto Press, 10 Spencer Court, 7 Chalcut Road, London NW1 8LH 01-722 0141.

BOOKS for Southern Africa comrades. Money desperately needed for this vital field of internationalist activity or any books you can spare. To 'Books for Southern Africa', Box 102, Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.

BRENT NALGO Campaign Benefit on Thurs 29, 7.30-midnight at Carlton Centre, Granville Road, London NW6. Moonshine Family Entertainment Group with 'Family at War' at 9pm, and Bandyland Disco. £1.20 (incl 20p temporary bar membership), claimants 70p.

MANCHESTER Regional TU Conference on Abortion Rights, 15 Dec 1979, Small Assembly Room, UMIST, Sackville Street, Manchester 1. Starts 10.15am. To discuss the way forward for the fight for safe, early and free abortion facilities and services. Registration: £1 individuals, £2.50 TU delegates, unwaged — donations. Creche available. For more info phone Manchester NAC, 061-224 4392.

'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'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
The cartoon on page 7 of last week's issue was by Corinne Pearlman from the NCCL publication **First Rights**, reproduced with permission.



## ICL retreat at Dukinfield

By Andy Blundell, ASTMS group hairperson at West Gorton ICL

The determination of workers at the International Computers Limited Dukinfield plant and widespread solidarity action have forced ICL to cut back its closure plans, with the loss of 900 jobs.

They have agreed to put the 90 days notice 'on ice' for 28 days to allow the unions to set up a working party and then reconsider the decisions in the light of their report.

One can hope, of course, that this is a ploy to allow the company to withdraw the notice without losing face. But it is far more likely that the company see it as one step back so as to take two steps forward!

There are very real dangers that a joint working party could become a participation exercise, ending in acceptance by the unions of 'inevitable' redundancies, or that the alternative will be posed in terms of how the unions can make the plant 'viable' for ICL.

As this week's Socialist Challenge bulletin explained, our alternative to the closure is a reduction in the working week throughout ICL.

It went on to warn against seeing the 28 days as a 'Christmas truce' and argued that the time should be used to continue the fightback by organising support in the local labour movement and the community for the next round in the battle.

With a limited victory under their belts Dukinfield workers are now in a position to build links with other Manchester factories facing redundancies and develop a district wide fight for the right to work.

## Ford offer

By a Ford Worker

IN A surprise move last Friday the Ford motor company offered its 59,000 manual workers wage increases of around 21.5 per cent. For the majority of workers the company's original offer of £11 on basic rates was increased to £15, giving a new weekly grade rate of £89.52.

Although the unions' claim was for £30 and a threshold clause, there is little doubt this will be accepted. It took a nine week strike last year to achieve an increase half this size.

The major drawback is a further increase in the disciplinary 'Supplementary Payment' by £1.52 to £25 a week. This is aimed at weakening the shopfloor because any worker in dispute for 5 minutes or attending a shop meeting will lose a further £3 to £4 in wages.

Why did Ford increase its offer by £4 in the space of a week?

One reason is that labour turnover is so high on the 29,000 strong Dagenham estate — currently running at 40 per cent per year in the assembly plant — that the company is falling far short of its production targets.

The Leyland dispute was probably a further factor. With a big slump predicted in the car industry in 1980, Ford can seize this opportunity to increase its market share without having a major dispute or a discontented workforce on its hands — for a few months anyway!

Whether any progress has been made towards a shorter working week is ambiguous. The unions and company agreed to a series of meetings: 'To consider changes in working arrangements necessary to achieve a negotiated reduction in working time, without reducing the company's competitiveness, which would be effective from the commencement of the New Agreement to be negotiated in November 1980'. The job now will be to make the 35 hour week the main element in next year's claim.

## Whose choice?

DO MEMBERS of the National Union of Public Employees have the right to elect a shop steward of their choice? Most NUPE members think so, but if NUPE branch secretary Jamie Morris gets his way, they will not.

In October, Dave Norman and Gillian Brear were elected unanimously to represent their sections at Westminster Hospital. At the branch Annual General Meeting, the secretary, Jamie Morris, advised members not to 'ratify' the democratic election of these stewards — claiming that they were a disruptive influence.

The 'disruptive influence' of Dave and Gillian couldn't perhaps be that they have consistently argued for action against cuts and low pay? Could it be that their opposition to the policies of Jamie Morris — who is quoted as saying that 'it would be hypocritical of me to oppose cuts in the NHS when I am implementing cuts as a councillor in Tower Hamlets' — has something to do with it?

It was Jamie Morris who called off all action in the branch when a well orchestrated press campaign, coupled with pressure from the union leaders, attacked hospital workers at Westminster for taking action over their pay claim. At that time he was opposed by the stewards concerned.

Their full-time officer told them that they could appeal against the branch decision through the union's National Appeals Committee. However, when they used this procedure they were told by General Secretary Alan Fisher that there is no right of appeal against decisions taken by a branch. This means NUPE effectively does not have a rule book.

## Health workers take control



OUTSIDE the hospital the picket line makes it clear who is in control at St Benedicts. Volunteers are needed to help on the picket rota. INSIDE the daily routine is only interrupted by mass meetings and the deliberations of the occupation committee.



Photo: G.M. COBURN (Socialist Challenge)

# Occupied to defend our services



By Pete Cooper

PATIENTS are still being admitted to the St Benedicts 130 bed geriatric hospital — despite the decision of the Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth Area Health Authority to cease admissions from 23 November.

The hospital is now being run by a workers council who, with the help of local doctors, are exercising control over admissions and discharges. That way they hope to stop the hospital being run down for closure in July 1980.

## Excuse

Arthur Hautot, secretary of the occupation committee, told me how the Authority tried to move a patient out last weekend. The patient is 82, and twice he has been moved to Rame Home, only to be sent back to St Benedicts because of its superior facilities.

'It was just an excuse', says Arthur, 'they will try and discharge people only to admit them somewhere else later. We stopped the ambulance at the picket line, explained our case, so the driver turned round and went away.'

One nurse told me, 'We think it's diabolical — I only found out about the plan to close when I heard it on the radio'. All the nurses at St Benedicts are in a union, but even the unions were led to believe that there was to be no closure. As late as August a health authority circular tried to give the impression that St Benedicts would be part of a new 'integrated' service for the area.

## First step

Nick Williams, Secretary of Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Council, insists that the St Benedicts workers have taken the first step in fighting cuts and must be supported by the rest of the labour movement.

'We are under no illusions about the occupation — the longer it goes on the more likely it is that the health authority will remove the patients by force — as at Hounslow hospital. We are helping with the picket rota, trying to build up a telephone tree, and building up links with the building workers fighting cuts in Direct Works.'

'We are saying to the local labour movement — come out on 28 November to show solidarity with St Benedicts and the Direct Works because they are in the forefront of fighting the cuts, and must not be left to fight alone.'

## Students fight education cuts

'MORE for defence, less for schools'. That was the way the Financial Times summarised the Tory White Paper on Public Expenditure for 1980-1. In all 4.3 per cent is to be cut from projected education expenditure.

£200 million will be 'saved' by withdrawing the subsidy from school meals and milk. On top of the cuts made in the Budget of 12 June this will mean the closure of nurseries and schools in many areas.

Access to further education will become more difficult for working class youth as Local Education Authorities [LEAs] reduce or abolish discretionary awards as a means of further trimming their budgets.

In higher education there will be a similar effect given the decision to cutbacks on student numbers in the universities by 6 per cent, the attempt to introduce 'full cost fees' for overseas students and the general trimming of budgets in the polytechnics.

Students in many areas have

already begun to respond to these attacks. One third of the 10,000 strong demonstration against the cuts in Bristol on 15 November consisted of students and school students. At Oxford Polytechnic students have already occupied in opposition to deteriorating conditions and services.

In Lambeth on 7 November school students walked out of two schools to support the march to Westminster. In Manchester 3000 students marched against the cuts on 14 November.

In many other areas students in further and higher education have organised occupations against the racist fee increases. These too constitute a cut and students have no illusion that the Tories are going to stop at attacking just this section of the student body.

In Bristol one of the chants of demonstrators was 'Education for the working masses, not for the ruling classes'. If there is to be any hope of realising that then we have to start by kicking out the Tories and their policies.



# Cuts, rate rises, or fight the Tories?

By Dave Burns, reports from M.C.

**THE TORIES** have confronted Labour Councils with a dilemma. Should they act as Thatcher's book-keepers? After all, the Labour Government asked them to implement cuts. If cuts are rejected, how can services be paid for with government funds reduced to a trickle?

The answer lies in the way the rateable value system is administered. Rents and rates should be frozen and the Government challenged to provide adequate funds to maintain and extend social services.

Supporters of Ted Knight object by asking 'where will the money come from?' The answer is simple: true socialism. The rateable value system is a strangled child of finance capital. The local government has to raise funds for building from banks and insurance companies. For this they have to pay interest on the debt accumulated.

With Thatcher's increase in interest rates, things can only get worse. Soon more money will be spent lining the finance house coffers than on services for the working class. Just think what the people of Islington could do with £401 million!

But this perspective of non-payment of interest is inadequate by itself. The financiers will not be kindly to the seizing of their profits. Loans will be withheld, facing councils with the problem of paying for wages, building materials and other things needed to keep social services afloat.

Banks will attempt to regain their 'investment' by action through the courts to claim council property, or by freezing their current account stopping wage and other payments. The Government will respond by calling in the commissioners and the courts.

These attacks can only be resisted by the strength of the workers' movement. The money for social services won't fall from the skies. We don't get anything without a fight.

As a start, Labour councillors, with the backing of local Labour Parties, need to link up with the local council workers unions. It is their members who will be in the firing line when councils go bust.

This trade union and Labour Party cooperation needs to spread to other unions, and support built up in the labour movement so that there is a rapid response when the courts and commissioners act against the council. In the past miners have taken action to defend striking nurses. Scargill has promised the industrial support of miners to fight the cuts.

Opposition will gather steam through local struggle. But it cannot rest there. Many Labour councillors

have tied themselves in knots over the funding of local services. This is because they try to find local solutions.

Socialism is not possible in one borough. The root of our problems is the way society's resources are allocated. These decisions are taken at Government level.

Local Labour councillors cannot unravel the knots without linking up with a labour movement challenge to the Tory Government. This has to go hand in hand with a fight in the trade unions and Labour Party to make sure that, once the Tories are chopped, a Labour Government comes up with something better than Callaghan's version of cuts.

Unrealistic left rhetoric? Not at all. The miners strike brought down the last Tory Government. Just think what combined action by public sector workers, miners and car workers could do to Thatcher.

## Lambeth makes a stand

So, despite the fact that some inner city areas are in greatest need of government support, they get less subsidy. Working class people in these areas get stung wherever they turn: they pay higher rates and rents and receive relatively less government support for services!

### Cop out

An increase in rates is yet another cut in living standards. In Islington, for example, the average rate payment is around £5 per week. Labour councillors who seek to resist public service cuts by upping the rates will face working class tenants with a 100 per cent rate rise and an increase in rents. That's at least another £5 a week.

How can councillors hope to gather local support for their anti-cuts stand if the working class is presented with the bill? Already, some right-wing Labour councillors are seizing on this to justify cuts in services.

Garry Southgate, leader of Islington council has attacked the idea of massive rate increases because it involves 'poor families paying the biggest tax increases most of them have ever known'.

Of course, his plans for a ten per cent cut in services show how serious he is about defending us against Tory policies. But the anti-cuts councillors



Lambeth Labour leader Ted Knight.

**LAMBETH'S** Labour council recently decided it would not implement cuts in spending — thereby reversing a previous decision to implement cuts. Bill Bowring, a Labour Councillor in Norwood, Lambeth, explained to Socialist Challenge what happened.

“When cuts in the rate support grant were announced Lambeth moved faster than other boroughs in a way which a lot of us disagreed with very strongly. The leader got together the chairperson of each committee and the Director of each Directorate, and this was done in secret, and told them to produce plans to give cuts of 4.5 per cent.

This was then presented to the Labour group as a fait accompli so that there was no alternative other than to bankrupt the council. At that group meeting there were only 7 councillors who voted against those cuts.

There was an outcry in the Labour Party, and at the next Norwood Labour Party General Management Committee Ian Wilson and myself put forward a motion which called for no cuts, no rate increases, and said Labour councillors should do everything possible to resist the cuts up to and including if necessary resigning.

The reason we put that forward was that we were told that if the council failed to make interest payments then the Director of Finance could immediately move in and take over the finances, that if we did something illegal then commissioners would move in to implement the cuts. What we wanted to do was make the issue of what Labour councillors were for on principle as clear as possible.

As the Norwood GMC Ted Knight had a

resolution supporting cuts being carried out. There was a very bitter struggle in the GMC and much to everyone's surprise we won.

The leadership of the council called a delegate conference of all four constituency Labour Parties. The motion passed at the Norwood Labour Party GMC went up to that, and there were two motions saying cuts should be resisted but there should be rate increases, and there was a motion supporting the cuts. The majority of the councillors fought for the position of implementing cuts, but again we got a clear majority.

It has to be said that the council leadership — much to its credit — reversed the decision to carry out the cuts when they saw the grass roots feeling. The council is not carrying out the programme that we were before the cuts, but it is felt that this will lead to a large deficit at the end of the year.

We lost one battle however, in that the last GMC took out the part of the resolution referring to possible resignations. We regard that as very important. Quite a lot of money was saved by the council during the period cuts were being implemented but it's not certain what they will do at the end of the year.

The council leaderships position is that in law the deposit will have to be found out of the rates and we think that what will be proposed are big rate increases and perhaps some cuts.

My opinion is that the issue is not whether, as some put it, it is better to have a Labour council implementing cuts than a Tory council, and that what we have to do at all costs is keep Labour in office. This is a false argument as the reality of cuts, whoever carries them out, is the same.”





## Cuts, rate rises, or fight the Tories?

By Dave Burn, Islington NALGO

**THE TORIES** have confronted Labour Councils with a dilemma. Should they act as Thatcher's book-keepers? After all, the Labour Government asked them to implement cuts. If cuts are rejected, how can services be paid for with government funds reduced to a trickle?

