

Socialist Challenge

WHAT DO WE WANT?

TORIES

OUT

HOW DO WE GET IT?

GENERAL

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.

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

- I am interested in more information about activities in my area.
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EDITORIAL

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



Photo: HANNIES WALLRAFFEN

Now prepare for a general strike

1. A bleak future under the Tories

THE future for the working class under this Tory government is bleak. Tory financial policies and their cuts in state aid are leading to massive closures, both in the public and private sectors of industry.

Hardly a day goes by without news of more redundancies — by the end of the year two million people will be unemployed. Cutbacks in social services are hitting every working class family in the country. Inflation is set for 20 per cent.

Now the Tories are trying to force through measures to shackle the trade union movement — to stifle the basic right to strike and picket.

This government aims to inflict a defeat on the organised workers' movement, not only through their own measures but by encouraging employers, the police and the courts to take a 'hard' line.

Keith Joseph refuses to intervene in the steel strike because he wants the entire labour movement to be 'taught a lesson'.

2. Labour movement confidence

But the Tories are not getting things all their own way. They were forced to concede more than 20 per cent pay increases to the miners and the water workers to avoid damaging strikes.

The willingness to fight is there. The solidarity shown by the Yorkshire miners, and the mass pickets have revealed the hatred and contempt felt for this government by millions of working people.

By the Tories have also won some important victories. The nine to one vote at Longbridge against taking strike action to defend Derek Robinson; the relative success of the police action at Sheerness Steel and the return to work at Hadfields; and the vote against strike action to defend jobs by the South Wales miners' lodges, all represent dents in the armoury of the labour movement.

Of course the Tories have the press and the television on their side. But that is not the whole story; there is an increasing reluctance on the part

Margaret Thatcher's government must be the most hated Tory government since the Second World War.

As class war mounts in Britain today it becomes vital that revolutionary socialists have a clear line for action.

Phil Hearse explains that while united action against every individual attack is important, building a movement for a general strike to get rid of this government must be our overall goal

of many workers to go into action and put themselves out on a limb — risking their jobs and livelihood in defence of lost causes.

In order to have the determination to fight, the rank and file have to be confident that their leaders are not going to stab them in the back; they have to know that there is a real chance of winning.

3. A clear lead is vital

The example of Longbridge shows the problem very clearly. After the sacking of Derek Robinson a large percentage of the workforce were prepared to fight.

Duffy and Boyd could have ensured a victory by calling out their members indefinitely; but instead they called off the strike and engineered a pointless 'inquiry'. After two months of prevarication, and a report so unsympathetic to Robinson it could be used as ammunition by the bosses, it was hardly surprising that the Longbridge workers were reluctant to restart the strike.

What is missing is not the willingness to struggle, but organisation, leadership and a real perspective for winning.

No way forward at all is offered by Callaghan and his cronies on the right of the Parliamentary Labour Party. They cannot even bring themselves to support the steelworkers; all they can do is bleat about the necessity for 'arbitration'.

The Labour left on the other hand is strong on words of condemnation for the Tories, but very short on actions. Their only perspective is to wait until the return of another Labour government in four years time.

Some of the trade union leaders, of course, have shown a certain

determination to fight. Arthur Scargill and Emlyn Williams in particular have mobilised in Yorkshire and South Wales to support the steelworkers.

But their approach to how to defeat the Tories suffers from a fatal flaw; they imagine that by a simple accumulation of industrial struggles the Tories can be brought down.

What is needed, however, is not just an attempt to get more industrial militancy, but an overall political perspective. This involves putting across the socialist arguments that can offer a real solution to the crisis of the economy with a line of action to get rid of the Tories.

4. A socialist plan

Neither the Labour left nor the labour right have a programme anything like far reaching enough to solve the present crisis. The economy is reeling under a major structural crisis which cannot be solved within the framework of capitalism.

Bold socialist measures, which put all the major decisions about investment and the planning of the economy in the hands of working people, rather than the capitalists — these are what are needed today.

Such a programme must include:
* a sliding scale of wages to make sure wages keep pace with inflation
* a 35-hour week with no loss of pay and a massive programme of public works to cure unemployment
* a freeze on all prices and the introduction of price controls to stop run-away inflation
* the nationalisation of the major monopolies, the banks and the finance houses to give society as a whole control over investment and planning.

These measures which hit at the source of Britain's economic

problems, the anarchic rule of capital, would immediately begin to solve unemployment and austerity.

5. A mighty movement: a general strike

Days of action are not going to defeat the Tories. Neither is waiting for a general election in five years time.

What is needed is the generalisation of all the partial struggles — for more pay, against the cuts, against unemployment into one mighty movement to throw out the Tories: a general strike.

Len Murray says the TUC is talking 'protest' and not 'politics'. But it is precisely politics that is needed to generalise the struggle. If Murray and the other TUC leaders are not prepared to shoulder their responsibilities, then it is up to the rank and file to do it instead.

The creation of a cross-union rank and file alliance to coordinate the fight is crucial to success. The embryo of such a movement lies in the existing rank and file bodies — the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions and the Rank and File Defend Our Unions Conference.

These two bodies should link up their work with other rank and file bodies, such as the national shop stewards' strike committee currently being organised in the steel industry, to build a movement for a general strike in the strongholds of the labour movement.

A general strike is not something which can be undertaken lightly. In preparing a general strike either the working class begins the preparations for taking power, or it stores up the possibility of a major defeat.

That is why the IMG fights for the creation of a class struggle left wing in the Labour movement as a militant minority which can take the struggle beyond the betrayals of the bureaucrats, and for the building of a revolutionary political party capable of giving leadership to this movement.

The TUC have called a day of action for 14 May. Typically they have left individual unions to decide whether to come out on strike or not. 14 May can be used as a springboard to ram home the need for a national lead in the fight to remove the Tories.

Leicestershire against the Tories

THE TORIES in Leicestershire had a sad and depressing day on Wednesday of last week. **ALEX ACHESON** explains why.

THE Leicester Mercury is a notorious right-wing rag. It's a Tory spewpaper rather than a newspaper. When the public sector unions decided to organise a day of action against the cuts the local Tories and their press went berserk.

They orchestrated a sustained 100-decibel campaign to slander by red smears those fighting the Tories.

They tried to stop the distribution of anti-cuts leaflets. They lied about the campaigners' intentions. They threatened disciplinary action against employees.

Reasonable

They claimed that the cuts were reasonable, and attacked the public sector unions for damaging the interests of children.

Anger has been mounting in Leicestershire for some time. The new school bus charges and meal prices increases; the sackings of ancillaries, crossing wardens, technicians and nursery assistants; and the freeze on teacher replacements and the threatened school closures have all created a real hatred of the Tories.

Schools

Teachers in Leicestershire decided on an official strike. Fifteen hundred teachers came out and shut down all the schools on 27 February.

In collaboration with hundreds of parents, the teachers distributed tens of

'The largest march for half a century.'

thousands of leaflets. Parents brought their children to the protest demonstration. The result was the largest demonstration Leicestershire has seen for half a century.

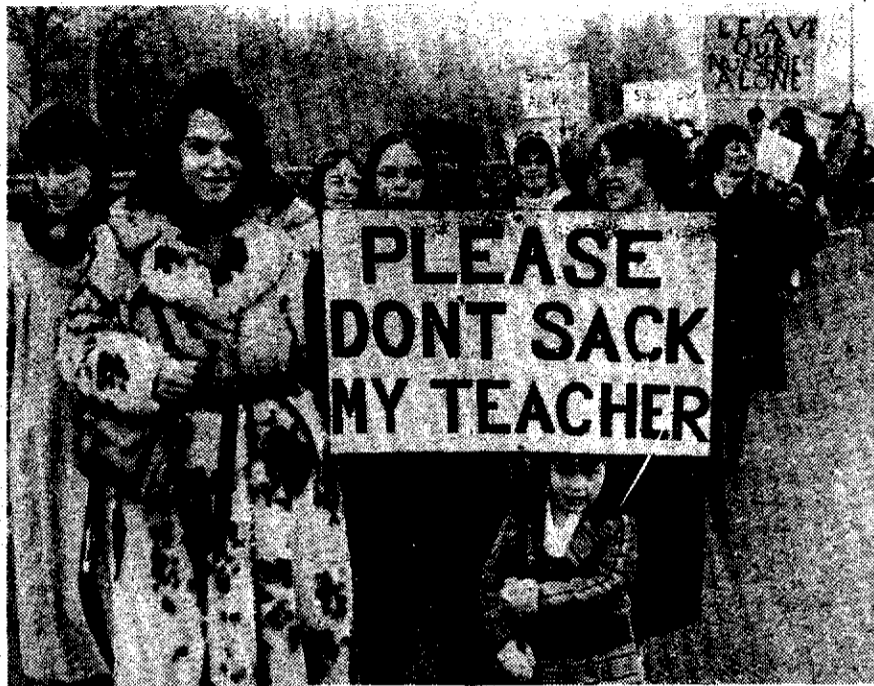
The local Tories were open in their hostility for ordinary working people. Tory leader Geoffrey Gibson attacked the teachers on strike: 'The strike action taken by the National Union of Teachers is far more injurious to children than any cuts made by this council.'

And then for the benefit of the TV cameras Gibson tore up anti-cuts leaflets.

Duke

Over two thousand people showed their contempt for Gibson and his Tory friends by leaving them in no doubt that opposition to the cuts is widespread and becoming more extensive every day.

The local landowners led by the Duke of Rutland are clearly not too bothered by the cuts. Private education and private clinics have always

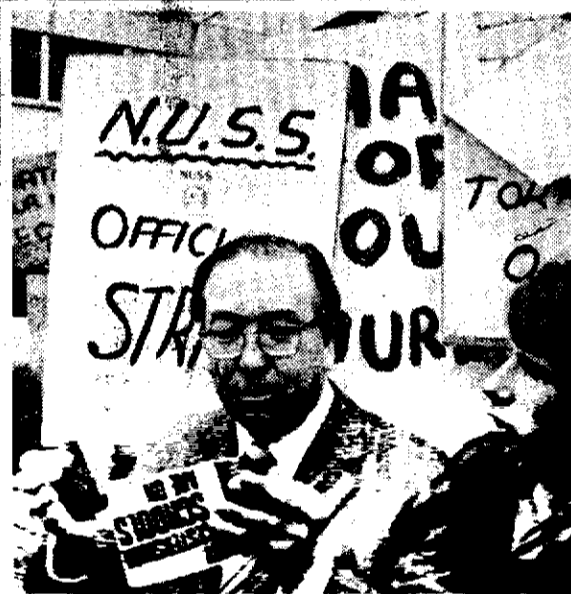


Part of the large anti-cuts march in Leicester

been part of their way of life. It is this local squirearchy which dominates Tory thinking in the area.

The day of action was a tremendous success. It united all the strands of opposition to the Tories which exist in the labour movement.

It is actions such as these which prepare the way for a nationally co-ordinated struggle against the policies of this government.



Tory council leader, Geoffrey Gibson, tears up anti-cuts leaflets in Leicester. He claimed the information on it was out-of-date.

Labour conference calls for British withdrawal from Ireland

BY A sweeping ten to one majority the last weekend's annual meeting of the Greater London Regional Council of the Labour Party called for Labour MPs to commit themselves 'to a policy of British withdrawal from Northern Ireland'.

The successful motion also disassociated the party from the 'sterile bipartisan posture of the Labour and Tory front benches on the Irish issue'.

The radical mood of the conference was reflected in other debates. Conference threw out sections of the report from Sir Ashley Bramall, leader of the Labour-controlled Inner London Education Authority. The rejected sections supported ILEA's £21 million education cuts. Motions were also passed condemning the Nationalities Bill and the 'Sus' laws.

Dirty work

But the conference drew the line when it came to turning the radical sentiments into action. Thrown out was a Labour Party Young Socialist motion calling on Labour councils 'not to do the Tories' dirty work and to refuse to make any cuts', oppose rate increases and to organise 'mass demonstrations, industrial action and rate/rent strikes' against the Tories.

A fringe meeting organised by the Labour Co-ordinating Committee did show that sections of the Labour Party ranks were looking for an alternative. Stuart Holland MP got a good reception when he said the LCC was envisaged as a 'campaigning body'.

Tony Banks, chairing the LCC meeting proposed a rank and file trade union movement committed to socialist policies. Announcing the LCC's intention of calling an open trade union conference to discuss socialist strategy Banks added: 'We plan a series of sectoral, as well as cross sectoral, conferences.'

But welcome as such declarations were, one member of the audience made the most obvious comment when she said: 'We're supposed to be discussing action against the government. But no-one has yet mentioned the most important anti-government action now going on — the steel strike. Let's start by working out what we can do for the steelworkers.'

'For further discussion on Labour Party policy on Ireland come to the Labour Committee on Ireland Conference at North Library, Manor Gardens, London N7 on Saturday 29 March. Details: 5 Stamford Hill, London N16. Labour Party members only.'



Debate: 'The Crisis and the Future of the Left'

Speakers: Tony Benn, Paul Foot, Audrey Wise, Stuart Holland, Hilary Wainwright, Tariq Ali

Monday 17 March, 7.30pm

Central Hall, Westminster, London SW1

For tickets send £1 plus s.a.e. to: Socialist Challenge (Debate), 328 Upper Street, London N1.



COUNTDOWN TO WEEK 10

By Geoffrey Sheridan

ON 3 December the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation puts in a claim for a 20 per cent wage rise. The offer from the British Steel Corporation is 2 per cent, tied to local productivity deals.

