

# Socialist Challenge

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**TUC CALLS 9 MARCH  
DEMONSTRATION  
AGAINST PRIOR'S LAWS**

**JOIN THE PICKETS**

**JOIN THE MARCH**

**JOIN THE STRIKE**

THE Tories are shaken. They have been shaken by the militancy of the steel strikers.

Shaken as well by the solidarity shown to those strikers by workers all over the country; by those like the miners who have joined them on the picket line; by the transport and dock workers who have refused to handle scab steel.

The result? First, the steelworkers have victory in their sights. The leadership of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation still talk about a compromise settlement, but the cry from picket line after picket line is clear, simple and without any hint of concession — '20 per cent, no strings'.

At the start of the strike that demand was almost a whisper, today it is a roar — a roar of defiance against the steel bosses and the Tory government; a roar of warning to Bill Sirs and others in the ISTC who might be thinking of selling out.

## Laws

Result number two is to be found in the very heart of the Tory government, whose leaders are now battling in public about just how the working class can be controlled and whether the Tories' proposed union laws are tough enough.

The row between Chancellor of the Exchequer Geoffrey Howe and



**VICTORY!** Steelworkers outside the Hadfields private steel plant when news came that the mass picket had won a walk-out by the workers inside.

Industry Secretary Keith Joseph on the one hand and Employment Secretary Jim Prior on the other is not about whether the traditional union rights of the working class should be attacked, but how they should be attacked.

Prior remembers better than most the Heath years and how the strength of the trade union movement swept from the statute book the last attempts of a Tory government to savage union rights.

He wants to be a bit more subtle

this time, but his target is the same. As Thatcher said about Prior's measures last weekend — they promise 'a very considerable restriction on the right to picket'.

And that in a phrase is why these proposals have to be fought by every means at the trade unions' disposal.

The steelworkers have shown one way — by developing misnamed 'secondary picketing' into a campaign in itself and by showing Thatcher the type of

struggle she will face if she goes ahead with her plans to outlaw such effective picketing.

But exemplary as the action of rank and file steelworkers has been, it will not in itself be enough to smash Prior's plans. For that, a fighting response from the entire working class is needed.

The first chance is on 9 March, when the TUC is organising a demonstration in London against Prior's Bill. That protest can be a start, and should be built for by every trade union militant.

## Memory

But again, one march on a Sunday afternoon in London won't by itself force the Tories to retreat.

Only when a Sunday demonstration is followed by one on Monday, and then Tuesday and then Wednesday and then Thursday, and then Friday — and every day of the week until the Tory offensive is smashed — will Jim Prior's law be no more than a bad memory.

In other words organise for 9 March, but note well that tens of thousands of Welsh workers are following the call of the Wales TUC by planning to take indefinite general strike action the following day.

That is a lead that could be followed. Organise for 9 March, but organise demands to be shouted at the TUC leaders on that demonstration. One demand in particular should be in the forefront — a general strike against the Tory offensive.

## THIS WEEK



## TITO

The man who turned an imperialist war into one of socialist revolution... page 3

## STEEL

Holding out for 20 per cent and against the closures... pages 2, 4 and 5

## ABORTION

Where should we go from the campaign against Corrie? On to a woman's right to choose... page 6

## BLACK LIBERATION

The 1.75m black people in Britain are changing the face of politics here. We examine the major task for socialists — helping to build a united black liberation movement... pages 7 to 10

## IRELAND

Yet another of Britain's solutions to its war has passed away. Obituary of the Peace People... page 11

## AFGHANISTAN

The road to civil war... page 12

## NICARAGUA

Learning to spell 'revolution' and 'liberation'. Nicaragua's mass literacy campaign... page 13

## ZIMBABWE

As the British governor does his best to eliminate the whites' opponents, Zimbabwe lurches towards civil war... pages 14 and 16

## This week's issue

READERS might note that this issue of Socialist Challenge is a bit different from usual — we have more feature material and less news than normal. This is because most of us who write, design and typeset the paper have been attending the national conference of the International Marxist Group during the past week.

A full report of the conference will be in next week's issue.

**SUPPORT THE STEEL STRIKE**



## 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.

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- I would like additional literature and enclose 50p to cover costs. (Delete if not applicable)

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## EDITORIAL

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# Steel troops without a general

IT SEEMS the Tories' Employment Secretary is considered 'wet' by his colleagues. The 'hawks' in the cabinet led by Keith Joseph and Geoffrey Howe believe his proposals on shackling trade unions do not go far enough.

For weeks now the Tories have been arguing in public on these proposals, now it appears peace has been restored and an agreed package will soon see the light of day. The Fleet Street press is divided on whether the 'hawks' or 'doves' won the cabinet debate. But we should be clear on one thing — whoever won, trade unionists were the losers.

This is evident from what the right wing Daily Telegraph's editorial said last Wednesday which described how 'doveish' the 'doves' are:

'Mr Prior has frequently asserted that the Employment Bill already contains drastic restraints on secondary picketing, and he is right. The secondary picket who defied a court order to desist could swiftly find himself in jail.'

### Immunity

Such, in a sentence, is the meaning of Prior's proposals. The lifting of legal immunity on what the Tories define as 'secondary pickets' will mean, inevitably, that trades unionists will end up in jail. It seems that the 'secondary pickets' category is now to be extended to include any worker who refuses to handle 'blackened' goods.

Extending the attack on unions, Thatcher announced at the end of last week that the government plans to reduce strikers' social security payments by the amount they would be 'deemed' to have been paid out of union funds. Only last month Thatcher was declaring that such a policy would be 'very, very difficult' to implement. Indeed even Keith Joseph was against such a scheme in 1971 when in a Heath cabinet discussion he was reported to have said, 'Beware, we shall have the television hunting hungry families'.

If such proposals are spearheading the biggest attack on trade union rights since the start of the century, it is some comfort that they are being launched by a government which looks neither so secure nor so confident as it did a couple of months ago. The public divisions, the changes of policy, the hesitation in carrying them out hardly resemble the 'smack of firm government' associated with the Tories.

Credit for this lies overwhelmingly with the steel strikers. At the start of the year they were seen as easy pickings by the Tories. Thatcher and her colleagues must now be wondering whether if these are 'easy' pickings, what will the difficult ones look like?

The damage the steel strikers have inflicted on the Tories they have done largely at a rank and file level. Bill Sirs, the union's general secretary, must

be as surprised as Thatcher at the militancy of his union members. Certainly he has done his best to curb it; first by instructing that Denning must be obeyed, then by suggesting there should be no picketing of private steel, even after Denning was overturned, finally by entering into talks with the steel bosses until his negotiating committee forced him to walk out. The steel strike has been a case of all troops and no general.

The same thing can be said for trade union movement as a whole. The role of the TUC in the last few months has been negligible. A few occasional warnings to the government is all its resistance has amounted to. True, they have called a national demonstration against Prior for 9 March, but that being a Sunday it will have nothing like the effect a national demonstration during a working day would have.

### Militancy

What all this amounts to, and what needs to be argued now on the factory floor, in offices, at trade union branches, is that both because of the government's weakness and because of the militancy shown by hundreds of thousands of workers in the steel strike, in South Wales and in other areas and industries, is that a full-scale TUC-led offensive is not only necessary, but it is opportune as well.

# Welsh miners to vote on all-out action

By Geoffrey Sheridan

IT IS unlikely that the miners in South Wales will wait until 10 March — the date set for the Welsh general strike — to begin all-out action over jobs.

South Wales NUM is to hold a special area conference on 20 February to consider whether to begin strike action on Monday next, 25 February.

The reason for the conference is a decision by the Port Talbot strike committee that there should be no return to work at the steel plant until they are given job security.

### Conference

Last weekend the Llanwern strike committee urged that jobs should be made an issue in the steel strike. This means it is likely that the miners' conference will have a recommendation from their executive that a South Wales miners' strike should begin on 25 February.

Twenty thousand steelworkers at Port Talbot and Llanwern face redundancy in the cutbacks proposed by the Steel Corporation, and this would lead to the loss of 15-16,000 jobs in the local coal industry.

'We've been pressurised by our own members to press for strike action,' says Don Hayward, South Wales NUM's administration officer. 'Our task is to join the steelworkers. We can't wait until 10 March.'

This determination to ensure that action over jobs is coupled with the present steel strike will be bad news for the TUC, which has been doing its best to delay indefinitely the general strike in Wales.

### Decimation

Having already secured a postponement from the original date in mid-January, TUC general secretary Len Murray has been persuading his counterpart on the Wales TUC, George Wright, that the problem of the decimation of jobs and communities should be left to negotiations with the government.

Last week's hint by Sir Geoffrey Howe, Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the government might be willing

to speak to the TUC about the steel corporation's plans was greeted by Len Murray with the announcement that he took such moves 'seriously'.

Murray immediately asked the Wales TUC to call off its conference scheduled for 27 February, at which plans for the general strike are to be discussed.

If the South Wales miners begin their action on 25 February, Murray and the Wales TUC leadership will have their time cut out trying to restrain other workers from joining in the strike.

'We will be calling on all other unions to back the action by the steelworkers and miners', says Don Hayward.

# TEN THOUSAND CALL FOR 'MAGGIE OUT'

'MAGGIE OUT' was the most popular chant of nearly ten thousand people who took to the streets of three cities on Monday to oppose the Tories' cuts.

Sheffield saw its largest demonstration since the war when 5,000 marched to the city-centre in response to a call from South Yorkshire Association of Trades Councils.

Members of the local government union, NALGO formed the largest contingent, and they marched with other public sector workers, miners, engineering workers, the Fire Brigades Union, and steel strikers. A delegation of NALGO members from Lambeth in South London joined the demonstration.

Although a majority of workers in 14 engineering factories in Sheffield had voted for a day's stoppage, a meeting of AUEW convenors decided last week that there was not sufficient support to call a one-day strike. The turn-out on Monday, however, showed the strength of opposition to the savaging of the public service.

In Manchester, some 3,000 trades unionists, students, and pensioners joined the march led by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, and in Liverpool 1,200 demonstrated against unemployment. Among them were Meccano workers who have occupied against the closure of their factory.

Speakers at a rally in Manchester, who included Tony Benn, urged support for the TUC demonstration on 9 May against Prior's anti-union laws, and a resolution urged the TUC to make its 14 May day of action a national strike.

There was loud applause for Brian Molyneux, from the South Yorkshire steel strike committee, when he invited all those at the rally to join a mass picket of Manchester Steel on Wednesday.



SOLIDARITY with the steel and British Leyland workers — Manchester on Monday were among the themes of the 'anti-Tory' march in

Photo: Morning Star





TITO in Moscow, 1945

# TITO'S ACHIEVEMENT

By Michele Lee

**JOSIP Broz-Tito was on his deathbed in Ljubljana, the main town of Slovenia, as we went to press.**

Born into a poor peasant family in 1892 in northern Croatia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Tito became a metal worker and in 1914 was drafted into the Imperial army. As a prisoner of war he witnessed the October Revolution, and in 1919 returned to the newly created state of Yugoslavia a committed communist.

In 1920, in the first popular elections, the young Yugoslav Communist Party (YCP) emerged as the third strongest party and claimed over 80,000 members. Shortly afterwards, however, it was banned and driven underground in a red scare of continent-wide dimensions fuelled by the generalised unrest of post-war Europe — and in the Yugoslav case, the Hungarian revolution of 1919.

The ban was never lifted, and the party declined, its leaders killed, imprisoned or exiled.

## Outsider

An outsider to the intense inner-party conflicts of the '20s and '30s, Tito was appointed party secretary in 1938 after the almost total physical elimination of the existing leadership in the Great Purges. His return to Yugoslavia in 1939 was followed by a growth of party membership from about 3,000 in 1939 to about 12,000 in 1941.

In the ensuing years, Tito and his hand-picked Central Committee (most of whom were some twenty

years younger than him) succeeded in turning the imperialist war into one of socialist revolution. By 1945 the partisan army was 250,000 strong and in virtual control of the country. An important contribution to its military victory was made by veterans of the Spanish Civil War who learnt the art of guerrilla warfare in the fight against Franco.

## Breach

It became increasingly clear, however, that the Soviet leadership could not tolerate an independent state within its 'bloc'. In 1948, grave economic and political provocations by Moscow led to an open breach.

It was a difficult personal moment (the whole leadership, including Tito himself, suffered in those months a series of neurotically induced illnesses) and a dangerous one for the revolution. Having entered the war under the banner not only of national liberation, but also of defence of the Soviet Union, the Yugoslav leadership found itself suddenly isolated and boycotted by other Communist parties and states, at a time when the Cold War was freezing international relations.

At one time Stalin seriously contemplated invasion of the country in order to replace 'the Tito clique'. But the Yugoslav regime passed this test of its popularity with enhanced prestige and embarked on a distinct 'road to socialism'.

A certain devolution of power (self-management) was accompanied by the progressive introduction of market elements into the hitherto centralised economy. The centralised state was weakened in favour of republican centres and a re-definition

of the role of the party emphasised its spiritual rather than administrative role.

Yugoslavia also helped to promote a 'non-aligned' movement, which gave it more room to manoeuvre between the Soviet Union and the West. Although deeply involved in all major policy decisions, Tito always had a preference for foreign affairs, which he conducted through frequent travel abroad.

At the same time he remained emotionally tied to the 'first land of socialism', which — like so many other militants of his generation — he had learnt in his young days to identify with the cause of world revolution. (In this he differed from Mao and Castro, for example, who first visited Moscow only after establishing themselves as supreme political leaders in their own countries.)

## Equality

Any review of Tito's leadership must give a special place to the solution of the country's national question. The Yugoslav revolution was successful because it offered a vision of Yugoslavia based on equality of all its peoples. In spite of the revival of nationalist sentiments in the early 1970s, the fact remains that no ethnic unit can be said to be oppressed — with the possible exception of the large Albanian minority.

In earlier, more optimistic days, both the Yugoslav CP and the Comintern foresaw the division of the Albanian and Macedonian nations being healed by the creation of a Balkan federation, which was to include Yugoslavia, Albania,

Bulgaria and hopefully Greece. This plan was dropped, however, in the face of British and Russian hostility.