One answer to this from left Labour councillors like Ted Knight is 'socialism on the rates'. This strategy of rate increases is both reactionary and a tactical disaster.

Labour councils tend to be elected in working class and inner city areas. Domestic rate increases will hit working class tenants and residents hardest.

The way in which rateable value is assessed results in highest rates for inner city areas. The government subsidises local services through the method of the rate support grant. This is partly assessed on the basis of the rateable value of the area — those with high levels receiving less support.

So, despite the fact that some inner city areas are in greatest need of government support, they get less subsidy. Working class people in these areas get stung wherever they turn: they pay higher rates and rents and receive relatively less government support for services!

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Of course, his plans for a ten per cent cut in services show how serious he is about defending us against Tory policies. But the anti-cuts councillors

need to answer his objections.

The answer will not be found by administering the present rate support system. Rents and rates should be frozen and the Government challenged to provide adequate funds to maintain and extend social services.

Supporters of Ted Knight object by asking 'where will the money come from to pay for these services?' True enough, a freeze on rates, rents and cuts will face councils with bankruptcy before 1980 is out.

One response is to challenge head on the stranglehold of finance capital over local government. Councils have to raise funds for building from banks and insurance companies. For this they have to pay interest on the debt accumulated.

Interest payments amount to nearly 45 per cent of Islington's total budget. By April 1980, its total outstanding debt will be £401 million,

an increase of £260 million in 6 years. With Thatcher's increase in interest rates, things can only get worse.

Soon more money will be spent on lining the finance house coffers than on services for the working class. Just think what the people of Islington could do with £401 million!

But this perspective of non-payment of interest is inadequate by itself. The financiers will not take kindly to the seizing of their profits. Loans will be withheld, facing councils with the problem of paying for wages, building materials and other things needed to keep social services afloat.

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## We're all red moles

THE BANSHEE yell of 'Traitor!' raised by the Tories and their media in response to the revelations of Anthony Blunt's role is about as surprising as the fact that banshees do yell.

That the Prime Minister should take the opportunity to threaten left-wingers with her remark that 'our task now is to guard against their [the spies'] counterparts of today' adds an ideological dimension to the attacks on the organisation and living standards of the working class already launched by her government.

But it is the response from the left which is the most instructive. 'Spying,' said an editorial in the Morning Star, 'is something we abhor and oppose'. No moles there, just upright British 'Euro-Communists' aiming to be as patriotic as the citizens on the Daily Telegraph [in fact, more so].

Labour MPs have been falling over themselves to denounce spies and affirm their loyalty to the British nation.

Dennis Skinner put himself in the front line, barely managing to raise his voice louder than that of the Tories in placing traitors on a par with mass murderers. Blunt's alleged homosexuality was sufficient for Willie Hamilton to describe him as a 'creature'.

The social democrats and their fellow travellers in the Communist Party have a touching belief in loyalty to 'their' nation, which they rightly suspect the establishment does not share.

Hence their concern for the cover-up over Blunt, with MPs such as Skinner describing Thatcher as a 'common or garden nark' for tipping off the former knight before her announcement in the Commons.

Peregrine Worsthorne deputy editor of the Sunday Telegraph, spelt out the ruling class's view of loyalty in an article published a fortnight before news of the 'fourth man' broke. It was headlined: 'When treason can be right'.

That, in case you hadn't guessed, is if a government even remotely representing the interests of the working class were elected.

'I could easily imagine myself being tempted into a treasonable disposition under a Labour government dominated by the Marxist left,' Worsthorne wrote. 'So shocking might be its programme... that it became quite natural to start looking to the United States for succour.'

There would be no question of fourth or fifth men when it comes to those co-operating with the CIA, he commented, 'since their number will, I trust, be too numerous to count.'

This is no pipe dream but an admirably frank description of how the capitalist class acts whenever its rule is threatened by an elected government. During the Allende government in Chile, for example, when the armed forces were riddled with CIA spies, American imperialism gave every possible assistance to the Chilean bourgeoisie in destabilising the government and preparing the coup which established the present brutal dictatorship.

Worsthorne and the rest of the class he represents are fully prepared to carry through a similar scenario in Britain, should the defence of their property and rule require it. Unlike the social democrats, their loyalty is not to 'their' country, for the ruling class thinks internationally, but to their class.

And unless the working class can be won to thinking likewise, the prospects for socialism are grim.

That's why all socialists are red moles, placing loyalty to the proletariat, nationally and internationally, above considerations of the nation state — which was, in any case, a creation of the bourgeoisie.

# FOR CLASS NO

George Smiley, the mole-catcher in John le Carré's spy story, is — we're led to believe — some kind of national hero. By the same token, Anthony Blunt, the real-life mole who has just surfaced, is depicted as a traitor.

**GEOFFREY SHERIDAN asks: Traitor to what? For what? And why not?**

ANTHONY Blunt, art historian, former Communist Party member, and intelligence gatherer for the Soviet Union, says that he was won to the Marxist interpretation of history in the mid-'30s, and that about the same time he became convinced that helping the Russians was the best way to aid the cause of anti-fascism.

Although this information was volunteered in his statement on Wednesday of last week, MPs and the media have been too busy persuading us about Blunt's supposed treachery to mention the circumstances which led to his undercover activities.

It's not exactly an oversight, since a river of blood ran through Europe at that time, and much of the ruling class in Britain did their best to aid Hitler's Third Reich in the hope that the Soviet Union would fall victim to the Nazis. The British establishment is not anxious for the working class to be reminded of such delicacies.

Among the first British troops to march into Germany towards the end of the Second World War was Raymond Williams, the socialist writer, who had become a member of the CP while he was a student at Cambridge University in 1939.

Williams recalls that the Nazi SS officers he was helping to detain in a liberated concentration camp said to him: 'Why did we ever get into this ridiculous war with each other when it is so clear who the common enemy is?' (the Russians were in Berlin). Williams reported these remarks to his army superiors, who told him: 'They could be right, old boy.'

## Peace with honour

Bourgeois historians are happy to discredit the policy of appeasement pursued by Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister who returned from a meeting with Hitler in Munich in September 1938, waved a piece of paper, and declared: 'Peace with honour. I believe it is peace in our time.'

That was six months after the Wehrmacht goose-stepped into Austria announcing: 'Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer.' Schuschnigg, the Austrian Chancellor, had attempted to prevent the invasion by trying to hold a plebiscite on

Austria's right to self-determination. The British ambassador in Berlin described this as an 'ill-conceived and ill-prepared folly', which happened to coincide with the Führer's view.

This was when Anthony Eden resigned as Foreign Secretary over the appeasement policy, estimating that no more than thirty of the four hundred Tory MPs shared his view.

The bourgeois historians tell us that appeasement was a genuine but misguided determination to maintain 'peace' in Europe. It was nothing of the kind. Even after the German invasion of Czechoslovakia and Poland, many of these politicians hoped that Nazism would be a bulwark against Bolshevism.

## British empire

The bourgeois politicians who opposed appeasement, most particularly Eden and Churchill, shared that hope but recognised a greater danger; that if the Nazis overran central Europe, they would be in an extremely strong position to threaten the British empire and its super-profits.

Their concern was for the competition posed by German imperialism, not the regimes imposed by fascism. The British establishment had watched with admiration the destruction of the working class movements in Italy and Germany when Mussolini and Hitler came to power.

The establishment's historians, with the benefit of hindsight, praise Churchill and deride Chamberlain. For the working class, it is another matter. In the midst of the Russian Revolution, 'Winnie' had talked of the 'foul baboonery of Bolshevism' and then sought to send British troops to join the White Russians in the civil war. His response to the 1926 General Strike had been to call for martial law. Some saviour of the people.

Opposition to fascism, both in continental Europe and at home in the shape of Oswald Moseley's Black Shirts, was the issue which along with unemployment galvanised the left in Britain in the '30s.

Mass unemployment was the progenitor of fascism, and it was the decision of the 1929-31 Labour government to cut unemployment



benefits which finally split the Labour Party, leading to the formation of the National government, led in succession by Macdonald, Baldwin, Chamberlain, and Churchill. These gentlemen continued to cut working class living standards, and did nothing to shorten the dole queues.

Organising on these issues, as well as taking up cultural questions, the Communist Party thrived at Cambridge University in the '30s. Between early 1932 and mid-'34, its membership on the campus rose from a dozen to over a hundred, and continued to grow after that and to include Anthony Blunt.

During 1936, with the battle of Cable Street against the Black Shirts and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, anti-fascist committees dotted the country.

For Blunt, Philby, Burgess, Maclean and many others, the issue could not be more clear cut. Mussolini and Hitler were arming Franco against the Republican government in Spain. The Soviet Union was aiding the Republicans, while the National government in Britain

blocked was per constituted fascism'

Those period Trotsky Internat assessme

While workers' imperial Stalin's disarmed the rise of alliance Stalin's trapped alliances

The notion of logically the Hit 1939-41.



ART historian Anthony Blunt, by appointment to the Queen. It's the fact that he betrayed her class that's so upset the establishment.



# T COUNTRY



shipments to them. Hence Blunt had that 'the CP and Russia' as the only firm bulwark, against

to broke from Stalinism in that of the miniscule ranks of the opposition to the Third would, of course, qualify that

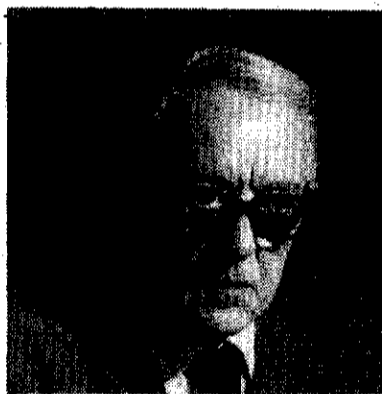
existence of the Soviet Union as a was indeed a bulwark against and its Nazi variation, it was of 'social fascism' which had resistance of the German CP to er, by preventing an anti-fascist the social democrats, and then to 'popular frontism' which European CPs into crippling the bourgeoisie.

of these murderous policies, the talism in one country, led quite most cynical development of all: talin non-aggression pact of the defence of the Soviet

bureaucracy was to be placed above every other consideration, including the sacrifice of he workers' movement internationally, then making 'peace' with the Third Reich was no obstacle. As with the policies of social fascism and popular frontism, the pact did nothing in reality to defend the Soviet Union.

Anthony Blunt's loyalty survived this development, and since the Third International had systematically undermined mass action to counter fascism, he took the one route that Stalin had left open — passing on intelligence information to the Kremlin. 'Spying' is something of an exaggerated description of this activity, because many intellectuals, scientists, and workers freely handed over secrets during the war years.

The notion of socialism in one country continues to take its toll. The CP in Britain now applies this doctrine to Britain rather than the Soviet Union, which is why it joins with the Tories in denouncing any present-day 'treason' on behalf of the workers' states.



NEVILLE Chamberlain (top) waving the piece of paper he signed with Hitler in March 1938. It donated Czechoslovakia to the Third Reich. George Smiley (above), played by Alec Guinness — latter-day mole catcher and defender of British ruling class interests.

## Act to free information!

THE TORIES have not had a lot of luck with their legislation. Last week, in the wake of the Blunt affair, Margaret Thatcher announced that the Protection of Official Information Bill, already introduced in the House of Lords, was being dumped.

The government could hardly do otherwise. The Blunt 'scandal' has been blazoned around the world, and Andrew Boyle, whose book *The Climate of Treason* first brought the facts to light, declared that the proposed law would make the publication of such information in Britain illegal.

In fact, Boyle was only able to write his book by using sources in Washington. The present, absurd situation is that authors and journalists who have sufficient funds are travelling to the American capital in order to obtain from the US government documents about activities and policies of British governments.

Here, the Official Secrets Act seals up virtually all information concerning the civil service, the military, the secret service, and just about every other aspect of government affairs.

### Defunct

The now defunct Protection of Official Information Bill, which showed all the signs of being dreamt

up by civil servants, would have greatly extended the powers of officials to classify information, and of the courts to prosecute those publishing it.

Even mentioning that you thought your phone was tapped would have been a punishable offence.

In the United States, a step towards the public's right to know has been taken with the Freedom of Information Act. This gives an individual access to any information about him or herself, or about any organisation s/he belongs to that is held on federal, state, or local government files.

Thus, for example, Philip Agee — who was expelled from Britain because of his activities against the CIA — has obtained copies of telegrams sent from the US embassy in London about his deportation.

### Courts

As in the Blunt case, the American legislation also provides access to documents about domestic and foreign policies and activities. While the discretion that can be exercised by the authorities in revealing details can be challenged in the courts (in which, incidentally, the judges are elected), the legislation is far from perfect. But it's a far cry from the clandestinity of Whitehall.

Last week's backdown on official secrecy by the Tory government does not mean that new legislation will be much more liberal than the defunct Bill; merely that it will be a little less blatant.

Secrecy — in the affairs of industry, finance, and the state itself — is an important weapon for capitalism, for it allows the bourgeoisie to formulate its plans against the working class of its 'own' country and others in a way most beneficial to their realisation.

The myth that elected governments, at least, know what's going on has been exploded by the Blunt case. When the secret service granted Blunt immunity from prosecution in 1964, the Prime Minister of the day was not informed. And that Prime Minister, Lord Hume, was a Tory.

Countless historical examples in Britain and elsewhere, show how the state apparatus routinely conspires against left-wing governments in capitalist societies, quite apart from the secretive decisions of business and finance, which will defend their interests against those of the working class and its government.

That is why we should demand the opening of all the books of companies and the banks, and why we should call for a Freedom of Information Act which makes all the files of government and the state open to inspection.

# The irrationality of Corrie's anti-abortion Bill

By Alan Beard

THE ABORTION (Amendment) Bill has been put forward to change the 1967 Abortion Act. According to at least one estimate two-thirds of the abortions carried out now would be illegal if the Bill came into force.

The thinking behind the Bill shows fundamental inconsistencies within itself. This was clear after a meeting with Michael Ancram, MP for Edinburgh South and co-sponsor of the Bill. Of course, even if the thinking was more self-consistent, the measure would still represent a very reactionary change.