The steel bosses are confident of a meek response. In the same week they announce a further 52,000 redundancies.

On 8 December the ISTC executive calls for a national strike over the pay claim. The walk-out from BSC plants on 2 January is virtually total. The demand is for 20 per cent. Within a few days engineers and other workers who have remained behind join the picket lines.

South Yorkshire comes to the fore as a centre of militancy. The policy of the strike committees is that no steel should move, and flying pickets are despatched to the private sector steel firms, stockholders, and the ports.

The redundancies scheduled for Port Talbot and Llanwern galvanise the South Wales miners. The steel cutbacks could close 21 out of the 36 pits. 'On 21 January,' says George Wright, general secretary of the Wales TUC, 'we want a mini-general strike.'

Within a week of the start of the strike, BSC has increased its pay offer to 8 per cent. Len Murray says it is 'festooned like a Christmas tree with conditions'. His role is to be a go-between, looking for a compromise settlement.

By mid-January, there are picket-line confrontations. Arrests have already started outside Hadfields, the private steel firm in Sheffield, which is to be a major focus in the strike. 'The strike is forced to get bloody,' comments a local ISTC branch secretary. 'It's a fight against the Tory government.'

Sour

When Sir Keith Joseph visits Birmingham he is greeted by a thousand steel strikers who chant: 'Maggie out.' Events are turning sour for the Tory government sooner than almost anyone expected.

Joseph is still maintaining a policy of 'non-intervention' in the strike. No one takes him seriously.

The Wales TUC gives way to pressure from Congress House. The regional general strike due to start on 21 January is postponed for a week.

On 21 January, Arthur Scargill tells two thousand workers at a rally in Sheffield: 'I've been accused of interfering in this strike. I plead guilty (massive applause)... They can introduce whatever laws they like we'll picket whatever targets are necessary to win this strike.'

On 26 January Lord Denning rules in the High Court that 'secondary picketing' is illegal. Two days later public industry comes to a halt in Wales when 200,000 workers strike.

At a rally that night, Bill Sirs is moved to tears by the tremendous show of solidarity, but this does not prevent the ISTC general secretary from accepting Denning's judgement until it is reversed by the House of Lords.

In Swansea, Blackburn, Pontypool, Aberdeen and numerous other towns strikers confront the police on picket lines in an effort to halt the movement of all steel.

With Employment Secretary James Prior's anti-union law on the stocks, the cabinet divides into 'hawks' and 'doves' in their debate over how best to break the power of pickets and make strikes ineffectual.

On 8 February, Bill Sirs brings together the ISTC's negotiating committee to consider the Steel Corporation's new pay offer of 2 per cent plus a 12 per cent pay-for-jobs deal. The committee shouts it down. A week later the national coordinating committee of the craft unions also rejects the offer.

Blockade

The private steel sector becomes the main focus for the pickets, the police, and the media. To the jubilation of South Yorkshire steelworkers, miners, and engineers, workers at Hadfields in Sheffield agree to join the strike after the plant is blockaded.

But then come the first reversals in the strike. After the Port Talbot and Llanwern steelworkers decide that there should be no return to work until their jobs are secured, the Welsh miners are balloted on all-out strike action, to begin on 25 February.

The proposal is rejected by 22,000 votes to 4,000. With evident relief, the Wales TUC calls off the general strike which was to start on 10 March.

The private steelworkers at Hadfields and other firms decide to scab on the strike. A mass picket of Sheerness Steel in Kent fails to halt the plant, and 600 ISTC members there are expelled from the union.

On 18 February the first national meeting of steel strike committee representatives is held in some secrecy. They discuss how to make the picketing more effective, and decide to meet again.

Interview with strike leader Brian Molyneux

HOW TO WIN OVER THE PRIVATE SECTOR STEELWORKERS

'If the private steelworkers support us now we should back them in any fight on jobs or closures.'

BRIAN MOLYNEUX, a member of the South Yorkshire divisional strike committee, and a newly-elected member of the ISTC national negotiating committee, spoke to Clive Turnbull about the state of the strike as it enters its tenth week.

'Locally, morale is low with the return of the private sector,' Brian Molyneux considers.

'People are obviously getting more desperate for money, with mortgages and electricity being cut off. But in BSC we're absolutely solid.'

'Morale boosters are being organised, and we're trying to get the wives and families more involved. More people are volunteering for picketing than at the beginning of the strike.'

The involvement of local steelworkers' wives and families was shown last week when two coach-loads of wives lobbied MPs at the House of Commons. Whole communities turned out in a five thousand-strong march in Rotherham on Sunday.

Despite the scabbing role of the private sector, Brian Molyneux opposes the removal of their union cards as an answer.

The South Yorkshire divisional strike committee has decided that all officials who have gone back to work should have their credentials removed,' he explains. 'This has already been done in some areas, such as Corby.'

'But I don't think it's on to expel members. It's a gift to the Tories. And it is not the members' fault; it's the fault of the officials.'

They should have argued for the decision to call out the private sector to be upheld. It's that lack of leadership which is the problem,' he maintains.

'It was apparent when we met the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions that managements have been using the old Tory arguments about profitability and closures as a threat against supporting us.'

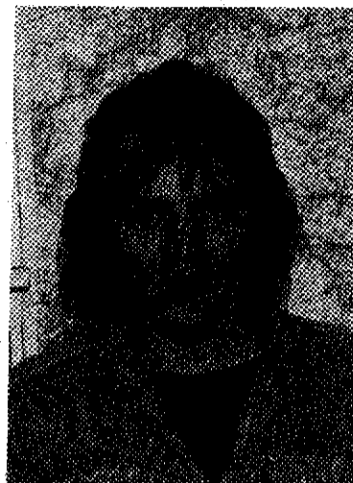
'What engineering and other workers must realise is that the arguments which they're accepting now will be used against them when they put in their pay claims.'

'We sent Bill Sirs a telegram last week saying that he had to give the private sector steelworkers some encouragement, but making it clear that if they support us we would back them in any fight on jobs or closures.'

Ballots

Despite the problem of the private sector, Brian Molyneux is convinced that the strike is being effective, particularly in engineering. Plants in Sheffield are being affected, he believes.

In South Yorkshire the response to the Steel Corporation's ballot has been overwhelmingly in support of a boycott.



BRIAN MOLYNEUX

'They're using the ballot to delay negotiations. It'll take a month to get the sort of procedure they've started — organising the ballot, and presenting the results. In the meantime they can get on with plans for hiving off sections of BSC.'

'From Rotherham we are now hearing at board level that there are firm plans to hive off parts of BSC in this area, in particular Stainless Steel and Stockbridge.'

In Brian Molyneux's view anyone who backs the BSC offer would not be getting a 14.4 per cent pay rise, but the 2 per cent originally put forward.

He explains that the claim now being put forward by Sirs had been drawn up not by the union's negotiating committee, but by the executive council.

'The claim is an exact copy of BSC's with all the same strings, and lasting 15 months. South Yorkshire has made its position absolutely clear — 20 per cent and no strings, with a 12 month deal.'

Murray

'We back our general secretary's previous stand against arbitration, unless we can have Arthur Scargill as the mediator.'

'We're going to get as many people as possible down to the TUC demonstration on 9 March. We're pissed off with the lack of response from the TUC. They should be calling a general strike for a starter. They should be giving the Tories a set time to settle, and then call a general strike.'

'And it's time we got rid of Murray. He's done nothing to win.'

As for the way forward for the union after the strike, Brian Molyneux says: 'We've already established the divisional committee, and made the first steps to a national committee.'

'The South Yorkshire divisional committee agrees with most of the demands of the Liaison Committee for Constitutional Reform in the ISTC — for a policy-making conference and a changed basis for the election of delegates to the executive council.'

'Views are changing on the election of full-time officials. This union will never be the same again.'

HADFIELDS — THE VIEW FROM INSIDE

By a Hadfields worker

ONE of the worst aspects of the steel strike has been the role played by the management and unions at Hadfields, the private steel firm employing 2,500 workers in Sheffield.

With the return to work after the mass picket earlier this month, the atmosphere inside the plant is that no one should speak to anyone outside.

Although there is sympathy on the shopfloor for the strike — many of the workers have relatives who work for the Steel Corporation — the leadership of the joint shop stewards committees has fully cooperated with management to keep the plant working.

Prompted

Right at the beginning of the strike when Hadfields was picketed, the shop stewards committees organised counter-pickets at the expense of management. And with threats of closure because of the walk-out at Hadfields, management was able to prompt a number of publicity stunts, such as the lobby of Arthur Scargill by women workers after the mass-picket which resulted in the vote to

join the strike.

The closure threats should not be taken all that seriously. Hadfields is owned by the multi-national Lonrho which has good links with the Tory government. Discussions have taken place about the takeover of parts of BSC.

Private

This points to the failure of the steel union leadership nationally. They have not adopted any strategy which could link the private and public sectors, either by posing the joint defence of jobs or the nationalisation of the private sector.

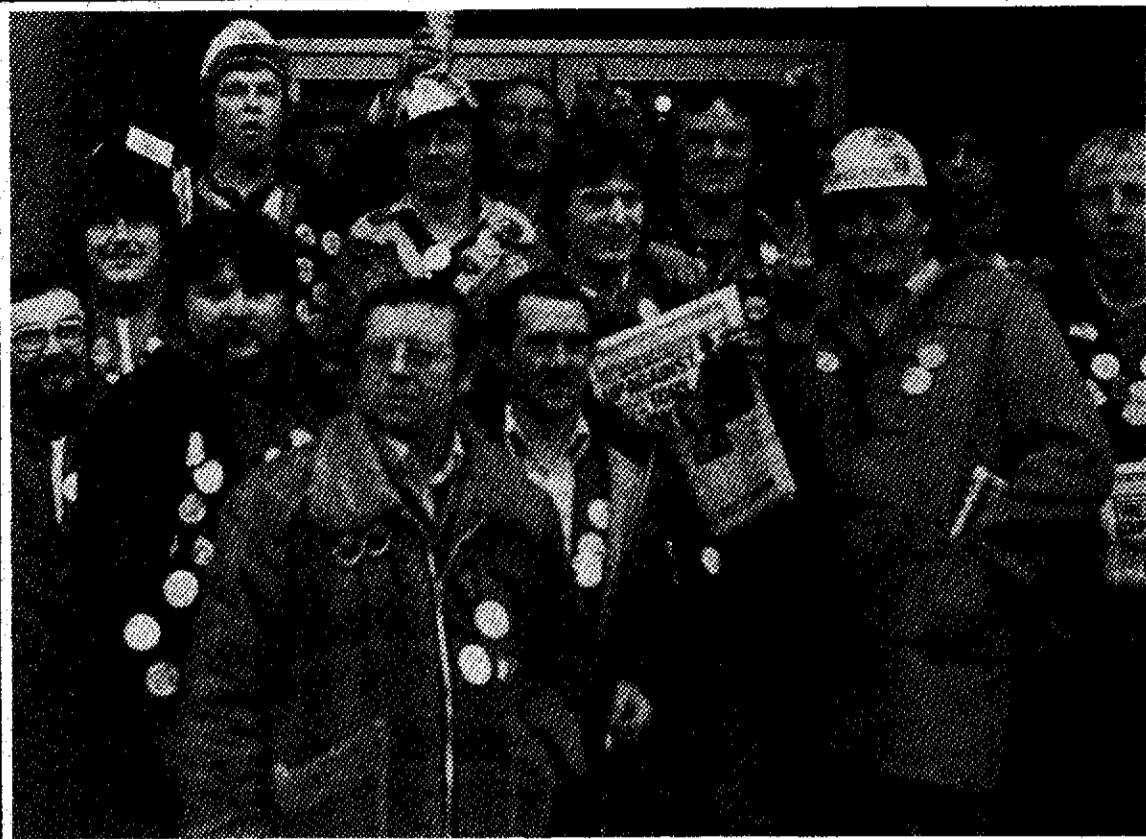
At the same time, the private steelworkers were put in the position of being the only section on strike on the basis of solidarity. Drawing engineers into the struggle before they are laid-off through steel shortages would be one of the best ways of winning over the private steel sector.

Hadfields management has promised to stockpile all the steel produced at the plant. Rumours suggest that they are doing otherwise. Twice a week the bosses circulate bulletins about cracks in the strike. Hopefully the strikers will put out leaflets explaining the need for solidarity.



A CONTINGENT from the Warrington 'Brick Brigade' — see story next page

Photos: LARRY HERMAN



NO SIR'S, WE CAN DO WITHOUT YOU

By Brian Grogan

BILL SIR'S can't be very fond of the steel strikers in Warrington, Lancashire, where the Steel Corporation plant faces closure.

The ISTC committee in Warrington has produced a sticker calling on Sirs to resign, and last Friday fifty of the strikers picketed the union's head office in London to demand that the national executive takes action against the private sector steelworkers.