## Product

A revolutionary critique of the Yugoslav leadership must centre on the questions of internal democracy, economic planning, and proletarian internationalism. But the deformations present in the Yugoslav revolution were a product not so much of Tito's mistakes as of the Stalinist degeneration of the October Revolution in the USSR, which replaced the perspective of world revolution by the monstrous theory of socialism in one country.

The Yugoslavs carried through their socialist revolution because they did not accept the logic of that theory; but it nevertheless asserted itself subsequently, above all after their break with Moscow.

Ever since then, the country's economic and political insecurity has continued to exact a further price from its original revolutionary capital. The policy of 'non-alignment' has often in practice meant tactical accommodation with imperialism and collaboration with reactionary feudal or bourgeois regimes, and a sacrifice of proletarian internationalism to the short-term interests of the Yugoslav state.

## Passivity

Historically, the emergence of a workers state in Yugoslavia was decisively dependent on the prior consolidation of the YCP — a feature quite typical of proletarian revolutions in the 20th century.

In 35 years, the working class has

grown from a numerically and economically (though not politically) small minority to a position of absolute social dominance. Yet at the same time it has been characterised by a deep political passivity, while an ossified and bureaucratic structure commands the political life of the country in its name.

The original Maoist charges that Yugoslavia was reverting to capitalism look a bit thin in the neon light of contemporary Chinese politics. Yet there is no doubt that market forces have been allowed far too much freedom: uneven regional development, a neglected infrastructure, large-scale unemployment and emigration, as well as the return of old-style nationalism into Yugoslav political life all testify to this fact.

## Positive

History will pass a critical but positive judgement on Tito's contribution to the international working class movement. By its victory, the Yugoslav revolution confirmed (like those that came after it in Albania, China, Vietnam and Cuba) that the Russian revolution was no historical accident, but the beginning of the end of the capitalist era.

It furthermore showed that Europe was not immune to revolutionary success, even if this success had eluded its more developed regions. Revolutionary militants should support the unity and independence of Yugoslavia, and defend its revolutionary achievements, while all the time pressing for the return of the working class to the centre of its political stage.





# Is Bill Sirs losing his grip?

By Valerie Coultas

**IT'S NOT** only the Tories who are shocked by the militancy of the steel strikers. The steel union leaders themselves are reeling under the strain.

Steelworkers, previously looked upon as 'moderate' trade unionists, have shown the power and initiative of the working class in action.

In Sheffield, miners, engineers and steelworkers last week threatened a Saltley-gate style mass picket to put a stop to management's campaign at the Hadfields private steel firm to get the workers to scab on the strike.

In Scotland, at Sheerness Steel, mass picketing also took place to convince private sector workers not to scab. Strike leaders on Teesside have been discussing support action with other unions in their area.

Miners in Yorkshire are

considering requests from steel workers to join the picket lines. Dockworkers in Sunderland face the prospect of a three-day week. The steel strike is reaching a crucial stage.

The rank and file in the steel unions are clearly making the running in the strike. The Rotherham strike committee has even called for Bill Sirs, general secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, to resign because he tried to give 'dispensation' to Hadfields to return to work.

Keith Jones, an ISTC official, expressed the feelings of the Sheffield strikers when he said: 'Having won the legal battle in the House of Lords it was ludicrous to allow workers in the private sector to weaken the strike at a crucial time.'

A union priding itself on its moderation is facing a revolt from its rank and file which threatens to permanently transform the balance of power in the union. The South Yorkshire strikers have set the pace

throughout the strike.

But what about the man at the centre of the dispute, Bill Sirs? The authoritarian union leader who 'likes to run a tight ship' seems to be losing his grip.

Sirs, a former Hartlepool butcher's boy, no doubt considers he has made good. One of a family of ten he was farmed out to his grandmother until he was 14 to 'stop the means test man taking money off my father's unemployment allowance'.

He started working in steel after being on the dole for a number of years. He told the *Sunday Times* it was 'one thing my father did for me'.

Today Bill Sirs lives in a fine house in Hatfield — part of London's commuter belt; hobnobs with TUC leaders and top politicians; wears smart suits and is driven around by his chauffeur in a Rover 3500. He is also a fitness freak and has managed to find time during the steel strike to play squash with a top steel civil servant.

Despite being reduced to tears by the solidarity of Welsh miners and steelworkers during the one-day all-out strike, and saying he would go to jail if necessary, Bill Sirs has not lost his sympathy for management. In the tradition of steel union bosses, he prides himself on the principle that what is good for the company is good for the workers.

## Sympathy

Talking to the *Sunday Times*, he expressed his sympathy for management. 'Men in the industry getting low wages, just won't care. Managers will have no control over them.' For the steel union leader, the problem is work discipline rather than the poor living standards of his members.

Bill, who thinks that 'Sir Keith Joseph is a nice man in his way', is a very responsible union leader. As a magistrate he was in a particularly sticky position when the law

intervened to try and prevent the private sector being called out in solidarity with BSC workers.

'There are many excellent private companies and I felt a bit hurt that we had to bring them into the dispute,' he told one reporter. 'Reasonable' and 'responsible' working class leaders like Bill Sirs are courted by the bourgeois press, which loves to present the 'human' faces of such men.

While the pressure is on Sirs he will be forced to some extent to play the game to keep his ranks behind him.

But as soon as the pressure is released he will be running to the steel corporation bosses and the Tories to negotiate away jobs for a lousy pay deal. That's why Sheffield steelworkers are right to call for a national strike committee that will place the struggle in the hands of the rank-and-file, and — if necessary — be ready to displace Sirs from his throne.

# PICKET POWER VICTORY

By a Sheffield engineering worker

**MASS** pickets showed their power by forcing the closure of Hadfields, Lonrho's Sheffield steel firm, last Friday.

Arthur Scargill led 300 miners to join 1,200 steel and engineering workers who then threatened to storm the gates of the East Hecla plant unless the plant was closed. Earlier that morning 600 police had forced 'back to work' ISTC members through the picket.

The closure marks a major victory for the steel strike. Derek Norton, the manager of Hadfields, had received a secret dispensation from Bill Sirs, ISTC general secretary. This gave the Hadfield's management the go-ahead to organise a mass meeting with the collaboration of right wing ISTC

convenor, Mick Adams. Observers from 16 other private plants were invited to this meeting and press and television were given every facility to cover the event.

The Tories hoped that divisions between the private and public sector, and any sell-out negotiated by the craft workers' leaders would smash the strike. They were wrong.

BSC strikers are now convinced that only total stoppage of the movement of steel can lay the basis of winning the strike. The next step is rank and file control of the dispute through a national strike committee which is being pushed by militants in Sheffield.

After a total of 45 arrests throughout the week, the picket became more and more of a focus.

By Thursday there were 1,500 trade unionists outside Hadfield's

East Hecla plant. Brown Barclays, the other Hadfields plant that has not received so much press attention, was already out again by that time.

Eventually the East Heclas workers took the hint and voted to strike. The events at Hadfields have posed the trade union movement in Sheffield some problems that need to be tackled head-on.

No. 28 Confederation of the Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions will need to give a clear lead to overcome the divisions between the public and private sector in the steel strike.

Private sector workers need to be motivated not only by calls for solidarity but also by a view of what the future of the steel industry is as a whole in Britain.

The unions need an offensive strategy. Jobs can be saved through

worksharing. Private and public company books should be made available to workers in the steel industry to develop the case for nationalisation of the entire industry rather than allow Villiers and Derek Norton to dictate sackings when and where they choose.

In Wales and in Yorkshire solidarity has given a massive boost to the steelworkers in both public and private sector. Throughout the length and breadth of Britain that solidarity will be crucial if the steel strike is to remain solid and be brought to a successful conclusion.

The Tories are not the invincible force they appear to be. Class-wide actions, such as those at Hadfields demonstrate the power of the organised labour movement in Britain.

That power must be backed by

policies that can counter the paternalism of the Derek Nortons of this world who pretend that the workers in the private sector have common interests with management and instead emphasise the common interests of all steelworkers have in building a strong union that can defend both living standards and jobs.

A barrage of bad eggs, rotten tomatoes and flour bombs greeted BSC boss Sir Charles Villiers, as he arrived to address a meeting in Middlesbrough on Thursday. Three hundred Teesside steel workers kept up a continuous chant outside the hall demanding '20 per cent', and 'Maggie — Out, Out, Out'. Delegations from plants threatened with closure carried placards with 'Unite and fight for Consett'.





## The nuts and bolts of struggle

By Ron Thompson  
Chairperson shop stewards committee  
Eclipse Tools, Sheffield

AS THE steel strike enters its eighth week the determination of the steelworkers shows no sign of flagging. But there are signs of increasing anxiety about how long the strike is taking to bite. The growing dissatisfaction with the way the strike is being conducted was expressed by the South Yorkshire strike committee when it passed a resolution of censure against Bill Sirs last week.

The recent pitched battles between pickets and the police outside Hadfields not only express the militancy of the steelworkers in South Yorkshire, but also express their frustration.

### Frustration

That frustration was highlighted at a recent meeting, about 200 strong, of shop stewards and officials of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions in Sheffield. An appeal was made to the meeting by Bernard Connolly, from the National Crafts Coordinating Committee of the steel industry, and backed by Keith Jones of the ISTC, for the Engineering Unions to step up their solidarity boycotts to cover all steel products rather than just raw steel.

He made it clear to the engineering workers what the object of the appeal was:

'We want to see you out on the street', he said.

The reaction of many of the engineering shop stewards was that this was an unrealistic demand. How could they ask their members to virtually lay themselves off within days?

### Cracks

The discussion which followed showed signs of cracks in the widespread support which steelworkers have been receiving since the beginning of the strike. It summed up the dilemma now facing the steelworkers — they cannot win unless the strike begins to hit key sectors of manufacturing industry, at the same time they need the support of the very workers that will be thrown out of work by the strike!

The strike is at a crucial stage — it is now recognised by most workers that the steelworkers fight is a struggle against the Tory government. That recognition has to be turned into action.

Bernard Connolly's wish to see the engineers on the streets must go beyond a discussion about what are finished products and what constitutes raw steel, and become an explicit call for an all-out onslaught against the Tories. This is how the rank and file leadership of the working class movement should motivate the spreading of the steel strike to other sectors.

### Fighting

Whether nuts and bolts are finished products or raw steel does not matter. What does matter is that the Tory government which the steelworkers are fighting is defeated and kicked out.

The logical outcome of the extension of the steel strike to other sectors of workers is a general strike. The steelworkers should take the lead in raising precisely this call.

OVER 500 angry craft workers in the steel industry gathered outside Congress House in London last Thursday to picket the meeting of the National Craft Coordinating Committee. The delegates to the NCCC had come to London to discuss the latest offer from BSC which union leaders had recommended they accept. The pickets outside had other ideas.

The message to those talking inside was loud and clear: 'No sell out — no job loss', they chanted. If the delegates at the meeting had been in any doubt as to what union members thought of the offer they had no excuse once they

arrived at Congress House.

Wyn Bevan was outside Congress House, together with several coachloads of other steelworkers from South Wales. He thought that the officers of the NCCC should be forced to resign if they dared accept the offer.

But in the end there was no need for resignations or further anger. The NCCC roundly rejected the offer by a majority of over 100, and made it quite clear to BSC that they would need a lot more than 10 per cent to get them back again.

## Steel craft union negotiations

### It's time the TUC thought about it

### — they can't go on selling jobs forever

THE BRITISH Steel Corporation and those union leaders who want to rush to a settlement — any settlement — received yet another decisive slap in the face from steelworkers on Thursday last week.

The 200-strong National Craft Coordinating Committee, representing the smaller craft unions involved in the steel strike, met in London and overwhelmingly rejected the offer that their negotiators had accepted the previous week.

A miserable 10 per cent on the basic and a blank cheque to sell jobs was the offer originally accepted by craft union leaders. But not for long!

WYN BEVAN, Electricians' Union convenor at BSC Port Talbot,

talked to Socialist Challenge before the National Coordinating Committee met last week.

“ Apart from the size of the increase on the basic, which is only 10 per cent, the main thing that we are opposed to is the iniquitous clauses in the agreement which would allow the British Steel Corporation to carry through the whole of its streamlining operation.

This would include the loss of up to 12,000 jobs at Port Talbot and Llanwern. This would mean an immediate loss of 300 electricians at Port Talbot.

This offer is an attempt to drive a wedge into the solidarity of the strike. We have a unanimous mandate from

our committee to use every means to oppose this deal, to reject any streamlining or slimming proposals and to protect jobs.

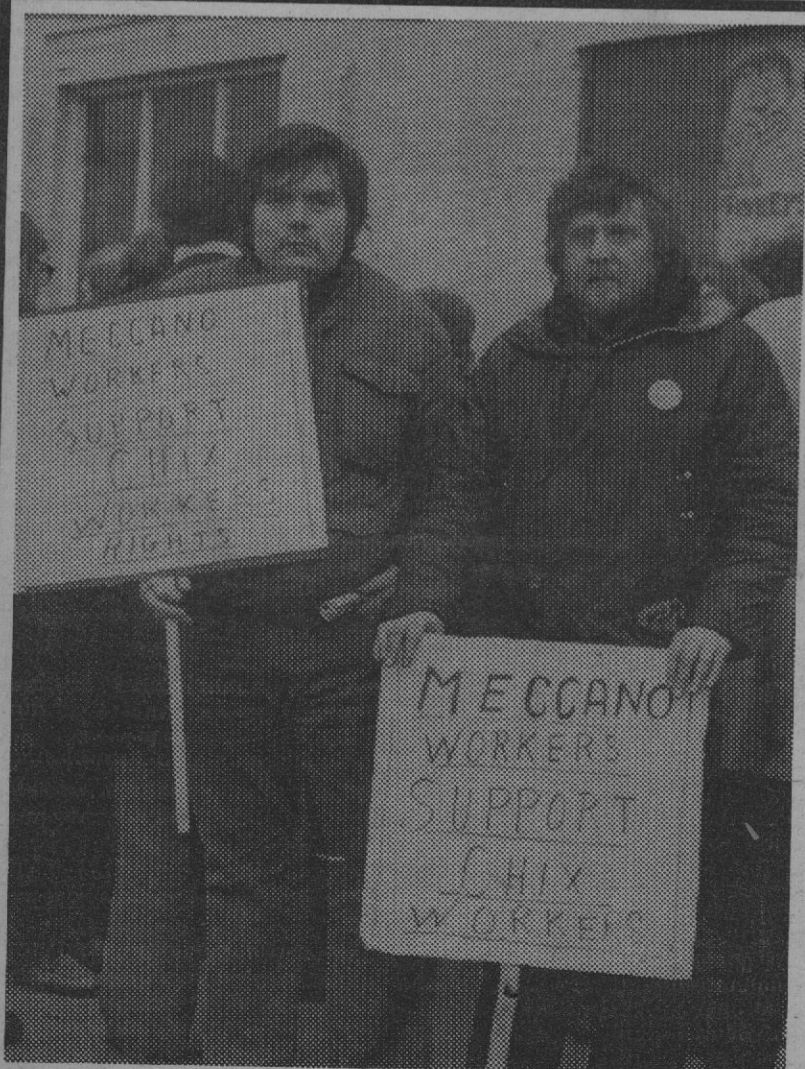
As far as we are concerned any agreement now reached with the BSC must contain complete guarantees of no redundancy and no job loss.