Ancram said the intention in changing the '67 Act was to get away from what he called a 'statistical' interpretation to an 'individual' interpretation. The '67 Act allows a woman to have an abortion if two doctors are willing to agree that the risk of continuing with the pregnancy is greater than the risk of having an abortion.

### Assessment

A proper assessment of this involves considering a large number of cases and comparing risks associated with pregnancies and abortions that have occurred in the past in a systematic and coherent way.

Professor Peter Huntingford of the London Hospital did just that and found that the risk of having an abortion is less than the risk associated with pregnancy (at least as long as the abortion is not carried out at a very late stage). It therefore followed that any woman who wanted an abortion should, according to the Act, legally be able to get one, so long as two doctors agreed.

The Corrie Bill removes this basic criterion and makes abortion legal only if there is 'grave or serious' risk to the health of the mother. This would then be left wide open to interpretation by doctors. The doctor can no longer adopt the sensible approach of Huntingford but is to magically decide whether a risk is 'serious' by 'judgement' based on his clinical experience and point of view.

The relative criterion of the 1967 Act, which is amenable to clear interpretation largely because it is relative, is to be replaced by increasing the weight of the guesswork and prejudices of individual doctors.

### Horrified

It is as though Parliament, having unwittingly found a situation it could understand, was horrified by it. Quick, the doctor must be back on his pedestal! The religion of medicine must be maintained.

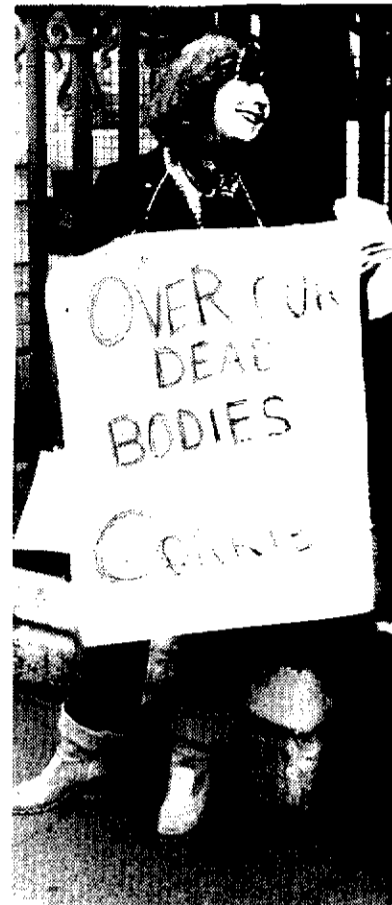
In face of this it is rather amazing that Ancram claims the Bill is 'objective', but he claims that the notion of 'injury' shows this. But why is injury being used as a criterion at all? Why should the criterion not just as well be that the woman has decided that she wants an abortion?

The proposers also claim that the Bill reflects social values, that most people want the Bill.

It is truly incredible that something can be 'objective' and yet be devised to reflect the moral values of society at the same time; not that the Bill does reflect what people want in any case. The overwhelming opposition to it from all quarters and the very large demonstration against it in London on 28 October strongly indicate the opposite.

### 'Pressures'

Michael Ancram also says that he is trying to get rid of the 'pressures' on women. According to him women are being persuaded to have abortions when they do not want them. He quotes a case of a woman who



developed German measles during pregnancy and had an abortion which, it is said, she later regretted.

He ignores the fact that a child born to a woman who has had German measles during pregnancy is almost certain to be very severely handicapped. If he is serious in wishing to remove the 'pressures' from the woman then logically the woman should be allowed to take the decision herself, with as little interference from others as possible.

### Impossible

The proposers also say that the Bill will make the availability of abortion more 'uniform'. However, the lack of 'uniformity' in the working of the present Act is due to the powers of consultants and variations in NHS facilities throughout the country.

It is almost impossible to obtain NHS abortions in some parts of the country and this is very often because powerful local doctors are anti-abortion. 'Uniformity' could be introduced by removing the dictatorial powers of consultants and making more facilities available on the NHS, not by arrogating even more arbitrary powers to doctors.

The Bill also seeks to severely curtail the actions of the charities which provide abortion where the NHS fails. The proposers claim that there is a 'financial incentive' to send people for abortion. This must be the only time that the Tory Party has come out against 'financial incentive'!

### 'Spirit'

In practice the charities provide a service, at a cost, because the NHS is failing to carry out its proper task. But the sponsors have no intention of ensuring that the NHS expands to fill the gap. The proposers of the Bill claim to agree with the 'spirit' of the 1967 Act. If that is true then it is clear that the 'spirit' they have in mind is a malicious one.

The points made here have concentrated on the self-contradictions in the thinking behind the Abortion [Amendment] Bill. The real issue is whether or not society is going to act in an even more repressive way towards women [and, less directly, men also] than it already does. The resounding answer from both women and men must be a decisive 'No!'.



**ANTI-RACIST NEWS**

**Aeysha must stay.**

At least one of the Tories' election pledges is being fulfilled in Oxford. Already since the election four Asians have been threatened with deportation. Three have been deported. The fourth, a 9-year-old boy, Akram Dogar, was allowed to stay only after a massive local campaign.

Now another 'illegal' immigrant is threatened. Seven-year old Aeysha Khatun came to Britain in July. She came with her adoptive mother, Mrs Rojob, with whom she has lived since her mother died five years ago. Mrs Rojob came to join her husband, who lives and works in Oxford. Now the Home Office want to send Aeysha back to Bangladesh, where she has no one to look after her.

Over 70 people — and BBC Nationwide cameras — attended a public meeting on 14 November organised by the Oxford Multi-racial Action Group (an alliance of black and Asian organisations, trade unions and other anti-racist groups). The facts of the case were outlined by Oxford CCR chairperson Alan Griffiths, who described the case as 'the worst he had ever come across'.

An Asian woman speaker described how 'England used to need cheap labour' and encouraged immigration. Now that they are no longer 'needed', they are systematically harassed. She instanced the notorious virginity tests. A delegate from the trades council tied in the attacks on black people with the attacks on the working class, and emphasised the need to oppose the Tory government.

A final decision from the Home Office is expected in the next few days. Plans are being discussed to oppose the decision if it goes against us. A Socialist Challenge supporter suggested at the public meeting that the transport unions at Heathrow and elsewhere should be approached to seek their cooperation in opposing Aeysha's deportation.

**'Karaa' rights upheld.**

SEVERAL weeks ago Marwinder Singh Marway was walking with two friends in the High Street in East Ham, East London, when they were attacked by two white youths. During the fight Marwinder's metal bangle (called a 'karaa' — it has religious significance for Sikhs) fell off his hand. He caught it in his left hand and when punched he hit back with his 'karaa'.

Soon the fight stopped and the Asians went to a barber's shop. A mob gathered and attacked them — Marwinder was hit over the head and needed several stitches. But when the police arrived they arrested Marwinder and charged him with possessing the 'karaa', which was classified as an offensive weapon.

During the trial the prosecution used a white witness who admitted that he was 'prejudiced against Pakis'. The jury took two minutes to find Marwinder not guilty, but the judge refused to award him any damages.

Being a black, Marwinder should regard himself lucky that he wasn't sent down for six months. The judge did not actually say this, but there is every chance that he thought it.

**'We're here to stay'**  
**10,000 MARCH AGAINST RACIST LAWS**

By David Wax and Asha Patel  
**THE FIRST** mass demonstration against the racist immigration laws took place last Sunday. Over 10,000 demonstrators assembled in Hyde Park at midday and marched off to Trafalgar Square.

The overwhelming majority of the demonstrators were Asian workers — from London, the Midlands, Yorkshire and also Glasgow. It was a mobilisation which could not have taken place without the efforts of the two major Indian Workers Associations. A large contingent of Asian workers from the Rover plant in Solihull marched behind their union banner. Also there in force were many Sikh, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Kashmiri organisations.

**Black**

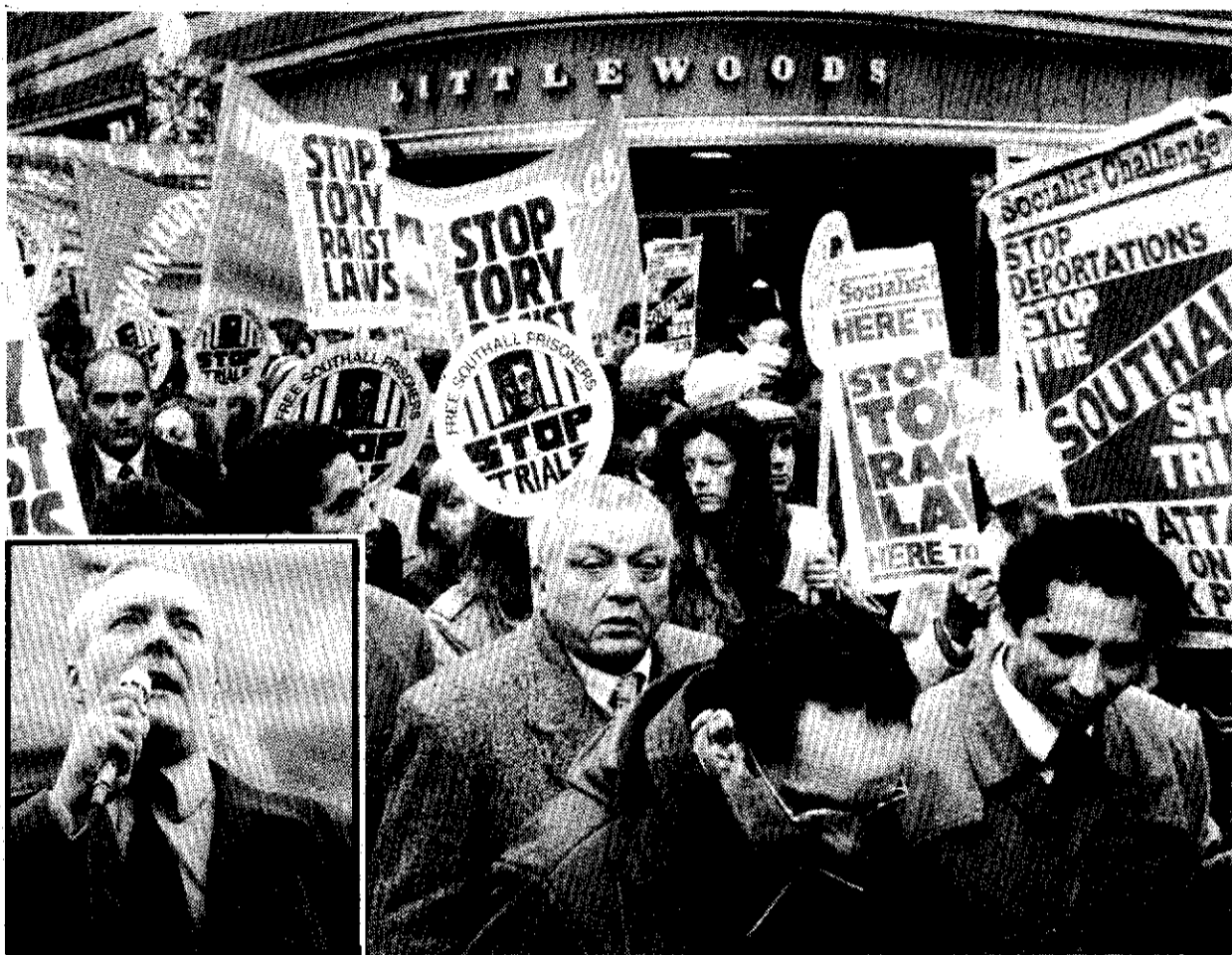
The Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party and International Marxist Group were represented by banners, placards and several hundred members. But the traditional base of the Anti Nazi League was almost entirely absent. It was from beginning to end a black workers' demonstration.

Many commented bitterly on the lack of support from the labour movement. 'There are only half a dozen trades council banners on the whole march', commented an Asian trade unionist and Labour Party member. Apart from Rover and a Ford Langley banner, the only other sizable union contingents were from NALGO, the NUT, and NATFHE. A few constituency Labour parties were also represented.

The mood of the march was dignified but militant. There was anger against the deportations taking place every day. There was hostility towards the media for ignoring the plight of the Southall 342. Thousands of placards demanded an end to the continuing show trials at Barnet magistrates court.

**Mother**

The first speaker at Trafalgar Square was Anwār Sultana Ditta, a mother of three from Rochdale who has been fighting since 1975 to be reunited with her children. She married her husband in Pakistan in 1968 when she was 15, and returned to England four years ago. Her children were not allowed to join her. The Home Office is challenging the fact



Tony Benn got special applause when he referred to the struggle in Zimbabwe.

that she is their mother. After her speech Sultana, now in tears, told her story to Tony Benn who took detailed notes and promised to raise the matter in the House of Commons.

Avtar Jouhal and N S Noor, the leaders of the two IWAs from the Midlands, attacked the Tory government and the immigration Acts. Tariq Ali, speaking on behalf of the International Marxist Group, stressed how important it is for black people to make it clear that 'we are here to stay'.

Tony Benn spoke in support of Labour Party policy for repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act, and explained how 'capitalism in crisis seeks to divide workers through racist and sexist measures'. He argued that all those campaigning on different issues needed to come together with a

common purpose; special applause greeted his mention of the struggle in Zimbabwe.

Suresh Grover (Southall Defence) stressed that platform speeches from Benn and other Labour lefts were all very well, but what was their record of action? What had they done to defend the Southall 342?

Paul Holborrow of the ANL stated that 'the fight to reinstate Derek Robinson and the fight against racism are the same', while Sibghat Kadri (Standing Committee of Pakistani Organisations) emphasised that it was instructive that the vast majority of demonstrators were black.

But the demonstration can only be seen as a small beginning. A continuing campaign to mobilise the black communities against the racist and sexist laws is necessary for any

lasting impact. Six thousand people have been imprisoned since 1973 under the 1971 Immigration Act. This figure does not include those who are locked up in detention centres like Harmondsworth, where 5,128 were detained in the last year alone.