'The biggest mistake was Sheerness,' says Chris Herd, secretary of ISTC's Warrington branch. *'The officials didn't want to pull out all the stops. We want all raw materials stopped, and we're calling on British Oxygen and carbon suppliers to block deliveries.'*

'The failure at Sheerness,' he adds, *'gave the green light for a return to work in the rest of the private sector. We are demanding that Sirs tells them to come back on strike, or*

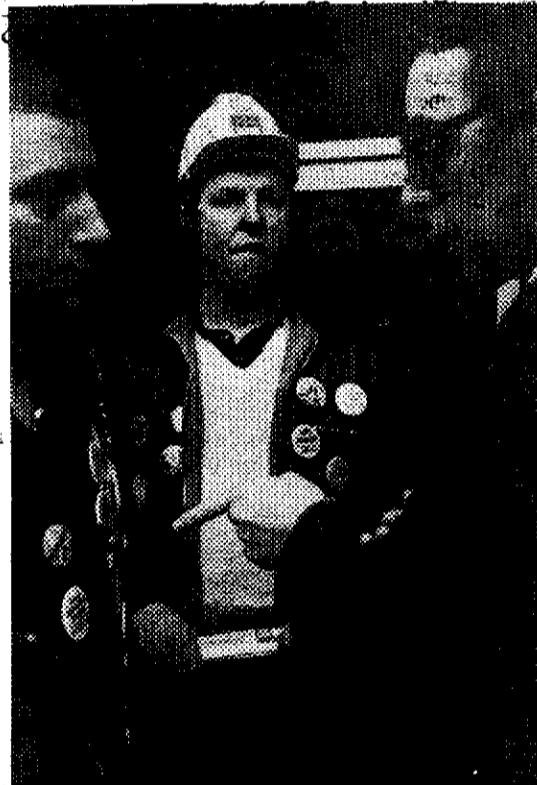
have their union cards removed.'

The Warrington strikers have been dubbed the 'Brickboys' by James Anderton, the Greater Manchester chief constable, because of their activities on the picket lines. It's a name they have now adopted as their own. Chris Herd is known locally as the Ironatollah.

Chris Herd considers that both steel stockholders and the private sector should be nationalised. *'The private sector scabs are just stupid,'* he says. *'Thousands of them will be down the road by the end of the year.'* To strengthen the strike, he believes that the fight should be to close all major steel users.

'If we were running the strike,' says George Burgess, chairperson of the Warrington branch, *'we'd soon have won it. We hope the national strike committee will take the running of the strike out of Sirs' hands.'*

WARRINGTON steel strikers outside ISTC's headquarters to demand action against the private sector steelworkers



CHRIS HERD, the 'Ironatollah', secretary of Warrington ISTC on the left, arguing with an ISTC official outside union headquarters in London.

By Roger Tovey, Llanwern, NUB

THE miners' vote against strike action was a great disappointment.

Massive pressure was placed on the miners. The Coal Board and the media lied and told them new markets had been found for coking coal.

The TUC and the miners' union nationally didn't want to fight or even rock the Tory boat let alone sink it.

This all contributed to the ballot result of 22,000 votes to 4,000 against strike action. One of the lessons is that South Wales miners don't want to come out on their own — yet the Wales TUC and the TUC nationally have done nothing to involve the whole trade union movement in the present fight.

Hard on the heels of the pit vote has come the decisions of the Steel Corporation to ballot us to see if we want to vote on the 14 per cent offer. That is, do we want to vote on losing our jobs?

No we don't. We won't accept anything on their terms. The BSC is always saying that they've no money, yet they can spend £100,000 on this ballot.

This is yet another attempt to defeat us. Take the example of Edwardes' ballot which pressurised workers at British Leyland to vote in favour of losing 25,000 of their own jobs.

Rejection

The steel unions should hold mass meetings to urge rejection of the latest offer, and they should be stepping up the campaign for 20 per cent with no strings and no redundancies.

This is the way to handle the ballot — through our

Caldicot fights as a community

STEELWORKERS' DEMOCRACY V RIGGED BALLOTS

democracy not through the rigged ballots.

The South Wales conference of the National Union of Blastfurnacemen has voted to stay out until assurances on jobs are given.

We've got to carry on winning more support and involving more unions in the fight against policies that will take us back to conditions worse than the '30s.

There should be no retreat by the Wales TUC from its commitment to hold strike action against closures.

On the 9 March TUC demonstration we have to get the message over to Len Murray. They have to lead a political fight against the Tories by involving the whole NUM, rail and engineering workers, and the public sector — otherwise the future of our children will be horrific.

As many as possible have to be on the demonstration saying: 'Unite to kick out the Tories'.

Starving out the BSC bosses on Teesside

By Dave Carter

THE connection between the press in Middlesbrough and opposition to the steel strike is not hard to fathom. An anti-strike march in the town last Thursday began outside the offices of the Evening Gazette, which has done its best to build opposition.

There were just eight women on the march, and they were heavily outnumbered by steelworkers and their wives who counter-demonstrated in support of the strike.

Managers

Pickets are now being mounted at Steel House, BSC's headquarters in the North-east. On Friday evening, 50 managers were prevented from leaving the building for two hours.

ISTC has also called out the catering workers at Steel House. John Whittingham, spokesperson for the strike committee, says: *'Most of the bosses could do with losing a bit of weight. We aim to starve them out.'*

'Wales TUC has ruined the struggle,' says miners' leader

DON HAYWARD, chief administration officer of the Welsh NUM, told Pat Kane how the union sees the collapse of strike action by the Welsh miners.

'If the Coal Board comes forward with its list of closures then it's certain that there will be a fight. There's all the difference between the ballot last month and miners voting to lose their jobs.'

'After the ballot we will now have to start from scratch and each lodge will be inviting executive members to their meetings to get the facts about the closures.'

'On 14 March there is a national NUM delegate conference in London to discuss coal imports. The national executive is unanimously opposed to

Preston Rally Backs Steelworkers

By John Parkinson, Secretary, Joint Staffs Committee, GEC Preston

STEELWORKERS from Stocksbridge, Sheffield, have been touring plants in Preston, raising cash for the strike and arguing for the boycott of all steel. They have had the support of Preston Trades Council, which has arranged accommodation for the strikers.

On Sunday, 60 local shop stewards and convenors attended a rally to build support for the strike.

It was agreed to step up support for pickets and to argue in the plants for a steel boycott.

It was also decided to maintain the liaison between the organisations which had built the rally — the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, Preston Trades Council, and the Labour Party — in order to obtain the biggest possible turnout for the TUC's day of strike action on 14 May.

At GEC we have refused to unload two lorry-loads of French steel brought in by management before dawn on Wednesday of last week.

While senior representatives on the staffs committee at GEC are arguing that we should boycott all steel, the works committee considers that since Bill Sirs has allowed the private sector to return to work, the boycott should only apply to imported steel.

This underlines the need for strike action in the private sector.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE PUBLIC MEETING

'THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE STEEL STRIKE'

Speakers: Colin Herd (strike committee, ISTC Warrington), Pat Hickey (deputy senior steward, BL SD1), and a speaker from the Stone Platt occupation, Oldham.

Wednesday, 12 March, 7.30pm. For venue ring Manchester 236 4905.

imports and we want strike action to stop them.

'We will have to get the support again of the Newport dockers, who were holding up imported coal, and the Port Talbot steelworkers. They have been suffering during this strike, and they must feel disappointed after the ballot result.'

'We'll have to meet the Wales TUC again. The 10 March strike is now a non-starter, and the recall Wales TUC meeting has been cancelled. The Wales TUC has told us that we can apply for a recall conference, but after the ballot it will be difficult.'

'The Wales TUC has ruined the struggle. If it had been seen to be behind the strike, the miners would have come out. And if this had happened the steel strike would have been over in a week.'

'We should have come out on 21 January, the original date for a regional general strike. The members were ready to come out then.'

'We had the same meetings and ballots during January, and we had a big turnout on 28 January. There was a 92 per cent vote in favour of action.'

'That's been turned round now so we have to get out to the pits and start again.'

Port Talbot will stay out over jobs

By Patrick Sikorski

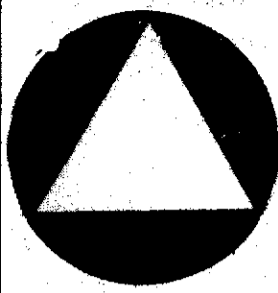
A MASS meeting of National Union of Blastfurnacemen members at Port Talbot decided last week to oppose any settlement which does not guarantee all jobs at the threatened plant.

John Perrins, the NUB district secretary, said that there had been no discussion of the rumoured picketing of pits by steel strikers, but he indicated that the matter would be taken up with Emyln Williams, the Welsh miners' president.

Williams has said: *'No miner will cross any official picket line. It's not our tradition. We've never done it in the past and we won't do it now.'*

The blastfurnace workers' decision over jobs follows that of the crafts unions at Port Talbot. ISTC branches meeting this week are likely to endorse a similar recommendation from their strike committee members.

'This article also appears in 'Steelsheet', the bulletin of Llanwern workers.'



SACKED FOR BEING GAY

JAMIE GOUGH, London Gay Activists Alliance

Geoff Brighton, a student at Leeds University, has been refused a medical certificate to train to be a teacher on the sole grounds that he is gay.

Dr Fraser, the director of the Student Health Centre, judges Geoff to be 'emotionally unstable' and a 'threat to children'. Dr Fraser is demanding that he sees a psychiatrist. Unless he receives a medical certificate Geoff will not be allowed to teach.

Dr Fraser's decision is based on two big lies about gay people.

Sex

First, that gays are 'child molesters'. In fact, gays are no more likely to have sex with children against their will than heterosexuals (statistically, in fact, much less so). But it may be the case that a gay teacher will influence her or his students to regard homosexuality as OK.

That is what Dr Fraser really wants to prevent.

The second big lie is that gays are 'sick', mentally ill, unstable, or unreliable character. Traditional ideas identify homosexual behaviour as deviant in order to deny that 'the majority' can have any gay sexuality at all. There is no medical evidence to back up the assertion that there is a parallel between homosexuality and mental illness.

Student

Geoff has already won the support of his student union against this discrimination, and is seeking the support of trade union branches and Labour Parties in Leeds.

He is calling on the British Medical Association, the General Medical Council, and the DHSS, to state clearly that homosexuality is not a disease and that doctors have absolutely no business pontificating on the matter.

And he is calling on the Department of Education and Science to state that an individual's homosexuality is completely irrelevant to their right to teach.

This case is a clear piece of anti-gay discrimination and it also concerns the right to work. Fraser's attitude keeps young people ignorant and frightened of homosexuality, and by calling it 'sick' affects the sexuality of everyone.

Picket

So far the NUT, true to past form, has refused to take a position on the issue.

A picket has been organised for Saturday 15 March at 9am outside the NUT headquarters in Euston.

For further information, contact Leeds Campaign for the Defence of Gay Students, Box 110, Leeds. Alternative Publications Ltd, 29 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds 2.

'BACK TO WORK' WOMEN A FLOP IN TEESSIDE

BRENDA Parry is a steelworker's wife in Teesside. She recently announced her intention of leading an anti-strike march in Middlesbrough on 1 March. The local press, hungry for such events, gave her masses of free publicity.

The police refused to stop the traffic for Brenda Parry's march. She and her six or eight followers marched along the pavement looking

like a shopping expedition. The steelworkers and their families who had turned up to jeer the anti-strike march in fair numbers restricted themselves to uncontrollable fits of laughter as Parry and her friends arrived outside the local ISTC headquarters.

The media was sorely disappointed that its efforts had been wasted. The steelworkers were delighted.

Cuts 'regrettable, but negligible'

BATTERED women, 'one parent families', gays, and the inner city poor are being dragged into the spending cuts turmoil in Manchester.

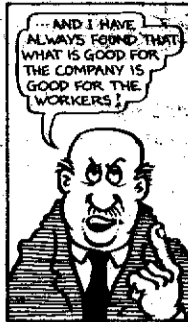
On 12 February the Social Services Committee of Manchester Labour council axed grants totalling more than £130,000. Social Services chairperson, Cliff Tomlinson, said: 'Cuts have to be made to prepare for the inevitable holocaust that will come next year.'

Eight 'Category E' organisations have had to do without their grants because the loss of their services would be 'negligible though regrettable'.

Just what is a negligible effect? The closure of Manchester's two refuges for battered women; in Alexandra Park the end of a three year plan for a 24-hour nursery; the closure of the Manchester Gay Centre; the end of plans for a tenants' information centre on the notorious Hulme estate; further cuts in pregnancy advice centre and inner city projects.

The much vaunted Labour council campaign against Tory cuts seems now to revolve around increasing rent and rates, and preparing the ground for big cuts to come by attacking those it thinks are 'weakest'. Battered women, young mothers, gays, without the collective support that these grants help finance, will be driven to lives of misery and suicide — these are the 'negligible' effects. All they say is: 'The families will have to cope.'

Meanwhile, women's organisations have been quick to respond. They have called for a women's march against the cuts on International Women's Day on 8 March in Manchester.



STUDENTS OFFER FACILITIES TO STEELWORKERS

PAULINE ROE, NUS Executive, personal capacity

TWO hundred students are occupying the administration area of Essex University in protest against increases in overseas students' fees and cuts in housing for first year students.

The students decided to occupy a 350-strong emergency general meeting of the students union on 26 February.

Tempers had been roused already following threats by the University to take control of the Union building after an earlier general meeting had offered facilities to steel strikers.

Staff in the Union building went on strike fearing that the University's action would lead to redundancy. They returned to work, and the steelworkers came to stay.

The occupation at Essex will be reviewed by future student general meetings. Telegrams of support can be sent to the Students Union, The University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex CO4 3SQ.

redundancies, particularly in engineering. Last week Tootal, the shirt manufacturer, announced 1,600 redundancies. Despite the failure of the Engineering Union executive to make the occupation

official, the powerful north and south Manchester districts of the AUEW have endorsed the action, and thousands of pounds have been collected.

Workers at the British Aircraft Corporation plant in

Oldham, who are considering a walk-out over the sale of government shares on the stock market, plan to march to Platts to hold a joint mass meeting.

Meanwhile, management at Stone Platt — part of a multinational — is offering substantial payments to haulage firms to place their lorries on stand-by to remove £10m of machinery from the occupied plant.

