

Socialist Challenge

HANDS OFF ZIMBABABWE

THE DESPATCH of a colonial governor (in the shape of the portly Lord Soames) and several hundred officers and soldiers to Zimbabwe represents a desperate attempt by Britain to shore up the existing social order there.

True, some cosmetic changes will be acceptable. Black men acting instead of white settlers. New tame politicians to replace Smith and his gang, provided the replacements are acceptable to South Africa. The preservation of the basic structure of the existing 'security forces'.

These are the aims of the Tory government.

The four senior British officers already in Zimbabwe are veterans of the Kenyan and Aden civil wars. The regime in Kenya is the model which the Tories would really like, but they are prepared to settle for something worse.

The Patriotic Front, under massive political pressure from the frontline states, has made a number of concessions on paper (see editorial, page 2). The central point, however, is whether they will agree to disband their armies in the field and bring their soldiers under British control.

If they do, the result will be a series of massacres. If they do not, many of the concessions will not amount to all that much as far as imperialism is concerned.

The recent air raids on the guerilla camps in Zambia are the strongest indication yet of what would happen if the Patriotic Front agreed to disband their armies and assemble in camps supervised by the British.

It does not matter much whether Thatcher and Carrington have agreed to stop referring to the guerillas as 'terrorists'. They would still be eliminated on some pretext or the other.

Britain will aim to bring the Front into line politically or ensure its military defeat. It would prefer the former, but it will not flinch from the latter. Any illusions on this score could prove to be fatal.

In addition to the Union Jack there are other equally sinister though more powerful forces in the field. These are South African troops.



When the white Rhodesian General Walls denies all knowledge of their presence he is telling a deliberate and cold-blooded lie.

There is a battery of South African howitzers at Chirundu on the Zambesi. They are pointed at Zambia.

There are South African guards on the railway line north of Beitbridge as far as Rutenga.

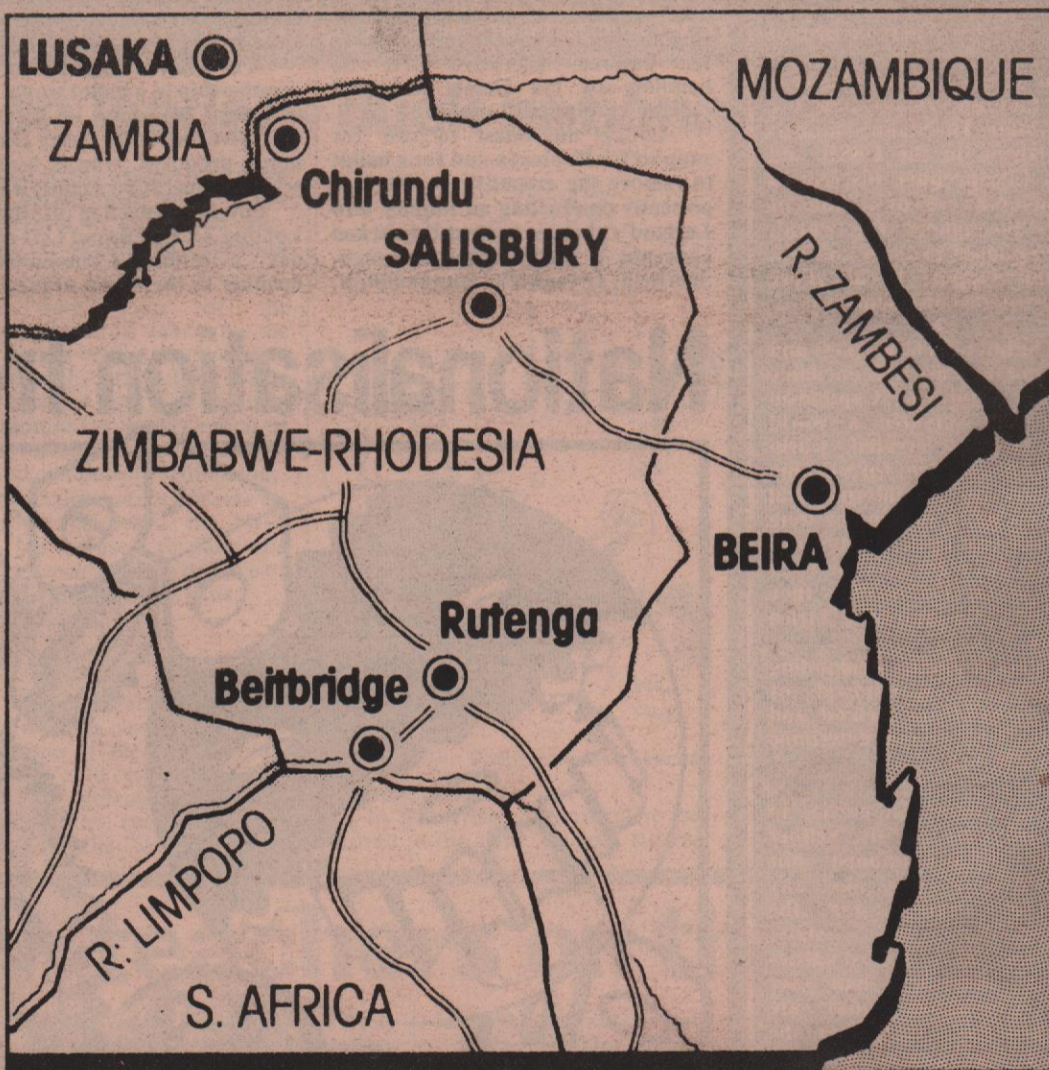
There are South African pilots flying Puma helicopters and hunting Patriotic Front guerillas deep in the bush.

There are South African patrols in the Mateke Hills, north of the Limpopo.

These forces owe allegiance to the apartheid regime in Pretoria and to no one else. When Carrington says that there will be no 'witch-hunt' of any elements inside the white settlers' army, he is, in effect, assuring the South Africans that they will be left alone.

We do not believe that Britain has anything to offer the people of Zimbabwe. We are opposed to any British presence in Zimbabwe. That is why we demand that Britain and South Africa get out of Zimbabwe immediately. That is why we will continue to support all those fighting against the 'security forces'.

And that's why we believe that any deal which led to the disarming of the guerillas would be suicidal. Not just for the Patriotic Front, but for the majority of people in Zimbabwe.



WHY WE OPPOSE BRITISH TROOPS

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.

EDITORIAL

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1. Editorial: 01-359 8180/9. Distribution and advertising: 01-359 8371.

No British solution for Zimbabwe

WHEN the troops went into Britain's oldest colony in August 1969 it was as peacekeepers — or so the world was told. It only took a few months for the truth to begin to emerge.

Zimbabwe is not Ireland but it does have a few things in common. The troops who fly out to Britain's last African colony this week are ostensibly going to keep two warring factions apart: the white settlers, irrationally if understandably fighting to defend their privileges, and the Marxist terrorists, fanatically devoted to the subversive idea of one person, one vote.

Zimbabwe and Ireland also have in common that they are 'non-political' issues — bipartisan questions on which both major parties will have an identical line because, of course, the interests of the British state are not negotiable.

And it is those interests which lie behind the despatch of British troops, not 'peace' or 'legality' or 'majority rule' or any of the other Lancaster House catchphrases.

We will continue to refer to them as British troops, despite the official designation of 'Commonwealth Monitoring Force'. Of the five

nations sending troops, the two black ones, Fiji and Kenya, are only providing about 60 between them. The bulk are from Britain and the rest from the 'kith and kin' in Australia and New Zealand.

The troops are going to police a settlement which is unjust and racist. We will not labour the point, since we have spent many weeks pointing out that 20 per cent white MPs and a white army, judiciary, and civil service do not precisely correspond to the best interests of the Zimbabwean people.

We would simply draw attention to the virtually identical terms of Ian Smith's 'internal settlement' which brought Bishop Muzorewa to power. That was denounced by everyone — Patriotic Front, Communist Party, Labour MPs — as a racist fraud.

For the Patriotic Front now to accept such terms is a grave setback for the people of Zimbabwe, and one imposed by the brutal excesses of the white regime as well as by the political shortcomings of the Patriotic Front leadership.

But Zimbabwe has another thing in common with Ireland: the problem will not go away. British

troops are being dropped into a situation from which they will not easily disengage. As long as there is substantial opposition to the settlement, as long as the Patriotic Front keeps its guns — and as long as the white forces try to doublecross them, as they surely will — the Zimbabwean struggle will continue.

In that context our task is clear. It is not simply to quibble about this or that loophole in the Lancaster House accords, but to question the very right of Britain to impose its solution on Zimbabwe. Most practically that means the demand that British and Commonwealth troops be immediately withdrawn, along with the British governor, Lord Soames, and his team.

The example of Ireland is not altogether an inspiring one, since those who take an internationalist position are still only a tiny minority within the British labour movement. That is why we must seize the opportunity now to build the largest possible campaign in defence of Zimbabwean self-determination.

Hands Off Zimbabwe!
Troops Out Now!

Sack the AUEW executive!

By Steve Harper,
AUEW Chiswick No 2 Branch

THE number of branches of the Engineering Union seeking to remove the national executive over its handling of the Derek Robinson sacking continues to mount.

Among the latest to call for support for Robinson and for a ballot to remove the executive — which is presently conducting an inquiry into Leyland's charges against the sacked convenor — are branches in Slough, Sheffield, Greenwich, Southampton,

and the Chiswick No 2 branch.

Rule 15, paragraph 5 of the union rule book provides for a recall ballot if 10 per cent or more of the branches call for it.

A two-thirds majority vote of the membership in a ballot would then be necessary in order to dismiss the executive, including Terry Duffy, the union president, who is leading the scabbing operation against Robinson.

But at a meeting of the North London AUEW Broad Left on Saturday, a leading Communist Party member in the union argued against

the moves to recall the executive.

George Anthony, president of the union's North London district, said that a ballot would be divisive, because the right-wing executive was likely to win it. He maintained that we should simply fight for strike action to gain Robinson's reinstatement.

Anthony also considered that the executive would use a technicality to find the sacked convenor 'guilty' of the charges laid by BL management.

Anthony's argument should not be supported. While we certainly need

to continue the pressure for strikes, the call for a ballot makes it clear where the blame for demobilising the strike action lies.

Exercising the basic union right of challenging the national executive over the way it has stabbed Robinson in the back is to directly call the executive to order.

Even if the executive wins a ballot, the left in the AUEW would be able to put the issues on the table. And that would help prepare a campaign against the re-election of the right wing.

Nationalisation from Meccano parts?



By John Kirby

AIRFIX, the owner of Meccano, has had second thoughts about the 40-minute notice it gave to the nine hundred Meccano workers about the plant's closure. The company has now offered them 90 days' pay in lieu of notice.

At a mass meeting last Monday this offer was cordially thrown out. The occupation at the Merseyside plant, which began a fortnight ago, continues.

Management had attached a few conditions to its redundancy pay offer, including a demand for an end to the occupation; no further industrial action; and for access to the factory and warehouse, which contain stock worth £2.5m.

As Dick Fitzpatrick, an Engineering Union steward, put it: 'Our intention is to keep the plant open, not just for 90 days but for all time.'

Negotiations along these lines continue between the unions and Airfix, although the company appears determined to close the plant. One idea presently being discussed by the workforce is to call on the local council to take over the plant as a municipal workers' co-operative.

Support and donations to: Meccano Fighting Fund, c/o Mike Egan, GMWU, 99 Edge Lane, Liverpool L7 2PE.

Join the Party

Action Space, Chiswick Street,
off Tottenham Court Rd, London.

Meal/Wine & Entertainment
Sunday 16th December
7.15pm — 11.15pm.

£5

Socialist challenge xmas party
Fund-raising extravaganza for your favourite socialist newspaper — with an all-star cabaret scheduled to interfere with history. For tickets, ring Davy on 01-359 8371.

HOMENEWS

Thousands fight cuts in Avon

No to Tory privilege in our schools!

THE TORIES are pummeling education. Not just cutting it back, but further boosting the system of privilege in our schools.

But thousands of workers, teachers and school students are preparing themselves to fight for the right to be educated.

These are the Tory plans.

The Tory Association of County Councils calls for 'the end of obligatory provision of free school transport, school milk, subsidised school meals, free nursery education and the education of people before they are 6 or after 15'.

Dismantled

Grammar schools are being preserved; comprehensives in some areas like Tory Bexley are being dismantled, 100,000 'assisted places' will be introduced at direct grant schools.

Meanwhile, primary comprehensive schools will be closed, teachers sacked.

Education is being crucified.

One of the areas of biggest cut-backs is Avon County Council in the West Country.

Cuts totalling £4 million means that 400 teaching jobs must go in the Bristol area by the new year. Job wastage is the main method.

But teachers are being sacked. And it's likely that at Christmas about 100 'supply' teachers, mainly women, will be given their cards.

Reaction

The reaction from working people in the area is a powerful one. The biggest strike in Bristol since the war took place on 15 November. On the demonstration that day 7,000 people marched; teachers and students, white-collar and manual workers and many other public sector employees.

The demonstration itself was the product of a mass meeting of 1,500 teachers who, two months earlier, had gone out to fight for the action.

But local teachers are also determined to get the support of industrial unions. Workers in the largest tobacco factory in Europe, Wills, have reproduced material from the campaign and distributed it at the shop floor.

Arrangements have been made to address the District Committee of the engineers' union.

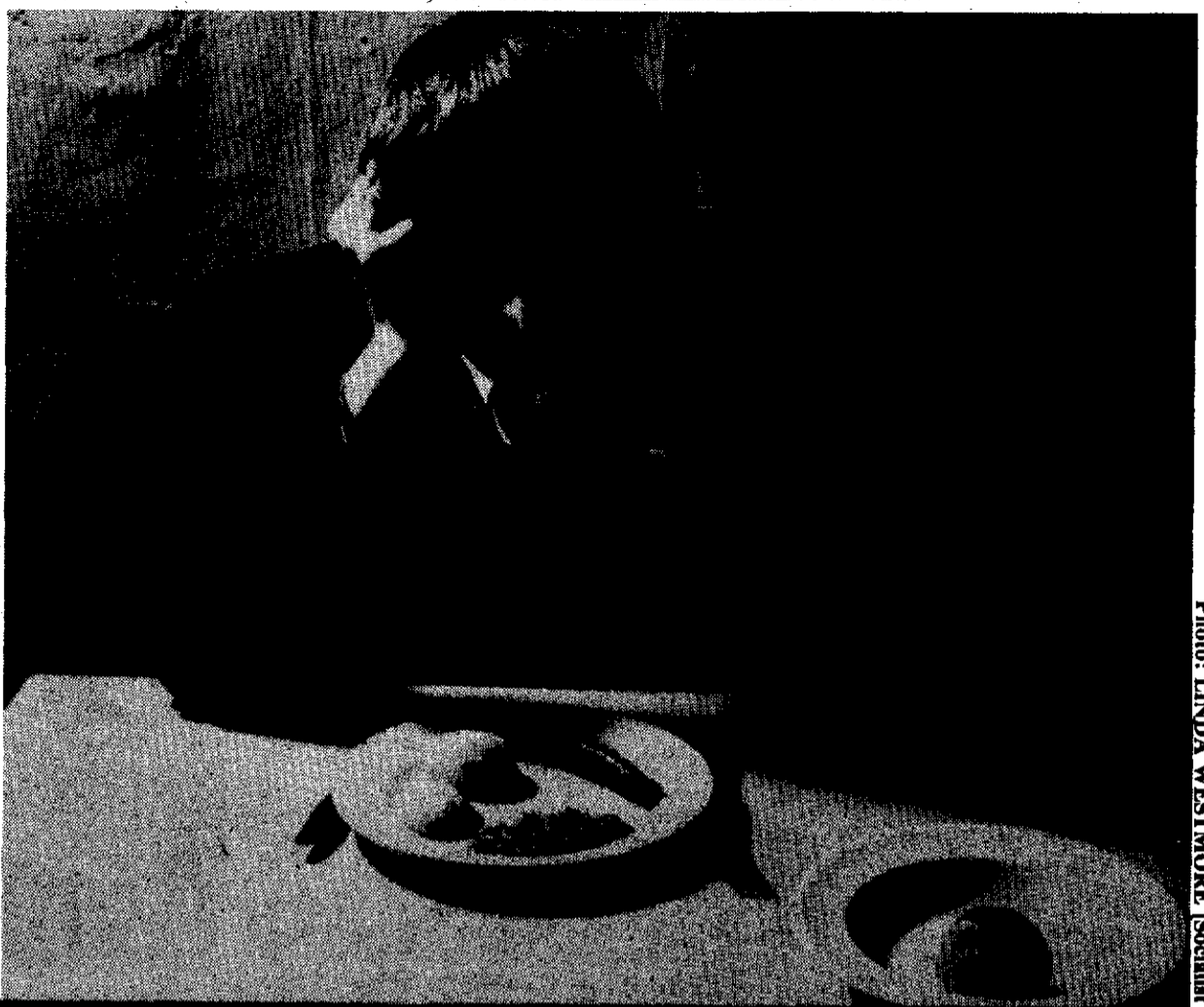
The Avon Tories, like their national leaders, are looking for confrontation. By taking on traditionally weak sections like the teachers, they hope to teach the rest of the working class a lesson.