It would be tragic if the Campaign Against Racist Laws were to disappear after this demonstration. For in order to ensure that the deportations are fought CARL will have to be built in the black communities and the labour movement.

One weakness which needs to be remedied was the virtual absence of West Indians on the demonstration. The gulf between the West Indian and the Asian communities must be bridged in order to maximise the impact of black people on national politics in this country.

**Nazis attack Holborrow**

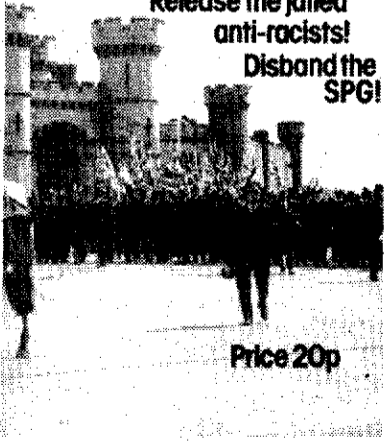
ON 15 November a group of fascist hoodlums broke up a meeting organised by the Socialist Workers Party in Brixton where Paul Holborrow was speaking on 'Labour and the Cuts'.

Twenty Nazis invaded the meeting with truncheons and iron bars and attacked those present. Five comrades were treated in hospital and one had to have 120 stitches. The meeting has been re-organised for 29 November.

By chance someone overheard a Nazi in a public call box talking about plans to bomb Union Place Resource Centre, a community printshop. Last Saturday night a dozen people stayed in Union Place with cameras. Three Nazis were caught in the back garden wiring up a bomb. The police were called and the Nazis were arrested.

The growth in Nazi violence is partially the result of a competition between the NF and the British Movement for new recruits.

**Support the Leicester 87!**  
**Quash the Convictions!**  
**Release the jailed anti-racists!**  
**Disband the SPG!**



Price 20p

Published by the Anti Nazi League on behalf of Leicester April 21st Defence Committee, this pamphlet describes the events that led to the arrest of 87 anti-fascists during the last general election in Leicester.

**Anti-Nuclear Campaign will grow and grow**

By John Boran

ON SATURDAY 25 November the anti-nuclear campaign (ANC) had its launching conference in London. 500 people from a huge variety of organisations — from the Ecology Party and the Young Liberals to the many local anti-nuclear campaigns and alliances responded to the call from Energy 2000.

The aim of the ANC is to unite and coordinate the anti-nuclear campaign in Britain. The conference was opened by Arthur Scargill, president of the Yorkshire NUM, saying its task was to win the battle of ideas against nuclear power in Britain. The organisation would coordinate activity but retain the autonomy of the constituent organisations.

The programme agreed by the conference was:  
\*Stop nuclear power  
\*Reduce energy wastage  
\*Develop alternative energy programmes

\*Guarantee employment during the changeover.

The conference and the formation of the ANC are a step forward for the anti-nuclear movement. But now it should consider whether its time should really be spent on promoting alternative energy solutions for the 'energy gap', which misses the real problem — the political reasons for the development of nuclear power as a method of stabilising energy supplies to the West and protecting energy security from both the miners and the oil producing third world states.

The demand for unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain should be incorporated into the campaign of the ANC, as it makes the link between civil and military use of nuclear technology.

Now having won the Yorkshire NUM to an anti-nuclear stand the campaign should turn to the other sections of the trade union movement to win them to the same position.



# Another British solution grinds to a halt

By Geoff Bell

'THE government means business,' said Northern Ireland Secretary Humphrey Atkins when he introduced his Green Paper on Tuesday of last week.

Unfortunately for Atkins it soon emerged that if he meant business few others did. By the weekend his 'working paper for a conference' had been rejected by the Official Unionists and the Social Democratic and Labour Party.

The only people prepared to talk are the extreme Loyalists in the Democratic Unionist Party, led by Ian Paisley, and the 'moderate' Unionists of the Alliance Party who are heavy on image but light on support.

The key points of the Green Paper are:

\*No consideration of a united Ireland, independence or confederation.

\*No return to power sharing, but the possibility of 'minority participation in decision making'.

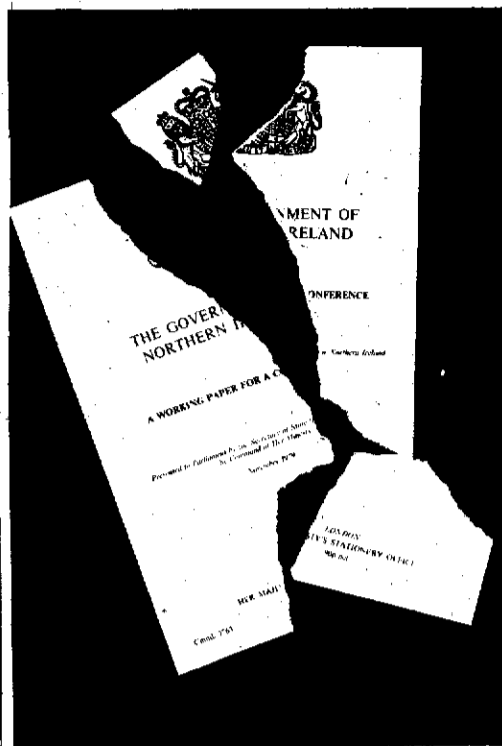
\*A possible 'Bill of Rights'.

\*'Law and order' to remain in the control of Westminster.

Why have the proposals been met so coldly by the majority of the parties in the North of Ireland?

For the Catholic-backed SDLP the answer is obvious. With very limited 'safeguards' for Catholic rights, Atkins' proposals amount to a virtual handover to the Loyalists. When the issue of a united Ireland is not even allowed to be raised at the conference, the SDLP — to maintain whatever support it has — had no choice but to opt out.

The Official Unionists' refusal to attend the conference appears more peculiar. But the Green Paper is being used by the warring Loyalist factions to score political points off each other.



Paisley promised he would consider attending the discussions if the Tories promise to step up 'security'. He demanded a special meeting with Thatcher, was given it, and declared himself satisfied afterwards. 'Mrs Thatcher,' said Paisley, 'is the only Prime Minister who has ever said to me that the way to defeat the IRA is through military defeat.'

But promises by themselves did not satisfy the Official Unionists whose new leader, James

Molyneux, has decided that the best way he can win back support lost to the Democratic Unionists is to appear more Paisley than Paisley himself.

Accordingly, Molyneux called for greater 'security' before the conference.

The Tories tried their best to deliver. Two weeks ago junior minister Philip Goodhart had a late night booze-up with Unionist MP Harold McClusker. At one point McClusker complained that the Provisional Sinn Fein was squatting in government property.

Falling over himself to please, Goodhart immediately phoned some unfortunate civil servant and ordered Sinn Fein's eviction. But even that has failed to impress, and the Official Unionists have maintained their boycott.

## Pique

While the Official Unionists' pique must have annoyed the Tories, Atkins himself was probably not too upset.

According to newspaper reports in various British and Irish newspapers, Atkins didn't support launching an initiative in the first place. Apparently, Thatcher insisted on some sort of Northern Irish window dressing in order to placate the demands coming from the United States that Britain at least be seen to try something.

Now Atkins has tried and he has failed. The odds always were that he would. From the outset his proposed conference had the appearance of a stunt.

The plan seemed to be that Atkins would allow the conference to ramble on for a couple of months, announce that no agreement was forthcoming, and then the government would impose its solution and submit it to a

referendum.

But that depended on the participation in the conference of the SDLP. It didn't matter so much if one Loyalist party refused to attend so long as another one did.

But with no party at the conference from the Catholic side it means that Atkins cannot even suggest that the Northern Irish minority was given the opportunity to agree to a solution. What has now been exposed is that Atkins' terms of reference ruled out from the start the participation of the SDLP.

Atkins must now be wishing he had never given in to Thatcher and attempted the whole charade. The only thing he has managed to achieve is the alienation of the SDLP.

Roy Mason notched up a similar achievement when he was in office, but at least Mason sacrificed SDLP support for increased backing from the Official Unionists. Atkins has not even managed to achieve that.

This latest and most dismal British initiative confirms what similar ventures in the past have suggested: that it is useless attempting 'consensus' politics in the North of Ireland because there is no consensus.

The one issue Atkins ruled out of discussion, that of Irish unity, is the issue that matters because it is that which divides. It cannot be skirted around, ignored, or avoided.

The simple truth is that this British government — as countless others in the past — has only two 'options'. One is to agree to the right of the Irish people to rule themselves; the other is to repress those who insist on that principle.

The obvious bet is that the Tories will now opt for increased repression, but the crisis of their policy is that they know that in the last ten years repressive policies have as long a history of failure as have political initiatives.

# Portrait of a renegade

THE following story is told about Gerry Fitt, who resigned from the Social Democratic and Labour Party last week after it voted not to attend the Atkins talks on Northern Ireland.

Apparently Fitt was hit on the head by a police baton during the famous civil rights march of 5 October 1968. Shortly afterwards he was sitting in a Derry hotel relating his heroism to any who would listen.

A considerate waitress approached Fitt and offered to replace his blood-stained shirt. 'Oh no', said Fitt in a panic. The shirt was too good for his image; he wore it for the next week.

The fact that Gerry Fitt is an opportunist explains in part why he has survived longer than anyone else in Northern Irish politics. Being an opportunist he has often changed his mind.

As recently as last November he was dubbing the Thatcher government 'one of the most reactionary

Conservative governments in the history of Westminster'. Now Fitt insists that much can be gained for the Northern Irish minority by talking to that government.

Yet these talks specifically rule out any consideration of what is contained in article four of the SDLP constitution — 'to promote Irish unity'.

## Unity

At times Fitt has been careful to play up the unity aspect of the SDLP's policy. Speaking in November 1978 he declared: 'Let me state in quite blunt terms, the SDLP stands for the reunification of this country. The SDLP does not believe that the partition of this country was ever justified. The SDLP wants to unite people of all religions and outlooks not only in Northern Ireland but in the whole of Ireland.'

Whether or not the SDLP believes in such principles, Fitt has now indicated that he does not. Indeed, he has always been more interested in co-operating with various British 'solutions' — whatever they happen to be.

## Affection

He was deputy leader of the 'power-sharing' executive brought down by the Loyalist strike of 1974, and he still remembers that executive with affection. Speaking recently on BBC television he boasted: 'I was a willing signatory to the Sunningdale Agreement, part of which, in fact the remaining part of which, is the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill which makes it possible for terrorists in either part of Ireland to be brought before the courts.'

Being involved in headline-capturing events like nailing 'terrorists' has appealed to Fitt. He has always been full of himself. Once he was a Westminster MP, an MP at the old North of Ireland Stormont parliament, and a Belfast city councillor — all at the same time.

## Importance

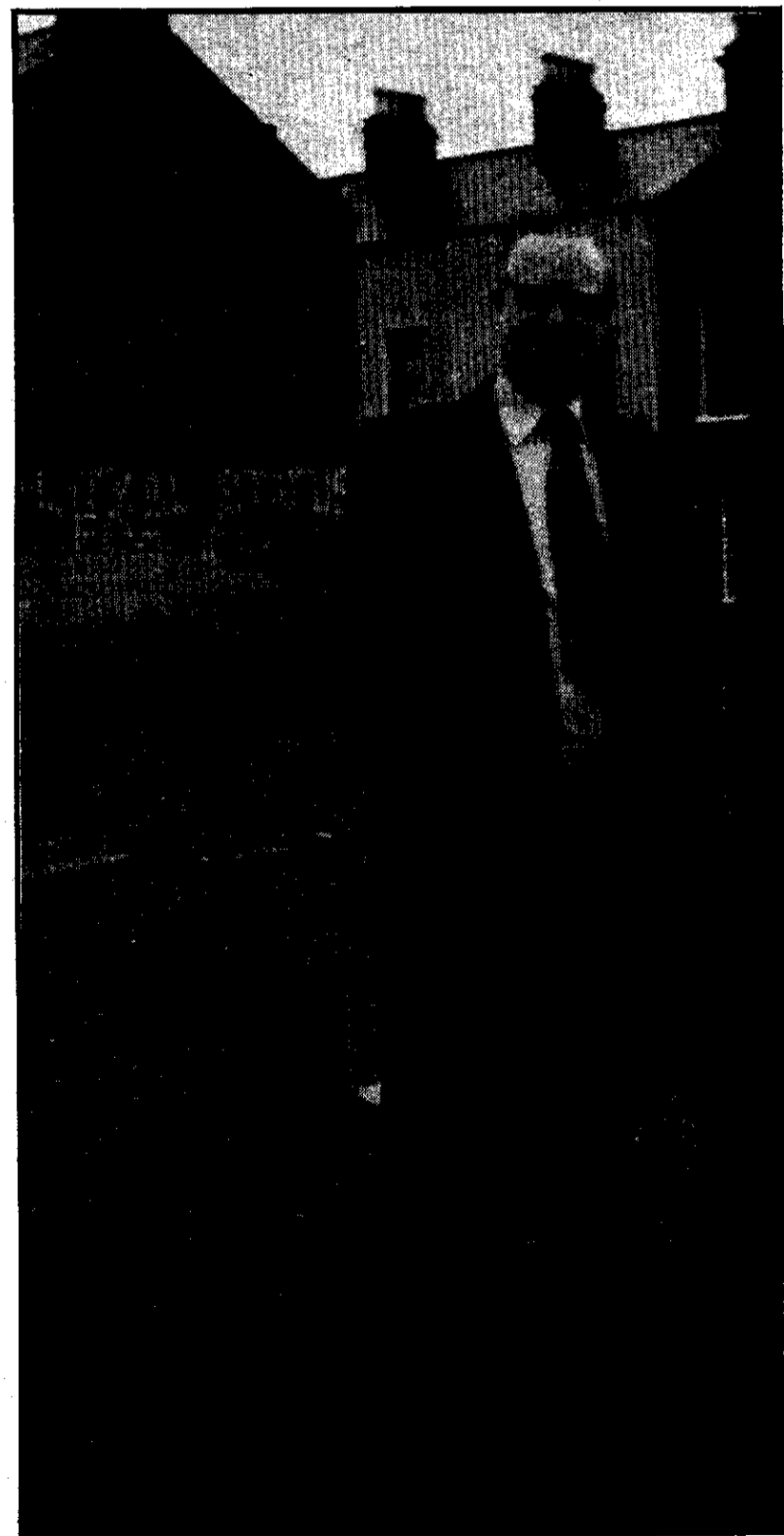
The SDLP's decision not to take part in the Atkins talks offended Fitt's sense of his own importance. He believes that he and he alone should decide such matters.