The boss of the multinational is Edward Hawkins, who is president of the Engineering Employers' Federation and author of a pamphlet on guidelines for employers on how to smash strikes.

The Platts workers need solidarity from the company's 20 other plants. As Eddie Holland, the works convenor, says: 'We want them out with us.'

Several plants have already been visited, and stewards there have agreed to consider holding mass meetings.

Donations to: Eddie Holland, 70 Lord Street, Oldham, Lancs.

Oldham: fighting job loss

By Pete Clifford

SUPPORT is growing for the 850 engineering workers who are in their third week of occupation of the Stone Platt textile equipment manufacturing plant in Oldham.

The labour movement locally is making the occupation against closure a focus in the fight against unemployment in an area which has seen widespread

Youth demand a future

By Redmond O'Neill

'THIS STRIKE is about our children's future' is a familiar enough comment from steel strikers in South Wales.

Closures and redundancies mean devastation of whole areas of the country. For youth, in places like Port Talbot and the South Wales mining valleys, they mean no future at all.

The choice for youth is the army, the dole or get out of Wales altogether. That's why there's such tremendous support for the strikers in the schools and tech colleges.

A united struggle for jobs has to involve the youth, whether they are apprentices, banned from striking, or school students, banned from organising, or the unemployed, banned from working.

That's why Revolution in South Wales has begun to campaign for a youth march to the Wales TUC. It will call on the TUC to organise a recall conference in order to map out united action in defence of jobs.

Railways

Here's what one Revolution member had to say about the campaign in South Wales:

'In South Wales the steel strike is all about jobs as well as wages. Closures in pits, steel and the railways would

mean no future for South Wales youth.

'We organised a petition from youth calling for the Wales TUC to organise united action against redundancies and closures. With this we went to schools, colleges and the apprentice college in Port Talbot, getting an amazing response from local youth.

'Now we are campaigning for a youth march to the Wales TUC, through the mining valleys. Some of the youth are interested in Revolution because we have pushed for this and because they are beginning to see that fighting for a different society is the only real way out.'

Apprentices

In the first two days of campaigning 500 school students in Port Talbot signed the appeal for the youth Apprentices in Port Talbot are discussing support. The Wales National Union of Students chairperson, Andy Chandler, has endorsed the call, as has the Cardiff area NUS.

Two members of the NUM South Wales Executive are supporting the march and arguing for backing from the executive as a whole.



CLUEING up on the way forward for the steel strike. A picket and two cops outside Sheerness Steel in Kent prepare for action. If you wish you were better

informed, fill in a subscription form for Socialist Challenge. It's on this page.

FIGHTBACK AGAINST THE TORIES JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

I am interested in joining the IMG

Name

Address

Age Occupation

Fill in and return to IMG, PO Box 50, London N1

Labour movement daily?

THE Campaign for Press Freedom has asked the Labour Party and the TUC to carry out a study on the feasibility of launching a labour movement daily newspaper.

The campaign, to which all the print unions are affiliated, had its inaugural rally in London last Thursday, attended by over five hundred people. Tony Benn was among the speakers.

With the resistance of the mass media to any mass opposition to the government's policies, the campaign is likely to be the focus for demands for action against the voice of the bosses and for the establishment of alternative media.

A collection at the rally raised £250 for two local alternative papers, the East End News and the Rochdale Alternative Press, and the not so alternative Nottingham News.

To obtain a speaker for labour movement meetings, write to: Campaign for Press Freedom, 274-288 London Rd, Hadeleigh, Essex. Individual membership of the campaign costs £3. Organisations, from £5.

IMG School Students, Youth and the Struggle for Socialism

Discussions on: *The revolutionary youth organisation *The present crisis *Women's Liberation *Black Liberation *The revolutionary party *The revolutionary international

Open to all members of the party and guests

Saturday/Sunday The University of Leeds

Claimants need our support to defeat Tory Bill

By Alison Cooper

THE government's new Social Security Bill is now in its committee stage in Parliament. If it goes through unchanged, 1.8 million claimants will be worse off next November.

And this is the official estimate of its negative effects — so the real numbers who will suffer are likely to be far greater.

The Bill is a calculated and heartless attack on claimants — the non-organised 'working' class. The Tories commend it for its 'simplification' of the social security system. But what they call simplification is in fact the elimination of discretionary elements of the system with no compensatory increase in the scale rates.

Nil-cost

'Simplification' is taking place on a nil-cost basis — in other words, claimants will be worse off. These are some of the effects:

- * Claimants on the long-term supplementary benefit rate will lose 40p per week when supplementary benefit is brought into line (i.e. downwards) with national insurance benefits. This will happen at the next annual uprating so that it will be disguised and claimants may not realise what is happening to them!

- * Young people leaving school in the summer will not be able to claim supplementary benefit for three months after leaving school. They will have to remain dependent on their parents for this period.

- * Exceptional needs payments — one-off lump-sum grants — are to be greatly restricted by regulations and stopped completely for those not on weekly supplementary benefit.

No outcry

There are currently 4.25 million people on supplementary benefit. There are over 1 million unemployed, more than 350,000 single parents on benefit, 700,000 disabled people on benefit other than supplementary benefit, and more than 8,500,000 pensioners.

The numbers are enormous, yet the outcry at what is to happen in November has so far been minimal.

This includes the left. To judge by its press, claimants don't exist. The TUC has a committee on social security but its deliberations are seldom publicised. It would seem that the scrounger campaign has had its effect — that claimants are indeed regarded as the lumpen-proletariat, the dregs, not worth our interest or support.

It is time that this is clearly demonstrated as false: that claimants are supported in their daily struggle for a living in this capitalist society.

It is time for trade unions to destroy once and for all the scrounger myth, to recognise claimants as brothers and sisters who are denied a job, to form branches in each union for unemployed members, and to support claimants in their fight against cuts and the ravages of the capitalist system. Above all, there must be a united fight to defeat the Bill.

Police attack another black family

ON 9 April 1979 Mrs Earlington and her son Trevor became involved in a domestic argument with their next door neighbours. An ordinary enough domestic dispute — until the police intervened.

Up to 20 police invaded the family home, assaulted members of the family and then arrested them!

Mrs Earlington, an orderly at the local hospital for eight years, was handcuffed, dragged downstairs and had her thumb so badly twisted that she was off work for several weeks. Trevor Earlington, was arrested after being chased upstairs by 3 police. Audrey, a married daughter with two children, was arrested. Angela Earlington, fourteen years old, was arrested when she returned from school. She was punched in the jaw re-starting a childhood

illness, now requiring hospital treatment. Mr Earlington came downstairs to be punched in the stomach and arrested.

The family then faced numerous charges of assaults. Mrs Earlington and Trevor have already been found guilty on the charges against them. They have appealed against conviction.

The police response was to arrest Trevor for a second time on Wednesday 9 January 1980. He was held from 2.45pm that day until 9pm the following day, and then charged on a trumped up allegation of breaking and entering and receiving stolen goods. During his detention he was assaulted with a fire extinguisher and called a 'black bastard' and a 'wog'.

On Monday 28 January the family appeared in court. Outside the door of the court room the police abruptly

informed Audrey that all previous charges against her had been dropped to be replaced by a new charge of assaulting a policeman! Audrey was formally charged just five minutes before entering the court. The case was adjourned until 21/22 April and the family announced their intention to summons the police for actual bodily harm.

Defence

The Earlington family is only one of many black families under attack. They need money to fight the cases and to finance the campaign. All donations, large and small, should be sent to: Earlington Family Defence Fund, c/o 49 Raiton Road, London SE24 0LN. Leaflets and information can be obtained from the Earlington Family Defence Committee at the same address (Phone: 737 3922).

National Front wracked by internal crisis

DOWN — BUT NOT OUT

RECENT weeks have seen a sordid power struggle for control of the National Front, Britain's largest fascist party. Today the very existence of the NF hangs in the balance, as does the fate of führers John Tyndall and Martin Webster.

Here Dave Hudson examines splits and fusions fascist style.

LAST Sunday the fascist National Front took to the streets again to intimidate and harass immigrant communities in the South London borough of Southwark.

The new series of Front activities are designed to reestablish their waning fortunes, diverting attention away from the internal crisis that has been tearing the organisation apart since their poor showing in the general election.

These problems are related to the activities of the anti-fascist movement and in particular the Anti Nazi League.

The sordid gangsterism that characterises the power struggles in the NF has recently led to another split in its ranks. Anthony Reed-Herbert, head of the NF's legal department, has taken steps to launch a new nationalist party, the British Peoples' Party — free of the trappings and associations of Nazism which he argues has damaged the public face of the Front.

Seamy

Unlike the previous 1975 split the BPP project appears to have the support of a substantial section of the membership — particularly in the Midlands.

Ironically white Reed-Herbert was organising the split, he was also defending the NF at the public enquiry in Hackney into the complaints against the use of Excalibur House as the party headquarters.

Typical of the seamy double-crossing that goes on in the NF corridors of power, it appears there is a link-up between Reed-Herbert and Andrew Fountaine's 'Constitutional Movement', a faction still inside the Front which has been slugging it out on the national Directorate with the dominant Tyndall/Webster faction. These two, with Richard Verrall, are known as the Gang of Three.

Fountaine, expelled from the Front by Tyndall, is leaving his options open, although he has successfully fragmented and isolated the 'Gang'. Tyndall was forced to resign from his post as chairperson at the Directorate meeting in mid-January, despite offering to get rid of Webster.

Assets

The power struggle on the Directorate has focused on who controls the party's assets. Legally NF Properties is controlled by trustees loyal to the Constitutional faction.

At times this struggle has taken

the form of a pantomime. One such interlude is the so-called 'piss in the boots affair'.

Philip Gregan, an NF solicitor, arrived at Fountaine's Norfolk farm to serve a writ concerning possession of NF Properties (Fountaine is a trustee), and was so frustrated at Fountaine's refusal to open the door, that he pissed in a pair of nearby wellingtons.

A furious Fountaine later complained to the Law Society over 'unprofessional conduct'. Gregan was lucky he did not suffer the same fate as fellow storm-trooper Martin Webster (NF National Organiser) who, on a similar mission to another trustee, had a bucket of cold water thrown at him.

Power

It would be quite wrong, however, to dismiss the NF leadership as a bunch of irrelevant fools. The current power struggles do not appear to reflect differences on strategic policy, but rather on tactics and emphasis in building a mass fascist party today.

In a lengthy letter announcing the formation of the BPP, Reed-Herbert states:

'...Let us make clear immediately that our nationalist policies are in no way in issue here...but whether the National Front as a political movement is capable of taking these policies forward to power and implementation by constituting an election winning, mass movement.' (Searchlight No 56.)

Reed-Herbert still wants a party that puts forward Nazi ideas of 'race and nation'; still sees a purge of the



'enemy within' (blacks, Jews and reds) as a prerequisite for 'national regeneration'. Neither are parliamentary elections and other constitutional procedures seen as a substitute for a 'mass movement'.

In the same letter he says: 'We criticise the leadership of the NF for its past, the Nazi image it has in the minds of the electorate, the image of violence that the media has

been allowed to build up thanks to many of the tactics adopted by the leadership...'

What we see in the NF today, is a sharp polarisation within the declining membership between those who wish to adapt to the 'democratic and constitutional peculiarities of the British', and those ultra-right dyed-in-the-wool Nazi thugs who want a campaign of confrontation and intimidation. In this way they hope to stop the drift of members to the British Movement, which is behind the new increase in racist violence in London.

These developments must be seen in the context of the combination of blows recently inflicted on the NF. The ANL on the one hand, and the right wing rhetoric that accompanied Thatcher's victory on the other have taken the wind out of their sails.

The Tyndall/Webster leadership, which had based itself on a longer term 'vision', has been unable to come down firmly in either camp. Pulled towards the ultra-wing by their adherence to National Socialist doctrine, and under pressure from both sides, they have broken up under the strain.

The election last week of the new leadership that excludes Tyndall and upholds the previous expulsion of Fountaine and Co represents a last attempt to hold the party together.

Fortunately, this new ramp leadership has a slim chance of achieving this.

FIGHT THE TORIES RACIST LAWS

By Davy Jones

WHAT exactly is being changed by the new Tory Immigration Rules? How can you organise successful local campaigns to prevent people being deported? How can more effective and informative propaganda against immigration controls be produced?

What role should the Campaign Against the Immigration Laws play in the wider movement against these racist laws?

These are the kinds of issues that will be discussed at the CAIL Annual Meeting which will be held at Waterloo Action Centre, Baylis Rd, London SE1 from 10am to 6 pm on Saturday 15 March.

All supporters of CAIL are welcome, but if you are not an individual member already you will have to become one (for £2) if you want to vote. Affiliated bodies can send two delegates.

As a security measure we are asking all non-members to contact us beforehand or ensure that someone will vouch for them on the day. Anyone requiring overnight accommodation or creche facilities should also contact us beforehand.

Write to CAIL, c/o Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5 or phone Davy 01-359 8371 (days) or Bernard 01-720 2328 (evenings).



NAME: Robert Gabriel Mugabe
POSITION: President, Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU)
AGE: 55
PLACE OF BIRTH: Kutama, Southern Rhodesia
FAMILY HISTORY: father was a village carpenter.
EDUCATION: primary and secondary education in mission schools; further education in South African college. Holder of a string of university degrees many of which were collected by correspondence courses while in prison.
POLITICAL HISTORY: joined Youth League of the South African National Congress when at college in South Africa; joined the Southern Rhodesian National Democratic Party in 1960, becoming publicity director the same year. When the NDP was banned he became publicity director of the successor party, the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU). Placed under a three-month restriction order in 1962. Suspended from ZAPU in 1963, helped to form ZANU the same year. Jailed from 1964-74. Describes himself as 'a Maoist-oriented Marxist'.
PERSONAL DETAILS: enjoys sport, traditional Zimbabwean music and the singing of Bing Crosby, Elvis Presley and Pat Boone.