It's about time that the TUC stood and thought. The unions can't go on selling jobs. The TUC has a record of doing this from the '20s onwards. We can't have it this time.

There will be a bus load of electricians going to London for the TUC rally and march on 9 March. There will also be a trainload of trade unionists from the Swansea and Port Talbot area.

Of course we are giving unanimous support for the Welsh general strike scheduled for 10 March. They've tried to buy off the miners in South Wales with the new subsidy on coal imports. This, and the pathetic £48m for the Welsh Development Agency, is part of a concerted attempt to buy off the unions with cold comfort.

We want a positive commitment from the Welsh and British TUC to protect all jobs in industry. If the government won't give us what we want — which it won't — then the unions and the TUC have got to stand and fight against this government all the way.



## CHIX WORKERS WILL WIN!

OVER a hundred local trade unionists picketed the Chix sweet factory in Slough on Wednesday 13 February. The mainly Asian women workers at the factory have been on strike for union recognition for several months.

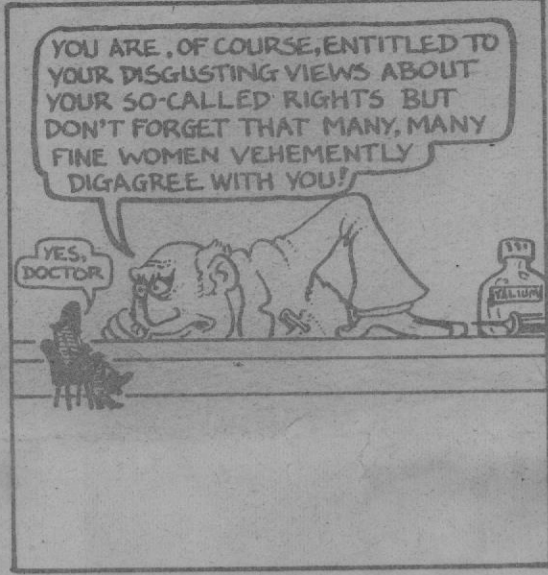
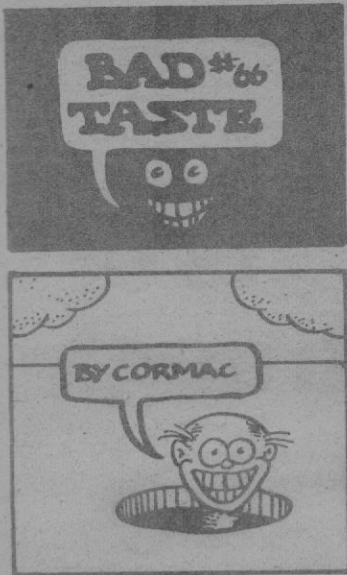
The dispute has won mass support from the Asian community of Slough, but the union concerned, the General and Municipal Workers' Union, has been slow off the mark in organising support for the pickets.

Jerry McMullen, GMWU regional officer, told pickets how management had been trying to farm out their distribution to other factories. These attempts had been stopped by flying pickets and solidarity action from fellow trade unionists.

A group of workers from the Meccano factory in Liverpool attended the picket. The Meccano factory is presently under occupation by the workforce which is determined to hold off management's plans for closure. Frank Bloor, GMWU convenor at Meccano, told the pickets that the key to victory in both struggles was union solidarity.



# SEXUAL POLITICS



## What next for the National Abortion Campaign NO COMPROMISES WITH CORRIE

THE CAMPAIGN Against Corrie started out with what looked like an impossible task. The Corrie Bill threatened to dismantle nearly all the gains of the '67 Abortion Act, and with a long session of Parliament allowing more time for debate, and an even larger anti-abortion majority than usual in the Commons it

looked unstoppable.

But now, eight months after the Bill first appeared in the Commons, success seems within our grasp. We haven't won yet — there are manoeuvres to win more time to discuss the Bill alongside talk of compromises from MPs on both sides of

the debate — but now is a good time to look ahead and examine the choices facing the abortion movement.

JUDE WATSON, a member of the National Abortion Campaign steering committee and of the IMG, discusses what the options are.

DAVID STEEL, Gerald Vaughan (Minister of Health) and Stan Orme (shadow health spokesperson) have all come out in favour of a restriction of the '67 Abortion Act to bring in an upper time limit of 24 weeks. Even the 'pro-choicers' in the House of Commons are divided on this issue.

The National Abortion Campaign, which over the past five years has built a massive campaign in defence of the '67 Act, is opposed to any restrictions on a woman's right to choose.

We have to step up the campaign against all compromises. There is a danger that the sense of relief if Corrie's Bill as a whole is rejected may blind us to the necessity of fighting any restriction to the '67 Act.

### Choice

NAC is the only section of the abortion movement which clearly stands for no restrictions on women's choice. It has plans for a Bill that really would embody a woman's right to choose — we should start campaigning for that kind of positive legislation as a counter to all talk of reducing time limits.

The National Abortion Campaign's declaration of aims spells out the kind of things we are fighting for (as opposed to what we are fighting against) — day-care abortion clinics, changes in the NHS, no time limits and so on. It explains NAC's positions and why it is vital that no compromises are accepted.

It is not just that Corrie must be stopped, nor simply that we must resist all attempts to reduce the time limits, but we have to take our campaign forward towards winning legislation for a woman's right to choose. The dynamism of the campaign that has been built up against Corrie should not be allowed to dissipate but be turned on to a more aggressive footing.

What are the steps towards achieving this positive campaign? Initially we can have 'women's right to choose' contingents on the International Women's Day and May Day demonstrations this year.

### Conference

In the next two or three months NAC will be holding its national conference. For the last few years the event has not been very well attended, but this year there are enormous possibilities to take the campaign forward. Let's aim for a conference as big as in '76, with at least a thousand people there.

Women's groups, students, trade unions and community groups — all the people who have actively campaigned against Corrie — should be invited along to discuss and debate the way to build a mass campaign around NAC to win legislation for a woman's right to choose.

The Labour Party and the TUC are already committed to 'free abortion on request' — now we have to encourage them to turn words into action.



JUDE WATSON: 'The coming months will make or break the mass campaign for women's choice.'

If the Labour Party were to pledge itself to positive legislation in its next manifesto then our fight would be taken forward considerably. It wouldn't guarantee that the next Labour government would actually introduce such legislation, but it would strengthen the hand of the pro-choice movement.

The Labour Party conference next autumn still seems a long way off, but it is not too early to start putting down resolutions in constituency Labour Parties and trade union branches calling for the repeal of any amendments to the '67 Act that do get through and for a manifesto commitment to a woman's right to choose.

The main focus for the fight for positive legislation will be the labour movement conference on this subject that has been called for the autumn. We should fight for regional TUC conferences on positive legislation as part of the build up to the autumn conference.

The Campaign Against Corrie will be holding a forum on 1 March to discuss the future of the fight against Corrie. CAC must obviously continue organising support against any restrictions to the '67 Act, explaining the importance of refusing all deals. Within the broad forces that support CAC the role of NAC is to continue to press for its own position for no restrictions and to win people to the ongoing fight for a woman's right to choose.

We want to win the masses of people who have campaigned against Corrie to the fight for positive legislation. We want them to join NAC.

Within the broad abortion movement there will always be differences about how to win abortion rights. NAC, though led by women, has many male supporters and members, and the campaign has emphasised taking the issue into the labour movement. NAC thinks that the most likely road to success is through the joint action of the women's movement and the labour movement on the abortion issue.

Women alone are certainly fearless fighters for their rights, but they do not have the strength to win on their own.

The politics behind such a strategy differs from that of some women who tried to storm Parliament on 8 February or those who seized the front of the demonstration on 28 October.

Not all the women who did these things saw it as a complete alternative strategy, but some sections do see direct confrontations with the police and spontaneous actions as the way to build campaigns. The same people often disagree with forging alliances with the 'male dominated' trade unions.

NAC thinks that direct actions should complement the ongoing mass campaign, and that they are the exact opposite of 'doing your own thing' in a way which cuts across the campaign in an undemocratic and confusing

manner. Direct actions must be well planned and their timing decided in a democratic way or they end in unnecessary arrests, heavy fines and splits in the mass campaign.

Such spontaneous actions are also alienating for many women, especially those who may be on their very first political event and who are not prepared for physical confrontation with the police.

Many women who went to 'storm' Parliament on 8 February literally did not realise that the police would use force and violence to stop them getting in. We may think such violence is unjustified but it is how the police always behave — the women who led that escapade had a responsibility to warn the other women of what was likely to happen.

A further difference within the abortion campaign is over the role of illegal or 'self-help' abortion in fighting for a better law.

### Networks

Some sections of the women's movement are calling for illegal abortion networks to be set up if the Corrie Bill goes through. In countries where abortion has been unavailable for years defying the law has proved useful in pressurising the state for abortion rights in law and practice.

In Italy, the USA and France such networks have been used in this way, but Britain is in a different situation. Clandestine networks would be limited to women 'in the know' — probably white, middle class women in the women's movement. It would take years to establish a network with mass pressure and this should not be done at the expense of fighting for a law for all. However big it might become, such a network is not a solution in itself.

NAC, on the other hand, should organise a declaration of doctors and nurses who are willing to break the law if the Bill is passed, and we should also be ready to defend any doctor or woman who is prosecuted for performing an illegal abortion.

But NAC must urge the women's and labour movements to campaign together for positive legislation. We must not end up with the women's movement organising illegal abortions and the labour movement organising for legislation.

The coming months will make or break the mass campaign for women's choice. We have to ensure that we take everyone who has campaigned against Corrie into a campaign for a positive law.

Finally, on the Corrie Bill front there is some bad news. It appears that a further three Fridays may become available for discussion of the Bill. But we are undaunted. Events will begin at Lincoln's Inn Fields at 6pm every Friday until this Bill is wiped off the face of the earth. Watch the press or ring NAC (01-278 0153) for details. But most important — be there!



# battle of ideas



## THE STRUGGLE FOR BLACK LIBERATION

ABOUT 1.75 million black people live in Britain today. The vast majority either settled in Britain during the post-war period, or are descendants of those who did. They have changed the political face of Britain, and that process is continuing.

Treated as second class citizens, black people suffer oppression which is met with indifference and even condoned by the labour movement and its racist leaders.

When resisting the racists, black people have been forced to act independently of the

labour movement, relying only on themselves to begin their struggle for liberation.

Unlike large sections of the white working class, who have wrongly come to see their interests as lying in the continued prosperity of Britain as an imperialist nation, the black people living here strongly identify with the march of the third world against imperialism.

That is why no socialist can afford to ignore the struggles of black people — they are a decisive force for internationalism within the working class and will play a major role in

breaking the hold of racism and national chauvinism among the white working class.

At its conference which has just taken place, the International Marxist Group discussed how this new situation in British politics needs to be incorporated into our strategy for socialist revolution in Britain. On the following three pages we examine the major task which the IMG is setting itself in the course of elaborating that strategy — aiding in the building of a united black liberation movement in Britain.

TO SAY how a united black liberation movement can be built in this country, we must first know what sort of movement we are trying to build. It must be an independent black liberation movement.

Independent from what? First, independent of the state, for it is the imperialist British state which ensures that black people remain second class citizens.

Everywhere black people turn they meet racism — from politicians, state officials, employers, trade union officials, from ordinary working class people at work and on the streets.

But racist ideology — the ideology which holds black and non-white peoples to be 'naturally inferior' to the white races — cannot simply be defeated through argument and education, because it has material roots.

From its earliest days, the British capitalist class embraced racism. The early slave trade and the super-exploitation of slave labour in the American colonies provided capital for early industrial expansion in Britain.

This bloody trade in human beings was justified on the grounds that the African peoples were 'sub-human'.

The later subjugation of the peoples of Africa and Asia, courtesy of the violent embrace of the British Empire, furnished British capitalism with cheap labour and raw materials. It was justified by notions of the mother country 'civilising' these 'child-like' people living in the dark ages.

### Divisions

Today the racists use identical arguments to justify Britain's imperialist role in Zimbabwe. They claim that the people of Zimbabwe 'need' the white settler minority.

Not only did racism serve to divide white British workers from the peoples of the colonial world, it also served to create divisions in the British working class itself.

The super-profits achieved by British exploitation of the third world enabled the most organised and skilled workers to win considerable concessions from the capitalist class.

These workers began to see their future prosperity as being assured by Britain's continuing dominance as an imperialist power, cherishing their privileges against the unskilled



and unorganised sections of the working class in Britain.

Since the Second World War, racism has again well served the capitalist class; this time on British soil. In the 1950s and '60s, cheap

labour was required in the clothing, metal production, and food industries, as well as the expanding social services.