The Avon teachers are taking up battle stations.

They deserve our support. To defend jobs, stop the cuts and continue the fight for education as a right, not a privilege.



School students on the march against cuts in London



TORY DINNERS: WARNING. THESE MEALS MAY BE A DANGER TO YOUR HEALTH. IF USED OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME WILL CAUSE MALNUTRITION.

Photo: LINDA WESTMORE (Socialist Teacher)

Union leaders duck national action

NO national action against education cuts. No action with other trade unions. Refusal to oppose all cuts. Refusal to act against all education cuts.

These were some of the unfortunate decisions taken by the National Union of Teachers' special conference on the cuts last Saturday. The only positive vote was for local action, organised at the discretion of the executive, to oppose some kind of job loss and compulsory redundancy.

Faced with the sharpest attacks on education for 40 years, the NUT executive has refused to take the measures necessary for the defence of the most basic educational rights.

Sacrificed

The school meals service, a product of working class pressure for reform, is one of the things to be sacrificed. 'Would you go to the barricades to defend the meals service?' read the speakers' notes provided for the executive by



From Socialist Teacher full-time officials. In this crisis, the executive has moved to the right. To seek support

for its course, it utilises to good effect the equivocal feelings that many teachers still have about the trade union movement.

Daft

'Would you be daft enough to ally with NUPE?' president-elect Jack Chambers asked the conference.

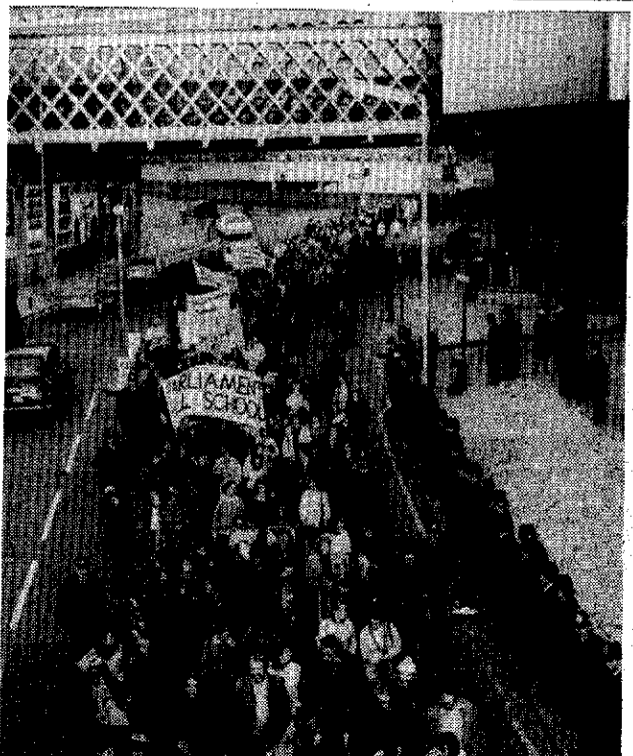
The NUT has for the moment turned its back on other trade unionists, on the fate of the welfare state, and the threat to the most basic and hard won educational reforms. This can only lead to isolation and defeat.

It is up to the left in the union to lead an opposition in defending the most basic levels of educational provision, which the executive is prepared to forsake.

The one card vote at Saturday's conference demonstrated that over a third of the membership is willing to support automatic strike action against redundancies. That is a basis for the left to build on.

Photo: LINDA WESTMORE

Photo: LINDA WESTMORE



London teachers march past Inner London Education Authority offices last week

London teachers on the move

EIGHT thousand teachers demonstrated on Tuesday of last week against £21m cuts being proposed by the Inner London Education Authority controlled by Labour.

The demonstration coincided with meetings of the ILEA education sub-committee and immediately afterwards of the full authority. The cuts were voted through by 29 votes to 28 in both committees.

Only two Labour councillors, Charlie Rossi and Ken Livingstone, voted against all the cuts. The rest defied their constituency mandates and voted for a package which provides for cuts in school meals and free school transport. The Tories would be proud of them!

Two members of the National Union of Teachers on the education sub-committee were out drinking tea in the corridors during the vote. They had been seen a few moments earlier with Sir Ashley Bramall, Labour leader of the ILEA, who apparently told them it wasn't worth voting as the package would get through the full authority anyway!

There were large contingents of school students demonstrating. Their main demand was for recognition of the National Union of School Students and a joint fight with the NUT against the Tory cuts. There were also delegations from the National Union of Public Employees and the union for teachers in higher education, NATFHE.

Bernard Regan, Secretary of the East London Teachers Association, urged joint action by the whole trade union movement to reverse the ILEA's Tory cuts package. The NUT should have been with the other 50,000 trade unionists on the 28 November march, he said, but the national and London teachers'

leadership had not campaigned for this.

Regan called for the election of teachers who would join with the labour movement in fighting the cuts — Dick North and Vanessa Wiseman to the national executive and Dave Picton, Mike Lewsley and Amanda Leon to the London executive.

The professionalism of the NUT executive is not going to stop 20,000 teachers getting the sack. Only classwide action will do that.

*Socialist Challenge wrongly reported last week that the membership of the NUT has declined by 4.5 per cent this year. The drop in membership is in fact 1.5 per cent.

Now drop these charges!

AROUND 100 teachers from the Newham area of London were on the march and now 37 of them face disciplinary action. The charges are that they went on the march 'against the advice of their headteachers' — despite the fact that the Labour controlled council had passed a resolution allowing its employees to attend the march.

The Newham Teachers' Association is being urged to support its members. It should call on the Labour council to support its own employees. The council should order the Director of Education to drop the charges.

There will be a picket of the council meeting on 9 January against any cuts in teaching jobs. The picket has been called by a conference of the Newham Cuts Committee.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

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

EDINBURGH: SC on sale every Sat, Princes St, 12.30-2. For more info phone 554 0196 or write: Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, 45 Niddry St.

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.

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.

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

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.

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

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

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

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

Benyon-

'The foetus comes first'

By Valerie Coultas

WILLIAM Benyon has been up to some very clever tricks in the House of Commons' standing committee discussing John Corrie's anti-abortion Bill.

Under the pressure of their advisers — the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child, and Life — the 12 anti-abortion MPs on the committee of 17 have decided not to alter the time-limit of 20 weeks proposed by Corrie.

But a new clause has been added by William Benyon which will allow abortion beyond this limit in order to preserve the woman's life; to prevent grave or permanent injury to her physical or mental health; or to terminate pregnancies when tests have proved that the foetus is deformed.

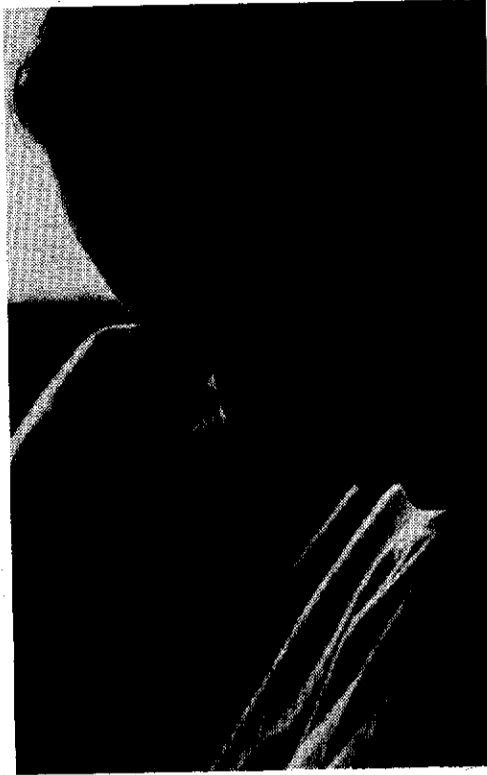
Under the 1967 Abortion Act, the emergency procedure for an abortion when a woman's life is in danger requires only one doctor's signature. The new proposals will mean that, when speed is of the essence, two signatures will have to be obtained.

Benyon was also responsible for bringing back the original wording of the 1967 Act to allow for abortions whenever it would be less risky than childbirth, but he added the word 'substantially greater risk'.

Now Michael Ankrum and James Dunn have added the word 'serious' to this clause so that it will now only be possible for women to have abortions if a pregnancy would 'cause serious injury to the woman's mental or physical health or a substantially greater risk in childbirth'.

These two words, 'serious' and 'substantially', will make it far easier for the powerful anti-abortion lobby to take doctors to court for allowing women to terminate their pregnancies.

Two further amendments make the aims of



the majority of this committee crystal clear. Benyon persuaded the committee to allow a statutory instrument to lower the time limit. By delegating authority to the Secretary of State for Social Services, the time-limit could be reduced without even a parliamentary vote. The anti-abortion MPs on the standing committee are worried about the 'conscience'

of doctors. They are worried about the unborn child. But they have no 'conscience' about the number of women who will die through unsafe backstreet abortions because of their arrogant bigotry.

The standing committee has also decided to recommend to doctors that they should use a method of abortion that avoids killing the foetus before the termination takes place unless, it would cause a 'substantially greater risk to a woman's life'.

Presumably if there is only a small as opposed to a great risk of the woman's life being in danger — even if an abortion is taking place — the foetus comes first!

The third reading of the Corrie Bill will take place in February. The National Abortion Campaign is calling for a mass lobby on Tuesday 5 February, backed by the South-east Region of the TUC. On the Friday there will be an assembly outside the House of Commons to express the feelings of women about this Bill.

Pro-abortion campaigners should make the month of January a month that the 12 anti-abortion fanatics on the standing committee and their friends in Parliament do not easily forget.

OVER 200 people marched through Oxford against the Corrie Bill on 1 December. The emphasis had been on winning the support of young people in particular and the march was overwhelmingly composed of University and Polytechnic students, together with some school students and young workers.

The march, organised by the local branch of the National Abortion Campaign, ended with a rally outside Hertford College, home and workplace of John Patten local Tory MP. Patten is a reactionary Catholic who supports the Corrie Bill.

Young women come together

By Jude Arkwright

YOUNG women had their first chance to get together at a conference held in London on 1 December. Among the 120 women who came were school students, college students and young women who had just started full-time employment.

For many of these young women it was the first opportunity to talk about the problems we confront. The conference was sponsored by the women's committee of the National Union of Students, the National Union of School Students, and the National Association of Youth Clubs, and the newspaper Revolution.

Parents, boyfriends, lack of advice about contraception, the difficulties of getting abortions even after you've plucked up the courage were common issues raised.

If you're female and under 16 you get trod on, even more than women generally do. One out of two women

on the dole in this country is under 25.

Things are going to get worse not better with the Corrie Bill, which will make it very difficult for young women to obtain an abortion while the cuts will throw 'equal opportunity' out the window in schools and colleges.

The women's liberation movement has had a big impact on young women. Militancy ran high at the conference about the Tory attacks on women.

Tempers

But tempers also rose over the intervention of radical feminists after the lunch break. The radical feminists, several wearing war paint, disrupted the session by screaming about Revolution, the youth paper that had been heavily committed to building the conference, being written by men and dominating the conference.

Revolution supporters and other women tried to explain that we had wanted as many women as possible involved but they were not open to persuasion or debate. Many young women were completely bewildered by what was happening. It was their first experience of any kind of feminist meeting.

It struck me that these radical feminists had a similar approach to the women on the anti-Corrie march who rushed to the front ignoring the feelings of the thousands of women trade unionists who had been building the campaign for months.

The radical feminists who came to the young women's conference did not seem to be interested in building a broad movement that could attract new women. They were more concerned with red-baiting women because they supported the socialist youth paper Revolution and worked with men.

It's about time the elitism of

sisters who use these bullying tactics was challenged. Everyone should be allowed to put forward their views at women's meetings.

Magazine

Despite all the hullabaloo we decided to launch a young women's magazine. Instead of giving young women tips on what to wear we'd discuss how to organise. Rather than having a problem page we would have a page where we could talk about the common features of the oppression of young women.

We also thought that national meetings were useful and that we should organise a much larger conference at a summer school.

Women interested in setting up the magazine are invited to a meeting on 8 January at Spare Rib, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

Lambeth women workers stay united!

By Jean Mackenzie

ON PAPER, Lambeth council — which has been in the forefront of fighting the cuts — has a healthy attitude to the employment of women. It employs women as painters, carpenters, tree surgeons, and — at the council's North Street depot — street cleaners.

There is just one problem. The council is proposing to close the North St depot and disperse the women street cleaners to other depots in the south-west London borough, in spite of strenuous resistance to this by the women themselves.

Their objections relate to general needs of women workers, and the fact that both the Labour council and the women's union, the Transport and General Workers' Union, are prepared to override these needs reveals a great deal about the problems that women commonly face at work.

There are several reasons why the

women at North St depot wish to continue to be based there.

First, they like it. Secondly, moving to the other predominantly male depots would take a number of the women further from their home, which with childcare problems would put in doubt their ability to continue in the job at all.

This problem could be overcome if nurseries facilities were available, but despite the council's present resistance to the Tory cuts, it shelved a plan to extend child-care provision in the borough.

Difficult

The women street cleaners have a further reason for wanting to remain at their depot, which has made it extremely difficult for them to fight the issue within their union.

They consider that being together at North St has reinforced their confidence about doing a traditional male job, and strengthened their

ability to confront hostility from men.

Unfortunately, much of this hostility has come from the depots to which the council is proposing to move the women next month.

Reactionary

A number of the men have spoken against the employment of women in manual jobs, and their reactionary view on this issue coincides with their racist attitudes. Several of the women street cleaners are black.

Not surprisingly, the women fear that if they are split up there will be no effective voice for their interests within their TGWU branch or in negotiations with management.

As if all this wasn't bad enough, the women at the North St depot were suspended from work for six days on 1 November, the day that management announced the proposed closure of the depot.

The reason for the suspension was

that the women's shop steward had informed management that several of the women had threatened to ring the wives of councillors saying that they had slept with women in the depot. A council inquiry failed to offer any evidence that such threats had been made. The shop steward resigned her office.

Lambeth Trades Council discussed the dispute last week, but decided not to take action because of the inter-union problems involved. However, the general management committee of Norwood Labour Party is now looking into the issue

Offers of help to Jean Mackenzie, c/o Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Trainee designer needed for Socialist Challenge. Positive discrimination will be applied. For further details ring 01-359 8288 and ask for Alan.

LIVERPOOL XMAS SOCIAL: Fri 14 Dec, bar till 2am. 'Better Frights' Disco plus food, Stanley House, Upper Parliament St. Creche available: Tel 051-727-1748.

LIVERPOOL XMAS FAYRE: Sat 15 Dec, Caribbean Centre, Upper Parliament St. Food, Xmas gifts, books and jumble — starts at 2pm. **LIVERPOOL SC** meetings: 20 Dec 'The Tories and the Immigration Controls', speaker from Merseyside Campaign Against the Immigration Laws; 10 Jan, The Cuban Revolution, speaker John Kirby; meetings start at 7.30pm at 15a, Richmond St (off Washington Square).

PADDINGTON SC group presents: Alain Tanner/John Berger's La Salamandre (1971 Sw. 129 mins.) An earlier film from the makers of *Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000*. How a young woman worker (Bulle Ogier) confronts attempts by both a Marxist intellectual and a libertarian poet to find out why she shot her stepfather. At 1 Thorpe Close, W10 under the Westway flyover and 2 mins from Ladbroke Tube (buses 7, 15 and 52). Followed by social at Basement Flat, 24 Powis Sq., London W11. A film not to be missed, rarely available in London, Friday 14 December, 7.30pm. Paddington SC group can be contacted at PO Box 50, London N1.

SWINDON SC on sale 11-1pm every Sat., Regent St (Brunel Centre).

TOWER HAMLETS SC supporters sell papers every Fri 5-6pm, Sat 11-12.30, Sun 10.30-12.00 Brick Lane.

SHEFFIELD SC on sale every Sat. 12-1pm Fargate.

ARGUMENTS FOR



SOCIALISM

MARXISTS CRITICISE capitalism on two fundamental counts. First, capitalism is incapable of developing the economic potential of society, developing its potential for the creation of wealth; second, capitalism is a regime of the denial of freedom, a society of

exploitation and repression.