ROBERT IN HIS OWN

DESPITE all obstacles, Robert Mugabe's party has won an overwhelming majority in the Zimbabwe elections. ZANU has overcome the intimidation by the Rhodesian authorities, the harassment by the British and the attempts on Mugabe's life. Who is Robert Mugabe? What does he stand for? Here, in his own words, is the leader of the new Zimbabwe.

ON AIMS:

THE first objective of our armed struggle is the attainment of total and unfettered independence so we can rule ourselves as we deem fit and develop our country in the general interests of the masses.

This means we completely reject and would never entertain any discussion whatsoever which seeks to preserve the interests or privileges of a minority.

September 1977

WHY was this war necessary?

The people of Zimbabwe took up arms to overthrow an unjust and undemocratic, racial, social and political order.

The people of Zimbabwe, under the leadership of ZANU have always been clear as to the identity and nature of the enemy.

Our people have always understood that the enemy is colonialism, which held us under the yoke of racism, exploitation and oppression.

ZANU took up arms in pursuit of just principles, not to replace one form of injustice with another. The enemy of the people of Zimbabwe is not and never has been the British people. Our enemies are not the Zimbabwean whites.

January 1980

WE would like to establish a socio-economic system which is based on Marxism-Leninism. When we say that we don't mean we are going to impose that system.

We are going to derive authority from it from the people and if the people accept our party naturally they would have accepted our principles.

We adopted, as a party, scientific socialism as far back as 1973. So, this is the basis on which we would like to operate politically and socio-economically.

October 1978

IF we are poor together, then that's

acceptable. But if we are poor because a few individuals are rich then obviously I can't accept that system.

September 1978

On policies:

YOU can't start off by nationalising everything. You have to take into account the realities of the situation.

However the genuine policy would be one of socialising industry.

In respect of agriculture we have no difficulty because our traditional system is identical with the Marxist-Leninist approach: at least in so far as ownership of land is concerned.

Land never belonged to individuals, neither did it belong to the chiefs as in West Africa.

It has always belonged to the people as a whole. We must get back to that traditional position.

October 1978

THE banking system is a very vital sector which must receive immediate attention from the government.

If you are not in control of your money, by centralising the control, then you might very well run the risk of money leaving the country and being sabotaged by bankers and accountants.

We would seize the banks as quickly as possible.

October 1978

THE present education system is racial. You have schools which are intended for whites, and there is a system for blacks, another system in between for coloureds.

We will not be content with a position where these schools will be exclusive. They have all to be placed on a par, admission to them must be on a non-racial basis.

We must establish a non-racial society.

October 1978

WE have to bring about a position where almost every part of the country can boast of a clinic, each village boast of a dispensary and each region boast of a good hospital.

October 1978



On civil liberties

I WOULD like to see a constitution enshrining the usual liberties, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of movement, the right of people to assemble and to picket.

But you cannot at the same time you are enshrining the civil liberties also enshrine privileges based on racial togetherness of communities.

That would cut a principle of non-racialism which would like to see cut across and all our socio-economic activities.

So we cannot have civil liberties for minorities.

October 1978

MORALITY is morality, and it remains a murderer whether you are a socialist or capitalist system.

But the forms of punishment, course, might differ and therefore have to consider the nature of punishment as you feel effective.

What is lacking in the present system is the corrective aspect. I have been to prison and I know what obtains — a punitive system.

But you have got to reform the people, to reform them, to acquire better habits, acquire a better attitude to life.

I am not one of those who

MUGABE IN WORDS



that capital punishment is a happy event. I would be happier if it were abolished.

October 1978

On the workers' states

WE HAVE had a great deal of help from China, but also from Korea, Rumania and Yugoslavia. Since my visit to Vietnam we have also had good relations with Hanoi.

We have never considered the USSR as our enemy. In helping ZAPU the Soviet Union has helped the people of Zimbabwe. But we would like more assistance from the Soviet Union.

August 1978

BUT China has always said they will attach no strings to the aid they give us. They are not going to use that military aid as a weapon to orientate us in the direction of their own views.

The fact that we get help from China doesn't make us married to China.

October 1978

WE WANT to build a solidarity of socialist countries around our struggle. My visit to Cuba was the first that a leader of ZANU has paid to that country and we found President Castro very responsive.

As our endeavours continue we hope to find ourselves in the orbit of all socialist countries, with the Soviet Union and China included in this solidarity.

October 1978

THE Bolshevik Revolution's success and the subsequent creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as the parent socialist state meant the eventual success of socialist revolutions in China, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Korea, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Vietnam, Cuba and here in Africa in Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Congo Republic and now in Ethiopia.

Who would have imagined in 1917 or even in 1945 that a socialist revolution would one day be Africa's experience?

Let the Pinochets, Somozas, Begins, Vorsters and Ian Smiths take note. The workers and the peasants of the world are uniting; they have nothing to lose but their imperialist chains.

September 1979

On the party:

WHILST we should recognise the role and status given to us by the party, there should constantly exist the common denominator, the

equaliser, the persistent fact of our comradeship and the mutual respect that it demands from those below for those at the top, and from those at the top for those below.

This is why quarrelling, fighting, beating and ill-treating others obviate harmony of party relations and constitute indiscipline.

Comradeship demands more the spirit of tolerance and the desire to educate others than the desire to punish, fight and beat others.

We should always try to invoke in others a greater degree of consciousness than they have, and help to transform them into better revolutionaries than they are.

June 1979

I DEFINE party unity as harmony that draws us together under the given leadership of the party towards the achievement of its set goals.

Unity is in fact more than mere harmony. It is an active bond of aspirants who share in common given political beliefs.

Unity is integrative of revolutionary forces in the direction of set goals.

June 1977

On the future:

WE HAVE a glorious history as consistent and principled revolutionaries.

We cannot besmirch that history by accepting half-measures as an effective solution which, under false pretences, speaks of a majority rule when in effect they operate in the interests of a bigoted minority, thus perpetuating minority rule.

August 1979

IAN Smith is a criminal, he has committed all kinds of very serious crimes.

The massacres he has committed upon Zimbabwean refugees in Mozambique, upon the civilian population here, in Mozambique, in Zambia, in Botswana, all these put together warrant very stern judgement by the people.

We will have him tried by the people if, by the time we take over he is still around.

October 1978

THE ONE thing we cannot change or modify vis-a-vis South Africa is our commitment to the liberation of the masses there.

But in respect of our own bilateral relations with South Africa it cannot be expected that overnight we will sever relations. It will take time.

We will therefore, in that respect be pragmatic.

October 1978

PEOPLE of Zimbabwe — workers, peasants, industrialists, traders, intellectuals, civil servants, farmers, students, men, women and children this is the moment for unity.

The Republic of Zimbabwe must unflinchingly pursue an anti-racist policy. We will ensure that majority rule never becomes majority tyranny.

Both must be smashed if all Zimbabweans are to live in true freedom in their own country.

January 1980

Will ZANU make room for capitalism?

By Richard Carver

ZIMBABWE may slide rapidly into civil war or simply undergo a slow political paralysis. But what will not happen is the instant legislation of socialism hoped for or feared by so many observers.

'You're not believing all this rubbish about me being a Marxist are you?' Robert Mugabe reportedly told a business delegation a couple of weeks ago. The story is probably apocryphal but it does show that, despite the press campaign against him, the ZANU leader is still concerned not to frighten the white community, which has a stranglehold on the country's economic life.

The ZANU-PF election manifesto is remarkably similar to those of the other main African parties. It promises that the party would not interfere with white and multinational business interests. Private enterprise will be allowed to continue until 'circumstances are ripe for socialist change' — a sentiment vague enough to grace a Labour manifesto.

On land reform, the single biggest issue facing the land-starved rural Africans, it talks only of 'resettling' blacks on underused white land — a plan already supported by the white farmers' union. Land seizures and expropriations, the bogey of the country club set, are nowhere to be found.

A good index of ZANU intentions is to be found in neighbouring Mozambique, which has always been Mugabe's strongest outside ally.

Only last week President Machel told a group of representatives from major multinationals that 'there is a place for foreign private investment in our country.' And he correctly added: 'We have experience in working with foreign capital.'

A major problem for Mozambique has been that it inherited a colonial economy entwined with that of white South Africa. Combined with the flight of Portuguese settlers and the decision to close the Rhodesian border in solidarity, this has created appalling hardship.

Mugabe is concerned that these problems should not be repeated in Zimbabwe. He does not consider the opposite conclusion — that with Zimbabwe's vastly superior economic resources a ZANU victory might be the moment to accelerate the struggle for socialism in alliance with Mozambique. He has even gone out of his way to assure Pretoria that a ZANU regime would stand for coexistence with South Africa.

Mugabe's main efforts just before the election were devoted to a defence of the ceasefire agreement which has done him so much harm. The day the election began he flew to Mozambique to join the front-line leaders in their attack on President Nyerere. The Tanzanian leader had denounced the whole settlement as a British confidence trick.

Far from marshalling his forces to smash the white power structures, as his opponents feared, he has enthusiastically taken part in the attempts to 'integrate' elements of the two guerilla armies into the white security forces to form the nucleus of a new Zimbabwean army.

The very way the question is posed is revealing: the guerillas, the only popular force in the country, have to be assimilated into the existing structures. Such exercises will not save off the danger of a white coup; they simply render the nationalist forces less able to deal with it.

White fears of Mugabe are therefore largely delusions. But not entirely. Mugabe, after all, has led the most popular and effective wing of the nationalist movement in armed struggle for eight years. His political standing is rather larger than words on the page of a party tract.

For example, whites must know or fear that ZANU militants in the bush are not saying the same thing on land reform as the manifesto. One of ZANU's weaknesses has been its failure to organise peasants and workers into mass struggle. But a Mugabe election victory could be the signal for land seizures and working class activity unforeseen by the party leadership.

What Mugabe would do in such a situation cannot be predicted. General Walls, the white commander, visited Mozambique last week in a move that was generally taken to mean that the army would allow Mugabe to govern — for the moment.

They will be watching with concern how Mugabe handles his first major strike or wave of peasant struggles. If he does not perform to their satisfaction the army is still at large in the countryside and the South African armour waits on the south bank of the Limpopo.

ZIMBABWE 30p
INFORMATION 10p
GROUP bulletin no.13



Zimbabwe Information Group bulletin — left analysis of developments in Zimbabwe.

Available from bookshops or direct from: ZIG, 1 Cambridge Terrace, London NW1. Price 30p plus p&p.

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)



Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)



Von McClary (Irish Republican Socialist Party) and Lily Fitzsimmons from the Relatives Action Committee were two major speakers at the meeting sponsored by the Troops Out Movement last week. Over 300 people attended and other speakers included Tony Cliff (SWP), Tariq Ali (IMG), Alan Thornett (WSL).

NF anti-Irish march in Glasgow: opposition needed!

By Geraldine Molloy

THE National Front is pressing ahead with its plans to organise a demonstration in Glasgow on 15 March under the slogan 'Smash the IRA'.

Speaking to the press last week NF Scotland organiser, Raymond Skinner, declared: 'Ulster is British and it's going to stay that way', and he added that 'the defeat of the IRA is a major National Front aim'.

By taking up the anti-IRA theme the Front hopes to build its organisation among Glasgow's extreme loyalists. Skinner has specifically invited all 'Loyalist patriots' to attend the march.

This is an all or nothing attempt by the fascists to win support in the West of Scotland. Until now their efforts have been thwarted by timely opposition from anti-fascists and by a 'no platform' position adopted by Glasgow district council. For instance the Front's public meeting in Glasgow's Kingston Hall in 1975 and their election rally at St Bride's school, Glasgow, both met with massive protests.

But this time the opposition to the fascists has been

slow to organise. Perhaps this is because the Scottish labour movement has itself a poor record on Ireland.

Last Thursday the Glasgow district council reaffirmed that all council facilities were banned to the NF. The council appealed to Strathclyde's chief constable to ban the 15 March demonstration. The Scottish TUC and the Glasgow trades council are also waiting to see the police attitude before committing themselves to organising against the fascists.

If there is no police ban these bodies seem likely to back a counter-demonstration, but not one that marches anywhere near the Front.

Because of this reluctance to organise, the nature of the fascists 'Smash the IRA' platform has hardly been discussed. However the Troops Out Movement did leaflet a recent meeting of the Anti Nazi League pointing out that the racism of the NF was fully in line with its anti-Irish and anti-IRA attitudes.

Both the labour movement and the anti-fascist movement need to be aware that the Front's support for British presence in Ireland says more about the nature of that presence than it does about the Front.

THE HORROR OF ARMAGH

By Pauline Roe

ARMAGH prison in the North of Ireland is rapidly becoming the most famous, or rather the most infamous, women's prison in the world.

It was a year ago, on International Women's Day, that a peaceful picket outside the prison was savagely attacked by the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Eleven women protesters were arrested.

The case of the 'Armagh 11' highlighted the brutality of the 'security forces', but also drew attention to the situation inside Armagh itself where 33 Republican prisoners have been receiving the full force of British justice because of their demands for political status.