The availability of one traditional section of the reserve army of labour — women —

declined as white-collar employment rose and rationalised production involved shift and overtime working, providing jobs for women.

*Continued overleaf*  
Socialist Challenge, 21 February 1980 Page 7



# THE STRUGGLE FOR BLACK LIBERATION

Continued from Page 7

The capitalist class turned to the 'New Commonwealth' for its reserve army of labour. Racism again supplied the justification for the super-exploitation of immigrant workers in Britain.

Discrimination in jobs, housing, education and the social services has ensured that black people remain ghettoised in the worst jobs. Living in the inner-city areas and industrial conurbations, they have little opportunity to escape the role of second class citizen allotted to them.

While the state itself discriminates against black people, it also acts to break their resistance to racism.

State and police harassment under the guise of searching for illegal immigrants is used to intimidate and demoralise black people. The denial of basic rights of appeal and legal aid to those picked up for deportation adds to the insecurity of black people.

The militancy of the youth is met by blanket police operations in black areas; in Southall, for example, when the Asian and West Indian community opposed a National Front meeting during the general election, and in Notting Hill during the annual carnival. And it is countered by the use of arbitrary laws such as Sus.

## Insults

The racist insults and violence which are an everyday occurrence in black people's lives are directly stimulated and encouraged by racist politicians and state officials.

For these reasons, therefore, we must reject any strategy for ending the oppression of black people which is based on an alliance with capitalist politicians and state officials. It would be to make an alliance of the oppressed and the oppressor.

Rather than looking to the capitalist parties for allies, black people in Britain have increasingly turned to the workers' organisations.

Despite the support for racist immigration controls by the Wilson and Callaghan Labour governments; despite trade union support for tighter quotas for work permits in the catering industry and their acceptance of discrimination in jobs, black people have thrown their vote behind Labour, and the evidence suggests that union membership is higher among black workers than it is among whites.

A survey conducted by the Commission for Racial Equality in 24 parliamentary constituencies with a high non-white population showed the following support for the Labour Party in the last general election: West Indians and Asians, 90 per cent; Asians, 86 per cent; and whites, 50 per cent.

There can be unity between the white workers and black people of Britain in struggling to defeat a common enemy — the capitalist state which ensures both the exploitation of white workers and the oppression of black people.

It is this alliance which socialists must seek to create, and it can be done. But it will not come about while the white working class gives its support to the bourgeois state and opposes black people.

## Unity

To create unity in struggle it is necessary first to recognise the divisions which exist. Black people cannot hold back their struggles until the white workers understand the need for an alliance against a common enemy.

They have to begin to fight now on their own account. Only by doing that, and confronting the labour movement with demands for its active support in those struggles, will a genuine unity be created.

Far from dividing white and black workers, as some socialists claim, a black liberation movement independent of the white workers' organisations would create the best conditions for uniting black and white workers in a revolutionary struggle. It will be black people themselves who lead the fight for their liberation, or there will be no liberation.

We can go further. As socialists we believe that only the overthrow of capitalism can begin to establish the conditions for defeating racism. Only when the material basis for racism is destroyed — when imperialist exploitation of the non-white peoples is ended — will it be finally possible to defeat racist ideology.

Only when the capitalist state, which defends that system of exploitation, is destroyed will black liberation be possible. The strides towards eradicating racism that have been made in Cuba are testimony to this.

But the black people of Britain will only be convinced that this is the case when they see that the workers' movement places no conditions on their liberation; that the labour movement respects the right of black people to determine their own future and decide for themselves whether they wish to build a new multi-national state alongside the white working class.



All photos: G. M. COOKSON [Socialist Challenge]

The labour movement must say to black people: 'We will join with you in defeating our common enemy, the imperialist state, for that is the pre-condition for your and our liberation.'

'We wish to create a workers' state with you so as to build a socialist society — but whether you wish to join with us in this must be your decision. We only ask that you judge us by how we act in the course of our alliance to defeat the common enemy.'

Without black people having their own independent organisations, deciding and choosing their own route to liberation and selecting their own leaders, it is not possible for them to determine their own future.

If a black liberation movement has to be independent of the imperialist state and its parties, and able to act independently without waiting for the labour movement, it must also be a *united* black liberation movement.

When black people came to Britain in large numbers after the war they brought with them their own traditions, cultures, religions, languages and even political formations.

The continued links of black people with their country of origin through their family, political organisations, and government agencies, their tendency to be concentrated

together in the inner-city areas, and the necessity of collective self-help in the face of a hostile white society, all enabled the retention of these national traditions despite the pressures of British society to abandon them.

This is most clearly revealed in the growth of welfare and political organisations of black people based on different national minorities — the Indian Workers Association, the Pakistani and Bangladeshi associations, the Afro-Caribbean groupings. These reflect the divisions between the national minorities and within them, such as the split in the IWAs along the line of the split in the Indian Communist parties.

But in spite of these divisions between the national minorities, they suffer essentially the same oppression in British society — they are oppressed as *black* people. This has increasingly led to the formation of political alliances between the different black peoples.

In 1961 this developed in opposition to the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill, which brought the formation of the Co-ordinating Committee Against Racial Discrimination. Similar coalitions have been created time and time again — the most recent being the Campaign Against Racist Laws.

With each new generation born in Britain, growing up as citizens of this country yet constantly facing the clamour of the right for repatriation and treated as second class citizens, the need for black political unity against their oppression in Britain increasingly overrides the divisions between the national minorities.

One example is the formation of Asian Youth Movements — rather than, say, Indian or Pakistani youth movements — in the last decade.

For this reason we are confident that it is possible to build a united black liberation movement; one based on united political action between the black peoples which respects the right of the various national minorities to retain their own organisations. That political unity can be forged by united campaigns on the crucial issues confronting black people as black people.

The policies for which the IMG believes it is necessary to fight in order to build a united black liberation movement are presented on this page.

The fight to build such a movement also necessitates the formation of a new leadership. In particular it will require challenging the



# THE STRUGGLE FOR BLACK LIBERATION



**Black people must be free to determine their own future through their own organisations.**

**The task of revolutionary socialists is to unconditionally defend that right**

strategy of the existing reformist black leaders. Their argument is essentially as follows:

Black people are only 4 per cent of the population in Britain so they need allies. They must seek allies from the labour movement, especially the labour leaders. The latter cannot always be relied on, so we have to organise ourselves for mass action to pressurise these leaders — and sometimes that will involve standing independent candidates to those of the Labour Party.

But we must not let that action go too far in case we frighten off the labour leaders altogether.

The concessions we expect from the labour leaders, the argument goes, are aimed at making discrimination illegal; stronger Race Relations Acts and greater involvement of the black leaders in policing those laws are needed.

In short, this is a strategy which subordinates the struggle of black people to gaining an alliance with the leaders of the labour movement with the objective of reforming capitalism.

Increasingly, however, a new layer of activists has emerged among the black peoples; activists who reject this strategy. After seeing

the labour leaders promise a lot and deliver little, their silence on the Southall show trials, and their refusal to support black people defending themselves against racist violence, these activists consider that black people can no longer rely on such allies.

They are saying that black people must rely only on themselves; that they must decide on their own demands and objectives without tailoring them to what is acceptable to the labour leaders; and that they should go out and fight for these demands now.

In the past this approach has been taken by organisations such as the RAAS and the Black Peoples Alliance. It has now stimulated those involved in the Asian youth movements and black women's groups, and it has led to the formation of numerous local campaign committees which stand for self-defence against racist violence.

It will be from these activists that a new and militant leadership for a black liberation movement will come. To be able to win the support of the majority of black people they will need to offer a credible alternative to the strategy offered by the black reformist leaders.

There is a discernible political current among the present activists which correctly says that black people must organise themselves to fight, that they should not tailor their demands to suit the labour leaders, and that their struggle is against imperialism, but this does not fully answer how a revolutionary alliance is to be built with the white workers.

While the struggles of the non-white peoples of the world against imperialism weaken and paralyse the imperialist ruling class of Britain, the final overthrow of the imperialist British state can only be achieved by the black and white working class in Britain itself.

## White

It is not enough to say that black people will struggle on their own account and then see who supports them — they have to go out and fight for that support, to win the white workers away from their present racist leaders.

The task of socialists in fighting to build a black liberation movement is to show how a genuine unity with the white workers can be forged; to show how it is possible for the black peoples to fight for united action with the labour leaders at the same time as seeking to win their followers among the white workers to giving active support to the demands and objectives of the black movement.

As the next steps towards building a black liberation movement, the IMG must fight for the following:

First, to unite the black peoples as a whole in action. The broadest possible mobilisations of black people can only be achieved by overcoming the divisions between the national minorities, and through a consistent struggle to force the reformist leaders into action.

This has been most successfully achieved around specific cases in a number of localities, leading to the creation of united defence committees — the Ahmed defence committee against police victimisation, the defence campaign in Oldham against the deportation of Abdul Azad, the campaign against racism in nightclubs in Birmingham.

Even where it is not possible to force the reformist leaders into united defence bodies of this kind, a consistent fight for joint actions such as demonstrations and pickets is necessary, as has been carried out by the Newham Defence Committee.

## Self-organisation

Secondly, these campaigns should aim to increase political consciousness and self-organisation among black people in a struggle for liberation.

This requires moving beyond the limited welfare, social, and in part political organisations which currently exist, towards organisations which can involve the mass of black people in a day-to-day way — at work, in the unions, in schools, colleges, youth clubs and cultural institutions, and as tenants.

Thirdly, the campaigns need to aim to mobilise black people to force the white working class and the organised labour movement to act in defence of the rights of black people.

The successful Abdul Azad defence campaign, which involved the ANL and Oldham Trades Council, indicates the possibility of achieving this. Indeed, the struggles of black people over the past few years have already had an impact inside the labour movement.

The resistance of black youth to blanket police invasions in Lewisham, Notting Hill, and Southall resulted in Labour's election manifesto pledge to repeal the Sus laws. This was for opportunist electoral reasons, but it opens the way to force the opportunists to act on their words or face a fight to remove them from the leadership of the labour movement.



**Here to stay, here to fight for...**

### \*Opposition to all immigration controls

Tory politicians continually try to tell black people that the tightening of immigration controls is in their interests since it 'allays real fears' among white people in Britain.

In reality the tightening of immigration controls is because the ruling class has decided its reserve army of labour is sufficient now that the post-war boom has ended, and because it provides a means of heightening racism among the white workers.

Each Immigration Act has been racist — there is no possibility of the ruling class introducing 'non-racist' immigration controls.

### \*For the repeal of blanket and unspecific laws such as Sus, and an end to blanket police operations in black areas; disband the Special Patrol Group

There are widespread police operations to search and arrest black people under the pretext of hunting for illegal immigrants. These laws are just one means by which the state maintains constant harassment and repression of black people with the aim of breaking resistance to their oppression.

Thus it is in the areas with the highest concentration of black people that the use of the Sus law is most widespread. For example, in Lewisham, which has a black population of about 17,000, the SPG stopped and questioned 14,000 people and made 400 arrests in blanket operations in 1975.

### \*For self-defence against racist and fascist violence

Racist and fascist violence is a constant feature of the lives of black people in Britain, and it is met with indifference by the state since it aids the intimidation of black people. Only when such attacks provoke a mass upsurge among black people does the state intervene against the racists.

Short of that it is black people themselves who are victimised for defending themselves.

### \*For an end to discrimination against black people — for affirmative action programmes to end second class citizenship

While it is easy to point to the cumulative effects of racism in jobs, housing, and education, it is hard to pin down individual acts of discrimination in these areas. Attempting to end discrimination by putting a stop to individual racist actions is the trap of liberals and reformists who see things in individualistic, human rights terms rather than as social issues.

The only way to end these types of discrimination is through the demands taken up and fought for by the Afro-American, Chicano, and Women's movements in the USA — affirmative action.

Only through affirmative action can the black and anti-racist movements go beyond purely formal (and fictional) equality and fight for actual equality.

### \*For an end to imperialist oppression of the peoples of the third world

The most effective solidarity that workers in the imperialist countries can provide for the anti-imperialist struggles around the world is to challenge the imperialist role of the British ruling class and the British state.

The objective of campaigns in solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe, Iran, or Ireland, must be to limit the room of British imperialism to manoeuvre by mobilising the labour movement against imperialist intervention.

### \*For the right of black people to determine their own future through their own organisations

Black people must be free to determine their own future through their own organisations. The task of revolutionary socialists is to unconditionally defend that right.

Recognising national rights extends to other questions, such as housing and language. Take for example the Greater London Council, which proposed to create all-Bengali areas 'for their protection'. It is clear that the only consistent, democratic policy is to demand that Bengalis themselves must decide on their housing.

We defend the right of national minorities to learn their own languages, and to have facilities in schools, the media, libraries, etc to use their own language.

We are absolutely opposed to any policy of integration which forces black people to abandon their own languages and cultures.

### \*There will be no black liberation without women's liberation

Black women will increasingly play a central role in the struggle for black liberation. This has already been demonstrated in the workplace struggles of black people.

The newly-emerging black women's movement is beginning to play a leading role in promoting actions against the sexist and racist immigration controls (the AWAZ pickets over 'virginity testing') and police and state harassment.

The black women's movement has a vital and legitimate role to play within the black movement.



# Black people as an oppressed nationality

## The American experience

THE Fourth International, the world organisation of Trotskyists, regards the black people of the United States as an oppressed nationality or national minority. We are not alone in this — an important section of the Afro-American masses regard themselves as an oppressed nationality.

For us this is the key thing, for we have no pre-conceived notions as to what constitutes a nationality or national minority. It is primarily a matter of how they see themselves. As Trotsky wrote: 'We do not obligate the negroes to become a nation; if they are then it is a question of their consciousness, that is, what they desire and strive for...'

That black people were striving to become a nation was evidenced at the time Trotsky said this by the Garvey movement which had over 1 million adherents in the USA. It has been shown even more clearly after the growth of the black nationalist movement in the '60s.

### Fixed

Trotsky based himself not only on the present consciousness of black people, but on the objective factors which could lead in that direction. He argued that nationalities and nations were not fixed for all time, but were created out of racial material in certain objective conditions.