A socialist society would have to overcome both these fundamental features of capitalism. The first requirement for developing a society which is free from exploitation and repression is the abolition of all forms of oppressive and debilitating work. The drudgery of eight or more hours of daily work is the way that the working class under capitalism is physically and mentally ground down. Its horizons are stunted.

To overcome this situation it is necessary to automate all forms of productive labour. Total automation, from the extraction of raw materials, to final production of consumer goods in factories, is not a pipe dream. The introduction of micro-chip technology and self-regulating and self-repairing production systems is even proceeding under capitalism. Already some factories are totally run by robots.

But capitalist society faces an insuperable obstacle to total automation. In order to make profits capitalists need to employ workers — the exploitation of labour power is the source of surplus value.

Moreover, to realise their profits the capitalist class needs wage earning workers to buy the goods produced. Thus the elimination of work cannot be achieved under capitalism. A society without wage labour is no longer a capitalist society.

How would a society based on automation

function? First, all members of society would be entitled to a share of the products of society. Even when we get to total automation, however, at first the production of goods will not be limitless. Therefore decisions will have to be made about the allocation of society's products. But HOW will these decisions be made?

This is where the question of democratic councils open to all citizens comes in. Under

SOCIALISM = AUTOMATION + WORKERS COUNCILS

capitalism decision making is concentrated in a few hands. For most ordinary working people, participation in decision making means voting every few years in elections. The very structure of capitalist democracy is precisely designed to ensure that the masses do not have any real say or power.

The only way to overcome this is to ensure that decisions in post-capitalist society are in the hands of democratic councils open to all

members of society. These would be based on local areas, and in the period before total automation was reached on workplaces. They would be federated on a local and national basis. Overall decisions would be taken by national and international bodies of delegates from the councils.

Many people find it difficult to conceive of a society in which work was abolished. In fact, it won't be. As Marx pointed out in a famous passage in the Critique of the Gotha Programme: under socialism labour will not be the forced labour of capitalism, but labour carried out for enjoyment. With the ending of the drudgery of factory work, there will be a tremendous explosion of intellectual work and education.

People will be able to choose to engage in both manual and intellectual work, to choose to be, in Marx's words, a carpenter in the morning, an artist at lunchtime and a fisherman in the afternoon.

These two features — the development of technology and democratic decision making are the fundamental initial features of socialist society. But to carry this through means an end to capitalist anarchy in production, an end to technology which oppresses humanity, and the introduction of planning on a national and international scale. This means taking ownership and control of production out of the hands of the capitalists. How that can be done will be the subject of a future column.

Southall trials: lawyers protest to Lord Chancellor



THE LAWYERS defending the people arrested in Southall on 22 and 13 April have been in a difficult position. On the one hand many of them have felt that by taking part they have given a semblance of justice and fairness to a process in which those qualities have been, on the whole singularly lacking.

On the other hand they have been constrained from speaking openly. Now, in a unique move, they are sending a petition to the Lord Chancellor protesting at the abnormally high conviction rate, the excessively severe sentences and the fact that the defendants are being tried over 20 miles away from their homes and the place where the alleged offences occurred. The petition is expected to contain the signatures of nearly all of the 30-plus lawyers involved.

Hostile

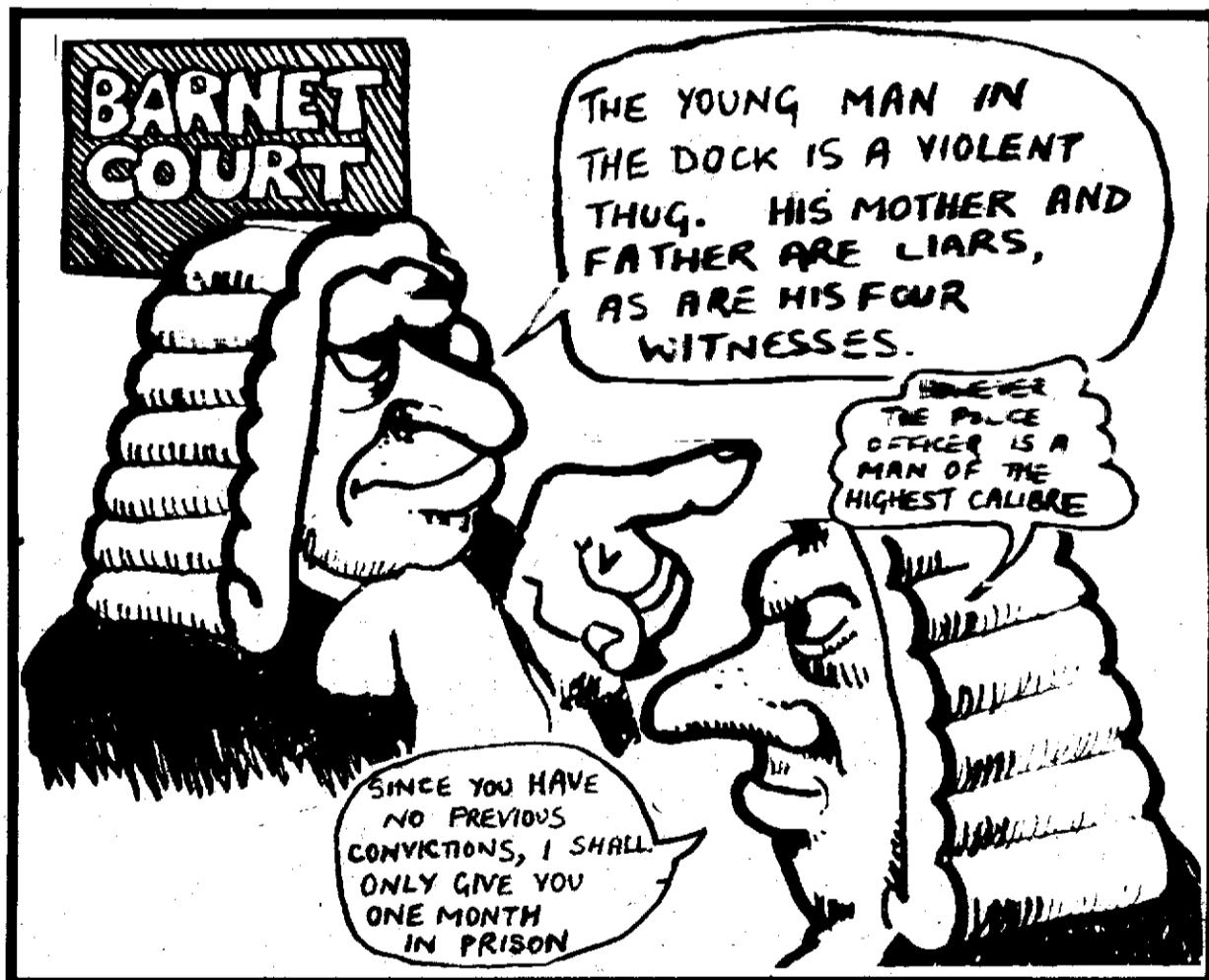
The cases have been tried by stipendiary magistrates from inner London specifically sent to Barnet Magistrates' Court for the purpose. They have each served two-week stints. With one exception they have been uniformly hostile to the defence.

The exception was Christopher Bourke who sat for two weeks at the end of October. He convicted 43.3 per cent of the defendants who appeared before him, as opposed to the previous average of 90 per cent. He was succeeded by Michael Johnston who, 'only' reached an individual conviction rate of about 70 per cent which led to a further falling off in the overall rate to between 77 and 78 per cent.

However, he infuriated defence lawyers by asking leading questions of police officers to elicit information favourable to the prosecution both during examination in chief and cross-examination. On one occasion, after a series of interruptions while defence counsel was cross-examining, there was a blazing row as a result of which it is understood defending counsel and Mr Johnston have both lodged complaints against each other.

Vernon Hunte

In one case Mr Johnston tried, that of Vernon Hunte, charged with three assaults on police officers, the arresting officer, one PC Mutch of Rochester Row, admitted that there had been a 'gauntlet' of police officers on the stairs of 6 Park View



inside which Mr Hunte had been arrested.

He also conceded that though Mr Hunte was obviously under arrest, some of those officers may have assaulted him, which could have accounted for the severe injuries he received. It remains to be seen what effect this admission will have in the long run.

In many cases arising out of the incidents in 6 Park View, defendants and witnesses completely unconnected with each other have given evidence that they were severely beaten by police officers who made them run the gauntlet downstairs and out of the house.

This had hitherto been vehemently denied by police witnesses who, on the other hand, were unable to give satisfactory explanations of some of the injuries received by the defendants. But the admission did not save Vernon Hunte, nor did the fact that some of the identification

evidence against him was extremely shaky. He was convicted and received six months imprisonment, although he had no previous convictions.

A record?

The Vernon Hunte case raises another interesting point. How many people can throw missiles through the same average sized domestic window at the same time? According to the police and most of the magistrates, it would seem that some 30 people can do so and that each can be separately identified by separate police officers at a range of some 50 feet. In one memorable case, a police officer actually claimed to have discerned pock marks on an individual defendant's face and was believed.

The resolution of such questions would, of course, have been easier if the prosecution had deigned to supply the defence with written statements, something they still refuse to do until

the very last minute before the court begins. The prosecution has maintained its refusal in the face of pressure from magistrates who have otherwise not been noted for their favourable attitude towards the defence.

One of them, Peter Badge, said of the non-service of statements that it was a 'deplorable situation' and brushed aside the prosecution's excuses. The cases were not trivial, he said, because although the charges themselves may not all be very heavy, the allegations upon which they were based were. (In a number of cases the prosecution has dropped heavy charges or not made them, although warranted on the alleged facts in order to prevent the defendants electing trial by jury.)

Mr Badge also said that any objections based on expense were groundless since the defence had offered to go to the Metropolitan Police Solicitors' offices to copy the

... THE PROSECUTION response, as expressed in the defence, was short and simple — 'you're not having them'.

Court staff had hoped to finish the cases by November. Early and frequent adjournments have meant that the trial has not yet started. It is now expected to start in the next few days. The trial will be held in the new court — a large purpose built building. It is only the new building which the findings of the Southall community will be about the standard of justice they have received. It is a feeling we should all share.

This article appeared in the Legal Action Group Bulletin, December 1979.

DATES TO REMEMBER

17 December
AS WE reported in last week's paper, there is a picket being mounted outside Barnet Magistrates Court to protest against the Southall Show trials. The Southall Campaign Committee and People's Unite appeal to all anti-racists to ensure that there is a good turn-out.

19 January 1980
SATURDAY 19 January 1980 is Southall Saturday nationwide. The aim is to raise £100,000 for the defence fund in one day by co-ordinated action throughout the country. The 'event' is being organised jointly by Southall Campaign Committee, the Friends of Blair Peach Committee and the Anti Nazi League.

The aim is to organise a fund-raising event in each town to reach the target. A fortnight ago the Haringey branch of the International Marxist Group organised a social to raise money for the Defence Fund. Members cooked one dish each and charged £1 entry. The booze was brought by those attending. Nearly a hundred pounds were raised for Southall!

20 January 1980
THERE will be a picket outside Pentonville prison for Southall prisoners.

Why Charlie Haughey will play the green card



By Geoff Bell
THE achievements of British government policy in Ireland continue. Two weeks ago the Tories secured the resignation of Gerry Fitt from the leadership of the Social Democratic and Labour Party. A more Republican-minded SDLP was the consequence. Now the Tories have helped to bring down Irish Premier Jack Lynch and seen him replaced by Charlie Haughey, long time leader of the 'green' wing in Fianna Fail.

Thatcher and the fumbling North of Ireland Secretary Humphrey Atkins did not plan things that way. On the contrary their intention has been the normal British one over the past ten years; to create a consensus in Ireland which would include Unionists, 'moderates' on the Catholic side in the North, and a collaborating Irish government.

Instead the Tories' policies have shattered what remaining consensus there was. Because their proposed conference on the North ruled out discussion of the 'Irish dimension' the SDLP announced its boycott of the talks, and Fitt, a supporter of them, fell from power.

Thatcher's insistence that the British Army be allowed to fly over the southern side of the Irish border has now proved the final factor in the fall of Jack Lynch, who conceded the

British demand. The hardline British attitudes have also helped Haughey secure the leadership of Fianna Fail. British ruling class circles are now in a state of semi-frenzy about what Haughey will do with that leadership.

The Tory government may console itself with memories of other 'deep green' leaders of Fianna Fail. Eamon de Valera and Sean Lemass executed and interned members of, and their former colleagues in, the IRA. But that Haughey will become another poacher turned gamekeeper is a dangerous assumption. The signs are that Haughey will have little option but to play the green card.

On Haughey's part this would not be out of some ideological commitment to a united Ireland, the truth is that the only deep felt ideology Haughey has ever displayed is the securing of his own advancement. But at this stage in Irish politics promoting the Irish national question as a major issue could achieve just what Haughey is after.

This is because Fianna Fail faces problems not confined to the North of Ireland. Rising unemployment, an increasing militancy in trade unions and the turning sour of the Irish 'economic miracle' means that Haughey faces grave difficulties on the economic and social front; difficulties which he will find it difficult to resolve. And yet Fianna Fail badly needs a cause to promote which can win back its traditional supporters and prove electorally advantageous: the issue of Irish unity fits that bill ideally.

Many attributed the last government's defeat in the polls to its failure to promote unity. Public opinion polls since have indicated wide support for a British withdrawal from Ireland. The election of Haughey, revealing his stature as Ireland's most popular politician, is further evidence of nationalist sentiment. What Haughey is best known for was his trial in 1970 on charges of gun-running to the Provos. He was subsequently acquitted, but his involvement in these activities, which he said were government policy, established his

Republican credentials. Such credentials are important in Fianna Fail whose founder, de Valera, led the Republican side in the Irish civil war of 1921.

The rest of Haughey's politics are a mixture of opportunism and reaction. A millionaire with a large estate — he gives his tenants turkeys for Christmas — he has consistently championed the interest of the richest five per cent in Ireland, a bracket in which he falls. As a former finance minister he oversaw one of the greatest capitalist bonanzas in modern Irish history when he sold mining rights in Ireland to a multinational for a pittance.

Most recently he has been associated with the Family Planning Act, a thoroughly backward and Catholic sectarian piece of legislation, an effect of which is to outlaw the sale of contraceptives to unmarried women.

Yet that legislation did Haughey little harm with those he has relied on for his climb to power — the grass roots of Fianna Fail. This is where Haughey's support has always been strongest and it was the grass roots, through the Fianna Fail backbenchers, which secured Haughey's election over the party establishment's choice of George Colley.

But the real credit for the apparent swing to Republicanism within Fianna Fail must go to those in the North of Ireland who, for the past ten years have maintained their struggle against British imperialism. The dominance of the national question in Irish political life has been once again confirmed by the Haughey victory; and the myth that there is no interest in the South of Ireland for what happens in the North has been once again dispelled.

What the Haughey victory says to Britain was aptly summed up in a comment by Neil Blaney, a Euro and Irish MP, who was also involved in the arms smuggling scandal in 1970. Said Blaney, just before Haughey was elected, 'It has come to the stage now where the very dogs in the street know that the British must go'.

Troops out conference

By Ronan Brady

Over 150 people attended the biannual conference of the United Troops Out Movement on 8/9 December in London. The highlight of the conference was a discussion on the H-Block prisoners led by Kay Walsh, a visitor from the Belfast Relatives Action Committee.

Walsh described how the Republican prisoners, most of whom are in the 17-20 age bracket, were 'beaten, brutalised and force-washed' by prison officers.

She detailed how women in Armagh Prison faced, 'a lot of harassment', were locked up 41 hours a day, and were denied the normal prison facilities.

The UTOM conference went on to decide that its major activity over the coming months would be to build for a national day of action on the H Block prisoners on 1 March. A series of local and regional demonstrations are planned and there will be a major rally in London to which a former 'blanket' prisoner will be invited.

As well as highlighting the prisoners' issue the conference also agreed to place increased emphasis on work in the labour movement. Encouragement will be given to establishing a 'troops out' current in the Labour Party.

The rest of the conference was taken up with establishing a national campaigning structure for the Troops Out Movement. For the first time the movement will have a nationally elected steering committee and its own office. The steering committee was given authority to appoint an office worker. The conference also decided to rename itself the Troops Out Movement.

The decisions reflected the feeling

HUMPHREY DUMPTY

HUMPHREY Atkins is possibly not Thatcher's favourite minister. Along with the media, she has had her time cut out trying to disguise the fact that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is a complete idiot.