Clothes

Unlike their comrades in the H blocks of Long Kesh, the women are allowed to wear their own clothes — as are all women prisoners in British jails — but other facilities are denied. Until recently the women have been locked in their prison cells 21 hours a day. This has now been increased to 23 hours.

But the most horrifying example of the new harassment came on 7 February this year when 40 male warders attacked the Republicans. Subsequently a number of prisoners were dragged before the governor. Now all the prisoners are being denied washing and toilet facilities.

A number of statements smuggled out of Armagh describe what happened on 7 February and why supporters of the prisoners are calling for the largest possible support for the International Women's Day picket outside the prison on 8 March.

Republican prisoner Eileen Morgan relates her experience:

'I was sitting in my cell when the door burst open and three male screws, with riot gear, came charging in.'

'One of them jumped on top of me and kept punching me on the arms and chest while the others held my legs. Then the two holding my legs swung them round so I was lying flat on the bed.'

'One sat on my legs and another on my chest; the other put his hand



EILEEN MORGAN

over my nose and mouth so that I could hardly breathe.

'Then three more male screws came in and four female screws. They lifted me off the bed and carried me out of the cell into the wing.'

'My arms were twisted behind my back and my legs were held spread-eagled in the air; which is how they carried me down the stairs. One of the male screws kept kicking me, while one female screw had me by the hair.'

'I was brought to the governor like this.'

'When the governor had finished the adjudication the male screws grabbed me again and threw me into a cell head first. One of them kicked me on the backside.'

'I was left lying in the cell with nothing but a smelly mattress and was refused permission to use the toilet.'

Another prisoner, Rosemary Callaghan, suffered even more degrading treatment:

'Numerous male and female screws invaded my cell in order to get me down to the governor. They charged in with full riot gear equipped with shields.'

Thumped

'I sat unprotected but was aware of what was going to happen as I had heard my comrade screaming in pain.'

'I was suddenly pinned to the bed by a shield and the weight of a male screw on top of me. Then my shoes were dragged off my feet. There followed so much confusion that it is really hard to describe the full extent of my ordeal. I was bodily assaulted — thumped, trailed and brutally kicked.'

'I was then trailed out of my cell and during the course of my being dragged and hauled from the wing both my breasts were exposed to the jeering and mocking eyes of the screws — male and female. There must have been about 20 of them.'

'While being carried I was also abused with punches to the back of my head and stomach.'

'The whole episode for me was totally embarrassing and degrading. I was eventually carried into the governor, my breasts were still exposed. While I was held by the screws the governor carried out the adjudication. I was then trailed back and thrown into a cell.'

It is in protest against such treatment, and in support of the women's demands for political status, that a delegation of women from Britain will be attending the Armagh picket on 8 March.

Originally the women's committee of the National Union of Students was organising the delegation. But last week the NUS executive removed the details of the Armagh picket from their women's mailing. This censorship follows the recent decision of the NUS executive to call off a demonstration against the Prevention of Terrorism Act.



ROSEMARY CALLAGHAN

But plans for the delegation are still proceeding and individual members of the women's committee are still going to Armagh. Anyone wishing to go should phone Socialist Challenge for details on 01-359 8189.

Any group of women who plan to make their own way to Armagh should phone Sue in Belfast, 0232 40465, after 6pm.



MARIE DOHERTY



CHRISTINE BEATTIE



EILIS O'CONNOR



ANNE-MARIE QUINN



SINEAD MOORE



MAIREAD NUGENT



DOLORES O'NEILL

All the photographs were taken by the prisoners and were smuggled out of the jail.



In the exercise yard.

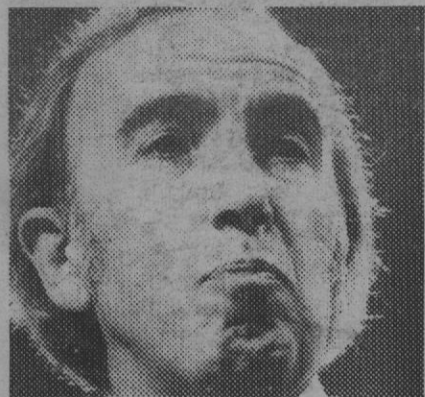
Photos from: AN PHOBLACHT/REPUBLICAN NEWS

Put a time limit on Corrie!

THE 'pressure group' that most worries John Corrie is the mass of women. They have shown that they will not allow Parliament to ignore their interests in the debate on abortion.

No final vote was taken on Corrie's Bill in Parliament last Friday but some, if not all, of the pro-abortion arguments seem to be slowly getting through.

The attempt to give the Health Minister powers to lower the time-limit



NORMAN ST JOHN STEVAS

for abortions according to his own whim was defeated.

The vote on the grounds for abortion revealed that many MPs still view women's rights lightheartedly. Although the term 'serious injury' to the woman's health was deleted, the phrase

'substantial risk of injury' was allowed to go through by three votes.

Having allowed an amendment to pass that severely limits the grounds for abortion, MPs then said they didn't realise that this would mean such a major change!

Pressing

Corrie is pressing for extra Parliamentary time to force his Bill through. Norman St John Stevas, leader of the House, and a well known anti-abortionist and member of SPUC, will do his best to satisfy Corrie.

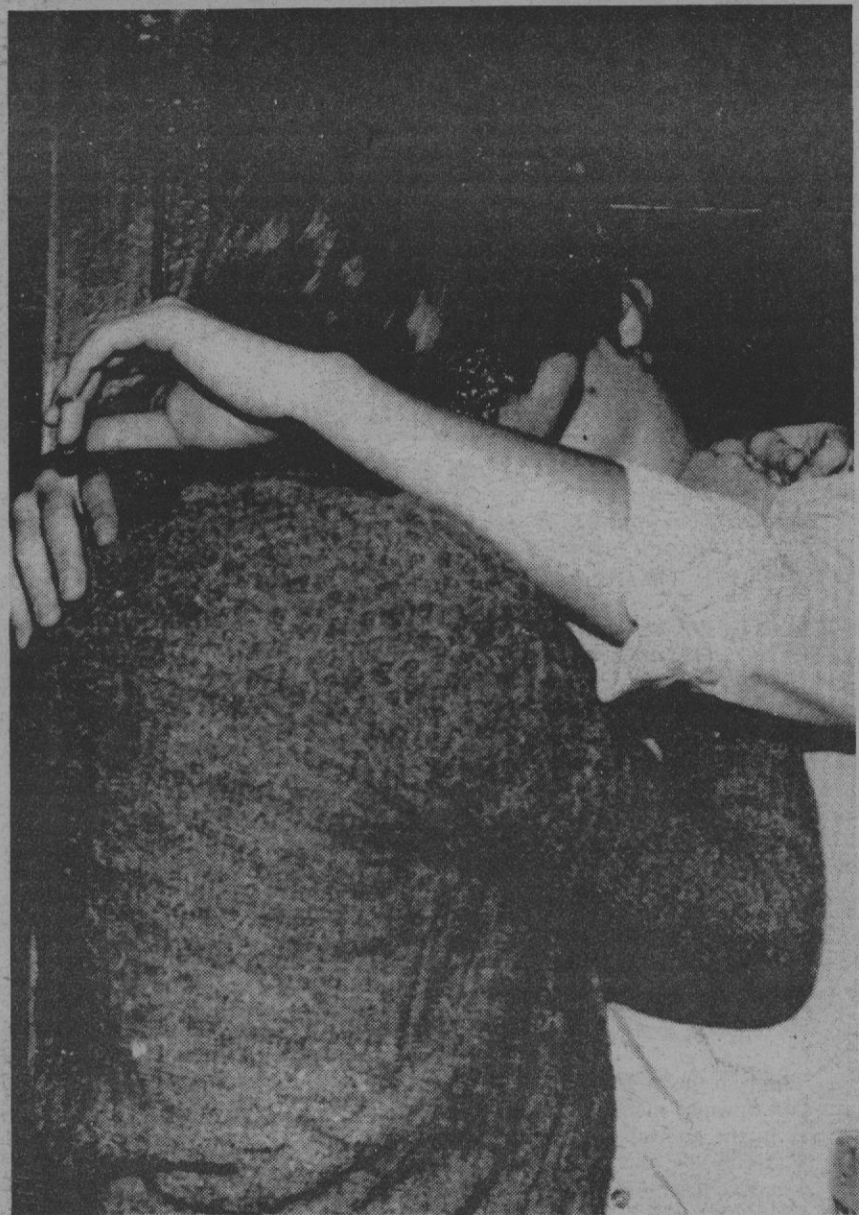
But unless Corrie gets government time his chances are slim. Only three further Fridays have been allocated for debate on Private Members' Bills this session — 7 March, 14 March and 4 July.

The sponsor of the 'Affiliates' Bill, due for its third reading on 14 March, has offered to make time available for Corrie if possible. After that it may have a chance to come up on 4 July.

Pro-abortion campaigners should maintain the pressure on John Corrie. The votes of Labour MPs on the various sections of the Bill need to be examined and those who ignored women's rights should be made to feel as unsafe as Roy Mason.

Events should be planned locally and nationally for 14 March and 4 July in order to remove the time-limits from women and impose them on Corrie instead.

'We are in a very great danger of pressure groups around the country trying to tell Parliament how to run the country.
John Corrie, Tory MP.'



Sex is not just about babies

This article is reprinted from *The National Abortion Campaign Newsletter*, 28 October 1979.

I AM a member of the National Abortion Campaign. I am also a lesbian. Why should women who choose to sleep with other women rather than with men be bothered about abortion? We don't run the risk of unwanted pregnancy, unless of course we have the ill fortune to be raped. Is fighting for abortion rights something we do to help our 'unliberated' heterosexual sisters?

No! The fight for abortion isn't just about the right to decide how many children to have. It is about the right as women to decide for ourselves about our own bodies and how we live our own lives.

Attitudes to sex have certainly been liberalised during the last twenty years but sex is still something we are only meant to do with our husbands to produce our 2.8 children. Women are not encouraged to express their sexual responses other than to please men.

If we like to do it too often we are nymphomaniacs, if we don't like to do it much we are frigid and if we like to do it with other women we are perverts. If we do it with men then hanging over our heads is the worry of pregnancy.

Menopause

A lot of women only start to enjoy sex when they know they can't get pregnant, when they've had their menopause or have been sterilised. The availability of contraception has allowed more women to enjoy sex but how many of us always have the worry of an unwanted pregnancy at the

back of our mind?

It is vital that we know that if we do get pregnant by mistake that we can get a safe early abortion and that we will not be treated as murderers or irresponsible, heartless women unwilling to take the consequences of our own actions. It is exactly the freedom to enjoy sex for itself without the worry of pregnancy that the anti-abortionists oppose.

It is no coincidence that the pillars of the anti-abortion movement, particularly the Church, are anti-lesbian and anti-homosexual. They provide a package deal of prejudice — abortion is murder and lesbianism is at best a sickness from which we can be cured.

Lesbianism challenges the idea that sexual relationships belong in the nuclear family and eventually end in reproduction. It challenges the idea that our proper place is living with a man, and having his children. Until society

recognises that sex is not just about babies we will never have the freedom to choose who we love, who we live with and who we have sex with.

The National Abortion Campaign believes that no woman should be forced to continue with an unwanted pregnancy and no woman should be denied the right to have a child if she wants one, be she lesbian or heterosexual.

The recent fuss over artificial insemination for lesbians has shown how the people who run this society want to control our fertility. If we are sexually 'normal', ie sleep with men, we are refused the right to decide for ourselves whether we go through with a pregnancy. But if we are 'queer', ie sleep with other women, we are refused the

right to have children.

Those in control aren't concerned that every child should be a wanted child but they are concerned that they should keep control over our lives. They don't want us to question why it is that we have no control over anything, not even our own bodies.

Once we demand this control who knows where our demands will end?



Suffocating parents fight contraceptive advice for under 16s

THE debate on abortion has fueled the moral zeal of at least two groups particularly concerned with the sanctity of the family.

'Responsibility Society' and 'Parents in Suffolk' (not suffocating parents!) are organising a campaign to prevent doctors giving contraceptive advice to women under 16 unless they have the parents' permission.

Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for Health and Social Security, is looking into ways of enforcing these proposals.

The Brook family planning clinic has already pointed out that far from helping young women this proposal is a sure way to more schoolgirl pregnancies and increased suffering.

All women, of whatever age, should have the right to choose whether or not to have a child.

Glasgow march

A HIGHLY successful protest march against John Corrie's anti-abortion bill took place in Glasgow last Friday. A press statement issued to the local radio station from Glasgow NAC explained that the 1967 Act was not being implemented in hospitals in the West end of the city.

The marchers who were in a militant mood were spurred on by the news that John

Corrie had not got all his own way in the House of Commons that day.

Cathy Finn, in a short speech, warned that this was only the beginning of the struggle for a woman's right to choose. 'The Tories will try and take back everything that women have won over the last years if they are allowed to', she explained to the assembled crowd.

Women move against the Tories

STEEL women's power is spreading throughout the steel strike.

Millmore Football ground in Rotherham last Sunday was the scene of a massive show of solidarity with steel strikers throughout Yorkshire. Prominent among the demonstrators were women sporting 'Steelwomen's Power' badges and shouting 'Maggie, Maggie, out, out, out'.

Mick Hull the chairperson of the Rotherham strike committee paid a tribute to the role that women had played in the steel strike:

'Women have played their part in this struggle. They've been with us on the picket lines, they've been with us at Sheerness and this week two coachloads were lobbying MPs with us at the House of Commons'.