'In any case,' he wrote, 'the suppression of the negroes (under slavery and after) pushes them towards a political and national unity...'

The Socialist Workers Party in the United States, co-thinkers of the Fourth International, have spelt out the objective conditions which were forming black people into a nation in the light of experience of the sixties.

'Black people were dragged to North America as slaves. They came here speaking different languages. They came here from totally different levels of historical and cultural development. They came here from totally different nations, and totally different tribes, from totally different sections of Africa. Certainly none of these characteristics was a common denominator.

'Their common denominator became their servitude, the destruction of their native languages the destruction of their native cultures by their slave masters. What happened was that on American soil, under unique conditions, these black slaves became a new nationality not directly linked to their original nations or tribes, which spoke different languages, had no common bond whatsoever and often didn't know each other.

### Afro

'That was the origin of what today we call the Afro-American nationality or black nationality.'

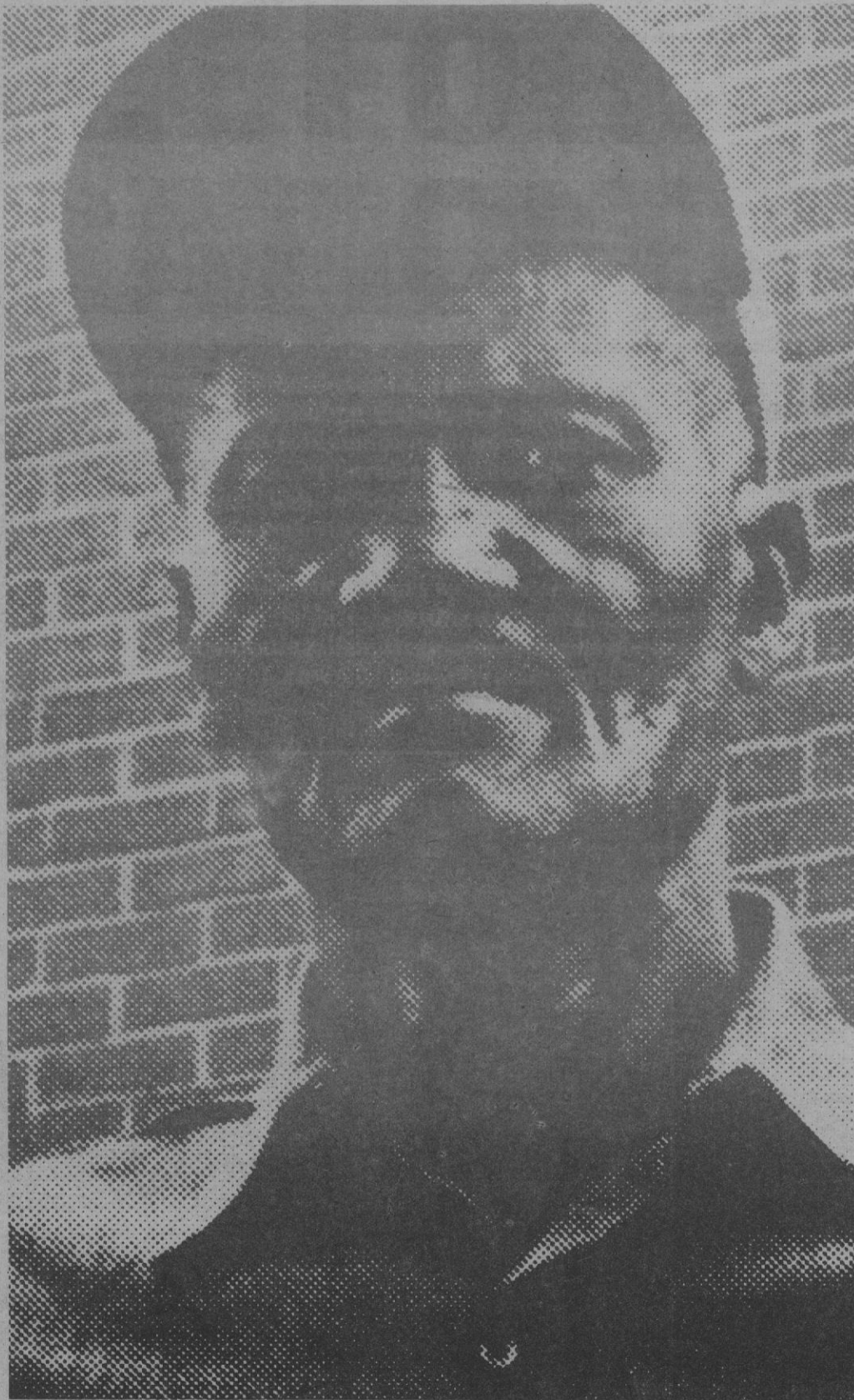
These unique conditions — which also welded the American Indians into a nationality — are not repeated in Britain. Most importantly black people in Britain did not come here as slaves.

Under slavery black people suffered an immediate and violent suppression of all aspects of their original social life, including the family and/or tribal structure. Black people coming to Britain brought with them the culture, religion, language and traditions of their nation or nationality.

While these are under threat as society forces them to accept British culture and language, black people have been able to resist and maintain them, even if in a modified form. Continued links with their country of origin continues to reinforce those traditions. Black people settled in this country as distinct national minorities.

British society, however, does not distinguish between black people according to their national origin. It oppresses them as black people.

Different aspects of that oppression affect different nationalities in different ways or even to different degrees. For example, the strong family network of the Asian people makes



them more subject to the forcible separation under the immigration controls. But common to all is that they are easily distinguishable — they are black.

This common oppression as blacks is even more apparent as each generation of British-born youth tries to grapple with life in Britain — they are British yet they are not accepted by British society. They have no country to 'return to', yet the debate over repatriation continually hangs over them.

While the traditions of the different national minorities continue to divide the black communities in Britain, their common oppression forces them towards a political unity in response to their common oppression.

As the pressure on the national minorities to modify and blunt their cultural and social identity increases, and as the necessity for common political action against their oppression increases, we can expect a 'black

identity' to increase within and between the black peoples in Britain.

At this stage it is not necessary to say with any firmness whether a single nationality will be forged from the national minorities in Britain. What is important is to understand the objective tendency towards a unity of the national minorities at the political level, but that in any case there can exist national minorities in Britain who face a particular oppression.

What should be our political response to the oppression of these national minorities? The Fourth International defends the right of self-determination for the Afro-Americans — that is, the right of the black people of the USA to choose for themselves their future, and if they decide to carve themselves out a black state on American soil, to defend unconditionally their right to do that and give them every assistance.

Trotsky first advanced this position when the only evidence of a mass current which wanted separation from the American state was the Garvey movement. It was not a question of whether black people then wanted a separate state or were calling for one — it was a question of their having the choice.

For Afro-Americans moving into common political struggle against their common oppression a simple question was and is posed: Is it possible to end our oppression through creating a non-racist multi-national state, or are we forced to create our own separate state?

For whole sections of the black masses this question will only come to the fore as they are drawn into political activity; as they begin to feel the force of their movement, and are for the first time grappling with the problem of achieving their liberation because some sort of major change seems on the agenda.

That is why Trotsky argued that it was very likely that on the brink of the revolution itself the Afro-American masses would be likely to raise this slogan, and socialists could not base themselves on present levels of consciousness. What will be true for the masses tomorrow is of concern for a vanguard of the black people today.

We believe that a non-racist workers' state can be created — indeed we believe that a successful socialist revolution depends on the working class championing the demands and struggles of all the oppressed.

Not only will ending the private ownership of the means of production eradicate the material basis of racism, which is the product of imperialist exploitation of the third world and slavery, but the existence of mass workers' democracy will create the political conditions for a struggle against the vestiges of racist ideology.

### Practice

But propaganda on the material roots of racism is not enough to convince the black masses that this is so. They will (correctly) wish to test this in practice.

In so far as a mass revolutionary current develops within the white working class which genuinely champions the specific demands and struggles of black people they will be convinced. In so far as that revolutionary current respects the right of black people to determine their own future, and fights within the workers' movement and against the bourgeoisie to aid the black people in separating if they so choose, then the black masses will be won to socialism.

That is why our support for the right of self-determination is unconditional and requires us to say nothing more than that it is for black people to decide — our efforts must be geared to convincing the white workers that they, too, must defend that right to self-determination.

Furthermore, in order for the black people in the USA to exercise the right of self-determination, they must be able to exercise it through their own organisations — their own political movement with their own leaders. The autonomous organisation of black people, or self-organisation of black people, must be unconditionally supported.

All these considerations apply to the national minorities in Britain today.

It is true that in Britain black people form a far smaller section of the population and that political separation would be in some senses more difficult. It is also true that the labour movement organises black workers in its unions, whereas in the United States the black workers remember when they were excluded from the unions.

But whatever these differences, the fundamental issues remain the same: capitalism cannot end their oppression.

As they enter into political struggle, the black masses will find the reformist leadership of the labour movement either complicit in their oppression or incapable of carrying through the fight to end it, and they will come to judge the white workers on how seriously they defend the rights of black people, including their right to self-determination.



## IRELAND

A NUMBER of protests are planned in Britain to mark the fourth anniversary of the abolition of political status for Republican prisoners in the North of Ireland.

Here, in a letter which originally appeared in the Derry magazine *Seven Stars*, is why you should be part of these protests.

NO DOUBT over these past few years and especially in recent months you have all become familiar with the terms 'H Block' and 'blanketmen'. Undoubtedly you all know that H Block is the name of the prison in which the 'blanketmen' are being held, but do any of you know of the true living conditions within this prison and of the treatment meted out to the 'blanketmen'? No? Well, let one here try, in this brief note, to bring to you H Block.

### Tomb

Firstly, picture in your head a 'tomb', a cold grey box of concrete just like the tombs in your own city cemetery. Picture this 'tomb' with a window. Only on the window have a large metal grille, surrounded by a wooden bar-like structure with inserted fibre-glass panels.

# H Block—why you should be marching

Now in your dull 'tomb' look at all of the walls covered in human excreta and rotten food, your floor littered with decaying food, soiled paper and splashed with pools of urine and water. As you picture the cell imagine the smell, the unbearable stink of old moulded food, excrement and urine. Along with the stink, feel the cold as it pierces your white body as you try to cover yourself with a smelly, damp-soaked blanket.

### Lump

Have you got this 'tomb-like cell' in your head? Add a 'blanketman'. Furniture — a large damp lump of smelly foam his bed; a ragged piece of coarse cloth which serves as his blanket; a plastic chamber pot and an old dirty, filthy water gallon from

which two men have to drink.

With this 'cell' pictured in your head think now of the young men

London demonstration and rally  
Break the wall of silence  
on the H Blocks

Blanket protests, Fleet St, 6pm  
assemble outside the Law Courts

Rally at 7.30pm, Conway Hall,  
Red Lion Square

Speakers invited include Pat  
Arrowsmith, Des Warren, Paul Foot,  
Tariq Ali, Alan Thornett and speakers  
from the Relatives Action Committee,  
Sinn Fein, Irish Republican Socialist  
Party.

who languish and rot there, young men, now old men, with long grimy shaggy hair, sunken eyes, matted

beards, rotten teeth and their bodies aching from hunger, cold and endless beatings, beatings which occur daily during cell searches, wing shifts and coming and going on visits.

Along with the beatings, the 'blanketmen' have to undergo the most inhuman degrading search which consists of firstly, the naked 'blanketman' being forced into a spread-eagle position over a large mirror, then he is kicked and thumped down into a squatting position, the mirror is then raised up to his buttocks, probing fingers prise his buttocks apart and a large torch and metal detector are used in a thorough search of his anal passage.

### Dragged

With this part of the search complete, he is dragged up by the hair, and in front of four or five

screws his nose, mouth, ears, hair, penis, testicles and pubic hair are thoroughly searched.

### Picture

We hope that through this short note we've put the true picture of life inside H Block for 360 'blanketmen' in your mind. Could you imagine what it would be like for these men to be able to smoke a cigarette, hear a tune on the radio, read a morning paper, write a letter to either their families or girl friends? Just these, the small natural things of life, have been denied to these men for over three years now and will go on being denied.

The endless suffering and beating and inhuman treatment will continue unless you speak out now and tell the world the truth and help stop it all. We, the 'blanketmen', write this letter to you, begging you to help us now before it is too late, before some mother's heart is broken with the news of her son's death in H Block.

SIGNED: Liam Carlin, Kevin Campbell, Denny Hutton, Eugene McCallion, Gary McCool, Eugene McCormack, Kieran Fleming, Adrian Callan, Frankie Doherty, Patrick McCourt, Joe Rodgers, Peter McGowan, Raymond McCartney, Eamon McDermott, John Cassidy, Micky Devine, Tony O'Hara, Connolly Brady.  
H Block



THE Peace People in happier days at a London rally in November 1976. Mairead Corrigan is embraced by US folk singer Joan Baez. Jean

Ewart-Biggs, wife of assassinated British ambassador in Dublin, walks alongside.

Corrigan and company could rally there.

Williams told the British ruling class media, which fell over itself to promote the Peace People, that Jim Callaghan supported them. Even the Queen gave them a special mention during her Christmas broadcast in 1976.

### Effective

Broader still, the *Morning Star* also gave its support, on one occasion approvingly quoting the view of the Irish Communist Party that the Peace People were 'an effective way to defeat the bombers and assassins.'

What united all these organisations, groups and individuals was hatred for the Provisional IRA. But that was never the feeling in the Catholic ghettos, as is clear from the following report of feelings in the Catholic working class area of Ballymurphy in Belfast:

'The Army is viewed with unconcealed hostility as forces of occupation...the hostility and hatred was unremitting and there was never a chance that the peace movement might gain a foothold there.'

The source of this quotation was not a Republican newspaper. It was *Visor*, a British Army journal.

The British Army was the one source of violence the Peace People would never condemn. The odd criticism was made here and there, but the essential message of Williams, McKeown and Corrigan was summed up in an October 1976 headline of the *Daily Mirror*: 'Ulster Peace Brigade Back Army'.