This task was not assisted by a press conference given by Atkins at Stormont Castle in Belfast on 20 November, the day when the government presented its Green Paper proposing a conference on the North of Ireland; yet another British 'solution' to its war which has already ground to a halt.

Atkins was asked the following questions by a reporter from An Phoblacht/Republican News.

AP/RN: 'If you could come down to earth one minute, Mr Atkins. Given the likelihood of the conference flopping, what with the apathy among the parties etc., and the intractability of the situation, as was the case in Zimbabwe, will the British government consider investigating Lancaster House-type talks with the equivalent of the Patriotic Front in Ireland — the IRA?'

Atkins: 'No.'

AP/RN: 'Why not?'

Atkins: 'Because I don't talk to, eh, terrorists...'

AP/RN: 'But that's how the Tory Party and the British media have referred to the Patriotic Front. And indeed Mr Whitelaw, your cabinet colleague, spoke to the Republican Movement in June 1972, and in fact flew them into England for talks...'

Atkins: 'Yes. But look... first of all I am dealing with Northern Ireland and not Africa, and secondly this is 1979 and I am sitting here and I am not going to talk to the Provisional IRA.'

AP/RN: 'Well it wasn't Africans Mr Whitelaw flew into England for the talks...'

Atkins: 'I am sorry, I just don't mind what happened in 1972, we are in 1979 now, and I have given you the answer to your question — No.'

A reporter from the Cork Examiner then said: 'Excuse me sir. What is the difference between the Patriotic Front and the IRA?'

Atkins: 'I don't know...'

There was widespread laughter as Atkins continued: 'I am the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, you see, and I don't know anything about the Patriotic Front.'

of the majority at conference that (U)TOM needed to have more of a national presence in order to take advantage of the growing oppor-

tunities for campaigning and organising around the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.

Record for Xmas

By Angie Todd

THE LATEST LP of People of No Property (originally Men of No Property) has just been released and is called appropriately *Brits Out*.

It's an album of Irish revolutionary songs with a wide and varied perspective. There are songs about social conditions in the North of Ireland, especially housing; about economic exile in England; there's *Bread and Roses* as a recognition of women's part both in the war and in the future. Also included is a song in support of the struggle of the blanket prisoners in England's Tombstone, H Block, Smash it.

Two songs are directed at getting the troops out, one which recognises how the dole or a dead-end job in England, plus advertising lies, push people into the army, and the other explains to troops why 'people in this country (Ireland) hold you to blame'.

The record also contains a tribute to the Angry brigade and a reminder of the resistance of prisoners in

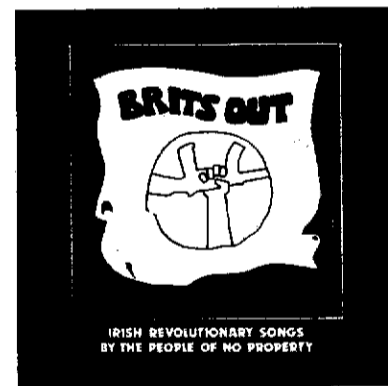
Ex-soldier's Scottish tour

By George Kerevan

SCOTTISH branches of the (United) Troops Out Movement have organised a speaking tour by Brian Ashton, an ex-British Army paratrooper who has served in the North of Ireland.

Ashton will speak in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, Dundee and Aberdeen at a series of meetings which will build for the Bloody Sunday Commemoration march in Birmingham at the end of January. Sharing the platform will be veteran socialist Harry McShane, a campaigner for Irish freedom for over 50 years.

The progress of (U)TOM in Scotland in constructing a broad-based movement has produced a



Britain called Hull Jail Riot.

Finally, not to forget how people are organised, resist and keep on fighting, there's a 17 verse story of Eddie Gallagher, Rose Dugdale and Marion Coyle.

It makes you feel good without being superficial; and hopeful without being optimistic.

Brits Out is obtainable by post from Troops Out (Literature Committee), c/o 2a St Paul's Rd. London N1.

variety of responses. One was typified by a (U)TOM benefit concert on 1 December which drew an audience of over 200. Another, and altogether different attitude was seen on 2 December when a group of Orange Loyalists attacked a meeting addressed by Eamonn McCann in Glasgow. A number of (U)TOM supporters were physically assaulted.

Such incidents are of nuisance value and indicate the frustration of the Loyalists at the 'Troops Out' successes in Scotland. They are best combatted by maximum publicity for every (U)TOM activity, the latest of which is to organise a major push to force a debate on Ireland at the Scottish TUC in April.

Details of Brian Ashton's tour from Box 32, Niddry St, Edinburgh.

Labour's myths and realities

By Julian Atkinson

THE CURRENT vitality of the Labour left poses the question of its potentiality and limits. Tony Benn's argument that the 1945-50 Labour government is the model which must be aimed at invites a close examination of that experience.

Mark Jenkins' *Bevanism — Labour's High Tide* examines this theme, providing us with a mass of new and carefully researched material on the period, with a useful chapter on the activities of the Trotskyists inside the Labour Party and previously unpublished minutes of the Bevanite group.

The author's stated aim is to challenge the contemporary 'mythology' which denies that the Bevanite movement was the broadest Labour current this century and attributes to it weak and purely parliamentary forms, with a neglect of trade union struggles.

Jenkins fails to point out that this 'mythology' is itself the product of a rather broad current, including Ralph Miliband and David Coates, who could scarcely be described as left, let alone ultra-left.



'Today's Labour right was yesterday's lefts.'

Deficiency

Jenkins argues that the real deficiency, as opposed to the aforementioned imaginary ones, was the inability of the Bevanites to develop a coherent characterisation of the states of East Europe, while the organisation of Bevanism was more than adequate for its perspectives.

It had a full domestic programme and did not need one that was more radical, 'the adoption of which would, in any case, have infringed the sovereignty of conference', the author claims.

He is hard put to explain the relative ineffectiveness of the Labour left in the late '40s and its growth in influence in the early '50s — a development which is largely accounted for by the fact that Labour lefts have always felt a deal more uninhibited when in opposition.

This flows from the central weakness of reformism, which is not its lack of anti-Stalinist vigour, but its incomprehension of the state.

Responsibility

To believe that it is possible to move gradually towards socialism by parliamentary means implies that the working class must take responsibility for the economy and implement 'socialist policies' within the context of a capitalist state and a predominantly market economy.

A Labour government is thus forced, regrettably no doubt, to discipline trade unionists. Putting trade unionists in prison for taking unofficial strike action was one of the specialties of the 1945-51 Labour

government. Sir Stafford Cripps, the Bevan of the '30s, was 'obliged' to impose wage freezes and restraints from 1947-49, and the Labour lefts went along with this.

In 1949, Aneurin Bevan commented that 'our people have achieved a material prosperity in excess of their moral stature'. Ian Mikardo wanted a tougher socialist wages policy — 'It is really idle to talk about a planned economy with an unplanned wages sector,' he said.

Mikardo argued that socialism would not be possible unless the unions gave the TUC General Council more power.

It was the Korean war which finally pushed the lefts off the fence. The rearmament programme threatened the welfare state and forced Bevan, Harold Wilson, and John Freeman to resign from the Atlee government. It wasn't the war itself which was the problem, but its economic consequences.

Michael Foot wrote in *Tribune* that US soldiers were dying to 'uphold a Labour Party principle'. The return of the Tories in 1951 caused the flood-tide of Bevanism, as resentment over the policies of Atlee and the right was let loose.

Mark Jenkins provides much evidence to show how the Bevanites were able to hold a massive series of meetings up and down the country and to produce a regular supply of pamphlets with a wide sale.

The point is well made that the influence of Bevanism was felt not just in the constituency Labour Parties but within the unions as well. The high mark of Bevanism within the unions was when, in 1954, it took on

Arthur Deakin, the general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, in support of the NASD — the dockers' blue union — and its right to organise.

What Jenkins fails to grasp, however, is that this activity was qualitatively different from sending a *Tribune* 'brains trust' to a shop stewards meeting. It was also quite atypical for the Labour lefts.

Bevan resigned as Minister of Labour in 1951 over NHS charges, after he had supported Deakin against striking dockers and caused seven of them to be jailed for conspiring to organise an illegal strike.

Decline

From 1954 Bevanism was in decline, with its main leaders splintering to the right. In 1957 Bevan came out against those calling for unilateral disarmament and in defence of Britain's possession of the H-bomb. Over the whole of this period the constituency left declined as the left in the trade unions increased.

Jenkins states that Bevanism was broader and better than previous Labour lefts, such as the Independent Labour Party and the Socialist League, but he doesn't seriously argue this case, still less prove it.

The evidence furnished by Miliband and Coates tends to point in the opposite direction — a secular decline of the Labour lefts as they become less effective generation by generation. This question certainly needs further discussion.

The other unsatisfactory theme of the book is the influence of the Cold War on Bevanism. Some points are

tellingly made, such as the oscillation of sections of the Labour left between Stalinism and US imperialism. Incredible illusions were held about President Truman, who was seen as a left social democrat.

The Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 showed the inter-relationship between events in East Europe and the West. But the link is over-emphasised and is overlaid with a disquieting Stalinophobia which balances its hatred of Stalinist betrayal with tolerance for the crimes of social democracy.

And Jenkins' lessons for today?

He appears to agree with Bevan that 'the task of maintaining the unity of Labour falls primarily on the left'. If the Bevanites were to have had a more elaborate organisation, they would have committed the sin of forming a party within a party. To have further refined their policy would have undermined the sovereignty of conference.

Several of those on Labour's present-day extreme left have evolved a 'theory of the defensive', envisaging that organs of dual power will only emerge to defend a left Labour government from attack.

Jenkins adds his pebble to this wobbly pile with his defence of existing conference policy. 'The most serious left-wing revolts encompass this element of preserving what is in the party programme, against those leaders who seek to change the direction of party policy from what has been mutually agreed upon' (emphasis in original).

The fundamental criticism of Bevanism is that rather than fostering the mass activity of the working class

in struggling against capitalism, it either — when in power — opposed such direct struggles, or sought to divert them into the higher purpose of voting in Bevan and Co., so that they could wage the fight where it counted — in Parliament.

Jenkins contents himself with reiterating that the logical thrust of Bevanism was the democratic renewal of the Labour Party and the unions. Just what this democratic organisation amounted to can be glimpsed from an episode which took place in October 1952.

Jenny Lee, Bevan's wife, happened to glance at a page on his typewriter while he was preparing an article for *Tribune*. She rang other key Bevanites who hurried round to consult with Nye. The message on the type-script? Merely the dissolution of the Bevanite group.

Squaring-up

Jenkins fails to square up to the dual class nature of the Labour Party which is a creation of both the working class and bourgeois politics. There is no gradual or constitutional way that the party in its entirety can be won unambiguously for the working class.

Socialists have to forge an organisation not simply to remove Callaghan, but to take on the power of the state. Bevanism does not point in that direction. It merely shows that today's Labour right was yesterday's lefts.

'Bevanism — Labour's High Tide', by Mark Jenkins. Published by Spokesman Books, £12.50.

Narrow victory for Portugal's right

By Martin Meteyard

IT SEEMED that last week's Portuguese elections had resulted in a big defeat for the left.

With four seats still to be allocated on the basis of overseas votes [but expected to go to the right], the right-wing Democratic Alliance [AD] had 125 seats in parliament. The left as a whole had only 121: 73 for the Socialist Party, 47 for the Communist Party, and one for the far-left UDP.

But the votes tell a rather different story. Despite massive financial backing from right-wing parties in Spain and West Germany, AD pulled in only 45 per cent. The CP and SP alone won more than 46 per cent; and when you add on the votes of the UDP and six other left groups which stood, it is clear that the parties of the labour movement actually won a majority of the votes cast.

In other words, while the election of an AD government is a political setback which will make it harder for the labour movement to regain the offensive, in no sense does it signify

that the working class is defeated.

What it does show is that the class struggle is sharpening. And this was reflected inside the vote for the left. The CP, which controls the CGTP trade union federation and has defended the land reform in the southern Alentejo region, boosted its share of the vote 14.6 to 19 per cent. Meanwhile the SP's vote fell from 35 to 27 per cent.

The SP, in fact, paid the price for trying to restore capitalist stability in Portugal. In government for much of the time after the April 1976 elections, it collaborated with the IMF to impose an austerity policy which has led to a 10 per cent drop in living standards, 13 per cent unemployment, and an inflation rate of 25 per cent.

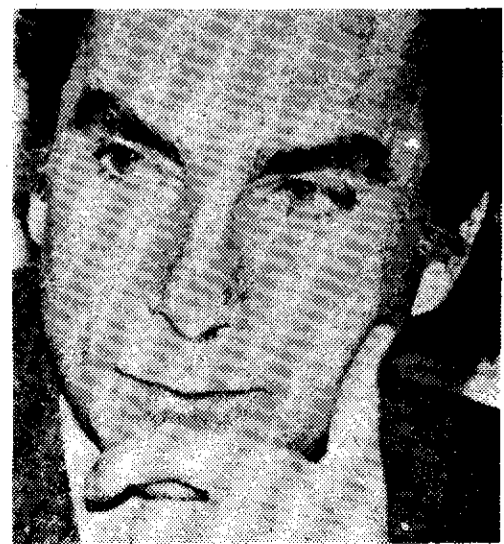
It was the SP, too, which tried to reverse the agrarian reform and make the agricultural labourers give up the big estates they had seized. The logic of this position was so clear that the SP's agriculture minister left the party to join AD.

Finally, last year the SP split the trade union movement by setting up a rival to the CGTP federation. It did this in alliance with the Social-Democrats [PSD] — the main party in AD, whose leader Francisco Sa Carneiro is likely to be the new prime minister!

The need for working class unity around a joint union plan of action against austerity was at the centre of the campaign of the Portuguese Trotskyists of the PSR.

Unlike all the other parties, the PSR also put major emphasis on the struggle for abortion rights. After giving over one of its TV broadcasts to the Portuguese abortion campaign, the PSR was charged by the Church and a small right-wing group with 'incitement to crime'.

In themselves the elections have solved nothing for the Portuguese capitalists. Big class battles lie ahead. And with new parliamentary elections required in October 1980 under the constitution, followed by presidential elections in 1981, political stability is the last thing that has been achieved.



Sa Carneiro

FIGHTING PRIOR

NO MORE talk about talks; the fist this time. The main aims of James Prior's proposed anti-union law, published last week are to:

*End effective picketing by restricting it to strikers' own workplace.

*Counter democracy in the unions by extending the use of secret ballots.

*Undermine closed shops by requiring an 80 per cent majority vote to secure them, and giving anti-union workers every chance to opt out.

*Making a worker prove that his or her dismissal was unfair, rather than having the employer prove that it was 'fair'.

Here PAT KANE examines the implications of the proposals on picketing, ballots, and the closed shop, and PHIL HEARSE reports on victimisations at Fiat in Turin, which might well have inspired management at British Leyland to follow suit.

Why Tories want to give pickets the heave-ho

By Pat Kane

OVER a hundred years ago, a Tory government tried to make picketing illegal. The Heath government, elected in 1970, tried to do the same. Now the Thatcher government, through the Prior proposals, is attempting to restrict one of the most basic weapons of the working class — the right to effective picketing.

In 1871, the Tories introduced the Criminal Law Amendment Act, which bears a striking resemblance to Prior's law. The Act made illegal 'threats or molestation'; 'watching or besetting premises', or 'persistent following'. Now the proposed legislation aims to outlaw 'intimidation' and 'secondary picketing'.

The Tories continually try to introduce these laws in an attempt to deal with the activities of the working class through the criminal courts. Picketing becomes a crime, and the punishment is imprisonment.

Saying 'Bah'

In 1871, seven women in South Wales were jailed for saying 'Bah' to a group of scabs. Throughout the 1870s, workers were jailed for picketing offences. In 1973, under Heath's government, 24 Shrewsbury building workers were tried for 'secondary picketing', and two of their leaders jailed.

Each time capitalism faces an economic crisis, it has to confront the strength of the working class, and it has to fight the traditional methods of struggle, such as picketing and the closed shop.

Picketing is as old as the trade unions themselves. Groups of workers picket because they want to win. Ordinary workers have no other strength. They don't have access to the courts or the mass media; and they don't control the armed forces or the police. All they have is their collective strength.

That's why effective picketing is so important. People picket to stop goods or other workers entering or leaving factories, offices, mines or docks. A few solitary workers standing outside a factory gate can neither stop a heavy lorry nor persuade several thousand workers not to cross the line. What makes picketing effective is strength of numbers.