Tricks

Sylvia Greenwood, an AUEW member, explained why women were not likely to fall for the Tory ballot tricks and put pressure on men to return to work:

'When will Margaret Thatcher put out a ballot to see whether old people can live off their pensions? When will she ballot the homeless to see if they want to be without a house?'

Women can see through the hypocrisy of a Tory government that pretends it values the family and yet allows children to forgo their midday meal at school, refuses to increase child benefits to a level that keeps pace with inflation and threatens to withdraw all supplementary benefits from strikers' families.

The official structures of the trade unions have begun to respond slowly to women's issues, as with abortion. But despite the massive increase in trade union membership among women, there has been little consideration given to involving these women actively in the labour movement. The TUC is still as male dominated as ever!

Two events in the near future will seek to tackle the problem of giving women a voice in the labour movement and bringing their energies to bear in the anti-Tory fight.

Both should receive the support of all trade unionists who see the need to strengthen the dialogue between women and the labour movement.

WOMEN IN ACTION

Out this Friday

'A journal for women in the unions that covers every aspect of women's lives in a direct, lively and open minded way'.

Orders from: Sisterwrite Books, 190 Upper Street, London N1.

FIGHTBACK FOR WOMENS RIGHTS

A working conference to stimulate a dialogue between the labour movement and the women's movement.

Women delegates preferable but men not excluded.

Saturday 22 March, 11am-5pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square WC1. Contact address: 41, Ellington St, London N7.

BEWARE!

Press Lies

By Steve Potter

A FUNNY THING happened to 'Journalist of the Year', Robert Fisk, in Kabul. This is how he tells it:

'Not long ago, the Voice of America radio, broadcasting from Washington, reported fierce fighting in the centre of Kabul. Afghan soldiers, the station announced, were in conflict with Soviet troops at the Bala Hissar fort in the centre of the city.'

'It happened that I was listening to the broadcast as I stood on my hotel balcony which overlooks Kabul, and I naturally directed my gaze towards the Bala Hissar...'

'But there was no smoke or fire, no sound of car horns from the city's traffic. Nor was there any fighting. The Bala Hissar was peaceful. There were no Soviet troops to be seen and the Afghan army... was evidenced only by a soldier drinking tea in the main street... Not to put too fine a point on it, the Voice of America was talking rubbish.' (The Times, 11.2.80.)

The two main sources for the Voice of America broadcasts have been 'travellers passing through Afghanistan to Pakistan' and 'senior diplomats in Kabul'. The former were credited with the following story which appeared in the Sun and Daily Telegraph on 28 February as the result of a despatch by United Press International (UPI):

'1,000 killed'

'Travellers from Afghanistan claimed in Pakistan yesterday that more than 1,000 people had been machine-gunned to death in Kabul in reprisal for last week's anti-Soviet riots.'

The same day, however, Robert Evans, a reporter for the rival press agency Reuters, reported from Kabul:

'In the past week correspondents in Kabul have consistently found foreign radio broadcasts based on insurgent accounts issued in Pakistan on the situation in the city to be very inaccurate.'

Evans went on to pour scorn on reports of massacres as reprisals for the riots, pointing out that it would be unlikely that either the Karmal government or their Soviet advisors would be so stupid.

What about the other main source: 'senior diplomats'?

The most intensive press briefings given by diplomats are, not surprisingly, those carried out by the US Embassy in Kabul.

This is what Ian Mather, one of the two correspondents for the Observer in Afghanistan, said about these briefings:

'The American Embassy here... has been feeding wildly inaccurate information to American journalists, exaggerating the number of Russian troops in the country, the number of Russians killed, and the extent of the engagements.' (Observer 20.1.80.)

There has not been time yet to sort out truth from lies about the so-called 'general strike' that was reported to have taken place in Kabul ten days ago.

The only generally agreed facts, both in the Western and Soviet press, were that there was a shut-down by merchants in the bazaar; that there was disorder in the streets; that the Afghan authorities imposed a state of martial law; and that one American and sixteen Pakistanis were arrested on suspicion of being foreign agents.

Not confirmed

The term 'general strike' only started to be used when it was reported in the Daily Telegraph on 25 February that civil servants had joined the shutdown. This report was not confirmed by other British newspapers which appeared that day, nor was any source credited.

If large numbers of state employees had joined the street protests then it would have been a major reversal for the Karmal government, since it is generally acknowledged that one of the main sources of support for his party — the Peoples Democratic Party — come from this layer of the population.

Neither should we forget that the only political forces which have claimed responsibility for the rioting in the cities have been the Islamic fundamentalist parties whose first aim is the removal of the Russian troops as the precondition for purging the left and reversing the reforms started in April 1978.



What's behind the neutralisation plan?

By Steve Potter

THERE APPEARS to be a positive response by the Soviet leaders to the plan put forward by Common Market ministers for the 'neutralisation' of Afghanistan. The plan, advocated initially by Tory Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, would guarantee non-intervention by imperialism in return for the withdrawal of Russian troops.

The search for mediation began a month ago, according to the West German news magazine Der Spiegel. The chairperson of the Social Democratic Party in West German, Willy Brandt, was approached by Russian diplomats on 4 February. On 15 February he was asked to mediate by President Carter.

The theme of guarantees against imperialist intervention being a precondition for movement on Afghanistan cropped up again in a speech by Leonid Brezhnev at an 'election' meeting in Moscow on 22 February. This speech was immediately hailed by West German Chancellor Schmidt as being a breakthrough in the situation.

The same day as Brezhnev's speech martial law was declared in Kabul against a shutdown by bazaar merchants and three street demonstrations which occurred that day.

So the notion that the Soviet leaders have been panicked into giving the 'neutralisation' plan a favourable reception appears to be in contradiction with the whole conduct of Soviet foreign policy since the invasion.

The Soviet Union appears never to have intended its stay in Afghanistan as a lengthy one, but one where a concerted effort would be made to smash or crucially weaken the rightist forces, to install a pliable and friendly government in Kabul and then withdraw.

Thus the black propaganda issued by the Western press that the Soviet Union had annexed Afghanistan, backed up by lurid stories of Soviet advisers taking the places of Afghan ministers do not appear to be supported by the facts.

Protracted

Likewise the idea of some on the left that the Soviet Union intended to stay for a protracted period of time, thus entailing the need for it to overturn capitalist property relations and introduce nationalisation instead, does not appear to be backed up by the slim evidence that we have.

The reason why the Soviet Union intervened was nothing but the stabilisation of

Afghanistan, not to pursue a revolutionary course.

The reason why socialists should back them in the current war going on in Afghanistan is that they are striking blows

against the number one enemy of the Afghanistan revolution, the rightist forces organised by the reactionary alliance of landowners, tribal chiefs and mullahs in the countryside.

NICARAGUA — LITERACY IS A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

'The only economic weapon we have is the organisation and discipline of our own people. They defeated the National Guard because they were united and conscious of their liberation.'

With these words a delegation from the FSLN explained the basis of the literacy campaign being launched by the Nicaraguan government. 'It is not an educational campaign with a political content. It is a political campaign with an educational content', they explained.

The campaign aims to provide 50 per cent of the adult population with something they have never before possessed — the means to read and write.

The FSLN delegation met representatives of the press, the Labour Party National Executive Committee and the teaching unions. Despite the total absence of press coverage, there was a good response in other quarters.

The Labour Party is already sponsoring the forthcoming national conference of the Nicaragua Coordinating Committee. The NUT Journal 'The Teacher' is to publish an interview with the FSLN. The delegation had a fruitful meeting with several representatives from Inner London schools, mainly organised through the Socialist Teachers' Alliance.

The Youth Group 'Revolution' has agreed to make Nicaragua a major campaign.

Plans are under way to launch a college and schools-based campaign of solidarity with the freedom fighters.

Anyone interested should contact the Nicaragua Coordinating Committee, c/o World University Service, 20 Compton Terrace, London NW1.

SCEVENTS

OLDHAM SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.
STOCKPORT SC sold every Saturday 1pm Mersey Square. Tel. 061-236 4905 for more information.
OXFORD SC supporters sell every Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.
BRENT SC supporters sell every Sat Morning at the Brent Collective Bookstall in the Trades Hall, Willesden High Rd NW10.
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 Rd, 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).
TEESSIDE: SC sales: at Newsfairs shops in Cleveland Centre and on Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and at Greens Bookstall, upstairs in Spencer Market, Stockton High Street.
TOWER HAMLETS: SC supporters sell papers every Friday 5-6pm Watney Mkt, Sat 11-12.30pm Whitechapel tube, Sunday 10.30-12.00 Brick Lane.
NEWHAM: SC sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Market, Upton Park.
FORDS: SC sale at Gate 25, Body Plant, Dagenham. Weds 9-9.45pm, Thurs. 7-7.45am.

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.
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.

UNION ADMINISTRATOR (part time) needed for London branch of ACTSS. Typing, duplicating, aptitude for figures and ability to work on own initiative required. Minimum £113 per month for 43 hours. Four weeks annual holiday. Job description and application form available from Ann Creighton, 8 Ridgmount Road, London SW18, or phone 870 3259 4-6pm. Closing date: 17 March. Interviews: 24 March.

PUBLIC meeting on cuts in services and attacks on trade union rights — organised by Camden NUPE. Speakers: Alan Fisher, general secretary of NUPE, and Ken Livingstone, Camden councillor. Tuesday, 11 March, 7pm. Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London NW1.

'THE National Question in Yugoslavia' — two articles from Workers Vanguard. 20p from Spartacist Publications, Dept A, Box 185, London WC1.

YOUTH/INTERNATIONAL

Founding conference of Revolution on 3 and 4 May

YOUTH ARE THE KEY TO THE FUTURE

By Jude Arkwright

THE YOUTH we win to the revolutionary movement are, beyond doubt, our most precious asset. In every revolution the youth have been at the forefront of the struggle — with less to lose than older workers, they have shown themselves, time and again, prepared to risk everything to secure the future.

In Nicaragua 8 and 9 year olds laid down their lives in the struggles to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship and to build a new society. In Iran again it was the young people who took the lead, often in opposition to the older leaders who tried to hold back the struggle against the Shah. Students in particular led the huge movement that developed against the Shah, and have consistently fought American imperialism as with the occupation of the American embassy.

Links

In Britain, the mass pickets outside private steel firms have been predominantly made up of young workers; school students have mobilised some of the largest forces fighting the cuts; young women have been in the forefront of the abortion campaign.

The revolutionary movement needs to harness the energy and enthusiasm of the youth. But the youth cannot fight every battle alone — they need to be united behind a clear revolutionary programme that links their struggles to those of the working class.

Revolution is fighting to begin the construction of an organisation that can unite youth behind such a programme.

When Revolution started we had few supporters and no organisation. Now we have 200 members and 18 branches. At the Revolution conference last December we mapped out a set of basic principles to set the framework for the kind of organisation we want to build.

REVOLUTION, the new socialist youth organisation, will be launched at a conference to be held on 3 and 4 May. The existence of the youth organisation — galvanising the most dynamic and willing fighters behind a clear banner and programme — will be a tremendous step forward for the revolutionary movement in this country.

The importance of the revolutionary

These principles are now the basis of intensive discussion leading up to the conference.

We have set ourselves a target of having 300 members by the time of the launching conference and we are also aiming for a £3,000 fund drive to help us on our way.

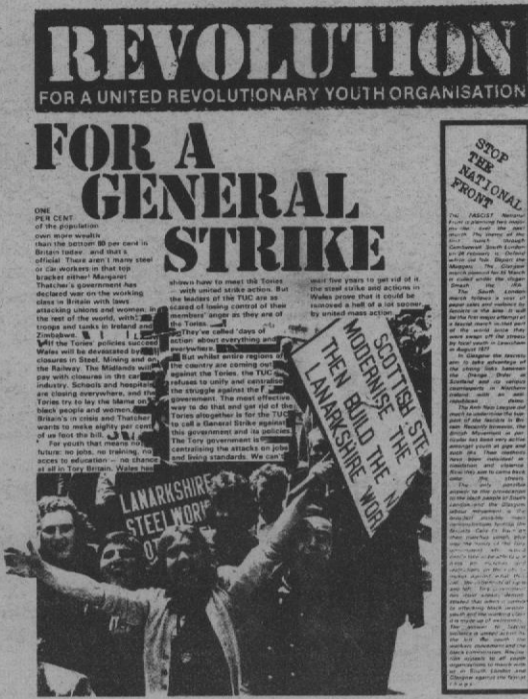
Elect

When it comes to the conference we will have loads to discuss, because Revolution is going to be an independent organisation — it will elect its own leadership, make its own decisions and make its own mistakes.

In society as it is at the moment the youth are not allowed to control or run anything. That won't be duplicated in Revolution, so Revolution will have a lot to do, will have its own view on Afghanistan, the Soviet Union, and so on; it will decide its own perspectives and priorities.

Of course, the IMG members in Revolution will argue for their politics. In particular, they will argue that it is vital to build a party of world revolution, and that attempts to achieve a revolution in Britain without looking at the situation of the world working class are ultimately doomed to failure. Therefore, IMG members will argue vigorously that Revolution should be in political solidarity with the Fourth International, and that it should declare its commitment to building a revolutionary youth international.

youth organisation has to be brought home to every Socialist Challenge supporter to ensure that the two months between now and the launching conference are used to the fullest advantage. We have to use this time to draw youth towards our programme, making contacts with them at school, in college and at work, so that the launching conference is as big and as dynamic as it possibly can be.



But, although IMG members will fight for this view on the Fourth International, and on other issues, it will be for Revolution itself to decide on all

these questions after a democratic debate.