### Backing

It was that backing which sealed the fate of the Peace People as far as the Catholic working class was concerned.

Contemporary British media explanations for the movement's decline concentrate on the money-grabbing attitude of Williams and Corrigan — the fact that they pocketed the money from their Nobel prize rather than donating it to their movement. But that is trivial analysis.

The Peace People, like a host of other 'solutions' offered up in and outside of the North of Ireland in the last ten years, failed because they were politically worthless and because they had nothing to say about the central issue in Irish politics — Britain's presence in the six north-eastern counties.

Today the Peace People are reported to be financially bankrupt. Politically they were never anything else. Their obituary may be being written now, but they died a long time ago.

## The Peace People: an obituary

By Geoff Bell

THE North of Ireland 'Peace People' have split. But perhaps the only surprise is that there was still a Peace People to split.

The news came last week when Betty Williams and Peter McLachlan announced their resignations from the organisation. Williams, along with Mairead Corrigan and Ciaran McKeown, was a co-founder of the Peace People in August 1976.

McLachlan became chairperson of the organisation in October 1978. He was a Unionist Party member of the now defunct Northern Ireland Assembly and a former staff member at Tory central office.

The immediate reason for the split was the support from McKeown and Corrigan for some form of

political status for Republican and Loyalist prisoners in the North of Ireland. But behind the divisions is a familiar pattern — the leadership of a demoralised and moribund organisation turning against each other.

So now those who once promised to bring the entire population of the North of Ireland together in brotherly and sisterly love have proved incapable of even staying together themselves.

Three and a half years ago it was all so different. Then, Mairead Corrigan proclaimed: 'Believe me, in a month's time there's not going to be a bombing, or a hi-jacking, or a shooting. There's going to be peace.'

That was in the early days of the Peace People, when thousands marched in Ireland and Britain under their banners.

The spark, or rather the shot,

which led to the movement was that fired by a British soldier on 11 August 1976. It was fired at a car being driven by a member of the IRA. The soldier's bullet killed the driver and the car went out of control, careering onto the pavement and killing three children.

The way the leaders of the Peace People dealt with those deaths was an early indication of their general approach. They did not blame the British Army soldier who fired the shot, but rather they castigated the dead Provisional for getting in the way of the soldier's bullet and hence being unable to control the car.

Betty Williams made her intentions clear when she explained to the *Daily Express*, in banner headlines, 'Why I Must Stop the IRA'.

From the start the movement was directed against the Provisionals. But

it was not this thinking that brought many Catholics onto the streets behind the banner of 'peace' during the first few weeks. Rather it was a general war-weariness, a simple and understandable desire to see the violence end.

What in the end destroyed the Peace People was that its only prescription for an end to the violence was the defeat or surrender of the IRA.

That emphasis did attract a good deal of support. One of the early peace marches was 'guarded' by a Loyalist paramilitary group, the Ulster Defence Association.

When the Peace People came to Britain their supporters ranged from the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland to the Labour government, which lifted a ban on Irish demonstrations in Trafalgar Square so that Williams,



By Steve Potter

**A FULL SCALE civil war is going on in Afghanistan. Rightist guerillas are fighting the Soviet and Afghan armies. American imperialism has attempted to polarise world opinion in favour of the withdrawal of the Russian troops. What attitude should we take?**

The Soviet troops entered one of the most underdeveloped countries of the world. Out of 15 million inhabitants only 15 per cent live in the towns. The infant mortality rate is the highest in the world; the literacy rate one of the lowest. There is a tiny working class, perhaps only 150,000 strong, employed in manufacturing and construction. But there has been a rapid expansion of a new 'middle class' made up of state employees, army officers, doctors, technicians, teachers and engineers.

## Power

In the countryside the landowners maintain practically unlimited power, because in general the rich landlord also assumes the functions of community leader. These landowners have formed close links with the mullahs (Islamic clergy) and chiefs of the local communities where they are not themselves big landowners already.

Together they make up a reactionary bloc whose aim is to defend the status quo in Afghanistan and that suits the businessmen in Kabul.

So when the Popular Democratic Party of Afghanistan took power on 27 April 1978, they were facing massive problems which would have been difficult to deal with even if the PDPA was a revolutionary government. It was not.

The chain of events which brought the PDPA to power started in the late sixties. Student mobilisations had broken out in the cities. The king, Zaher Chach, closed down the universities. The working class launched a number of strikes. Two years later the peasants responded to two years of famine with a series of localised uprisings. These were put down with extreme brutality by the army.

## Toppled

The instability of the monarchy was confirmed in 1973 when a coup led by the foremost ruling class politician, Mohammed Daoud, toppled the king and established a republic. But the chiefs and landowners refused to give up the slightest part of their privileges when he tried to advance a timid agrarian reform.

Of course, Daoud would not and could not turn to the urban masses and peasants to help him implement his programme. Instead he abandoned its main reform proposals, set up a dictatorship and turned to reactionary allies abroad to prop it up.

Repression against the PDPA and the nationalist officers worsened as the crisis of the Daoud regime deepened. Mir Akbar Kyber,



Right wing guerillas make up the reactionary bloc whose aim is to defend the status quo in Afghanistan.

# THE CONFLICT IN AFGHANISTAN

## Part one:

# The road to civil war

intellectual and trade union leader, was assassinated on 17 April 1978. Fearing widespread repression the PDPA leaders plotted a coup against the regime in alliance with officers in the army. Ten days later Daoud fell.

The overthrow of the Daoud regime was therefore much more to do with a classical coup d'etat than with revolution. Certainly the mass movement did take to the streets in the days immediately preceding the coup. But the workers and peasants were not mobilised and organised in the struggle for power, but only to back up the limited efforts of the PDPA to defend itself.

## Perspective

The PDPA at the time of its formation in 1965 adopted the perspective of a national democratic revolution as a stage to socialism. A section of the PDPA led by Barbrak Karmal

took this to its logical conclusion when they participated in the 1973 government of Daoud.

## Foundation

Divisions in the PDPA were systematised only two years after its foundation. Ethnic and personal factors combined with political ones resulted in the formation of two factions; that of the Kalq (People) faction led by Nor Taraki and Hafizullah Amin and the Parcham (Flag) faction led by Karmal.

In its first months in office the Revolutionary Council formed by a reunited PDPA decreed reform which aimed to end the massive indebtedness of the peasants in the countryside and to hit the big landowners through imposing strict limits on the amount of land that could be held by an individual. Equal rights were decreed for women and a literacy campaign was to start in 1979 with the target of educating 2.5 million children and 5.5 million

adults. Trade unions were set up and in one year had organised 160,000 workers.

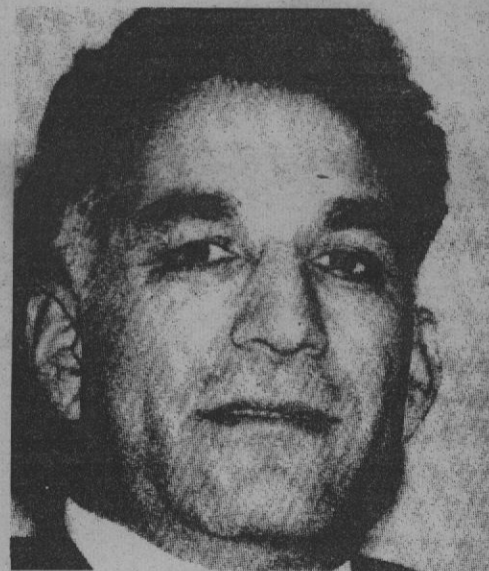
But nevertheless the programme's scope, dramatic in its impact on a country like Afghanistan, meant that the government was heading for direct conflict with the reactionary rural alliance which had already defeated Daoud's tame plans — heading for a civil war. Disagreements on the bureaucratic way in which the reform programme was carried through were reflected in bitter factional struggles inside the PDPA. Disputes within the Khalq came to a head with the overthrow and eventual execution of Taraki and his replacement by Amin.

## Dismayed

The Kremlin, although they sent the usual congratulatory telegram to the victor, were undoubtedly dismayed by this turn of events. They had wanted to slow down the process of reform, but now Amin had replaced Taraki and Amin was in favour of speeding up the reforms by the same unpopular methods. The number one question in their minds was the advantage that imperialism would accrue from the crisis in the country. The imperialists had feared any defeat for the reactionaries in Afghanistan. The social impact would have repercussions throughout the area, but particularly through the possible revival of the Baluchi movement which would destabilise neighbouring Pakistan. These fears were massively boosted after the overthrow of the Shah in January 1979 by popular insurrection.

The toppling of the Shah also caused problems for the imperialists. Who would act against any dramatic consequences of the Afghanistan developments? Israel and Egypt instead started to fulfill this role along with the bloc of countries headed by Saudi Arabia who had formed an alliance for the 'defence of the Gulf'. The plan was to support both directly and indirectly the efforts of the rightist forces against the PDPA government.

(This is the first article of two based on a resolution of the Fourth International shortly to be published.)



Amin

## SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

**CARDIFF:** SC sales Newport Town Centre outside Woolworths 11-12.30; Cardiff British Home Stores 11-12.30. Also available from 108 Books, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.

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

**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.

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

**BRIGHTON:** For more info phone Nick, 605052.

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

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

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

**HUDDERSFIELD:** SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.

**LAMBETH:** SC now available at kiosk Brixton tube, Oval tube, Herne Hill British Rail and Tetric Books Clapham.

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

**TESSIDE:** SC sales: at Newsfairs shops in Cleveland Centre and on Linsthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and at Greens Bookstall, upstairs in Spencer Market, Stockton High Street.

**TOWER HAMLETS:** SC supporters sell papers every Friday 5-6pm Wansey Mt. Sat 11-12.30pm White-hagel tube, Sunday 10.30-12.00 Brick Lane.

**YORKSHIRE:** SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Book, High Street. For more information about local activities, Tel. 861482 5151.

**YORKSHIRE:** SC Public Meeting: 'The Socialist Alternative to the Tories'. Speakers include Sir Tom Burt (C.C. Thurs 21 Feb, 7.30pm at Garage Arts Centre (Broom 42), Beckett Rd.

## WHAT'S LEFT

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

**'PALESTINIAN Workers and Trade Unions'** — pamphlet from UKPC, 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1. **DEFEND the Earlington Family!** Demonstration against police attacks and state racism called by the Earlington Family Defence Committee. Assemble Whittington Park, off Holloway Road, near Archway tube. Saturday 23 February, noon. Further information from: EFDC, 49 Railton Road, London SE24 0LN. Tel 01-737 3922.

**'THE FAST Against Our Future: Fighting racism and fascism'**. 50p (+15p postage), important new pamphlet from: Big Flame, 217 Wavertree Road, Liverpool 7.

**SOCIALIST Students Alliance National Conference:** 12 March, Sat. 10-5pm Manchester University Students Union, Oxford Rd, MCR 15. Evening Disco. Sunday — UMIST Students Union 11-5pm for publicity and further info tel: 061-273 5947.

**NEW issue of Revolution** — the best youth paper on the left — out now! Copies from Red, Jude or Mick on 01-359 8371.

# Our Fund Drive

**MONEY** is a problem. It's a particular problem for the working class at the moment with spiraling inflation and a Tory government that knows which class it thinks should pay. It's also a particular problem for us here at Socialist Challenge.

The price of paper goes up and up, as do all the other costs of printing, postage, rail fares, distribution and typesetting.

Our new, microchip typesetting machine makes us much more efficient and much more flexible but it isn't any cheaper to run.

Of course our readers' pockets are as badly affected by price rises as our account books, but we still have to ask you to dig deep and find something to send us.

The 'Send us a fiver' appeal is going very well. A large number of readers have already managed to find at least one of the blue ones to send us.

But just a note to the rest of you who haven't found the spare cash yet — we really are not asking for a lot. One fiver buys us... one picture for the paper or about a page of typesetting or it could send a journalist half way to South Wales to talk to steel workers.

Our paper has 16 pages and more than 20 pictures each week and we hope to get further than Somerset for our interviews, so we need help.

We know everyone is hard up, but big events in the class struggle demand sacrifices from socialists. Count yourself in! Send us a fiver today!

Our apologies to those who did send money this week. A note on page 2 explains why we haven't been able to give the details this week.

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# Masses in El Salvador rise against junta

IT IS only a few months since General Romero of El Salvador was overthrown in a military coup. But the new regime that replaced him is already falling apart under the hammer blows of the mass resistance.

Earlier this month we spoke to MANUEL, a representative of the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL) which is linked to the Popular Revolutionary Bloc (BPR).

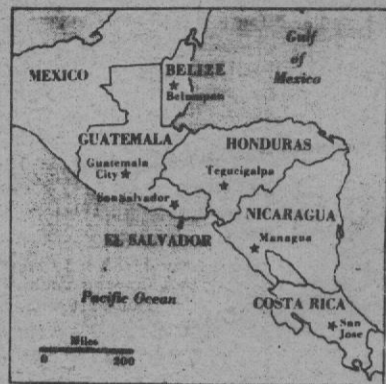
MANUEL described the coup in October 1979 as 'a manoeuvre of North American imperialism to hold back the revolutionary process which our people have started, and to maintain its influence in the area given the situation in Nicaragua'.

At first the new military regime was able to attract some civilian support — not merely from the Christian Democrats, but also from the Communist Party, which stressed the 'democratic and nationalist' character of the new officers. A CP member took the job of labour minister in the government.

It also benefited from the participation of the Popular Forum, an opposition front ranging from the

Christian Democrats to the leftist Popular League of 28 February (LP28) and Front for United People's Action (FAPU). Manuel stressed that 'our organisation, the BPR, stayed outside to deepen the struggles and demands of the people, instead of holding back mass action through support for the coup'.

LP28 and FAPU soon withdrew from the Popular Forum, however,



as popular struggles continued. One of the loudest demands since the coup has been for the freeing of the political prisoners. But no amnesty has come. Every demonstration for political freedoms has been attacked by the army regardless of what the government says or does.