Rank & File Code of Practice

The Tory Government is launching an attack on basic trade union rights. At the Defend Our Unions Conference on 23 June 1,100 trade unionists delegates from 487 trade union organisations adopted the Rank and File Code of Practice for Disputes as a statement of basic trade union principles which must be defended against the Tories. The Tories say they want consultation before they show their plans through Parliament. The best sort of consultation we can give them is a commitment to the Code of Practice from shop stewards committees, trade union branches, trade union councils and other organisations throughout the whole country. Campaign in your union to get the Code adopted as the official policy of the whole union. Join us in the campaign to win support for the Code of Practice and against the Tory attacks.

- 1 No crossing of picket lines;
- 2 For the building, and defence of, 100 per cent closed shop. For sanctions to be applied against any individuals breaking closed shop;
- 3 For full rank & file discussion and decision making by traditional democratic procedures—no enforced secret ballots.
- 4 Pickets to be positioned at whatever locations necessary to win the dispute and in sufficient numbers to ensure that picket lines are observed. Strikes to be run by elected strike committees.
- 5 All appeals for backing and financial assistance for disputes to be carried out wherever practicable;
- 6 Support calls made by strike committees for mass and sympathy pickets;
- 7 No settlement of disputes without full report backs to, and decision making by, the members concerned.

IF THE restrictions that Prior wants to attach to the closed shop ballots were applied to Westminster then he, along with the rest of the Tory government, would never have been elected.

MPs rarely obtain eighty per cent of the poll to send them to Parliament — the percentage vote that Prior now requires in order for the closed shop to be established.

No British government in this century has received such a high proportion of the poll in a general election, but the Tories' hostility to working class organisation obliges them to 'rig' union ballots.

The Tories want to stop the extension of working class organisation, by placing huge obstacles in front of any trade unionists who want the closed shop.

The right to vote was first won by the activity of the working class. As little as 60 years ago women were still

denied the right to vote. The fight for universal suffrage was something that everyone supported.

What's involved in the Prior proposals is totally different. The Tories want to

Secrets the balls

restrict the rights of trade unionists. It is not simply a matter of more 'democracy', but democracy for whom?

There will not be any closed shop ballots that the employers and the government don't think they will win in advance. If there is any doubt about the outcome, then they can always rely on the 80 per cent rule to



THE MASS picket which put the frighteners on the Tories — Saltley gates during the miners' strike in 1972. The new Employment Bill would make such pickets illegal

Most workers had never heard the phrase 'secondary picketing' before the lorry drivers' strike last winter. The media whipped up hysteria about the actions of Transport Union militants who picketed places other than their companies' depots. For the large majority of workers on strike there is no point in simply standing outside their own factory. If the strike is solid, then the factory is closed anyway, and in many industries it only takes a minority of the workforce to close down production.

What point is there in a miner standing outside a closed pit while imported coal is keeping the power stations running? Similarly, if a company has a large stockpile of finished goods these have to be stopped from leaving the warehouse. Secondary picketing can mean the difference between workers winning quickly, or the employer being able to ride out any strike.

The other form of picketing which the Tories dread is the solidarity picket. When the working class can begin to break out of the sectoralism and isolation imposed on them, the real strength of the workers becomes even more clear. The need for united action against the government and employers becomes more of a reality.

When the Yorkshire miners arrived at the Grunwick picket lines, it became all the easier to campaign for support throughout the labour movement. The issues involved became clearer to thousands of workers — George Ward was an anti-union employer, whom the police defended

against the Grunwick workers demanding union recognition.

The same happened at Saltley Gate in Birmingham during the 1972 miners' strike. The miners, in order to win, had to stop the power stations. They placed pickets on railway lines, and ASLEF members stopped their trains and wouldn't pass them. Arthur Scargill organised 'flying pickets' and when 10,000 engineers arrived outside the Saltley coke depot, they forced it to be closed.

The ruling class could see the power of organised labour, and it had to sever the muscle of rank and file workers in order to stop these types of actions. When there is only a handful of pickets — as Prior now proposes — they can be easily controlled by the police. Thus the right to picket is also about the right to picket effectively.

It is not simply the Tories who have introduced attacks on the right to picket. The labour leaders have always tried to contain the ability of the shop floor leadership to take actions independently of the official structures.

Last winter, for example, the TUC gave into the hysteria of the ruling class after the success of the lorry drivers. The future of the Social Contract was being challenged by the actions of these workers, and it was soon smashed by the Ford pay strike. The main political project of the Labour government was being destroyed, and

the labour leaders had to respond to this challenge to their authority.

Like the Tories, they tried to restrict the power of picketing. The TUC General Council concocted the 'Concordat', an agreement between the union leaders and the Labour government which aimed to salvage what was left of the Social Contract. The restrictions which they proposed were remarkably similar to Prior's.

They recommended that pickets should be restricted in numbers and controlled by their union officials. Like the Tories, they wanted to curb the independent activity of the rank and file.

Already we have seen the way in which Prior's law has been employed at the Charing Cross Hospital. Against the propaganda of the Tories, and the conservatism of the union leaders, we have to get back to the traditional strength of trade unionists — such as the right to effective picketing.

The Rank and File Code of Practice points out how to raise effective picketing. Every trade union body should adopt it and fight for its implementation.

In the 1870s, the Criminal Law Amendment Act was defeated by the mobilisation of 50,000 workers. The Industrial Relations Act of the Heath government was smashed by the actions of dockers, engineers, and miners. If we are to defend the basic rights of working people then the same type of actions are needed to defeat the Prior proposals.

PRIOR'S LAW

by the day. The ballots are held from the start. The problem with the voting system — which the Tories want to be used exclusively within the unions — is that it takes the running of

of t box

By Pat Kane

ions out of the hands of the people whom they affect.

These ballots will not be controlled by trade unionists, but by the Tory government and the employers. The participation of ordinary union members will be restricted so that there is as little involvement by the rank-and-file union members as possible.

It also allows the mass media to directly intervene in the ballot. Terry Duffy, the right-wing president of the Engineering Union, came to power through the postal ballot system, and his main support came from the national press.

The press was able to reach many more workers than the antiquated voting methods of the AUEW. With the full backing of the media, Duffy didn't lose.

Moderates'

Secret ballots, imposed by the union leaders or the government, always favour the 'moderate' union leader. 'Moderates' are usually people who support policies like the Edwardes' plan, the rationalisation of the building and steel, cuts in wage controls like the Social Contract.

The government likes to support those who support its policies. As with picketing, the closed shop is one of the tactics that stands in the way of those policies.

Closed shops grew through the industry along with the development of the shop stewards movement.

Before the closed shop, employers could treat individual workers separately. They could operate different wages and conditions for each worker. The policy was divide and rule.

The purpose of the closed shop is to defend the collective strength of the working class, to ensure that there is equal treatment and conditions throughout the workplace.

Collective

The closed shop allows union members to receive the benefits of collective strength. It prevents the victimisation of thousands of militants.

The closed shop makes collective action possible, and it provides the framework for democracy through collective decision making. It is the collective strength of the shop or that the Tories want to break.

The democracy of the Tories or the trade union leaders is not the same as the

democracy that we fight for. We stand for the active participation of ordinary union members in the running of their unions.

The propaganda of the Tories is that the secret, postal ballot is the best way to attain this. The right-wing union leaders agree, while the left wing wants to stay with the old system based on badly attended union branch meetings.

They all fear the active participation of workers in the unions.

Many people point to the balloting system used in the National Union of Mineworkers and argue that the Tories'



VOTING in a miners' union ballot. These ballots are controlled by the NUM and are accompanied by mass meetings

Victory at BOC

By Tessa van Gelderen

THE claim by workers at British Oxygen for £25 across the board, shift allowances, and drivers' meal allowances has been met in full. Management caved in to the Transport and General Workers Union's demands after two days' overtime ban.

The average increase is 42 per cent. This means that the shop floor will now be better paid than the foremen. The claim lasts for 20 months, culminating in a rise of £32.65 on the basic wage in two stages.

It is the length of the settlement that raises a small question mark over what is, undoubtedly, a massive victory for BOC workers. But a clause in the settlement states that if inflation goes over 30 per cent it would be renegotiated.

Although the company has said that in the event of a Tory wage freeze it would still honour the agreement, past experience has shown that this is by no means automatic.

proposals should be supported. But in the NUM the ballots are controlled by the union. They are accompanied by mass meetings, and the leadership — both right and left — actively campaign for their views.

When the ballots are held; what the question on the ballot form say; what action will result from the decision — all these are decided by the elected representatives of the NUM.

Prior wants to manipulate the trade union movement through the imposition of balloting.

Socialists have to fight both the Prior proposals and the present democracy of the unions. Many of the trade union leaders who will oppose Prior will themselves never have been elected in their entire term of office.

Democracy is about collective decisions and collective action.

Labour

Many union branch meetings are poorly attended because during the last Labour government they were used to support the attacks of that government.

In the Labour Party, the debate is over who controls the activities of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

We have to fight for the election of every union and Labour Party official; for the right to re-call them, and for the active participation of the full membership in this process.

Many of the leaders of the trade unions and the Labour Party have authority without accountability. Mass meetings, workplace ballots controlled by the shop stewards, and the accountability of MPs to the Labour Party conference are all ways of conducting that fight.

The battle against Prior is also a battle for more democracy, not less. It is a fight against restrictions on the rights of trade unionists, whether from the Tories or the labour leaders.

John Walsh, convenor of Hackney BOC, believes this is a real danger. But both he and Micky Boulter, deputy convenor at Hackney, consider that in the event of a wage freeze they would have to take on the Tories.

There is no doubt that the BOC workforce is strongly organised and very militant. The fact that after only two days of industrial action management capitulated indicates the strength of the BOC workers. No doubt management was moved to reconsider its offer because of the total support for the overtime ban among its workforce.

With a proposed strike in the new year, this would have resulted in a long and costly dispute for the company.

The level of militancy and organisation which has led to this extremely favourable deal will be the workforce's strongest weapon in ensuring that the 20-month deal is implemented in full.



DEMONSTRATION in Turin against the sacking of 61 militants at Fiat in October

Victimisation Italian style

By Phil Hearse

PRIOR's proposals for 'reforming' the unions are just part of the Tory strategy for undermining working class resistance to its policies.

The sacking of union convenor Derek Robinson at British Leyland fits in with that strategy, and it corresponds to recent developments in the car industry in Italy, where the government is similarly preoccupied with breaking the strength of militant trades unionism.

At the giant Fiat car plant in Turin, 61 union militants have been sacked for allegedly sympathising with 'terrorism' and the Red Brigades. Fiat Turin, like Longbridge in Britain, is one of the biggest factories in Italy and a stronghold not only of union militancy but also of the far left organisations.

Since the sackings, in early October, Turin has been an occupied city with thousands of soldiers and militia drafted in to combat 'terrorism'.

On 16 October the unions organised an assembly of five thousand shop stewards from the Fiat plant to debate the way forward in defence of the victimised militants. The meeting was marked by a heated debate between Lama, leader of the Communist dominated CGIL, the largest Italian union federation, and Caforio, one of the victimised militants and a member of the Italian Trotskyist organisation, GCR.

Although Caforio's call for a general strike was loudly cheered, the meeting voted for Lama's proposal for nation-wide two-hour stoppages by all engineering workers. These two-hour stoppages took place on 23 October, involving hundreds of thousands of workers, who utilised these two hours for further discussion on how to fight the sackings.

'Main enemy'

Unfortunately, the Communist Party used the meetings to denounce terrorism as the 'main enemy', a tactic which coincided with the FIAT-government offensive and effectively demobilised the building of mass action to win reinstatement.

The CP's response was not new. For months, alongside the Socialist Party, it had campaigned against terrorism and the far left, creating the atmosphere of hysteria and witch-hunt which was the background to the victimisation of the FIAT militants. It is this campaign which has enabled the government to get away with militarily occupying Turin, and for the bosses in Venice and Pordenone to use strong-arm tactics

against strike-pickets.

The Turin episode is part of an international offensive by the Fiat group to restructure its operations in the face of the world-wide recession in the car industry. This involves a drive to both rationalise through redundancies and increase the work-load through speed-up. Fiat's Spanish-based subsidiary, Seat, has transferred most of its operations to Italy and started a speed-up campaign. This has led to a series of strikes and threats of redundancy.

Car worker militants from the LCR, the Spanish section of the Fourth International, and the Italian CGR are beginning to campaign to co-ordinate an international response to the Fiat-Seat offensive, and have produced a joint bi-lingual paper called 'Fiat-Seat — Stessa Lotta — Misma Lucha' (Fiat-Seat, the Same Struggle).

Complicated

The struggle to re-instate the 61 militants in Turin has been complicated by the nature of the Italian labour laws, which enable dismissed workers to sue their employers through the courts. Unlike industrial tribunals in Britain, the Italian courts have the power to order employers to re-instate unjustly dismissed workers, which is what the courts have done in the Turin case.

Fiat responded by promptly re-sacking the militants and now the case is once again making its laborious way through the courts. It is unlikely that the judges will be able to impose their will on the immensely powerful Agnelli family who control Fiat. Meanwhile the workers have been de-mobilised and it becomes increasingly unlikely that a big struggle will take place to gain reinstatement. The parallel with Leyland is obvious.

Since the 'hot autumn' of 1969, when there were widespread occupations, the Italian working class has been among the most militant in Europe. Now the Italian bosses are opening up a decisive attack, which would have been unthinkable even two years ago.

The sackings at Fiat are just the beginning; the day after the sackings, 4,500 redundancies were announced at the Olivetti factory in the same city.

If Fiat's attack is successful, the responsibility will be with the Italian Communist Party and the Socialist Party.

The struggle is not only hampered by their refusal to initiate the kind of mass action necessary to counter the employers, but their years of tacit support for right-wing Christian Democracy, and their extraordinary position of blaming Italy's crisis on the 'terrorists' rather than the bosses, is preparing the road to defeat.

Ten trotskyists released

TEN MEMBERS of the Iranian section of the Fourth International, the Socialist Workers Party [HKS], were freed from Karoun jail in Ahwaz last week after being held since June.

Reports reaching Socialist Challenge at the weekend indicated that the ten had been released on bail. Four more HKS members are still being held.

Twelve of the 14 were sentenced to death in August, but an international defence campaign forced the Iranian authorities to revoke the sentence. The other two were sentenced to life imprisonment.

The identities of those released are not yet known.

WHAT'S LEFT

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

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.

'THE National Left Wing Movement in the 1920s — its lessons for today'. Workers Action meeting. Speaker: Mike Foley. Fri 14 Dec, 8pm, The General Picton, Wharfedale Rd/Caledonian Rd, London N1. Tube: Kings X.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST LEAGUE Day school on Revolutionaries and Iran. Speakers from the ICL, and others invited from: the Bolshevik Faction, the Socialist Labour Group, Workers Socialist League, and International Marxist Group.

Saturday, 15 December, 10.30am to 5.30pm. For details of venue contact: Neil Curtis, tel 01-607 7182.

NORTH WEST NAC: Regional Conference, Saturday 15 December, to organise against the Corrie Bill. Small Assembly Hall, UMIST Student Union, Sackville St, Manchester. Primarily a trade union conference but open to all who want to join the fightback, especially women's groups, community associations. Registration 9.30am. Further details from NAC, c/o 61 Bloom St, Manchester 1. tel 061-224 4392.

NAC Forum: a discussion about Eileen Fairweather's article in Spare Rib, 'The feelings behind the slogans', takes place on Thursday 13 December, 7pm, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London NW1.

BROADSIDE Mobile Workers Theatre needs new members to help take our shows on racism, workers' control, and the cuts to trade unions, women's groups and schools. We require a versatile socialist actress, an actor (singing an advantage) and an administrator. Long term commitment desirable. Write giving full details of theatrical/administrative and political experience to: 58 Holbein House, Holbein Place, London SW1. Tel 01-470 2581 or 01-730 5396. BRITTON Socialist Club — special general meeting to discuss whether the club should take a new building in Brixton. Sun. 16 Dec., 7.30-9pm, first floor, 52 Acre Lane, London SW2.

XMAS party for Chile organised by the ASTMS West End branch and the Latin American centre. Hampstead Town Hall, Fri. 14 Dec., 7.30pm. Music and dance by Mayapi, reggae disco, S. American food, bar, stalls. £1 entry, 25p for claimants and children. All monies will go to aid those fighting for human rights in Chile.

CONFERENCE to discuss a trade union campaign against unemployment. Called by Preston Trades Council and sponsored by the Confed. On Sun. 16 Dec., noon to 4pm, at Poly students union, Fylde Rd, Preston.