That the SDLP chose otherwise and voted against participating in the talks reflects the increasing feeling in the SDLP ranks for a more Republican stance. Fitt's departure is part of that pressure — and it is the best thing that has happened to the SDLP for a long time.

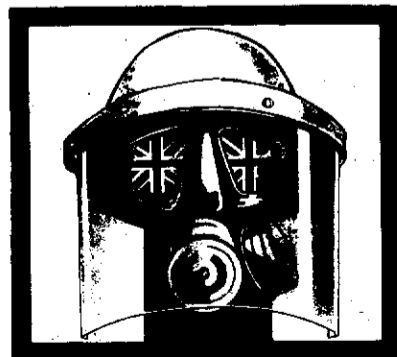
## Excuse

It may also have its effect in this country. At the recent Labour Party conference a prominent left-wing Labour MP explained to 'troops out' supporters that 'It's bloody difficult for us to call for British withdrawal. You see Gerry Fitt won't let us.'

With Fitt's isolation that is one less excuse for the Labour left to avoid the issue of Ireland.



**BUILD THE MOVEMENT TO GET THEM OUT NOW**



**National Conference United Troops Out Movement**

**December 8/9 City of London Poly**

Student Union, Fairholt House, Whitechapel High Rd E1, Aldgate East Tube Open to all members and supporters of the UTOM. Food and creche provided.



# STOP CARTER'S WAR DRIVE

By David Frankel

**THE UNITED STATES is closer to war today than at any time since the end of its military intervention in Vietnam.**

Using as a pretext the US-provoked seizure of the US embassy and sixty-two American hostages in Tehran, President Carter has carried out a steadily escalating series of measures that have already reached the level of economic warfare. And there is no indication that the escalation is over.

Carter's steps so far have included:

\* A ban on demonstrations by Iranian students. The blanket refusal to issue federal permits for such demonstrations in Washington goes far beyond any of the repressive measures attempted even at the height of the war in Vietnam.

\* An order, issued on 10 November, requiring all Iranian students in the United States to report to the Immigration and Naturalisation Service for possible deportation. Hundreds of Iranians have already been ordered to leave the country.

## Internment

Even US government lawyers questioned the constitutionality of this racist round-up, which singles out Iranians solely on the basis of their nationality. Such a step, reminiscent of the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, has never before been carried out in peace-time.

\* On 12 November, Carter ordered a halt to all oil imports from Iran, indicating at the same time that he would welcome similar moves by US allies.

Also on 12 November, troops from the Pentagon's Rapid Deployment Force carried out 'readiness manoeuvres' at Fort Hood, Texas.

\* A more direct threat was announced on 13 November when a fleet of nineteen US and British warships, led by the US aircraft carrier *Midway*, began manoeuvres in the Arabian Sea, just south of Iran.

\* And on 14 November, Carter announced the biggest step yet with the freezing of all Iranian government assets in US-owned banks — both within the United States and internationally.

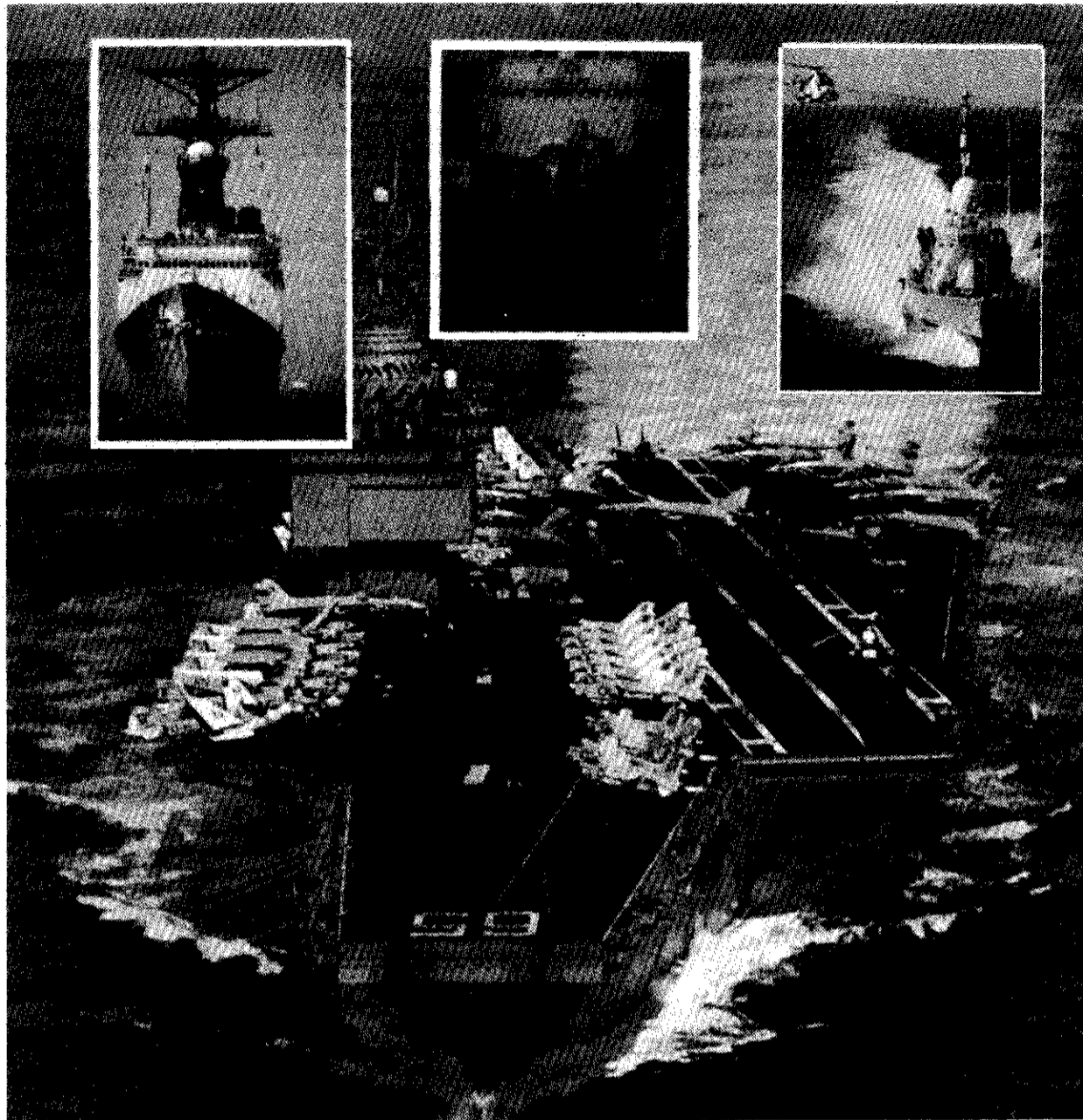
## Freeze

Despite denials by Washington, the effect of the freeze was to give it a stranglehold on Iran's foreign trade.

Television news programmes announcing the freeze on Iranian assets showed film clips of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour to illustrate the precedents for Carter's action. The message to the American people was to be prepared for war.

Accompanying Carter's moves has been a flood of articles and commentary in the capitalist media intended to sucker the American people into going along.

The impression conveyed by the mass media, however, does not represent the real mood of the American workers. Pro-war demonstrations have been organised mainly by right-wing groups such as the Jewish Defense League and Young

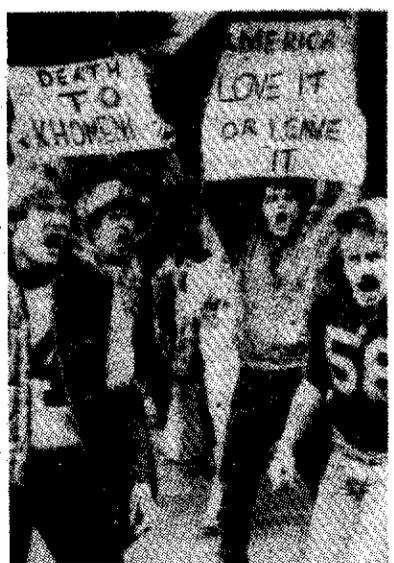


'This nation lives by the rule of law,' commented the Wall Street Journal

Americans for Freedom. They have generally been tiny.

Fifty right-wingers turned out at Brooklyn College in New York on 14 November to be met by other students chanting 'Down With the Shah'.

Two other anti-Iranian demonstrations in downtown New York drew turnouts of six and thirty. United Press International reported a demonstration of 200 in Dallas on 16 November, noting that 'organisers had hoped for as many as 10,000 marchers'.



With the exception of one action at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, where UPI claimed 2,000 sang patriotic songs, there has not been a single right-wing demonstration anywhere in the United States larger than the 14 October action welcoming Fidel Castro to the United Nations.

Although some trade union bureaucrats have lined up behind Carter, those who have gone out of their way to express support have been the exception. American workers are opposed to a new

Vietnam-style war. In the midst of the crisis, polls show a clear majority opposed to armed intervention.

As the days go by there is growing sentiment for returning the Shah in order to secure the release of the hostages and avoid a war. Both demonstrators in Tehran and the Iranian government have appealed to the American people, and their appeals are having an effect.

## Tyrant

In the most dramatic example yet of this consciousness of the need to reach out to the American people, Khomeini declared that women and blacks among the hostages would be released. He pointed in particular to the 'pressure and tyranny' suffered by blacks in the United States.

Despite the false impression of unanimity among the American people that the capitalist media is attempting to convey, it felt compelled to respond. As the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* noted on 14 November, 'within the US voices are already being raised suggesting that the Shah is after all some kind of tyrant and thief, not worth the safety of 60 Americans'.

## Tribunal

With typical hypocrisy, the *Journal* insisted that 'this nation lives by the rule of law', even as Carter was illegally banning demonstrations, deporting students, and freezing Iranian assets.

Turning to the idea of a public tribunal to investigate the Shah's crimes, the *Journal* expressed its real worries.

'And make no mistake, if we negotiate some kind of compromise invoking some international tribunal, we would be giving our assent to a propaganda forum against the United States. It would be tantamount to putting US governments of the last 26 years in the dock with the Shah...'

Moreover, the sages of Wall Street continued, 'think a bit how the example must look to the Saudi royal family and how the Shah's further humiliation would affect its opinion of the US and its willingness to find some accord with anti-American forces'.

# US hands off Iran!

THE World Congress of the Fourth International, meeting in Belgium, issued the following statement.

THE US government is using its economic power and threatening to use its vast military arsenal to impose imperialist interests in Iran.

In an arrogant response to the demands of the Iranian working masses for the return of the Shah and the wealth he plundered, the US rulers have escalated their aggressive moves.

A fleet of US, British, Australian and New Zealand warships has been activated in the Arabian Sea. American troops have been placed on the alert in the United States. Carter has ordered a boycott of Iranian oil and has frozen more than \$6 billion in assets held by the Iranian government in the United States.

A chauvinist war hysteria is being whipped up by the imperialist governments and capitalist media around the world to justify these moves. This campaign portrays the Iranian masses as bloodthirsty, reactionary religious fanatics. It blames the Iranian people, especially the heroic oil workers, for the energy crisis contrived by the imperialist oil monopolies.

Right-wing hooligan attacks on Iranian citizens in the United States are being used to create the impression that American workers want to go to war against their Iranian brothers and sisters.

From the point of view of the *Wall Street Journal* and the Carter administration, the lives of sixty hostages are small change when measured against such considerations. Washington is determined to keep the pot boiling. The US ruling class fears that the revolution in Iran may go beyond the limits of the capitalist system and spread to other countries in the Middle East. It needs a pretext for military intervention.

Millions of workers, soldiers, students, and urban poor have been demonstrating in Tehran and other Iranian cities against US imperialism and demanding the return of the Shah. They are the living example of what the capitalist rulers fear will happen in other Middle East countries.

## Rebellion

Part of the hysterical tone in the mass media is due not just to the deepening of the revolution in Iran, but also to the broader advances registered by the world revolution. From the downfall of the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea, to the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua, the advances of the black liberation struggle in southern Africa, and the successful uprising against the Gairy regime in Grenada — the imperialists are beset by the nightmare of a world in rebellion.

American workers are opposed to any more wars like the one in Vietnam. But if Carter and his superiors on Wall Street were to have their way, workers would soon be fighting and dying once again for the protection of US corporate profits.

Whether Carter succeeds will be determined largely by the political struggle within the United States. Socialists there are already countering the war drive through public meetings, picket lines, election campaigns, and discussions with co-workers in the mines, mills, and plants. At the same time, the greater mobilisation of the masses in Iran, the harder will it be for Washington to move against them.

It is in the interests of the workers and peasants of the entire world to unconditionally support the Iranian people in their struggle with US imperialism. That is the task of the day.

But neither the American working class nor the workers and oppressed masses around the world want an imperialist military intervention in Iran. They know the Iranian people struck a blow for freedom around the world when they threw out the butcher Shah and his imperialist advisers.

Carter calls the Iranian people 'terrorists'. But the real terrorists in Iran have been the imperialist powers who armed the Shah to the hilt, and the CIA and Israeli agents and the SAVAK agents they trained, who were responsible for tens of thousands of deaths and untold numbers of torture victims.

Today the Iranian masses are fighting to extend the revolution that ousted the despotic regime of the Shah, to win full social and economic equality, and to end imperialist interference. They deserve the fullest solidarity from the world working class.

The World Congress of the Fourth International calls on all workers' organisations around the world to mobilise the broadest possible campaign of action against Washington's military threats in Iran.

Return the murderer-Shah to be tried for his crimes!

Give back the wealth stolen from the toiling masses of Iran!

US hands off Iran! Withdraw the imperialist fleet from the Arabian Sea!