In reality the government does not govern. It has no power over the army, the national guard, and the rural police, which were the three pillars of the old dictatorship. In addition a paramilitary fascist grouping, ORDEN, is also receiving official encouragement.

As Manuel comments: 'Imperialism wanted to set up a more respectable government with more support, to modernise production. But it kept the army intact in reserve, and now it is being used. And if things get really bad, it can also call on the military regimes in Guatemala and Honduras.'

## Quit

On 2 January the Communist Party, Social Democrats and left Christian Democrats were forced to quit the government under mass pressure. Nine days later a new opposition coordinating committee was set up, involving the BPR, LP28, FAPU and also the CP. The declared aim was to unify action against the government, take forward the armed struggle, and draw up proposals for a new government.

This was a sharp about-turn for the CP: to change from supporting the government to signing a joint call to arms against it. But this was the only way it could avoid being left on the sidelines.

On 22 January a huge demonstration of more than 200,000 people took to the streets of the capital, San Salvador, against the repression. Immediately it set out, says Manuel, 'aircraft appeared — the ones used for crop-spraying — and began to spray an insecticide called "Malathion" on the crowd'.

The demonstration then

'THE heroic struggle of the Nicaraguan people, led by the FSLN, is an inspiration for our unity and will to fight until victory. The Sandinistas' victory has opened an epoch of revolution in Central America...

'We see the revolution in El Salvador as a part of this Central American revolution and as a step in the fight for the liberation of all the peoples of the continent. Hasta la victoria siempre! Venceremos!'

— from an opposition communiqué issued on 10 January

continued peacefully until 'they began to fire on us from the National Palace, from the Ministry of Defence and from the offices of the newspaper *La Prensa Grafica*.

'The self-defence brigades,

organised and trained for this demonstration, covered and defended an organised retreat, because we could not get involved in a stupid and unequal battle. Little by little the people withdrew to the Metropolitan Cathedral and the University, where we were attacked from the air.

But such was the situation that the government was persuaded by the Red Cross, foreign diplomats and a number of political leaders to allow more than 150,000 people to leave their refuges in churches, the Cathedral and the University.'

By this time, however, more than 100 people had been killed and 500 wounded according to estimates from human rights sources. Four days after this massacre, the press in El Salvador reported that 'the United States has reiterated its support for the junta'.

And what does the FPL see as its major tasks in the situation? Says Manuel: 'In a situation of prolonged people's war, partial armed insurrections, uprisings of whole peoples and their armed self-defence against the army, we have set ourselves three tasks: to build a Marxist-Leninist party; to build the FPL to take part in guerilla struggle, the militias and self-defence brigades; and to build a revolutionary front of the masses.'

## How Nicaragua will teach 900,000 to read and write

The following article is based on an interview with Octavio Rivas, assistant minister of education, in Managua on 3 January.

THE literacy campaign is something our people greatly need. We are going to organise some 170,000 literacy brigade members, but we actually need more. We estimate that between 850,000 and 900,000 persons above the age of ten do not know how to read. We need on average one brigade member for every four illiterates. In reality, however, there are rural areas that are very hard to reach, and we'll have to send many teachers to these areas.

The human needs are very great, and we are hoping for the help of companeros from around the world. Our problem is that we are undergoing an unprecedented economic crisis.

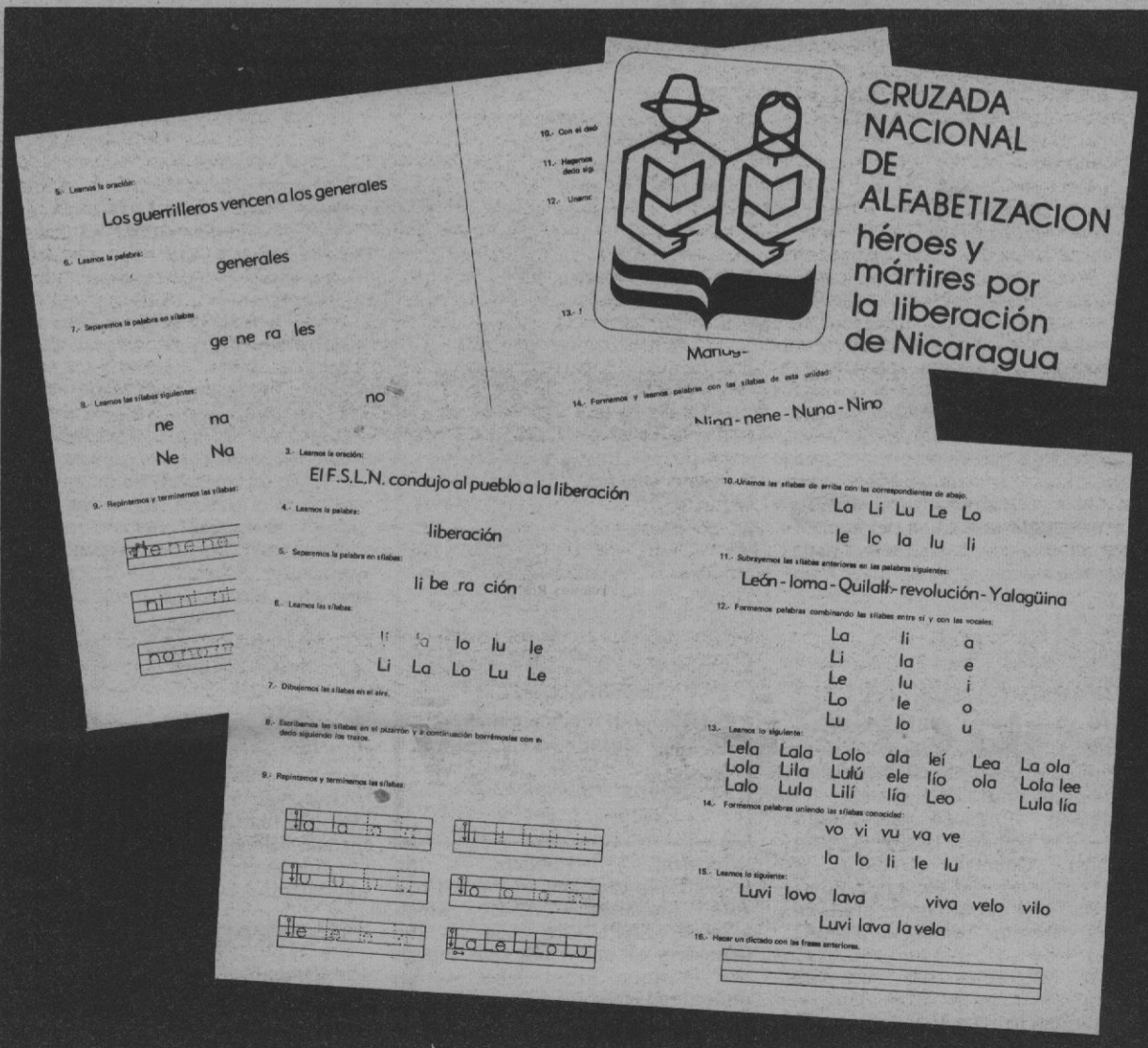
We are a small country, with a debt approaching \$1.8 billion. This is equivalent to the debt held by some countries with four times our population. That gives you an idea of the scope of the problem.

In addition, 40 per cent of our industry lies in ruins, as well as 40 per cent of our commercial establishments. In agriculture, in a crop as important as cotton, only 30 per cent was planted last year, which means a loss of millions of dollars at the very least.

## Finance

In short, we don't have the means to finance those who come to help. Every day I receive letters from all over the world, from Europe to Australia. We say the same thing in reply to all of them: 'Great. Come help. We'll greet you with open arms. But we can't provide you with a single cordoba while you're here.'

The only possible solution is the one that has been worked out with the teacher companeros from Cuba. Their government, in a genuine gesture of human solidarity, has



undertaken to pay them during their stay here. We have provided the only things our country can offer — a roof over their heads, food, and our great affection.

That's all we can provide. We can't pay anything in wages. For those who have the means to come

and stay without being paid, we can secure housing and food in the communities where they will work, but that's all.

We are very interested in having teaching companeros come from a number of countries. You are well aware that reactionaries around the

world have violently criticised the presence of the Cubans.

This is a manoeuvre designed to harm Nicaragua, to isolate us internationally in the economic sphere and to refuse us the aid that other countries could easily provide. We want to initiate a counter-attack,

and are seeking teachers from all over the world.

This is the real spirit of our revolution, which is a broad and democratic revolution that is going to lead us towards a different society, a structurally different society. We don't hide this; we aren't trying to fool anyone. This is a revolution that is marching towards socialism.

But we also say, and repeat over and over, that the Nicaraguan people themselves are making this revolution. Here reforms and changes are introduced step by step, in accordance with the degree to which the people attain the necessary level of consciousness to carry through these changes themselves.

## Literacy

The literacy campaign that we are going to carry out in the first year of the revolution is a clear sign of the democratic character of this revolution, for the weapon of knowledge is going to enable each individual to obtain an education, to be really free.

On the Atlantic coast, people speak three languages — Spanish, English, and Misquito. So, there we will be carrying out this literacy campaign in three languages. This is all part of our culture, and we are going to preserve and protect every element of our culture. That means all the songs, dances, and fables — the entire oral culture — will be saved and preserved.

In closing, I would like to appeal to the teachers' unions, to the trade unions in general, to ask that they donate an hour's pay in support of the literacy campaign. That would be a concrete way of assuring its success.

\*Money for the literacy campaign can be sent to: Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade, Cooperative Bank (Ealing branch), London W5 2XL.

NEXT WEEK: Special eyewitness report on life in the new Nicaragua.



**PEUGEOT  
HOUND  
MILITANT  
TO DEATH**

By Martin Meteyard

PHILIPPE Marchau was a revolutionary shop steward at the Peugeot car plant in Sochaux, France. Was. On 8 February he shot himself, driven to suicide by a management witch-hunt.

Peugeot — which owns the former Chrysler plants in Britain — has a long history of vicious intimidation of its workforce. Many of its plants are terrorised by a pro-boss outfit, the CSL (Confederation of Free Trade Unions), which includes known fascists among its bully-boys.

In many shops the foreman is a CSL member. For the immigrant workers who make up much of the workforce, joining the CSL is the price they pay for avoiding the sack and the long journey home.

At the Aulnay-sous-Bois factory the biggest French union, the CGT, has had the works council elections annulled time after time for CSL malpractices. In 1977 the CSL replied by a terror campaign on the re-run and only 30 workers out of 5,000 even voted.

Marchau himself was a member of the CGT. How management responded to his election as a steward can be judged from the list of provocations given in the statement issued by the CGT section at Sochaux after his death.

According to this, Marchau was the victim of 'too many of the worst insults, provocations, plots, ragging, punishments, several letters, serious warnings ... and sixteen days suspension in two years, including six in a single month'.

The CGT metalworkers' federation accused management of 'ferocious exploitation' and organising 'permanent repression', declaring that for three years Marchau had been the 'object of persecution by hand-picked management finks'.

**Stoppage**

Management described this as 'shameless propaganda', calling on the workforce to judge it 'in their hearts and consciences'. Where the workers stood could be seen on the morning of the funeral, when a five-minute stoppage took place in the plant in memory of Marchau.

But Marchau was not just a trade union militant. He was also a member of a revolutionary organisation, the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR, French section of the Fourth International).

In its own statement, the LCR said: 'It is with rage in our hearts that we salute the memory of this revolutionary militant. Rage against the daily repression of the Peugeot bosses, their systematic witch-hunt against militants...'

'Peugeot management wanted to break this CGT delegate, organiser of the defence and the struggles of the body shop workers. They gave him the most exhausting assignments: multiplying harassment and suspensions. As a result he is dead, victim of his determination not to yield to the intimidation, exploitation and repression of the Peugeot system...'

'The LCR calls on all the workers organisations, militants and workers for a united struggle to put an end to the Peugeot dictatorship.'

That dictatorship extends to Britain. It is already testing out its strength with its proposed redundancies at the Linwood plant in Scotland. Solidarity against the killers of Marchau will help to convince all Peugeot workers of the common enemy they face.

**Zimbabwe lurches  
back towards civil war**

By Richard Carver

IT IS STILL uncertain whether the ceasefire in Zimbabwe will hold until the start of next week's elections.

The main reason for doubt is the vicious campaign by the British colonial power and the white Rhodesian state against the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) led by Robert Mugabe.

The root of the problem lies in the very terms of the ceasefire agreement. The belief that the people of Zimbabwe could achieve liberation courtesy of the British state — an idea pushed in the workers movement by the Labour lefts and the Communist Party — has proved disastrous.

It may be surprising that Soames has been so openly partial to the whites and Muzorewa. But it was inevitable that his power would rest exclusively on the racist state apparatus — for the Lancaster House agreement provides no alternative.

**Continuity**

As a symbolic demonstration of continuity the elections for the 20 white and 80 African seats are even being held on different days. The elections will be run by the same team which produced Muzorewa's victory in the 'internal settlement' election last April — widely denounced as a fraud both in Zimbabwe and internationally.

The same police force will supervise the polling, though it is hardly a police force in the conventional sense, being more used to paramilitary actions against the nationalist guerrillas. As happened last April its ranks will be reinforced by the mobilisation of some 35,000 white reservists.

The Election Directorate, the civil service body which deals with practical preparations, is virtually unchanged from April. There will be no registration of voters, leaving the way open for widespread fraud. The adoption of a similar procedure last time meant that some constituencies recorded a more than 100 per cent turnout!

Above all, the election, like last April's, will be conducted under martial law and a State of Emergency. Lord Soames will need more than his share of British constitutional expertise to explain how democratic elections can be held when all democratic guarantees have been suspended.

**Seats**

The British have thus done everything in their power to ensure a Muzorewa victory. Yet Muzorewa will not win. He is unlikely even to get the 31 African seats needed to give him a majority in coalition with the white members of parliament.

Heavily financed by South Africa, the Bishop's United African National Council (UANC) is superficially the best equipped party. (The Patriotic Front parties are even having problems finding a printing press.)

Yet Muzorewa has seen his support drift away from him — even though he returned to campaign for the election a month before the Lancaster House accords were signed, and a full ten weeks before Mugabe was allowed back. He has all the trappings of power but none of its substance.