Intercontinental Press/Inprecor

ERNEST MANDEL writes on the meaning of the non-aligned conference in the latest issue of the weekly Intercontinental Press/Inprecor [Vol 17, No 45]. Other features include an eyewitness report on the mass mobilisations in Grenada, and a document by Chinese dissident Wang Xizhe, 'For a return to genuine Marxism in China.'

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

PROBLEMS MOUNT UP FOR KHOMEINI

By John Leadbetter

THE ballot boxes were wheeled out in Iran last week for the third time this year as Ayatollah Khomeini called for popular ratification of his new Islamic Constitution in a two-day referendum.

But in Tabriz, capital of Azerbaijan province, polling stations remained empty. Massive anti-Khomeini demonstrations took over the radio stations and the offices of the province's governor-general, and demanded greater local control over the province's affairs.

Members of the armed forces joined with supporters of the Moslem People's Republican Party [MPRP], Iran's largest opposition grouping, to organise a general strike in the city; while local people occupied the airport and refused landing permission to a planeload of Islamic Guards — Khomeini's 'hitmen', fresh from their campaign of violence against the Kurdish people.

Ballot

In the Kurdish provinces themselves, ballot boxes were stolen and burnt; while in Baluchistan, the governor-general was reported to be held captive after demonstrations protesting against the constitution. Even in the Persian-speaking areas, the turnout for the referendum was low. After two days of voting it was announced that polling stations would remain open overnight to ensure 'that everyone had had an opportunity to cast a vote'.

Clearly events around the US embassy have not produced the consensus which Khomeini must have hoped for. Popular though the demand for the Shah's extradition might be, it does not override the more pressing issues facing Iranians with the onset of winter. As the temperature drops, there is a visible cooling in response to pious proclamations from Qom.

Rhetoric

For all Khomeini's anti-imperialist rhetoric, he is unable to make a single constructive proposal for rebuilding a social and economic order which can genuinely challenge imperialism's parasitic grip. The response to the unveiling of the Constitution shows that there is no



KHOMEINI and enthusiasts

automatic equation between Khomeini's religious mumbo jumbo and the consciousness of the masses.

What has taken place in Azerbaijan holds particular dangers for the Khomeini regime. The people of Tabriz are no newcomers to struggle. The Azeris constitute the largest national grouping in Iran after the Persians, accounting for over a quarter of the total population.

As far back as 1906, during the constitutional movement against the old Qajar dynasty, Azeris provided many of the leaders of the left faction.

Tabriz followed the example of the soviets of workers in Russia, setting up councils or *anjomans* which took over the functions of the central state. Direct intervention by armies of the Russian Czar was required to defeat this movement.

The Bolshevik revolution inspired a new wave of struggle against Tehran in which the Azeris again provided many of the leading cadre. This time it was the armies of British imperialism which intervened to prevent revolution, installing Reza Khan on the throne.

Even this did not prevent a continuing tradition of struggle. In 1946 an autonomous republic was declared, based on Tabriz — in the same year that the Republic of Mahabad was established by the neighbouring Kurdish people. Again, the struggle was defeated because of international factors.

Stalin's withdrawal of the Red Army from Iran, where it had been during the Second World War, enabled the military to move against the republics; the Tudeh (Communist) Party, which had grown significantly during the year of struggles, capitulated to Stalin's line and urged surrender to the Shah. The result was another mass pogrom against communist militants, in which the responsibility of the Tudeh was clearly recognised, and is still remembered today.

Compounds

The Azerbaijanis, like the Kurds, have little to learn from Khomeini about imperialist manoeuvres and imperialist responsibility for the years of exploitation.

The stand taken by Ayatollah Shariat-Madari compounds the difficulties facing the Khomeini regime, since it introduces divisions

within the clerical movement in the city of Qom. Shariat-Madari is the recognised leader of the Azerbaijani people, the second ranking Ayatollah in Iran after Khomeini himself, and the head of the MPRP.

In August he led a widespread boycott of the elections to the Council of Experts which was to amend the constitution, and he has continued to express opposition to Khomeini's attempts to place the reins of the country in the hands of the clergy. In particular, he has criticised the Ayatollah for claiming such a prominent position at the head of the state itself, and his self-appointment as commander-in-chief of the army.

Shariat-Madari argues that the clergy should play an essentially oppositional role to government, monitoring secular authority to ensure respect and obedience to Islam rather than actually wielding it.

Bazaar

A strong Azerbaijani presence amongst the bazaar merchants in Tehran, however, is a more material reason for the positions Shariat-Madari puts forward. His criticisms of the government's economic policies reflect a growing impatience among the petty bourgeoisie for the economy to get going again without clerical interference.

The government's inability to maintain discipline among the workers in the factories, to stop inflation or to re-establish trade on any stable basis is one of the most important long-term factors working against Khomeini. In the meantime, Shariat-Madari's MPRP acts as a growing focus of opposition for the disoriented bourgeois secular forces trying to maintain their religious cover.

The demonstrations in Tabriz inject a more urgent dynamic to this power struggle. Clearly, for workers and the oppressed, there is little to choose between Khomeini and Shariat-Madari. But in the short term, Shariat-Madari's intransigence ties Khomeini's hands in any strike against the Azeris on the lines of the Kurdish war.

Concede

Already Khomeini has been forced to concede that no action will be taken with regard to the demonstrations in Tabriz unless prior agreement has been reached with Shariat-Madari. It will be far more difficult for the government to isolate the struggles of the Azerbaijanis through manipulation of the media than it was during the war against the Kurds.

Khomeini will have to face the political demands which the Azeris raise head-on, without being able to side track into Islamic demagoguery. Not even raising slanders on questions of anti-imperialism will provide a way out — the Azeris' mobilisation against America in recent weeks means that they have passed the test already on that score.

Kurdish leaders have already issued statements in support of the demonstrations in Tabriz. In fact Khomeini's writ has essentially ceased to run in the huge north-western regions of the country.

This is the clearest indication to date that the dynamic of the revolution is pushing beyond the boundaries laid down for it by the Islamic hierarchy; that to resolve their problems the workers and oppressed of Iran will have to seek answers of their own rather than rely on Khomeini to meet their needs.



PICKET OF THE US embassy in London on the weekend to protest Carter's war threats against Iran

The revolution in Nicaragua

What attitude should we take to the FSLN?

THE REVOLUTION in Nicaragua was an event full of hope for revolutionaries everywhere. Not merely did it bring down one of the most repressive dictatorships in the world, but it challenged imperialist interests in an area which Washington regarded almost as its own property.

However, some revolutionary organisations have been quick to condemn the course taken by the revolution under the leadership of the FSLN. Here FRANCOIS OLLIVIER explains the position of the Fourth International.

SECTARIANS, while they generally recognise that a revolution has begun in Nicaragua, refuse to take into account that it is a living process with its own rhythms. Instead they mechanically counterpose their own schemas to reality and denounce the FSLN as a leadership trying to reconstruct the bourgeois state and repress the mass movement.

This leads to a different response to the administrative measures which the FSLN has taken against sections of the far left.

Frente Obrero

The most important of the latter is the Movement of Popular Action (MAP) which leads a trade union current known as Frente Obrero (FO, Workers Front). This started off as a Maoist-inspired split with the FSLN in the early 1970s, but changed its line on China when Peking lined up its foreign policy with US imperialism.

MAP has a dominant influence in the editorial team of *El Pueblo*, an important daily paper in the capital, Managua.

There are also three smaller sectarian organisations claiming allegiance to Trotskyism. These are the Revolutionary Marxist League (LMR); the Socialist Revolution Group (GRS), formed by militants of the Costa Rican OST, which split with the Fourth International along with leaders of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency; and some isolated members of the Bolshevik Faction (which has also split with the FI) who remained after the expulsion of the adventurist Simon Bolivar Brigade.

From the start of the revolution these sectarian groups developed a conception of the transition to a workers state as taking place through a series of decrees (immediate nationalisation of the entire economy, total agrarian reform, etc.) which in the actual situation represented mere pious wishes.

Reactionary

This conception led them to denounce as reactionary several measures corresponding to the interests of the masses. Thus the Costa Rican OST attacked the nationalisation of the banks. It also attacked, as did *El Pueblo*, the withdrawal of 500 and 1,000 cordoba banknotes as a measure aimed at the masses. In fact it was aimed at the capitalists and the speculators.

This also led the GRS and the Bolshevik Faction to oppose the construction of a centralised, professional revolutionary army — something which is absolutely necessary to defend the country against the imperialist threats, and which the FSLN has explicitly declared will be combined with militias.

The sectarians, convinced that the FSLN wants to reconstruct the bourgeois state and repress the mass movement, call for the immediate convocation of a higher body to defend democracy: the Council of State or a constituent assembly.



'Workers and peasants to power' read placards on this demonstration of Sandinista workers. Ultra-lefts fail to recognise the revolutionary dynamic of the movement led by the FSLN.

Frente Obrero took part in several meetings called by the Chamber of Commerce to demand the immediate convocation of the Council of State — an institution which, as originally envisaged, gave important weight to the bourgeois and conservative elements of the anti-Somoza front.

In proposing such a policy, the sectarians not only hold down the mass movement below its present level of organisation and consciousness — they serve the interests of the bourgeoisie, which seeks in every way to undermine the authority and legitimacy of the FSLN.

Amalgam

In September the FSLN, while continuing its policy of mass organisation and mobilisation, launched a campaign against the ultra-lefts and sectarians. Speeches by FSLN leaders and articles in its daily paper, *Barricada*, made an amalgam between the ultra-left and counter-revolutionary Somozists. Such declarations were then followed by arrests: 70 militants of FO, suspected of having arms, were held; an LMR leader, Barzenas, was twice detained and briefly held before being released; and an Argentinian militant of the Bolshevik Faction, Carlos Petroni, was also arrested at this time.

We condemned the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade as a retreat to administrative methods when the FSLN had other means of handling this problem. Ultra-leftism has to be fought politically, by explaining the mistakes of these currents through discussion in the mass movement and not by repressing them.

Authority

We say clearly that making an amalgam between militants of FO or the LMR and the Somozists or counter-revolutionaries was false. It obscured the political campaign of the FSLN against the ultra-left and it weakened its authority in some sectors where these militants had a tradition of anti-Somoza struggle.

The use of such methods also

strengthens confusion inside the international workers movement and makes it more difficult to build militant solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution.

It would appear, however, that the FSLN has begun to modify its initial positions. In a speech on 22 October, interior minister Tomas Borge explained: 'We think that prison isn't the best place to carry out a dialogue.'

Impatient

Similarly, an article in *Poder Sandinista*, the journal of the propaganda secretariat of the FSLN, explained: 'We need a conception which allows us to unite the efforts of all revolutionary tendencies.' It ended by calling on 'the impatient left' to take its place in the revolutionary process.

These words were followed by actions. All the militants of FO were freed, and were welcomed as they left prison by Borge and their families. This is a good sign; although the FSLN hasn't yet properly clarified its position on this problem, and the discussion must therefore continue.

But our criticisms of and disagreements with the FSLN are made within a framework of unconditional defence of the revolution in Nicaragua.

Liberation

That is why, when taking a position on each problem that arises, including the liberation of certain political prisoners (though obviously not those who carry out sabotage or take arms against the FSLN!), we take it up with the FSLN as one group of revolutionaries to another.

We will have nothing to do with a campaign for the liberation of all political prisoners of the kind initiated by the OCI in France, which is a substitute for and is opposed to even the most elementary solidarity work. For us this is a campaign against the Nicaraguan revolution.

These organisations, which claim allegiance to Trotskyism, merely discredit it by such actions. Against

this we put forward a campaign to defend the Nicaraguan revolution. That is the task of all militants claiming allegiance to Trotskyism, to the revolution, to the Fourth International, confronted with a revolution on the march.

*In addition to the release of the FO militants reported above, the Argentinian member of the Bolshevik Faction, Carlos Petroni, was released and deported on 9 November. LMR members who were being held were freed on 22 November.

WORLDWIDE SOLIDARITY

By Brian Lyons

A WORLDWIDE campaign of solidarity with Nicaragua is already underway and shows concretely the possibilities for building a similar movement in Britain.

In Spain a solidarity committee has been formed and aims to collect £3.50 per worker by the end of the year. School students in Norway, who contribute a sum each year to social projects, have decided to donate their money to Nicaragua.

The campaign in Switzerland has pledged funds for the construction of a municipal hospital in Esteli and is establishing contact with Swiss hospital workers to contribute towards this. In Australia a series of public forums have been held on Nicaragua, while in New Zealand the organiser of the Northern Storemen and Packers Union has issued a fund-raising appeal.

A number of union branches in the USA have passed resolutions calling on the government to provide aid, and on 15 October the Washington DC Central Labor Council issued a statement demanding that the government grant 'unconditional reconstruction aid for the rebuilding of a free and democratic Nicaragua'.

Perhaps the best example of working class solidarity comes from Canada, where 'Operation Solidarity'

was launched by the Canadian Labor Congress. On 11 August they chartered a plane for Nicaragua loaded with 75,000 pounds of food and other urgently needed supplies. Another exemplary action has come from the unions in the food and garment industry, who have negotiated agreements with various companies to send food and clothing worth nearly £250,000.

In France the Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR) has launched a campaign to raise 50,000 French francs (about £5,500) for the literacy campaign in Nicaragua. More recently, a huge rally of 2,500 people in solidarity with Nicaragua was organised by the French section of the Fourth International, which raised over £1,000. Feminists in France are also organising to raise funds for child-care centres in Nicaragua.

In Britain the Nicaragua Coordinating Committee has already raised over £1,000 and is organising nationally so that various regions in Britain will raise material aid for corresponding regions in Nicaragua. The committee is presently launching a campaign of sponsorship from the trade unions and the Labour Party as part of a build-up towards a solidarity conference in the spring.

Contributions and sponsorship for the campaign should be sent to the committee and addressed to: Nicaragua Coordinating Committee, 20 Compton Terrace, London N1.

BUILDING A PARTY TO

11th World Congress of the

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL has sections (recognised by a world congress as having proved their ability to wage a consistent fight for Trotskyist positions in the class struggle) and organised sympathisers in the following countries:

Africa

Organised sympathisers:

Algeria
Senegal
Tunisia
Nigeria

Asia

Sections:

China (based in Hong Kong)
India
Japan
Sri Lanka

Europe

Sections:

Austria	Italy
Belgium	Luxembourg
Britain	Portugal
Denmark	Spain
France	Sweden
Greece	Switzerland
Holland	West Germany

Organised sympathisers:

Finland	Norway
Iceland	Turkey
Ireland	

as well as in some East European countries

Middle East

Sections:

Iran
Israel
Lebanon

Organised sympathisers:

Egypt Iraq

Oceania

Sections:

Australia
New Zealand

North American

Sections:

Canada/Quebec

Organised sympathisers:

USA*

Latin America/Caribbean

Sections:

Bolivia	French Antilles
Chile	Mexico
Colombia	Peru

Organised sympathisers:

Panama	Argentina
Puerto Rico	Brazil
El Salvador	Dominican Republic
Venezuela	Ecuador

*The SWP in the USA is prevented from being an official section by reactionary legislation.

By Ernest Mandel

United Secretariat of the Fourth International

CAPITALISM is currently undergoing its worst crisis since the start of the 1930s.

The defeat of American imperialism in Indochina has brought about a situation inside the USA which has prevented any massive military intervention against developing revolutions. For the first time in a long while, capital lacks a world policeman to defend the key strategic political and economic positions of the international imperialist system.

This has been seen in the fall of the Shah and then Somoza, which in their turn have seriously weakened the situation of imperialism in the Middle East and Central America. The persistent faltering of the international capitalist economy, which will undoubtedly lead to a new recession in 1980, underlines the depth of this historic crisis of the capitalist system.

This was the general framework for the resolutions and theses adopted by the 11th World Congress of the Fourth International last month.

Three questions are immediately posed. Is imperialism now paralysed before the rise of anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist forces throughout the world? Is a capitalist 'solution' to the crisis possible, and if so under what conditions? Why have the advances of the revolution not been more significant since 1974-75, particularly in the imperialist countries?

Paralysis

The answer of the 11th World Congress to the first question was unequivocal. There has been no military weakening of imperialism. In fact it's stronger than ever as far as the United States goes. Its paralysis from 1974 to 1979 can only be explained in political terms.

For some time it has been feverishly working to end this situation. It is setting up specialised intervention forces in the Middle East, Central America, the Far East, and the Mediterranean, and is using every means to change the political climate of opinion in the USA so that new counter-revolutionary interventions can be placed on the agenda.

Such adventures will cost imperialism dear on the political level — in the United States as well as internationally. The high price makes it hesitate. But that won't prevent it from going back into action.