## Behind the Veil

BEHIND THE VEIL

**Iranian women's photography**

Talk, slides, films. Women only, crèche available.

2-14 December, 3-6pm

Women's Arts Alliance, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, London NW1



PEOPLE might be forgiven for not knowing much about the situation in Nicaragua today after the Sandinista-led popular uprising which overthrew Somoza in July.

The struggle to reconstruct a country devastated by Somoza's scorched-earth policy; the growth of popular defence committees and the call for a 200,000-strong militia; the growing unease of the bourgeoisie about the radicalisation encouraged by the Sandinistas (FSLN) — none of these have merited coverage in the 'quality' papers. Even much of the left press (Morning Star, Militant and Socialist Worker) has only followed events there sporadically.

The first task is to break that silence and establish the need for solidarity. Whatever the disputes existing on the left about the 'revolutionary capacities' of the FSLN, we can all agree that the best conditions for a socialist outcome lie in unconditional aid to the Nicaraguan people against imperialism's blackmail attempts to tie aid to FSLN political concessions.

Our second task is to organise that solidarity. We need a huge international campaign based on non-exclusive action committees around two main slogans: Solidarity with the Nicaraguan people! Imperialist hands off Nicaragua!

## End the silence

# SOLIDARITY WITH NICARAGUA

The work done in Britain since 1973 in solidarity with the Chilean people should make it easier to appeal for support in consolidating the first successful popular uprising for twenty years in Latin America — particularly since it's possible that if the process is not consummated in a socialist solution we could yet see another

Chile in Nicaragua.

Already in Britain the Nicaraguan Coordinating Committee (NCC), with quite modest resources, has done valuable work in getting bulletins out and setting up committees in a score of cities. The country has been

divided up for the purpose of direct links with different centres in Nicaragua on aid projects: Scotland (Masaya), North (Esteli), Midlands, Wales and the South West (Matagalpa), and South East (Rivas).

However the NCC is the first to admit that it needs to broaden out and root the campaign in the labour movement. It aims to do this by approaching prominent individuals and organisations to sponsor an appeal for solidarity with Nicaragua and a national conference in March.

Particular work is underway in the health and education unions to establish links with the health and literacy campaigns in Nicaragua. A pamphlet on women in Nicaragua is being prepared for work in the women's movement and it is hoped to arrange a tour with a representative from the Nicaraguan women's movement.

Socialist Challenge supporters can build solidarity by affiliating to and getting their organisations to sponsor the NCC. Contact NCC c/o 20 Compton Terrace, London N1 (tel 01-226 6747).

\*The 11th World Congress of the Fourth International decided to make solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution its number one international priority. Full details next week.

## How the Bolivian coup ran out of steam

By Dave Kellaway

THE COUP in Bolivia launched by Colonel Natusch on 1 November collapsed 16 days later under the weight of mass working class opposition coupled with hostility from US imperialism.

Bolivia now has its first woman president, Lidia Gueiler, committed to 'democratisation' and backed by the US and all but one of the main political parties. But the problems which led to the coup remain.

Bolivia, like other Latin American countries, has a history marked by an infernal cycle of mass struggle/coup/mass struggle/democratic opening/class struggle/coup. Without stable parties of its own capable of winning mass support, the bourgeoisie has turned repeatedly to the armed forces.

This happened in 1971 with the bloody coup led by Colonel Hugo Banzer to overthrow the Torres regime, which had taken a series of anti-imperialist measures and established a popular assembly.

Continuing unrest — including one or two mass upheavals — led to the overthrow of Banzer last year. A 'democratic opening' backed by the US was proclaimed, and elections announced for July 1979.

But these resolved nothing for the ruling class. The popular front reformist UDP [Popular Democratic Union] got a slight majority ahead of



the MNR [National Revolutionary Movement] and Banzer's ADN [National Democratic Action]. But the compromise Guevara government was paralysed in face of the economic crisis and rising mass demands to bring Banzer to justice. This was when Natusch made his move.

But mass action from the central trade union federation, the Bolivian Confederation of Workers [COB], was decisive. It reinforced opposition from a section of the military, other Latin American countries, and the US — which withdrew all aid and

threatened to release its tin stocks onto the world market in order to wreck the Bolivian economy.

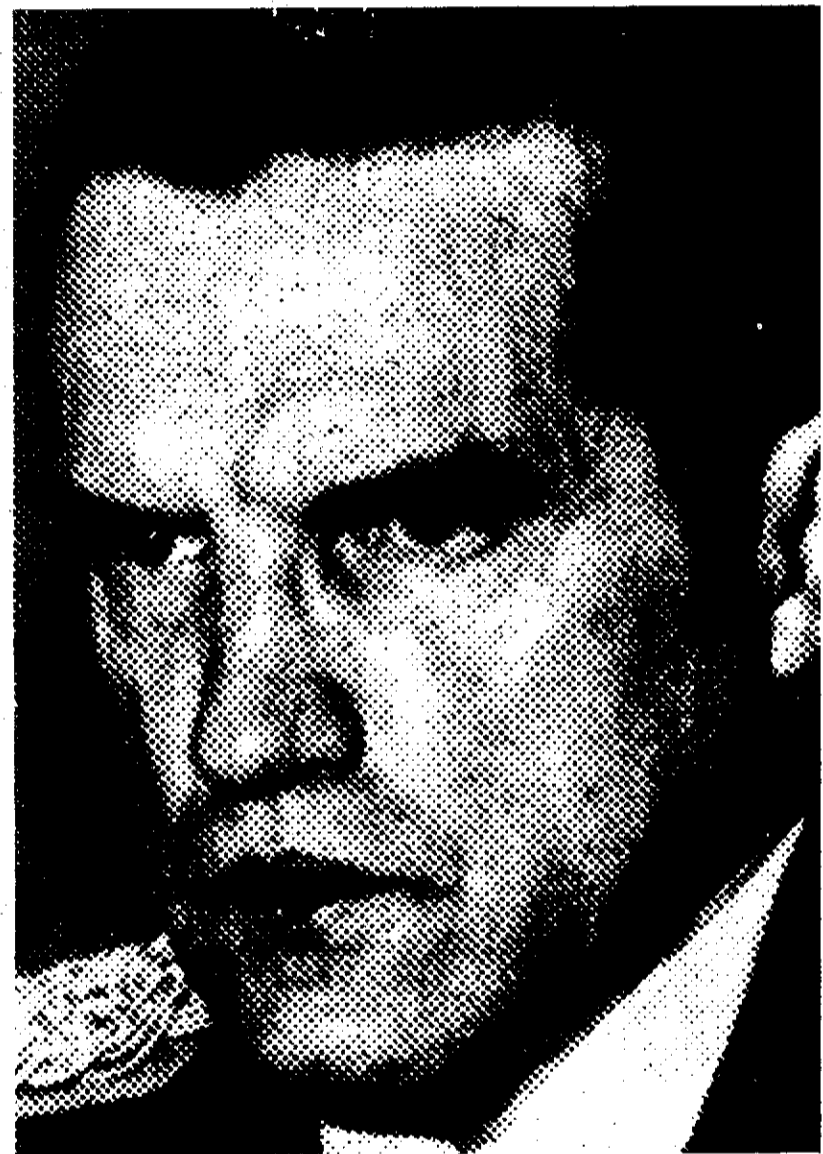
The Carter Plan in favour of 'democratic openings' clearly has some teeth! But the renewed confidence of the masses will not allow the Gueller government an easy ride.

Her first task is to meet IMF terms for resolving the economic crisis. The imperialists and the ruling class hope to trade on Gueller's populist credentials and channel mass aspirations into the stability of the May 1980 elections.

Trotskyists in Bolivia will not be supporting this bourgeois government but fighting to develop the working class self-organisation that defeated Natusch. In the elections this will mean fighting for an electoral front without the bourgeois parties and based on independent class action.

The Trotskyists' alternative to reformist attempts to manage the crisis will be rooted in the 1945 Pulacayo platform of the COB — for a break with imperialist dependence and a fight for transitional demands that challenge the power of the imperialists and the 'progressive bourgeoisie'.

Below NEMESIO TERAZAS, a militant of the Trotskyist organisation Vanguardia Obrero of Bolivia and a regional delegate of the COB, describes the mass struggle that erupted against the Natusch coup and the possibilities it holds for the future.



Natusch — his government collapsed after 16 days due to mass opposition

## 'The whole country rejected it'

“The left and trade union leaders had long been predicting some move by the military. Leaders of the peasant unions were calling on the trade unions to set up anti-fascist defence committees. But all these warnings were just words — no one had a clear strategy to prevent the army striking.

Natusch at first tried to present his coup as a radical, populist one with a left image. But no one believed what he said. Everyone knew he had been a minister in Banzer's government. So the whole country rejected the coup.

### Luck

The Bolivian Confederation of Workers (COB) called a 24-hour general strike. The only good luck that the Bolivian workers have had in recent years is that there is only one central trade union federation, so this had a big effect. Congress then refused to recognise Natusch as president.

At this point Natusch ran out of democratic ideas. He shut Congress down and declared martial law. The COB replied with another 24-hour general strike and mass demonstra-

tions began.

On the third day the army began firing on demonstrating workers. One of our comrades and several other workers were killed in Cochabamba, and many demonstrators in the capital, La Paz.

The general strike spread to the whole country, involving the miners and, in particular, the oil workers, members of a traditionally right-wing union. They cut off all petrol supplies and stopped even the right-wing lorry drivers from working. No buses could run in La Paz — whenever one tried to come out onto the streets the people would stone it.

Natusch then gave orders for this rebellion to be crushed. Street fighting broke out in La Paz. The tragedy was that the people were completely unprepared for it. They were armed with only sticks and stones. There were press reports of people rushing out and pounding on tanks with just their bare hands.

The army launched a major assault on the COB and miners' trade union headquarters, using helicopters, machine gun emplacements and bazookas. Perhaps as many as 3-400 were killed in La Paz altogether.

There was some disagreement among the top officers over the coup. General Padilla, the commander in chief, opposed the coup and was deposed. But the barracks had been involved in its preparation and so there was little opposition there.

### Barricades

However the National Police issued a statement declaring that they were from the people and supported the COB. In the La Paz working class areas the police even went around to the young people who were building barricades and told them, 'Hurry up! Hurry up! The army will be here in twenty minutes!', and then ran off with these kids when the army arrived.

Every political and trade union force was against Natusch. An anti-fascist front of 27 political parties was formed. The US government cut off aid.

There were a lot of rumours that Natusch would go. But by the seventh day the situation was getting very difficult. There were food shortages in the cities, and the COB decided to end the strike in exchange for

guarantees over civil liberties. On 7 November the strike ended, martial law was lifted, and Congress allowed to meet.

But the response of the most militant sections of the working class — the miners, petrol workers, bank workers, factory workers — was to demand that the COB explain why it had called the strike off and to reaffirm their willingness to continue the struggle.

The COB was forced to go around and explain to workers that it had not recognised the government, and that this was only a truce to allow the workers to prepare for further struggles. So Natusch was still completely isolated.

All the left political parties — including the Trotskyists — were completely unprepared for this struggle, however. During the general strike there was not a single clandestine radio station set up or a single underground paper published. There was no organisation of armed resistance.

The political level of struggle was so high that if any party had been able to show how to solve these problems it would have won widespread support. But now we know what we need and

what we have to do. Our immediate task is to prepare the masses to defend themselves in the coming struggles. And for that we are in need of all the international help and solidarity we can get.”

\*Resolutions and messages of support can be sent to: Nemesio Terazas, Casilla 3630, Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

### Intercontinental Press/Inprecor

CARTER'S war threats against Iran are the central theme of the latest issue of the weekly Intercontinental Press/Inprecor (Vol 17, No 43). Other major features in this cover the campaign against uranium mining in Australia and the fight for affirmative action in Canada.

Individual copies cost 30p plus 10p postage, but subscriptions work out much cheaper at £11 for a year (48 issue), £6 for six months (24 issues), or £3 for 10 weeks. Cheques/POs should be made out to 'Intercontinental Press' and sent to: IP/1, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



LETTERS published on this page will normally be cut to at least 400 words, to ensure that the maximum number of readers can express their views. Anonymous letters will not be published unless there is a very special reason, but real names will be withheld from publication on request.

## No problem like 'no problem'

THE Communist Party District Committee in Southall organised a meeting last week called 'Socialism and Youth' with speakers from Komsomol, the Soviet youth movement. I thought it would be interesting to go along as I have never been to the USSR, or heard anyone from there speaking.

Unfortunately, the average age of the audience was about 40 plus, and the all-male delegation from Komsomol were (being generous) in their thirties.

The meeting was getting rather boring and predictable, so when questions were asked for I asked why the speakers weren't young people, and then also asked about democratic rights in the USSR. Specifically, what was Komsomol's attitude to homosexual rights, the legalisation of cannabis and the distribution of Trotsky's writings.

The answers were most enlightening. Apparently there is 'no problem' of homosexuality in the USSR 'although we do have some of "them"'. Funnily enough, there is also 'no problem' of cannabis. The question of free distribution of political literature was dealt with as a question of dissidents 'undermining the state' and was never answered.

Komsomol has older people running it because really you can't expect young people to run an organisation of 40 million members. One of the speakers asked me if I would seriously consider 'leading an organisation of 200,000 people', so I said 'Yes, I'd love to!' (what else could I say!).

The Komsomol delegation would be touring the country for the next couple of weeks, and I'd recommend people to watch out for the meetings and go along armed with a few questions. No problem!  
HILARY DRIVER, Southall

## Nuclear risks

THE RISKS from nuclear power appear so overwhelmingly obvious that there seems no point in talking about anything other than how to get rid of it for good.

The pro-nuclear people say that any one of us is much more likely to die in a car accident than from a nuclear accident. Taking an analogy with car accidents may help to clarify the class interests in the whole debate:

\*Should one drive dangerously fast?

The answer depends on the urgency of the journey, which has to be weighed against the risk of not getting there at all.

\*What if there are others in the car?