Muzorewa is hopelessly compromised by his years of collaboration with the white regime.



ZANU supporters turn out to greet Mugabe

So the British and the white Rhodesians are badly in need of a second string — a black politician with mass support who can be trusted to abide by the settlement and look favourably upon Western capital. Joshua Nkomo is enthusiastically auditioning for this role.

The Patriotic Front alliance of ZAPU and ZANU broke up only days after the Lancaster House

cannot have expected that Nkomo would be so obliging.

His long association with the British multinational Lonrho was proof of his ultimate sympathy for imperialism, but he has done better than that. His armed forces have fully co-operated with the British monitoring forces, to the extent of lodging complaints against alleged ZANU ceasefire violations.

**Endorsed**

Nkomo's credentials were endorsed when Ian Smith, the longtime leader of the white community, urged blacks to vote for ZAPU in preference to the discredited Muzorewa. However, this was something of a mixed blessing which Nkomo may yet regret.

The problem for the British is that Nkomo is also unlikely to win the election. Mugabe has a far stronger base among the country's majority Shona people and his supporters indisputably played the major part in the guerilla war.

It will be surprising if ZANU does not emerge as the largest party. Nkomo has already taken precautions against this by informally approaching the UANC and a number of the smaller African parties with proposals for a coalition.

Lord Soames can be relied on to co-operate. Under the terms of a report by the British election supervisors at the beginning of February, Soames will be able to appoint Nkomo as prime minister even if Mugabe wins!

Nkomo's attempts to patch up a coalition, British administrative moves against ZANU, and the attempts on Mugabe's life all indicate the deep fear of a Mugabe victory — the feeling that this would mean the final destruction of the racist state. After such a result it is difficult to believe that the African population would willingly return to a daily grind of low wages, tiny plots of land and humiliation by the white state.

**Weakened**

Zimbabwe is thus lurching back towards civil war — though this time one in which the nationalist forces have been politically and militarily weakened. The anti-ZANU coalition, ranging from the white army to Nkomo, now threatens the elections themselves.

Defence of the nationalist movement therefore becomes an immediate necessity for the Western labour movement. The most effective

way to do this is by campaigning for the immediate withdrawal of the British Governor and his troops.

Many ZANU supporters (and rank-and-file ZAPU members) may have gone into the settlement believing that the British presence was a guarantee against intimidation, but few can believe it now. In the space of a few weeks Lord Soames has made it clear that far from being Zimbabwe's saviour he is — symbolically at least — the source of all its troubles.

The deployment of British troops is strikingly reminiscent of their use in Ireland in 1969. There too their arrival was tentatively greeted on the nationalist side as some protection against reactionary attacks. There too the British government believed that short-term military means could resolve a long-standing colonial grievance.

**Results**

The results of the Irish experience are there for all to see. No doubt the British government does not want a repeat performance, but it has yet to solve the problem of how to withdraw its forces.

What could easily happen is a swift decline into civil war with the British troops still in place and, of course, playing a far from impartial role. In that case the British state will once again be embarked upon a long and bloody colonial war — a war in which the Western labour movement cannot afford to be neutral.

**ZANU: 'WE ARE OUR OWN LIBERATORS'**



**BENEFIT  
VICTORY  
TO ZANU(PF)  
IN THE  
FEBRUARY  
ELECTION**

ALL PROCEEDS TO ZANU(PF)

FRIDAY 22nd FEB.  
8 till 12  
CENTRAL LONDON POLY  
NEW CAVENDISH ST.  
OXFORD CIRCUS, W.1  
£2 BAR and DISCO

**ZIMBABWE  
DAY OF ACTION**  
Saturday 23 February

**MASS PICKET**  
1pm to 2pm  
of the Foreign Office  
Downing Street

**RALLY**  
6.45pm to 8.30pm  
at the National Liberal Club  
1 Whitehall Place SW1  
Speakers from  
ZANU(PF) and PF(ZAPU)  
Alex Lyon MP  
and a representative from the  
International Defence and Aid  
Fund  
(recently returned from  
Zimbabwe)  
50p

**BENEFIT & DANCE**  
9.00pm to 12.30am  
at the National Liberal Club  
1 Whitehall Place SW1  
Bands from Southern Africa

**JABULA  
IMMIGRANT**  
(a special reunion benefit  
performance)  
£2.50  
Rally and Benefit £2.25

agreement. Publicly the responsibility for this seemed to rest with Mugabe's ZANU, which allowed ZAPU to pose as the defenders of unity and thus inherit the Patriotic Front label — an undoubted electoral asset.

However, the pressure for a split came at least equally from the leadership of Nkomo's party. Its idea of unity was that the ZANU cadres should 'rejoin' ZAPU, which they had left in 1964. Such an attitude could only harden ZANU hostility.

The British have aimed for a split in the Patriotic Front for as long as the alliance has existed. But even they



By Phil Hearse

IN the 1950s Tory and Labour leaders alike told us 'we'd never had it so good'. The post-war economic boom made politicians and academics alike assume that class inequalities were disappearing and class antagonism becoming a thing of the past.

But today inequality is no longer concealed. Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph champion the cause of inequality. The new Tory myth is not to deny that inequality exists but to mystify its source.

We have the 'right to be unequal', Margaret Thatcher claims, because wealth is the result of effort, initiative and, above all, enterprise. It is this myth which a new CIS report, *The Wealthy*, concentrates on exploding.

The report reveals the vast scale of inequality in Britain; the huge scope of the private wealth and conspicuous luxury consumption of the bourgeoisie; and shows how this wealth is not the result of 'effort' or 'initiative', but derives from accidents of birth, luck, exploitation and swindling.

**Taxation**

It also exposes the complete impotence of efforts at re-distribution through taxation, and the innumerable ways in which those who have keep it away from those who have not.

The report looks at three crucial areas of power and privilege; first, the distribution of total wealth; second, the distribution of income; third, the pattern of ownership of a vital raw material — land. Its conclusions are amazing.

It is virtually impossible to calculate total wealth, and the wealthy make every effort to conceal precise facts. Nonetheless one indicator is the ownership of company shares.

The pattern of ownership of company shares is important, because as the report says, 'They decide what goods will be produced, who will work to produce these goods, what they will be paid and what the prices of those goods will be.'

The value of privately owned shares is about £17 billion in total. A staggering 80 per cent of shares in private ownership are owned by one per cent of the population, and just five per cent of the population own 98 per cent of all privately owned shares.

**Shareholder**

The growth of giant financial institutions has concentrated ownership and control of shares even more, at the expense of the small shareholder.

The existence of a large number of huge firms today might give the impression of a dispersal of power and control. In fact the growth of huge corporations has concentrated economic power. The CIS report reveals this vividly in relation to the board of British Petroleum.

Every single director is also the director of up to a dozen other large concerns. And this interlocking system of directorships extends also between industrial and finance capital, especially between the large industrial companies and the merchant banks who have enormous power. As the report indicates: 'The directors of the merchant banks are regarded as the core of the city establishment. Most of them are hereditary firms, and families still dominate most of the boards.'

**Elite**

Despite the proliferation of unit trusts in the 1960s, economic power still rests in the hands of a tiny elite who control the major financial and industrial concerns.

The Diamond Commission on the Distribution of Wealth came to the

# The stinking rich



conclusion that ownership of shares, land and housing were the most important constituents of wealth. Ownership of all three is highly concentrated. The accompanying table shows precisely how concentrated.

**Distribution of Different Assets 1976**

	Shares	Land	Housing
Top 1%	54.2	52.0	8.6
Top 10%	89.6	84.1	37.5
The rest	10.4	15.9	62.5

Source: Royal Commission and Labour Research

The top one per cent of the population own 8.6 per cent of all

housing, while the top 10 per cent of society own nearly 40 per cent of all housing — a fact well worth bearing in mind when you next have difficulty finding a flat or getting a mortgage!

The same people own the most shares, the most houses and the bulk of the land. That's why it is possible to talk of a ruling class.

The wealthier you are to start with, the easier it is to generate income. Wealth generates wealth, and high interest rates only give this process a boost. Lending money to the government, the building societies, or indeed large firms, even for a short period of time, will lead to huge profits.

Therefore it is no surprise to learn, as the accompanying table shows, that income is also highly unequal.

The CIS report is full of juicy little details of the mechanisms by which

**The Distribution of income in the U K**

Income share of the:	% pre-tax	
	1949	1976/77
Top 1%	11.2	5.4
Top 10%	33.2	25.8
Next 40%	43.1	49.7
Bottom 50%	23.7	24.5

Source: Royal Commission and Labour Research.

the rich rip off the tax collectors and the rest of us. But even more interesting are some of the charming portraits of our betters. For example, there is the Duke of Westminster, who, apart from a few other minor interests, is a landowner.

He owns 15,000 acres in Cheshire, 14,000 in North Wales, 100,000 acres

in Scotland, a mere 900 acres in Shropshire, an estate in Northern Ireland, together with property in Canada, Hawaii, Australia, not to mention 300 acres in Mayfair and Belgravia (this 300 acres alone is worth £1000 million).

As the report notes: 'Part of the celebrations at the stag party for the 26-year-old Earl of Grosvenor (the Duke's other title) involved young chaps pouring £100 bottles of Chateau Mouton Rothschild 1961 over each other.'

Even more interesting is a breakdown of the directorships, the wealth and the background of the Tory leaders.

To be in the Cabinet it helps to be a member of the landed gentry — like Lord Carrington, who owns about half of Buckinghamshire, George Younger, the Scottish secretary and heir to the third Viscount of Leekie, or Sir Ian Gilmour, a hereditary baronet.

An alternative qualification is to be a director of at least a few large companies, as the accompanying table shows:

But whatever your precise background you must have breeding; of the 19 Cabinet ministers who went to public school, six went to Eton, nine went on to Cambridge and seven to Oxford.

**Tory Cabinet Directorships 1978**

- Humphrey Atkins**  
Foster, Turner and Benson
- Lord Carrington**  
Barclays Bank and Barclays International  
Cadbury Schweppes  
Rio Tinto Zinc  
Hambros Bank  
Amalgamated Metal Corporation
- Geoffrey Howe**  
Alliance Assurance  
Associated Business Programmes  
EMI  
The London Assurance  
Sun Alliance and London Assurance  
Sun Insurance
- Patrick Jenkin**  
Continental and Industrial Trust  
Royal Worcester  
Tilbury Contracting Group
- Sir Keith Joseph**  
Drayton, Premier Investment Trust  
Bovis
- Peter Walker**  
Adwest Group  
Wigham Poland Holdings
- Jim Prior**  
United Biscuit  
Avon Products  
IDC Group  
Norwich Union Insurance Group
- Christopher Soames**  
N M Rothschild and Rothschild International  
National Westminster Bank
- George Younger**  
Tennant Caledonian Breweries (Bass Charrington)

These are the people of the wealth and privilege who are now launching a huge attack on ordinary working people. Arm yourself with the facts and figures to fight them by buying the CIS report; fascinating reading and a weapon of struggle.

**THE OTHER BOOKSHOP**

- War and an Irish Town,**  
by Eammon McCann  
—Pluto Press £ 1.95
- Ireland: Divided Nation, Divided Class,**  
Morgan and Purdie (Eds)  
—Ink Links £3.50
- Irish Voices from Irish Jails,**  
—Prisoners Aid Committee £1.50

328 Upper Street, Islington,  
London N1 2XQ  
(Tel. 01-226-0571)



# Socialist Challenge

## MUGABE FRAME-UP BLOWN APART

**THE GREAT BRITISH** confidence trick has fallen apart in Zimbabwe. The exposure that the Rhodesian security forces are carrying out acts of 'violence and intimidation' came when a car allegedly carrying 'terrorists' blew up prematurely.

Inside were two members of the blood-thirsty Selous Scouts — the elite of the Rhodesian Army — posing as members of Robert Mugabe's ZANLA. There is strong evidence that the British were involved in framing up Mugabe. Just look at the sequence of events.

On Sunday 10 February a second assassination attempt was made on Mugabe's life. The attempt took place right next to a Rhodesian army garrison. The following day Mugabe announced that he would form a joint government with Nkomo's ZAPU Patriotic Front party.

The following Thursday someone got desperate. Rhodesian police arrested three of ZANU's candidates and held five party officials for interrogation.

The same day Lord Soames, British imperialism's watchdog in Salisbury, banned Mugabe from holding meetings in two of the areas where he expected to gain considerable control.

In what was obviously calculated to appear as retaliation, a wave of bombings hit Salisbury. One was outside the hotel where the leaders of the Commonwealth monitoring force were staying, and another in a church.

But something went wrong. A car blew up. Inside there were members of the Rhodesian army.

The *Guardian* newspaper noted:



*'The fact that the two Scouts had managed to place such a large amount of explosives... points to a well planned operation for which authority would have been required at a senior level in the unit.'*

*'The apparent fact that at some level of command the Rhodesian military authorised urban bombings to influence the outcome of the poll will inevitably raise doubt in the minds of the nationalists as to British*

*ability to monitor or control the regular army.'*

The 'Cease fire Commission' established by the British has already received reports of 175 violations of the ceasefire. Up until the car blew up only two had been reported as caused by the Rhodesian Army forces. Isn't it strange that the first time that there is any real proof of who was responsible it turns out to be the Rhodesian Army?

Lord Soames has always pretended to be independent of the white racist regime. But ever since he arrived he has relied on the Rhodesian police and army to carry out his instructions. He has been hand in glove with the people who organised the frame-up bombings. Nor could it be otherwise — Soames is there to protect the interests of British capitalists. That means stopping Robert Mugabe from

gaining the overwhelming victory that he would if the elections were free of imperialist interference.

A defeat for British capitalists like Tiny Rowland's Lonrho, in southern Africa is a blow struck against the same Lonrho which is attempting to break the steel strike in the private sector at Hadfields.

That's why we say Britain should get out now. Let the Zimbabwean people decide their own future.

## BRITAIN GET OUT OF ZIMBABWE!

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of an anarchist  
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