The Fourth International therefore calls for solidarity with developing revolutions against such counter-revolutionary interventions, opposing the irresponsible idea that imperialism is no longer capable of reacting in such a way.

The reply of the 11th World Congress to the second question was no less unequivocal. The depth of the crisis means that capitalism can't extricate itself through limited measures. It is therefore preparing for 'solutions' similar to those of the 1930s: the crushing of the workers movement and war.

Crisis prolonged

But to do this it first has to inflict major defeats on the proletariat in a series of imperialist countries and on the liberation movements in a series of semi-colonial areas. And the international relation of forces is much less favourable to it than in 1929-42, so the crisis will be prolonged.

The decisive battles are ahead and not behind us. This will create the conditions for the working class at last to overcome its crisis of revolutionary leadership and enter into the decisive battles with a good chance of emerging victorious.

As to why the extremely grave crisis of the international imperialist system hasn't led to more decisive gains for the revolution, the reply of the 11th World Congress was also clear.

In the imperialist countries the working class has to confront an enemy infinitely wealthier, more powerful, more experienced, more cunning and resourceful than in the semi-colonial countries. Experience shows that it cannot be brought down by semi-spontaneous actions, even when they are as broad and



impressive as those of May '68 or the 'creeping May' in Italy in 1969.

There has to be a revolutionary leadership which is up to the task. There have to be new revolutionary parties which the masses already regard as useful instruments in their immediate struggles. And the organisational weakness of the FI's sections and the political weakness of the centrist organisations mean that such a credible alternative to the reformist apparatuses is still absent.

The situation is complicated further by the very nature of the present world crisis, which extends beyond the imperialist system and the capitalist mode of production to the system of bureaucratic domination in the workers states.

It is true that these countries have not been hit by a crisis of over-production and massive unemployment — which confirms the analysis of the FI that these are no longer capitalist countries. But they suffer from different economic and social problems as a result of the impasse of the bureaucratic system.

There is increasing discontent in broad layers of the population, in which workers are already playing a preponderant role in Poland and are beginning to do so in China and other countries. The political revolution in the bureaucratised workers states is ripening along with the rise of the proletarian revolution in the West and the permanent revolution in the semi-colonial world.

But as long as this isn't victorious, the international bourgeoisie is able to couple its austerity offensive with a vast ideological offensive. It can go on about the 'crisis of Marxism' even while the deep crisis of capitalism which Marxism predicted and alone can explain continues to worsen.

That is why the FI lays so much stress on the defence of Marxism and its theoretical gains against the offensive of the bourgeoisie and the revisionists. That is why it reaffirms the need to

struggle through persistent daily propaganda for the 'socialism we want', for our model of society in transition between capitalism and socialism, for our programme for the dictatorship of the proletariat — which has nothing to do with the monstrosities of the Stalinist dictatorship and its heirs.

We fight for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie through mass action which allows the mobilisation and politicisation of the vast majority of workers. We fight for the maximum workers democracy inside the trade unions and other mass organisations. We fight for the workers to develop their own self-organisation in the most diverse forms, starting from their current struggles today.

Only this will give the workers the necessary experience to embark on the organisation, generalisation and centralisation of workers councils (soviets) in a period of revolutionary crisis.

From this analysis of world developments flow three kinds of political tasks:

1. The defence and extension of revolutions in progress.

This especially means the Nicaraguan revolution, whose anti-capitalist and internationalist dynamic is far from exhausted and has already extended to El Salvador. It must be understood in the context of a more general upturn of the revolutionary cycle in Latin America, with the huge upsurge of workers' struggles in Brazil, the determined struggles of the Peruvian masses, and the failure of the military coup in Bolivia after 15 days of general strike.

Nothing is yet decided in Nicaragua. The native bourgeoisie retains its strongholds. Imperialism and the Latin-American bourgeoisie want to 'freeze' the situation at the present stage of dual power, to smother and then destroy the revolution. International solidarity to prevent this was one of the essential tasks

CHANGE THE WORLD

Fourth International



and repression they suffer;
*the struggle for a 35-hour week;
*the struggle for the whole programme we put forward for the women's liberation movement (for the first time in the history of the international workers movement, the 11th World Congress of the FI adopted a global programme in this area);
*defence of soldiers' democratic rights, a struggle against NATO and the other imperialist military alliances, and against the use of nuclear weapons.

There is a precondition for the achievement of these tasks, however, which was understood and accepted as such by the big majority of delegates at the 11th World Congress, and which underlies in a practical sense all the political and organisational documents adopted: to continue and step up the proletarianisation of our organisation.

The FI today already consists in its majority of unionised wage-earners. It counts in its ranks numerous union leaders at a factory and local level. Hundreds of members of its Spanish section have won positions in trade union elections.

In Sri Lanka, the FI section spearheaded the campaign against defence trade union rights. In Brazil the forces turning towards it play an important role in the trade union opposition which is fighting for the political independence of the most important proletariat in Latin America.

Important battles

In France, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, Portugal, the United States, Peru, Mexico, Japan and Colombia, forces which are part of the FI or sympathise with its ideas have been in the forefront of important battles — against the bosses' austerity offensive, against the union bureaucracies' tendency to capitulate in this regard.

But the number of workers in basic industry is relatively small among the mass of wage-earners and union militants in relation to their weight in the workers movement as a whole — and above all their decisive weight both in the daily class struggle and in the struggle for the socialist revolution.

That is why the 11th congress decided to continue and step up the proletarianisation of the Fourth International by suggesting to the sections the measures necessary to increase in a decisive fashion the number and weight of workers in basic industry inside our organisations. This decision in no way implies a mechanical schema. It takes account of the particular conditions in each country and leaves to each section and sympathising organisation the power to decide the way in which this turn will be carried out.

This has nothing to do with 'workerism'. In no way does it revise the important theoretical gain of our movement that the proletariat is made up of wage-earners in their entirety (those under economic compulsion to sell their labour power) and not just manual workers in industry. It rejects all temptations to adapt to the working class milieu as it is. It is combined with a stronger emphasis on the need for central political campaigns, and on the theoretical grounding of our militants and our cadres.

Springboard

The Fourth International has developed considerably from a numerical point of view over the last decade, even if this growth has slowed somewhat over the last two or three years in the imperialist countries for the reasons described above. We now have to use this increased force as a springboard for a new leap forward.

The objective conditions — the crisis engulfing capitalism and the traditional bureaucratic leaderships of the workers movement, the new progress of the world revolution — will aid this leap forward. The stepping up of proletarianisation, the possibility of influencing major workers' struggles throughout the world from the inside, a change in the style of work of our national leaderships and organisations, the vigorous pursuit of a policy of non-sectarian revolutionary regroupment will all help to create the subjective conditions for this new advance.

Success here will mean a new stage in reaching our goal, one which is still distant but whose concrete outlines are now becoming visible: the creation of the world party of the socialist revolution.

that the FI set itself at the 11th World Congress.

Defence of the Iranian revolution against imperialism's blockade and threat of a brutal military intervention is equally important. Khomeini represents the last resort of the Iranian bourgeoisie, thanks to the prestige he acquired through his intransigent stand against the hated regime of the Shah. But the masses, encouraged by the victory against the Shah, are driven forward by genuine anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist aspirations which Khomeini is hardly in a position to satisfy.

Revolutionary Marxists will only gain mass influence if they participate today in each stage of the anti-imperialist struggle while defending the whole of their programme, taking advantage of each opening to extend the possibility of independent organisation of the proletariat and the defence of the oppressed national minorities.

2. The struggle against capital's austerity offensive. This is an international offensive affecting all the capitalist countries — the semi-colonial ones as well as the imperialist countries. Its immediate aim is to freeze and reduce real wages, to introduce massive and permanent unemployment through redundancies and factory closures, to weaken trade union organisation, to get rid of the most militant workers' leaders (Fiat, British Leyland), to restrict and then seriously limit the right to strike.

The workers' response must aim for unity to be effective. The reduction of the working week — the 35-hour week in Europe — without loss of pay, with obligatory proportional hiring and workers control over the work-rate, is the central demand around which a united struggle against unemployment must be developed. It can and must become an internationally coordinated struggle.

But it is also necessary to put forward an

anti-capitalist alternative. This must be centred on a united front policy, for a workers government of the mass workers' organisations in each country, whom we call on to meet the immediate demands of the workers, to break with the bourgeoisie to carry this out, and embark on the road to socialism.

3. Defend and free the political prisoners of the bureaucracy. The appearance of a bolder political opposition operating publicly in the bureaucratised workers states is one sign of the change in the world situation, a sign of the ripening of the anti-bureaucratic political revolution.

The international workers movement has a duty to organise the largest possible defence campaign for the political prisoners of the various bureaucratic dictatorships. Three names symbolised this campaign for the 11th Congress of the FI: comrade Petr Uhl and the Charter 77 supporters charged with him in Prague; the Soviet worker Khlebnikov, organiser of the first independent workers' group in the USSR for 40 years; the Chinese worker Wei Jingsheng, condemned to 15 years in jail because of his stand for democracy.

The 11th World Congress of the FI took an important step forward in the centralisation of its forces by calling on all sections and sympathising organisations to co-ordinate their efforts in four areas:

*An international solidarity campaign with the Nicaraguan revolution.

*The coordination of labour movement action in defence of workers whose jobs are threatened by the same multinational. Two initiatives are already underway: between Fiat (Turin) and Seat (Barcelona); and between Ford (Britain) and Ford (Valencia).

*The coordination of actions against nuclear power.

*The coordination of specific actions of the women's liberation movement, particularly action for the right to free abortion on demand.

Good sense

The congress showed its realism and good sense by limiting those actions in which we seek to coordinate the interventions of a series or majority of our sections or sympathising organisations. Obviously this small number of campaigns doesn't cover (far from it!) all the burning topics of the class struggle and revolutionary struggles in progress. But the FI is still too weak to mobilise its forces effectively for a greater number of objectives.

The congress drew a clear distinction between such international mobilising campaigns and those of a propaganda character — which will of necessity be more numerous. These will consist essentially of articles in our press, backed up in countries where they are a major issue with public meetings and participation in campaign bodies.

Among the most important subjects in this category are:

*defence of the Kampuchean people against the starvation attempts of imperialism and its allies in South-East Asia;

*defence of the Indochinese revolution in general;

*defence of the sectors of the colonial revolution exposed to particularly virulent attacks by imperialism (Zimbabwe, South Africa, Palestine);

*defence of national minorities or especially oppressed nationalities (Irish, Basques, Kurds);

*defence of tortured political prisoners in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay;

*defence of immigrant workers in the imperialist countries against the discrimination

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.

Split to Fuse

WHILE agreeing with comrades Hearse and Packer's analysis of the split in the USFI, their conclusions do not necessarily follow from it. The point about the split is that it is a sectarian split, carried out by those who put their own factional interests before those of the International as a whole. The FI was therefore justified in expelling them.

What is inconsistent is to then appeal to the sectarians for unity, or to accept the hypocritical statement of their supporters in the IMG that 'the fight goes on' — the fight for a split? The correct reply to this by the IMG would be to instruct them to cease their splitting activities, or else be expelled.

This result would then have the welcome effect of removing the chief obstacle — the sectarian current in the IMG — to the formation of a unified revolutionary organisation in Britain with the Socialist Workers Party, and clear the way to beginning the task of building a mass revolutionary party as the British Section of the Fourth International. Splits and fusions are a necessary part of this process.
J. STRAUTHER (Liverpool)

Credit and debit

ALL credit to your paper for covering the rise and fall of Hull News. Noel Hibbert's post-mortem (29 November) was certainly controversial.

He argues that too much reliance was placed on professional journalism. I judge this to be untrue, but the point is that money problems caused the paper to die. Specifically, the lack of launch capital and political resistance by advertisers.

He also argued that the strength of the paper must lie in its base of paid sales, not in advertising. But paid sales were not the problem, advertising was. While political resistance by advertisers is inevitable, nobody has yet come up with a formula for a mass circulation local paper not dependent on adverts.

Your contributor wrote of factory subscriptions. He knows perfectly well that the Newsagents' Federation had demanded exclusive sales rights outside the city centre. He talks of a smear campaign. In fact the local press ignored Hull News (naturally enough) while the radio was subdued but sympathetic.

After working alongside Noel for four years, I find it typical that he should casually double the amount of money he is supposed to have raised in the labour movement.

BRYNLEY HEAVEN, Ads Manager, Hull News

And another

AS a Hull News activist, I would like to reply to Noel Hibbert's article (29 November). Apart from waffle and factual 'mistakes', Noel produced a semi-accurate account of events, but he didn't mention a major factor in the newspaper's failure — the isolation of Hull Trades Council from the local workers' movement.

First, the waffle. What does seeking advertising from 'businesses least tuned into competitive markets' mean? Unfortunately, the SWP bookshop can't manage £1,000 a week.

More seriously, Noel raises the myth of the professional journalism mystique. We all attempted to involve 'outsiders' in writing for the paper, but a weekly newspaper needs a full-time, if unpaid, staff to put it together. Aren't Socialist Worker and Socialist Challenge run in this way?

Another false argument is that the venture suffered from a media red scare. The fact is that the local newspaper totally ignored us, and nothing appeared on TV. With a number of Journalist Charta supporters working at Rad-



Humberside, I'm sure we would have been informed of any attacks from that quarter.

A basic problem in running a trades council newspaper is the trade council's isolation from the working class in Hull. Despite being more left wing and active than most, Hull Trades Council is essentially a paper tiger. On May Day marches, for example, only two hundred people can be mustered, half of them from left groups.

A manifestation of this isolation was the lack of starting capital raised from the labour movement for the newspaper. Apart from the donation of £500 from the dockers — the trades council president and another executive member are dockers — other donations were pitiful. The AUEW district committee, for instance, gave us the princely sum of £2.

While £25,000 was necessary to launch the paper, we only raised a tenth of that sum. When the printers saw our first editorial they demanded weekly payment of their bills, and since the advertisers paid on a monthly basis, we immediately had a cash-flow problem.

The mass of workers in Hull do not identify with the trades council or its newspaper, and this relationship was worsened by the downturn in class struggle under the Labour government, the legacy of which is still with us.

A possible solution is to publish a large number of copies of a free newspaper to be distributed to most people, perhaps at their place of work. I understand that this is what Sheffield Trades Council is attempting to do with Forward.

Such a paper could adopt a left-wing perspective and take in advertising, because a sufficient number of individual capitalists would advertise if enough people would see their adverts. This could raise sufficient funds to produce a newspaper which a largish number of people would want to buy.
GEOFF COLLIER (Hull)

Child-care

OH DEAR, does Tommy Cusack (Letters, 22 Nov) not realise that the 'task' of childbearing can only be done by women? Or has this fact escaped his notice? Is it really the ideology of woman as mother that prevents men helping with the shitwork or is it really because housework is a bourgeois fetish?
JESSICA H. NORRISH (East London)

Marx and men

I AM sure nearly all letters to Socialist Challenge have to be cut for reasons of space, but the cuts that were made to my letter (22 November) set me up like a coconut in a shy for replies like Louise Smith's last week.

The central points of my letter were, first, that Sue Landau's view that the cause of women's liberation could be advanced by women journalists scabbing on the NUJ's fight to have its members reinstated in their jobs had to be opposed. And secondly, her claim that men have historical material interests as a sex separate from those they have as a class and that this was a Marxist idea had to be denied.

Unfortunately, all these references were the ones that were cut. Perhaps this is what led Louise Smith to believe that I was concocting a theory in order to dismiss the politics

of the women's movement.

In fact, I was neither trying to speak on behalf of women, nor trying to define who is and who isn't a feminist, but merely restating what I believe Marxism — from Engels to Evelyn Reed — has said is fundamental to a materialist understanding of women's oppression.

Of course, the activity of the women's movement has caused the development of this theory and the development of some rival ones. But I would say that the basic conception that women are oppressed as a sex is a function of class society has very well stood the test of time.

I thought Sue's original letter built a Chinese wall in theory between the interests of women and those of the working class as a whole. This led her to advocate actions which undermine the fight to win male workers to an understanding that it is in their own interest to support the campaigns of the women's movement and of women generally.

I concentrated in the few words I had on stressing the class content of the fight for women's liberation.

It's impossible here to develop the arguments further than that, but I hope that Sue, Louise, and other readers will accept there is a genuine and important debate, and that 150 years of Marxism cannot be dismissed as 'crass and sexist garbage' just because most of it was written by men.

TOMMY CUSACK (London NW1)

Whose sell-out?

I AM moved by anger to reply to the article 'Why has the Patriotic Front agreed?' (22 November). At the very moment when the Front needs support, SC prints an article accusing it of betraying the liberation struggle.