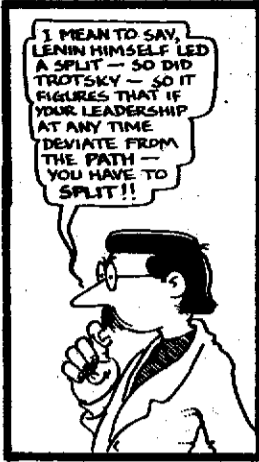
Do they have the same urgent reasons for making the journey? Do they trust the driver to inform them and look after their interests? Do they have an equal say in the speed?

\*What about the other road users? Shouldn't they be consulted — assessing risk is clearly a question of democracy.

Nuclear power development is being forced ahead by capitalism for several reasons — overcoming dependence on OPEC countries; overcoming vulnerability to miners' wage demands; access by governments in colonial countries to plutonium from spent fuel; export of nuclear capital from imperialist countries to colonial countries (though this is now slowing down).

Some of these interests contradict each other. All of them are clearly opposed to working class interests.

We know from experience (Windscale, Harrisburg etc) that the nuclear industry cannot be trusted to contain the risks or to keep us fully informed.



However to deal with the whole question of nuclear power by demanding that the technology be abolished is to deal with the dangerous driver by demanding the destruction of all motor vehicles.

It won't necessarily stop the capitalists reaching their goals by other means and may leave us without a technical resource that, used rationally, could perhaps be valuable to us. But we haven't had a chance to decide.

Cost-benefit calculations are always done on the basis of their benefit and our cost.

But we must not reject out-of-hand the possibility of rational decisions on nuclear safety — that would be to reject the possibility of democratic organisation.

CAROL RUSSELL, Oxford

## Greetings to African families

MANY of your readers may recall that in April this year a young South African, Solomon Mahlangu, was executed in Pretoria, despite unprecedented international appeals. This Christmas the Mahlangu family and thousands of other families in South Africa will be remembering their relatives who have died or who are imprisoned for their political beliefs.

May we once again invite your readers to send greetings for Christmas and the New Year to the families of political prisoners, detainees, the banned and the banished in South Africa, Namibia and Rhodesia. Such greetings are seen as an expression of support and concern, and are deeply appreciated by the recipients.

Lists of the above are available on request from the Anti-Apartheid Movement, 89 Charlotte St, London W1.  
ABDUL MINTY, Hon Sec, Anti-Apartheid Movement

## Splits and fusions

THE SPLIT in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International is important to revolutionaries not simply because of the revolution in Nicaragua, but also because the USFI is the organisation of a large proportion of the world's revolutionaries. This split gives those of us outside the USFI an opportunity to look at how differences are handled.

The USFI handled this situation badly. To say that to call an 'Open Conference of the Trotskyist movement' is to say the the USFI is dead is a piece of logic that overrates the USFI. The USFI doesn't equal the Trotskyist movement, and in fact the USFI has been calling for unity, what then is wrong with calling a conference?

Obviously the BF and LTT are not children, they knew that by calling this conference independently of the USFI they were going against what the majority wanted to do. But why did the majority give them satisfaction by expelling them?

The BF and the LTT could have been forced to split at the World Congress. It would have been sufficient for the USFI to have issued a statement condemning the untimeliness and basis of the conference and making clear that the issue would be debated politically at the World Congress.

More worrying than this revealing

tactical error is the analysis of Phil Hearse and Dave Packer. According to these comrades, it is only justifiable to split from an international when it has betrayed revolution in practice. The two examples are Lenin and the Second International in 1914, and, Trotsky and the Third in 1933. The implication is that even if revolutionaries have an analysis of an international which indicates it is unreformably counter-revolutionary they should not split until this has been shown in practice.

The comrades are historically inaccurate. Prior to 1914, Lenin saw himself as the defender of Marxist orthodoxy in Russia, hence his unwillingness to slam the door and block the return of the Mensheviks to the revolutionary ranks. When in 1914 Lenin received a copy of Vorwärts carrying news of the betrayal, Lenin assumed it was a forgery by the German General Staff!

In 1933, the betrayal of the German revolution by the Third International showed to Trotsky that it was unreformable and thus he finally recognised the need to build a new international. The point is that the betrayals in practice changed the analyses and on the basis of these analyses they split.

Thus comrades Hearse and Packer erect from a misinterpretation of history a principle which is then uncritically applied to the USFI today. This method of analysis has more in common with the dogmatic sectarianism of the WRP and Spartacist League than with Marxism as a critical and self critical method of analysis.

It can only support the view of those members of the ISA and Big Flame who have attacked the IMG for its dogmatism.  
STEVE PREW, Hull

## Pollyanna politics

ONE can appreciate that in a short article it is not possible to explain problems in detail, and therefore some propositions tend to become rather simplified. However, Jude Woodward's article (1 November) seems to go beyond such considerations.

She says: '... the first thing required is an immediate increase in wages, pensions and unemployment pay. This will ... ensure that more money circulates in the economy, leading to greater commodity sales and hence to an increase in economic activity.'

And: 'Secondly ... useful public works. This means reversing the cuts and embarking on a crash programme of public works, in health, education, housing and so on, under workers' control.'

Next, '... we should call for a reduction of prices of essential commodities, coupled with releasing extra resources for investment by radical taxing of the rich and cutting defence expenditure.'

'Other elements which pose a workers' solution to the crisis include the sliding scale of wages and social expenditure to ensure that people's standard of living at least keeps pace with inflation ... We need a monopoly of foreign trade coupled with workers' control of industry and the direction of investment so that it is in the interests of the working class.'

Since she goes on to suggest that even more could be done if the working class took over and ran things itself, it would seem that all the

above is meant to be a series of demands within a framework of the existing system.

But, it is not a capitalist myth that increased money incomes coupled with a constant production is inflationary, it is a reality. Since wages are supposed to be increased this will lead to increased costs for producers, but on the other hand it is proposed that incomes from the sale of 'essential commodities' (which constitute a considerable part of consumer spending) will be reduced — reduction of prices — and at the same time there will be a radical taxing of the rich.

The rich are those who — by and large — receive their incomes from the realisation of surplus value in the form of profits from the sale of commodities. So what is being proposed is that profit margins should be further squeezed at a time of falling profits because of the onset of the slump.

This is to be followed by a demand for investment to be made in the interests of the working class, but when was investment ever made upon such a criterion under capitalism? At a time of falling investment — the situation as it really is — to further squeeze profits is hardly likely to induce capitalists to invest for their own benefit, let alone the working class.

Again, I may be told that workers' control of industry is being demanded. But this is pollyanna politics. There cannot be overall workers' control of industry whilst the capitalist state remains in being, other than for the briefest moment. The alternatives are either partial workers' control, which gets sucked into the system, or workers' control which is a prelude to an integral part of democratic socialist planning, i.e. the removal of the bourgeoisie from state power.

Reluctantly, I must say that I rarely have seen such a melange of reformist-keynesianism and ultra-leftist ideas being put forward in a socialist newspaper.  
KEN TARBUCK, Hove

## Aboriginal liberation

ACTIVISTS of the National Aboriginal Liberation Front of Australia are starting the Aboriginal Information Centre in London (c/o Box 19, 136 Kingsland High Street, London E8). We aim to create an awareness of the problems and political struggle of black Australians, and to raise political and financial support for land rights, self-determination and economic independence.

In Australia:  
\*Only three out of ten aboriginal children live to the age of five.  
\*90 per cent of aboriginal adults are out of work.

The Revolutionary Communist Tendency is launching a regular review, *the next step*. This is the next step for the RCT and the next step for the working class. For the RCT — because it will broaden the range of our propaganda and sharpen our intervention in the labour movement. For the working class — because it will point the way forward from the struggles of today to the next stage in the struggle for state power.

Send orders for *the next step* No 1, cheques and postal orders to Junius Publications, BCM JPLTD, London WC1V 6XX. Single issue 20p (+8p postage), subscription for ten issues £2.80.

Public rally to launch *the next step*, the first revolutionary working class paper in Britain since the 1940s. Speakers: Mike Freeman, Sabena Norton, James Wood. Friday 30 November, 7.30pm. Holborn Assembly Hall, John Mews, Northampton St, off Grays Inn Road.

\*One-third of prisoners are aborigines... who make up only 3.3 per cent of the population.

\*In education, all children are still taught that Captain Cook was the first person to set foot in Australia.

\*There are only 63 aboriginal graduates out of a population of about 500,000.

In Queensland:  
\*Aboriginals live in reserves worse than concentration camps.

\*All demonstrations have been banned since September 1977.

\*Union strike funds are outlawed.

\*Strikes are illegal if the government declares that the workers are involved in 'essential services'... and strike leaders jailed.

We are therefore organising a picket of Queensland House, 293 The Strand, London WC2 at 10.30am on Saturday 1 December. The struggle of the aboriginal people is anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, the struggle of black and oppressed people around the world.

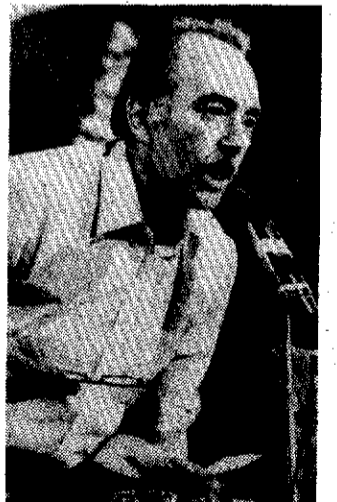
TOMMY SMITH, BINDI WILLIAMS

## From a hospital bed ...

Dear Comrades, I WOULD like to thank the innumerable individuals, IMG branches, and friends on the left who have written to me sending their greetings and get-well wishes following my accident. It is not possible to reply to each one individually, so perhaps these comrades will accept my thanks via the paper.

Readers will be pleased that I have made my first regular reader on the nursing staff, and we are mustering support for the local campaign against health cuts.

Yours,  
BOB PENNINGTON.



Bob Pennington in action — get well messages and greetings can be sent to him c/o Socialist Challenge.



# A TALE OF TWO WORKERS' PAPERS

'WHEN the history books are written they will show 1979 to be a turning point in the determination of the labour movement to confront the mass media and create media of its own.'

That was Tony Benn's prediction at a conference on 'Workers, Unions, and the Media' held by the South-east Regional TUC earlier this month. The evidence of that conference alone suggests that Benn is right.

Nearly four hundred trades unionists were delegated to the conference; speaker after speaker came to the microphone to suggest action to counter the mass media's uniform hostility to the workers' movement and its love for Tory policies, and how alternative media could be launched.

The SE Regional TUC now intends to urge all trades councils in the South-east to hold similar local conferences, to encourage the trades councils to publish local bulletins or newspapers, and to call on the media unions to examine complaints against the bosses' media.

Establishing a mass labour movement press, nationally and locally, will present a range of political and financial problems, which hit two such projects. Here COLIN ROBINSON records the rise and fall of the Daily Herald and NOEL HIBBERT reports the temporary demise of Hull News.

## The Daily Herald—when page 3 boosted strikes

By Colin Robinson

'THE TIMES is read by people who run the country; the Guardian by those who think they ought to run the country; the Express by readers who think the country ought to be run as it used to be run and, then, of course, there's the Sun — read by people who don't care who runs the country as long as they have big tits.'

Glancing through the pages of Rupert Murdoch's sleazy tabloid it is difficult to avoid some sympathy with Cyril Plant's analysis of the Sun newspaper at the 1976 TUC Congress.

It is difficult to believe that the Sun is all that remains of what was once the greatest mass working class paper this country has ever seen — the Daily Herald.

Particularly at the moment, when trade union leaders such as Moss Evans, general secretary of the IGWU are calling for a workers' daily [and when Evans at least is committed in more than words, saying that his union would contribute a minimum of £250,000 a year] it is instructive to consider the rise and fall of the old Daily Herald.

The Herald began life in 1911 as a strike sheet produced by compositors who were locked out of their London papers. It was a time of great

upheaval in working class politics — dockers, builders, railway workers and miners were all involved in extensive strike action.

There was a glaring need for a means of communication between the different groups in struggle. The Daily Herald, launched as a daily the following year, consciously aimed to fill this gap and its early circulation of nearly 300,000 copies daily showed it could do so. The era of mass working class newspapers had begun in 1896, when Lord Harmsworth launched the Daily Mail, setting the pace for the anti-labour and anti-union mass media of today. By 1914 all the main features of the present day press had taken shape.

### Socialist

The Herald's politics were committedly socialist: 'Strike and strike hard' was its slogan on the industrial front, and Parliamentary proceedings were reported under the banner 'The House of Pretence'. Pages were given over to the struggle of the Irish and the fight for the emancipation of women.

Despite its healthy circulation, the Herald soon hit financial difficulties.

The Limit Publishing Company which ran the paper [so called because



No. 1. LONDON, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 1911. PRICE ONE HALFPENNY.

**To "ONE AND ALL."**

What is this—the sound and rumour?  
What is this that all men hear,  
Like the wind in hollow valleys  
When the storm is drawing near;  
Like the rolling on of ocean  
In the eve of a fearful day?  
'Tis the People marching on.

— \* \* \* —

What nobler inspirer for the hour and the object—your modest, legitimate demand for a shorter working day—than the author of the above, that noble Old English Master Printer, William Morris, who treated his men as men, "fellow craftsmen," in that famous Kelmscott Press, down Hammersmith way?

Yes, after many years of that tranquillity which leads to sleep but not to death, "the sound and rumour" is of war!—war not of the workers' seeking, unless the worker is ever to receive no improvement in his everlasting drudgery.

is a Labour Party in the House, and it holds supreme power.

On we march, then—we, the workers,  
And the rumour that ye hear  
Is the blended soul of battle  
And deliverance drawing near,  
For the hope of every creature  
Is the banner that we bear:

**50—48.**

Yours, fellow workers, in the hope that conquers.  
W. F. HAZAN.

**STRIKING PARAGRAPHS.**

We have arrived. At last we have a daily paper of our own. If we differ at all from the orthodox daily press, it will be in the fact that we shall give the correct position of affairs day by day.

We ask our readers to be kind, and excuse our imperfections. We have met the usual difficulties that always attend the production of a first number. Still, we have arrived.

The necessity for our existence was brought

We are surprised to see, in one of the letters issued by the Master Printers' Association, that employers who concede the men's terms may be made to suffer for their tenacity. Is this a threat?

— : o : —

One of the most conspicuous features of the dispute has been the loyalty of the L.S.C. members. The notices have been tendered almost without exception. In only one instance has it come to our knowledge that certain members of the chapel failed to respond to the call. The proprietors of that establishment have decided that they will convert the establishment into an "open house." Here let it be known, once and for all, that the question of the "open house" will be fought as strenuously as the hours question itself. Members who have tendered notices will not withdraw them if any non-union man is retained in the department. Chapel Officers should make a note of this and act accordingly.

— : o : —

Our members must be prepared for certain methods of deception that are being practised. To one office, at least, a bogus telegram was sent to the Father of the Chapel ordering him to cancel notices—a trick of a most discreditable nature.

David Lloyd-George had said of the Herald 'This is the limit' consisted of a group of left-wing MPs and trade union leaders, and was not well funded.

The paper had been launched with a working capital of just £300. In an early appeal for funds surpassing even the freneticism to be found on the back page of Socialist Challenge, Ben Tillett, the dockers' leader, headed his article 'At Once, At Once!' and on one occasion bailiffs were physically prevented from entering the paper's offices by the editorial staff.

Times were hard, and willing though the readership may have been, many were scraping by on unemployment benefit or strike pay. Neither was the paper very popular with the large companies who controlled advertising revenue.

Nonetheless, thanks in the main to some wealthy friends of George Lansbury, editor at the time, the paper survived as a daily up to the outbreak of the First World War. The chauvinism whipped up for the war effort proved a more difficult obstacle, however. The Herald could not compete with the militarist fervour of its competitors and became a weekly during the war years.

As the war continued, and under the pressure of solidarity for the Russian Revolution [which the paper

joyously welcomed], the Daily Herald shifted from a pacifist position towards revolutionary defeatism.

At the end of the war and under the continuing editorship of Lansbury the paper went back to daily campaigning for the struggles of the workers' movement. But it was not long before the financial troubles which had plagued the paper before the war returned with a vengeance — and for the same reasons.

### Cap-in-hand

Lansbury was forced to go cap in hand to the TUC and the Labour Party. Both had opposed the Herald in its early days — the TUC had even launched a rival newspaper, the Daily Citizen, which collapsed within a year of its launch. The labour leaders certainly weren't about to fork out cash without editorial control.

Consequently, when the TUC took over the paper in 1922, Lansbury ceased to be editor and the paper became a mouthpiece of the right-wing General Council. Not surprisingly, the new-look Herald was not as popular as its predecessor, and with a falling circulation the TUC decided it could no longer support the paper.

In 1930, 51 per cent of the shares were sold to Odhams Press a

newspaper and magazine conglomerate headed by millionaire shipowner Sir John Ellerman. In 1961 Odhams was bought out by Cecil King's Daily Mirror empire, which 'revitalised' the paper, changing its name to the Sun in 1964.

All that was now needed to complete the transformation was open Tory support in the paper's editorial columns, and the 'Dirty Digger' provided that soon enough with his take-over ten years ago. Even the labour leaders must have balked at that development.

## Why Hull News should be based on militants

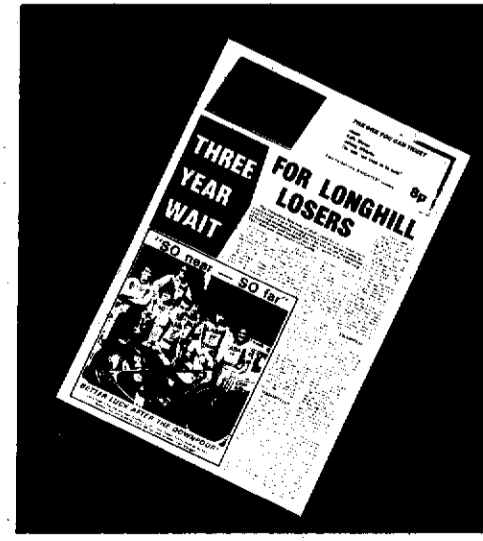
By Noel Hibbert, executive committee member, Hull Trades Council

THERE were just two issues of Hull News, a weekly paper launched by Hull Trades Council on 19 October, before its publication was suspended because of action by local advertisers and media.

The role of Hull News was to challenge the bourgeois press monopoly and to articulate the interests of the working class community in a popular fashion. Class struggle politics were at the centre of the paper's politics and its finances came from the unions and advertising.

Over 16,000 copies of the first two issues were sold, but the local business community refused to sit back and watch such a development. First, the Hull Daily Mail — from the same stable as the Daily Mail — offered reduced advertising rates to the clients of Hull News. Then a smear campaign was initiated over the local radio and television saying we were a 'communist' paper, a characterisation that the editorial committee did not adhere to.

The consequence was that leading



advertisers began to withdraw from the venture, in particular large car dealers. The trades council discussed several responses to this attack: to reduce circulation and dilute the politics; ask the dockers in Hull, who were among the main financial backers of the paper, to impose a car embargo; or to find alternative

sources of revenue.

The last option was decided as the best course of action. This has meant a suspension of publication while a reservoir of funds is built up.

Was it a mistake to rely on advertising as an important source of finance? Is it naive to expect such delicate animals to survive in the desert of the big press dinosaurs?

Hull Trades Council made a number of errors that should be borne in mind in launching alternative local newspapers.

Much of the debate revolved around ideas of a 'council' or 'party' paper. Socialist Challenge supporters argued that Hull News should be a mass circulation working class paper that popularised the politics of class struggle as against class collaboration.

But experience shows it is essential that everyone concerned with the project has a clear political conception of this. Unfortunately the 'mystique of professional journalism' became an obstacle to the paper realising its full potential.

We decided, I think correctly for the initial period, to raise finance from both trade unions and commercial advertising, with the objective of anchoring the newspaper politically and financially in the workplaces.

Over forty shop stewards committees and trade union branches were visited, raising £4,000. However, if a mass circulation of 20,000 was to be achieved, it meant taking adverts from businesses. We should have

mainly sought advertising from businesses least tuned into competitive markets.

Advertising should only be viewed as a medium term necessity. The main goal must be to develop a guaranteed base-line of paid sales. Unfortunately, Hull News did not build up a reservoir of adverts before its first launch, hence the ease with which the first 'run' on the paper succeeded.

### Anchor

In anchoring Hull News in the workplaces a number of leading factories committed themselves to taking weekly subscriptions. In this way an organic relationship could be established between the factories and the newspaper for mobilising the anti-Thatcher offensive.

During the engineering strike, for example, the trade union organiser on the paper was invited to sit on the AUEW propaganda committee which directed the strike. The concept of a city-wide rally of all those who supported the strike, advertised in Hull News, was put forward as the way of uniting the labour movement.

By relating to all those in struggle — from the National Abortion Campaign to local strikes — Hull News could play an important role in the fight against the Tories. To succeed, the paper would need to involve these militants, rather than those who see their role as 'professional journalism'.

**The Other Bookshop**

Beyond the Fragments: Feminism and the Making of Socialism  
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# Socialist Challenge

British hands off Zimbabwe

# NO DEAL WITH SMITH'S ARMY!

By Richard Carver

THE Rhodesian troops which last week invaded Zambia are the same ones which will form the bulk of an independent Zimbabwean army under the proposed Tory settlement.

Helicopter-borne troops cut roads and destroyed bridges deep into Zambia, with the aim of restricting still further the country's supply of food. One of the bridges blown up was on the main highway to Malawi 45 miles from Lusaka.

Landlocked Zambia is dependent on road and rail traffic through neighbouring countries for exporting copper and importing food, including the staple, maize.

The Benguela railway through Angola remains closed because of the attacks of Western-backed UNITA guerrillas. Earlier this year the Rhodesians sank the Kazungula ferry which is Zambia's vital food link with Botswana.

Now, with the destruction of communications with its neighbours on the east coast, Zambia is more than ever dependent on food supplies from South Africa via Rhodesia.

## Starvation

Recently the Salisbury regime stopped maize supplies to Zambia over the Victoria Falls bridge. It is only a matter of time before there is mass starvation in Zambia.

These measures are intended both to weaken the Patriotic Front forces based in Zambia and to force President Kaunda to increase his pressure on the Front to accept worse terms in the ceasefire talks at the Lancaster House conference on Zimbabwe. Kaunda's intervention has already played an important part in the Front's acceptance of unfavourable conditions for the

'transition to independence'.

The attack on Zambia is only an extension of the weapon of starvation freely used by the Rhodesian security forces against the black population of Zimbabwe. The forced movement of hundreds of thousands of people into 'protected villages' has meant the destruction of effective agriculture in much of the country.

## Unprovoked

With martial law in 60 per cent of the country, the army is legally empowered to destroy homes, villages, crops and livestock. It is a power that is frequently enforced.

Malnutrition and diseases related to it are now widespread. In one area 80 per cent of deaths in protected villages in their first year were from starvation. Aid agencies report that the army often prevents food supplies from reaching those who need them.

This is the army which will form the bulk of the 'new' security forces under the British plan — its stock in trade being unprovoked invasions, forced starvation and murder.

Much is made of its increasing black composition. Yet the black draft has been singularly unsuccessful, with only a tiny percentage answering the call-up. The officer corps is overwhelmingly white — often, as with its commander Lieutenant-General Walls, having learned its counter-insurgency techniques with the British army.

## Mercenaries

The backbone of its fighting forces is some 15,000 foreign mercenaries (the largest contingent British) and several thousand South African regular troops.

This is the army which the Patriotic Front has been forced to accept as the guarantor of 'black majority rule' in Zimbabwe.

Such a deal will mean disaster. Already the security forces have liquidated the private army of Reverend Sithole, himself a supporter of the present regime though an opponent of Prime Minister Muzorewa. This included the massacre of at least 183 Sithole auxiliaries in July.

It is not difficult to guess how much more brutal they are likely to be with the Patriotic Front if the British ceasefire proposals are implemented.

\*No to any British-sponsored settlement;

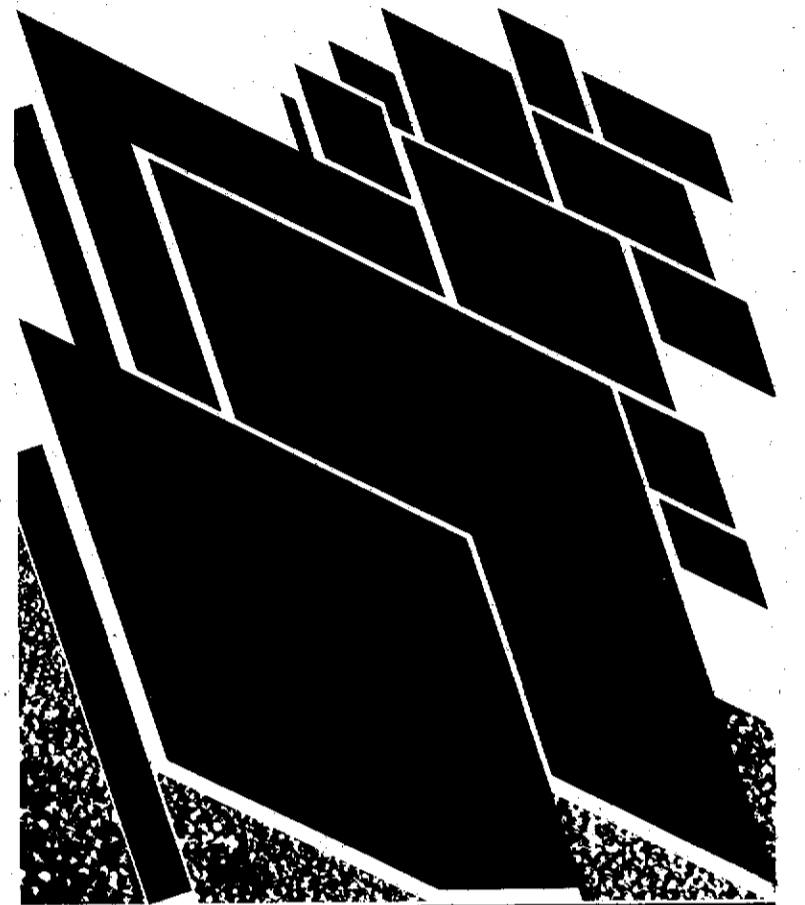
\*No British troops to Zimbabwe;

\*Hands off Zimbabwe!

**ZIMBABWE INFORMATION GROUP** bulletin no.12

30p NOV.-DEC. 1979

THE latest issue of the Zimbabwe Information Group bulletin contains much useful material on the present situation in Zimbabwe, perspectives for the solidarity campaign, the mercenary recruiting network, and the effect of the racist immigration laws on Zimbabweans. 30p plus 10p p&p (subscriptions £1.50 for five issues) from ZIG, 1 Cambridge Terrace, London-NW1 4JL.



**MAY 1980**

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25	26	27	28	29	30	31							

## Buy a calendar and help Socialist Challenge

WANT to help the Socialist Challenge fund drive — and help yourself at the same time? No problem. Just take some copies of our 1980 Trotsky Calendar to sell.

This calendar includes many photographs which have never before been available in Britain. And it has been exclusively designed for us by David King.

Individual copies cost £2 plus 40p for postage and packing. But take a minimum of ten and you get them for £1.50 each post free.

There could hardly be an easier way of making money for your local

supporters group. But don't put it off. Send in your order right away — there are only 26 calendar-selling days left to Xmas!

Meanwhile, thanks to those who contributed to our fund drive in the last week:

T Browne	£1.00
C Gardner	11.50
P Matthias	1.00
Brent IMG	60.00
'For Joe'	10.00
Wakefield IMG	6.00
B Lanfear	1.00
<b>Week's total</b>	<b>£90.50</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>£686.66</b>

## SUBSCRIBE NOW

Britain: 12 months £12.50; 6 months £6.50  
 Abroad: 12 months — Surface Mail £12.50  
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Name .....

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

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 Complete and return to: Socialist Challenge, 328 Upper Street, London N1