In reality the concessions the Patriotic Front are forced to make reflect not so much their weakness as the strength of British imperialism. SC's inversion of reality can only have one political consequence: abandoning the Zimbabwean liberation struggle to the clutches of imperialism.

For SC to condemn the Patriotic Front for capitulating to imperialism is disgusting when the national ZEC demonstration on 11 November could only muster 3,000 people, a large minority of whom were Patriotic Front supporters.

The British left was conspicuous by its absence. It made no serious attempt to mobilise support for and build a large anti-imperialist demonstration.

That is the real task that faces SC and all supposed socialists in Britain — the building of a genuine anti-imperialist movement in Britain, which will tie the hands of British imperialism and prevent it pressuring movements like the Patriotic Front. Until that movement is built, for SC to condemn the Front is tantamount to siding with imperialism.

Victory to the Patriotic Front!
Hands off Zimbabwe!
LEROY SMITH (Bury)

Blunt speaking

YOUR editorial on the Blunt affair (22 November) was a mixture of reaction and rubbish.

(1) In an editorial concerned with the cover-up done on behalf of a ruling class homosexual, you think fit to devote a paragraph to the alleged sexual relationship between Princess

Margaret and John Bindon. The only way this can be understood is that the ruling class is 'corrupt' because of its 'loose' sexual morality. Since when has this been the position of SC?

(2) 'The Blunt affair' showed how scared our rulers are of those of us who stand outside the palaces of Westminster and Buckingham. The degenerates and parasites who occupy those buildings are truly frightened of the wrath of the common people'. We can leave aside for the moment the questions of just how 'frightened' they are, and of whether Labour MPs, for instance, are 'degenerates and parasites'.

The passage quoted is a bit ambiguous, because we do not know whether the type of degenerate in question is the homosexual Blunt or the high-living Princess Margaret.

People who do this from the left neglect the fact that the decay of a mode of production results in increased open sexual 'immorality' not only in the ruling class but in the oppressed classes too. Any attacks of this kind on the ruling class therefore inevitably rebound onto the working class, and particularly onto women and gays.

(3) The editorial ends: 'And if they are that unsure of themselves, the only question that remains is why have we tolerated this scum for so long?'. This ridiculous piece of rhetoric is thrown in because the editorial can come to no useful conclusion, being based on such weak politics. When will you write a sensible editorial on the subject of sexuality?
DAVID ETHERINGTON (York)

Economics

I VERY much agree with Ken Tarbuck's remarks (Letters, 29 November) about your centre-spread on the economic crisis.

First, let me say that I think it is very good that you are now having more basic propaganda material in the paper. However, it is probably due to neglect of this in the past that two of the three articles in the centre-spread were based squarely on bourgeois rather than Marxist economics. The most essential point that such propaganda needs to explain (rather than continually assert) is why this is a capitalist crisis and why the workers are not to blame.

The reason is that the crisis is ultimately caused by the long term increase in the amount of capital invested in machinery and raw materials relative to that invested in labour power. Since surplus value and profit are only made from labour power, this means that the amount of profit made on a given amount of capital tends to fall.

It is this above all that is responsible for the long term fall in the rate of profit (not the amount of profit, as you say) since the early fifties, and thus for the present crisis. This crisis therefore only arises because production is organised along capitalist lines.

Your articles, however, presented a different story. To explain the depression of the 1930s, you quote J K Galbraith. The problem was 'the bad distribution of income', so that working class incomes were too low to buy capitalists' consumer goods.

This does not explain either that or this crisis, however, because if working class demand is 'insufficient' you have to explain why demand from capitalists for means of production and luxuries does not counter-balance this. This theory leads you to the conclusion that raising working class incomes would lead to 'an increase in

economic activity', which is the opposite of the case.

The second argument you present is that the 1929 crash was produced by stock market speculation by 'promoters, grafters, swindlers, imposters and frauds' who diverted money 'which could have been invested in new plant and machinery (into) the stock market'.

However, a half page devoted to moralistic attacks on speculators cannot explain why it is that they speculate rather than invest productively. The reason was and is that the rate of profit is too low, for the reason already explained.

One of the articles starts: 'We all know that capitalism causes the misery and deprivation that people suffer in their daily lives.' It is precisely because we do not all know this that Marxists have to prove it! This is a difficult thing to do, but it is certain that it will never be done by relying on bourgeois economics, which sets out to prove exactly the opposite.

JAMIE GOUGH (London WC1)

Memorial

THE Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize for 1979 has been awarded to Dr G A Cohen, Reader in Philosophy at University College, London, for his book *Karl Marx's Theory of History. A Defence*, published by Oxford University Press.

The prize, to the value of £100, is awarded annually and is intended to recognise and encourage outstanding research and writing in the tradition of Isaac Deutscher.

The prize for 1980 will be awarded in the autumn of 1980 and a jury drawn from among the sponsors will consider work published or in typescript.

Any such work should be submitted by 1 May 1980 to The Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize, c/o Lloyds Bank, 68 Warwick Sq., London SW1.

RALPH MILIBAND, on behalf of the Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize

THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS

How profit now endangers health
From unextracted lead,
Since petrol-firms with countless wealth
Think more of greed instead.

Does no one care that we must breathe
Such lead-polluted air,
Or that the petrol-firms bequeath
Such harm without a care?

The death rate on the road is known
With figures of despair:
But profit, greed and wealth disown
High rates of lead in air.

Though we with pent-up anger groan
At lead with every breath,
The baby and the child are prone
Much more to harm and death.

King Herod had the children slain
And thousands then were dead:
How heartless are the firms that gain
By pain of cursed lead.

© N. Racine-Jaques, 1979

[The lead content of petrol is higher in Britain than in most other countries. Lead is an accumulative poison. The title of the poem, whilst acknowledging the biblical story; also alludes to a Parliamentary slang term used to describe 'the abandonment of Government Bills not sufficiently advanced to be passed during the session' — to quote Cassell's New English Dictionary.]

Randy Newman, a realist

By Colin Robinson

FOR only the second time in a long musical career, Randy Newman played in Britain last week. The two concerts, at the Dominion in London, reinforced his already substantial following here.

He again showed the ease with which he can combine tight and progressive music with laconic, subtle yet razor sharp lyrics.

From his early days as a commercial songwriter for, amongst others, Barbara Streisand, through the success Alan Price enjoyed with his song *Simon Smith and his Amazing Dancing Bear*, to his own chartbusting with *Short People*, Newman's ability to write popular, interesting music has never been in doubt.

The musicians who accompany his piano are generally either the best session players around at the time or established musicians in their own right; Ry Cooder, Jim Keltner, Klaus Voorman, Joe Walsh and Clarence White have all played on his albums.

But it is his lyrics which really set Newman apart. Though far from sloganizing of much of the new wave, his songs are often directly political. They reveal a sharp awareness of the oppression and alienation of life in the imperialist heartland of the United States.

Sometimes this is achieved through vicious parody as in *Short People* or *Political Science* which begins:

No one likes us — I don't know why
We may not be perfect, but heaven
knows we try
But all around even our old friends let us
down
Let's drop the big one and see what
happens

In other songs, the message is more straightforward. *Rednecks* simultaneously attacks overt Southern racism:

We're Rednecks, we don't know our arse
from a hole in the ground
We're keeping the niggers down and the
hypocrisy of Northern liberalism
You're northern nigger's a negro — he's
got dignity.
Down here we're too ignorant to realise
The North has set the nigger free.
He's free to be put in a cage in Harlem,
New York City,
Free to be out in a cage on the South side
of Chicago.

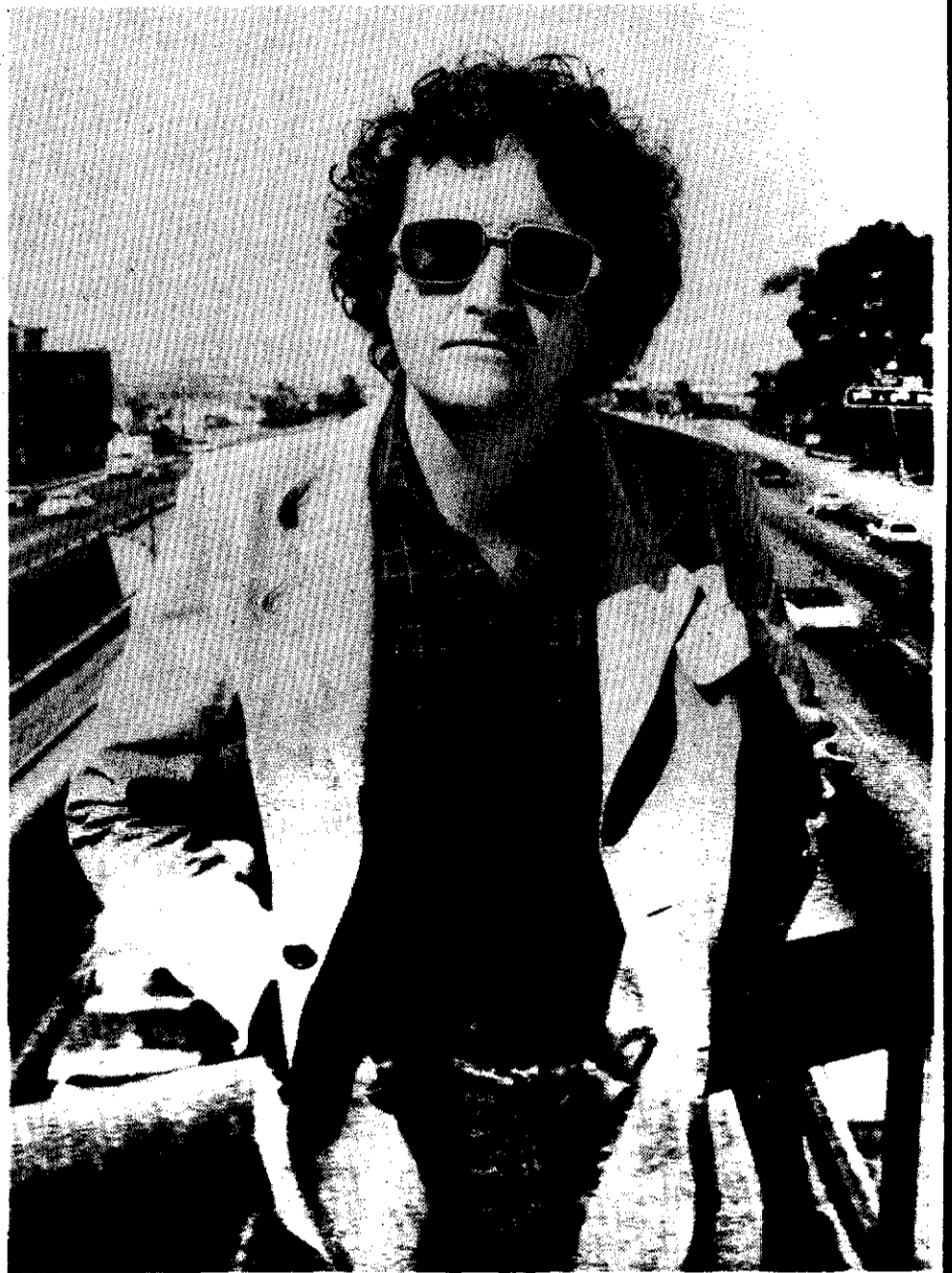
Newman's views on religion are to be found in *God's Song* which he introduced last Sunday with a unique song in which God speaks directly to you through me — it'd be better if Dylan was here. In the last verse, God in a rather incongruous Jewish, New Orleans drawl sings:

I burn down your cities — how blind you
must be,
I take from you your children and you
say how blessed we are
Your all must be crazy to put your faith
in me
That's why I love mankind'

It doesn't seem likely that increasing success will destroy Newman's sensitivity in the way it eventually flattened Dylan's. He has a very realistic assessment of the position he occupies.

Talking on BBC TV last year about his song *It's lonely at the top* which he originally wrote for Frank Sinatra, he said: 'I don't take all this money at the top stuff — all that money and power you have — I don't like working down a coal mine in Northern England.'

Listen all you fools out there
Go on and love me I don't care
Oh it's lonely at the top



Crossroads, an adult Toytown

By Sue Aspinall

THE WORLD of *Crossroads* is an adult Toytown. The scriptwriters are probably being animated by the spirit of Enid Blyton and haven't told anyone their secret.

In the suburbs of Birmingham there is a grown-ups Toytown, with an antique shop, a doctor's surgery, a grocer, a post-office, a farm, a garage, a cafe and a motel. No one who lives there knows about factories, large corporations, vast bureaucracies, department stores, multi-story car parks, newspapers or hospitals. They have never heard of trade unions, they find accommodation with amazing ease, no one is burdened with poverty or ill-health or large numbers of children.

What *Crossroads* suggests to its millions of viewers is a world seen through Thatcher's spectacles: the petty bourgeois grocer's daughter's view of life. At *Crossroads* motel, the microcosm of the universe, the boss cares about her employees and will stand by them as long as they work hard and do the right things.

Family

The fact that in this case the boss is a woman gives the whole enterprise even more of a 'family' feel. The cooks, cleaners, receptionists, accountants, garage mechanics, farm workers and secretaries in Meg Mortimer's empire all revere the boss-mother. They have no interests opposed to hers. There is never any silly talk of wage rises or complaints of injustice.

Within this cosy family is the central nuclear family of Mrs. Mortimer, Jill and Sandy. But it's an up-to-date, rather battered modern family — Mrs. Mortimer has been tragically widowed, Jill is divorced and does not have custody of her children, and Sandy manfully struggles with his handicap to 'make a go of it' in the family business. They have all faced adversity and have



'The seamless whole of the little motel world'

made mistakes, but they battle on with family loyalty and dignity intact.

There are no other competing nuclear families in the series. Alison and her uncle live together. David Hunter sees his ex-wife and grown-up son from time to time. Diane has just visited her son in America. But the surprising absence of the mum, dad and two kids model enables the emotional focus to stay on the motel and the family business/business as family.

Within this secure world, untouched by unemployment, homelessness, racism or poverty, the great problems are all moral ones. Currently there is the tale of repressed young Alison who is the domestic slave of her religious Bible-thumping uncle: will she be able to break away

from him to establish her own identity without hurting him?

Then there was Jill and the custody proceedings for her daughter — but she ended up doing the Right Thing in nobly giving up her child. There is also another bizarre story running at present about an ex-schoolteacher who once seduced a pupil and is now up to further shady behaviour as the motel's new

accountant — will Meg see through his ploys or will she continue to be deceived by his superficial charm?

Most of the narrative impetus is provided by setting up these types of situations in which individuals' morality can be tested. Bad behaviour is dishonesty, fraud, deception, greed, selfishness and sexual indulgence. Good behaviour is respectful, dignified, honest, hard-working and never breaks the rules.

At the same time good old romantic interest is an underlying source of narrative suspense. All the major characters are single — Benny, Diane, Jill, David, Meg and Sandy — and from time to time a possible partner is investigated for one or other of them, although it usually 'comes to nothing'. Sexual love is rare

TROTSKY ON TV

A special programme on Trotsky (including interview with Pierre Frank) will be shown on BBC 2 on Monday 17 December at 7.30 p.m.

Crossroads is a television series set in a small town in Birmingham. The scriptwriters are probably being animated by the spirit of Enid Blyton and haven't told anyone their secret.

In the suburbs of Birmingham there is a grown-ups Toytown, with an antique shop, a doctor's surgery, a grocer, a post-office, a farm, a garage, a cafe and a motel. No one who lives there knows about factories, large corporations, vast bureaucracies, department stores, multi-story car parks, newspapers or hospitals. They have never heard of trade unions, they find accommodation with amazing ease, no one is burdened with poverty or ill-health or large numbers of children.

Low-budget

Actors make entrances and exits across the confined space — but there is very little sense of movement on their part either. It seems strange that television drama is unable to use even basic outdoor locations to convey a more 'realistic' sense of the world, of cars and streets and buildings and fields and other people — and that it has in fact reverted to basically theatrical, not cinematic, techniques.

But in low-budget ideology perhaps the whole idea is that the world should not intrude — it would disrupt the seamless whole of the little motel world, the extended family within which individuals can wrestle undisturbed with their consciences. Because, after all, there's nothing else to worry about — is there?

The Other Bookshop

The Young Lukacs and the Origins of Western Marxism, by Andrew Arato and Paul Brienes — Pluto Press, £4.95.

Fascism and Dictatorship, by Nicos Poulantzas — Verso pbk, £5.25.

The Socialist Register 1979, Miliband and Saville (eds) — Merlin, £3.

328 Upper Street, London N1 2XQ (Tel. 01-2260571)