What happens at the conference in May will not only affect the future of Revolution,

could affect the whole future of the revolutionary movement in Britain. That's why it's vital that we go out and get as many youth as possible along to that conference.

The best way of helping to build it is to lend support to the initiatives that Revolution is planning over the next two months. In conjunction with

other youth organisations it will be organising a big campaign on 'a woman's right to choose' for schools and colleges, centred particularly on the need for better sex education and against attempts to withdraw contraceptive advice from women who are under 16. Revolution will also be supporting the Bradford Asian youth march against the Tories' new immigration rules.

Teams

There will be a series of open meetings on aspects of our programme relating to young workers, young women and so on. And teams of Revolution members will be going to areas where there are no Revolution groups to set new ones up.

We need the support of Socialist Challenge readers to make sure these projects are successful; to organise transport for the conference; to discuss with new recruits to Revolution, to answer their questions and help them develop in political understanding. But in particular we need money — the youth have no money, so if you agree with the project to launch Revolution then it is important to help raise funds so that it can happen.

For those who no longer qualify as 'youth' the conference is an investment in the future; for those who go to it, it will mark an important step in the fight to control their own lives. We all have something to gain, so we have to fight together to build the conference and build the youth organisation.

Hugo Blanco, Peruvian peasant leader, leading presidential candidate, to speak in London.

HUGO BLANCO was born in Cuzco, Peru, in 1933. After studying agronomy at an Argentinian university he returned to Peru in the mid-Fifties.

He set about organising peasant unions, which led to seizures of land under the slogan 'Land or Death'. He led the Peruvian peasants in a number of armed conflicts with the state.

He was arrested in 1963 and tried in 1966. Che Guevara, the legendary Cuban leader, stated: 'Hugo Blanco fought hard and fought well.'

The Peruvian military paid him its own unique tribute. They sentenced him to death!

Death

A massive international campaign was launched by the Fourth International to save the life of its most valued mass leader. The campaign was successful. The death sentence was commuted to 25 years in prison.

A left-nationalist military coup in 1970 led to Blanco's release. But he never compromised his political principles. He rejected the 'military road to socialism' and was deported.

When elections to a constituent assembly were announced in 1978 Blanco was back in Peru. He contested the elections on behalf of a united left slate, FOCEP, which won twelve seats out of a hundred, sending shock waves through the heart of Peru's military establishment.

Exile

Hugo Blanco is one of the best-known revolutionary leaders of Latin America. Undeterred by repression, forced exile, daily threats to his life, he fights back relentlessly.

Recently he was nominated as the presidential candidate of the major far-left groups in Peru. The opinion polls show him second in the list with a likely vote of 17.5 per cent and a higher percentage in the working class districts of Lima.

Socialist Challenge readers and the British left as a whole will have the chance to listen to Hugo Blanco when he speaks at the rally organised by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.

HUGO BLANCO

speaks at London rally
Friday 21 March

7.30pm, Friends House,
Euston Rd, NW1

Tickets (£1 and 50p
wageless) in advance from
The Other Bookshop, 328
Upper St, London N1.

SONIA, a member of Birmingham Revolution, explained why youth are in the forefront of the struggles against the Tories:

“Youth will respond to the anti-working class attacks in the most naturally militant and rebellious manner. The bourgeoisie have not yet deeply rooted their norms and values into the minds of youth. Youth are not integrated into the structures of the bureaucracy. Therefore they are more open to politics.

They may not always go to union meetings because they can seem futile and boring. They want to mobilise around abortion, Ireland and racism. As revolutionaries we want to mobilise the rank and file against the bourgeois state and against the bureaucracy and win them to revolutionary socialism.

Youth — young workers — are still unmarked by class defeats and betrayals — they are still dynamic — they are still able and willing to fight.

This applies to young women especially. All they've got in front of them is the prospect of becoming a boring mother and wife. I am on a training course for working a capstan lathe. The women I work with may not know the basic fundamentals of politics but they are instinctively against Toryism and all its institutions.

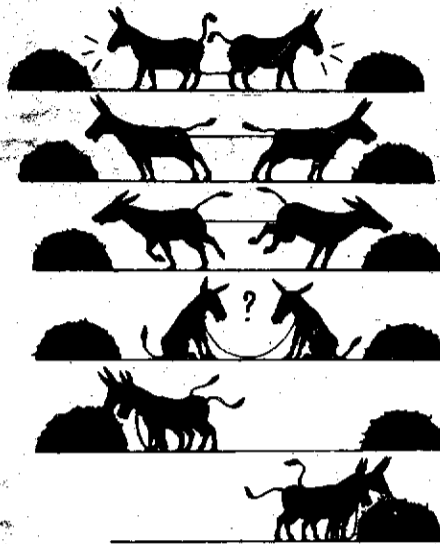
Our foreperson is a rabid racist and disciplinarian but the young women reject his authority totally. Youth will respond to the struggle under the Tories — they aren't willing to wait for elections or lengthy union inquiries to spark off their actions.

Under this Tory government the youth are fighting for their future, so we won't give in!”



THINKING ALOUD

In the first of a regular series of articles, Tariq Ali takes a personal look at the week's events



I REMAIN unrepentant on Afghanistan. I think the Russians were wrong to go in and the longer they stay the more damage they will do the cause of socialism in Afghanistan and elsewhere. It is obvious that hostility to the presence of Russian troops is now universal.

The recent demonstrations and strikes in the cities provide grim testimony to this fact. Can anyone seriously doubt that an overwhelming majority of the population of Afghanistan would, if offered the choice, demand the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops?

That this is the case is also clear to the Soviet leaders. Their sole aim is to ensure political stability in Afghanistan in order to safeguard their own interests inside the USSR. The intervention was intended as an injection to inoculate Afghanistan and prevent the virus from spreading to Soviet Central Asia.

So, if the West is prepared to put pressure on the motley rebel groups to do a deal, set up a national coalition government and ensure stability, Brezhnev could well order a withdrawal. Those who are opposed to a withdrawal will then scream 'betrayal', but it is only their illusions that will have been betrayed.

WHILE on the subject of Afghanistan I would draw the attention of readers to the latest issue of *New Left Review*, which contains another major article on the subject by Fred Halliday.

His pioneering article on Afghanistan was published several months ago and has become the source for virtually every article published in the far-left press on the subject. One positive result of the Soviet intervention has been that the left in the West has been forced to study the history and evolution of this poor Asian country.

Fred Halliday is one of the few Marxists in the West who has paid consistent attention to the fate of revolutions in the 'third world'. His new article thus deserves to be read by all those engaged in polemics on the subject.

I think there are two major weaknesses in Halliday's text. While extremely critical of the bureaucratic and repressive measures carried out by the late Hafizullah Amin, no serious alternatives are offered. Surely if revolutionary Marxists had, by a combination of inter-related factors, been propelled into power one of the first measures they would have promulgated would have been the preparation of electoral rolls and an election of a constituent assembly.

This would not only have provided the Afghan left with a fair estimate of the relationship of class forces on a national scale, it would have provided the most positive framework for proposing and implementing social reforms.

Secondly, Halliday does not enter into a serious discussion of the Soviet invasion and the question of national self-determination. Given the meticulous attention which Halliday has paid to the North of Ireland and his support (with which I strongly disagree) for the right of Ulster Protestants to self-determination, this absence is strange.

All he says is that if the Brezhnevites transform Afghanistan into Mongolia it would be alright, but if things get out of hand the damage could be immense. In other words we suspend judgement till history records its verdict.

But the Mongolian analogy is beside the point. Primarily because the Red Army entered Mongolia in 1921 to crush the White armies and the forces of China's warlords which had entered that country. There was also a revolutionary government in power in the Soviet Union.

Brezhnev is the heir of Stalin rather than Lenin or Trotsky. Soviet foreign policy has different aims now.

Fred is aware of these facts. It is unfortunate that he does not insert them into his analysis of the present crisis in South Asia.

I RECENTLY spoke at a meeting of over two hundred Pakistani workers in Sparkbrook, Birmingham. It was a meeting sponsored by a variety of working class organisations. Three Labour MPs had been scheduled to speak but had withdrawn on hearing that the SWP and IMG were to be present on the platform.

What made the meeting somewhat special was that it was the first attempt by Pakistani workers to expose gangsterism and corruption inside the community. It was alleged that a Pakistani hustler was in league with the police to intimidate and blackmail Asian workers. A story headlined 'Police in "extortion"

racket' was published in *The Guardian* on 28 February. But it did not reveal the identity of the person in question. We can do so. He is Sabir Mirza, Vice-Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (UK). There are signed statements from a dozen of his victims now in the possession of local activists.

Many of those who have given these signed statements are understandably nervous about these being used against them by the local police. The only advice proffered by Labour MPs is that they should trust the police.

But the meeting had one important impact. It ended the cycle of fear which dominated the community. Mirza was named and denounced. That in itself will act as a partial deterrent. But more activity is being planned.

THE Tory Cabinet is divided on how to deal with the unions. Thatcher and Joseph are for a frontal confrontation with the unions. They feel that they can play on the uncertainties inside the working class and outflank the union leaderships from below.

Prior and Heseltine view such a confrontation with alarm. They are perfectly aware that any attempt to view the recent events in South Wales, Longbridge and Sheerness as a justification for bashing the union leaders could provoke an extremely serious political crisis in Britain.

The Prime Minister most admired in Downing Street is the gentle Tory squire, Stanley Baldwin. He organised ruling class forces, provoked a General Strike and defeated the workers in 1926.

The strategic aim of the British ruling class and the whole Tory party is to inflict a defeat on the workers' movement at every level. The reason for this is not just class spite, but the precarious condition of the international capitalist economy.

The British trade unions are admired the world over for their organisational strength and their unity (no divisions on religious or political lines). Since the Second World War the trade unions have grown phenomenally. Britain is the most unionised society in the capitalist world.

But this strength, manifested most when living standards and social gains are under attack, has become a major obstacle to restructuring British capitalism. Hence the Tory desire to weaken the unions. Hence the heated debates at Downing Street. Hence Thatcher's public attack on Prior. She disagrees with his tactics, but that is no reason to sack him from the Cabinet. (Has she read John Marshall's Party and Faction articles, I wonder?)

But the divisions inside the ruling class party should not make the left complacent, for there are many unresolved paradoxes in the present situation.

In 1926 the trade unions were not as strong as they are now. The ruling class was materially and economically much stronger. But socialist politics had a much bigger base in the industrial working class and the Russian revolution was only nine years old.

Today the situation is almost reversed. The ruling class is materially weak, but politically and ideologically strong. The working class is organisationally strong and politically weak.

A failure to recognise this paradox will make it even more difficult to find a solution. Hence the vital necessity of fighting for socialist politics and socialist ideas in the labour movement as a whole.

THE 'British Journal of Hospital Medicine' is not my favourite magazine, but its February 1980 issue has a fascinating 'American letter'. This reveals that the Shah's move to New York had very little to do with his health.

The 'Journal's' American correspondent expresses despair that the State Department used doctors to further its sordid political aims:

'Whatever the secret political gyrations that led Washington to admit the Shah to the USA, the medical side of the deal looks as phony as a \$2 bill.... However much the Shah's doctors protest that they had no choice but to go along with the State Department's orders, it's going to be a long time before anybody believes a medical bulletin on a major political figure again.'

It goes without saying that, but for the mass mobilisations in Iran, the State Department's attempt to allow the Shah to stay in the USA would have been successful.

INVEST IN THE FUTURE

This is an open letter from a reader and a (very) occasional contributor to the paper. I believe in and support the paper's political orientation, but am neither an IMG member nor form part of a Socialist Challenge group.

There are many readers in a similar position and the following appeal is addressed primarily to them.

I have a 'thing' about banker's orders and on two previous occasions the editors have accorded me space to promote this method of fund-raising.

To recapitulate the advantages: for the paper a steady monthly income is an ideal form of financial support because it allows for proper planning.

For us — the readers and supporters — it is a painless way of making a contribution. One pound is automatically deducted each month from one's bank or post office account.

No mess, no anxiety and the satisfaction of knowing that you are making a consistent and valuable contribution.

Virtually every reader is capable of a £1 donation. Many are capable of giving more, particularly those comrades who already have standing orders but have failed to increase them.

The ease of maintaining an order means that it does tend to get forgotten, and I myself have been guilty of this.

Fund-raising for the paper is going well and this is a good moment for us to make a collective effort.

Whatever our relationship with the paper, we all use it for information, for theoretical debate and clarification, for an indication of the state of struggle.

The struggle is hard, it will get harder; we will become more reliant on the paper. Always provided that the paper has been able to rely on us beforehand, and that means now.

No socialist is exempt, not one. Fill in, cut out and post the form printed on this page.

Paul Russell, London SW7

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE BANKER'S ORDER FORM

Your Bank

Name of Account to be debited

Account Number

Our Bank Socialist Challenge

Lloyd's Bank, Upper St, London N1.

Account No 0179678

Sorting Code 30-94-57

Amount to be paid Monthly

First Payment due And on the same date in the month thereafter.

Signed

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)



ASISTER OF OURS?

THE fight to gain equality — and power — for women is a struggle that will last our lifetimes and those of our daughters and sons.

It really is a revolution, and I don't think we should be afraid of using that word. Leninists do not have a monopoly on the word revolution.

It is a radical event for women to participate in power, with a new understanding of power. It will change the world — not in a simple sense, as some feminists have hoped: I do not believe that women stand for fundamentally different values from men, or that women politicians necessarily will be more humane, more sensitive, more liberal, more tolerant.

Pleasure

Nevertheless, I must confess to some pleasure at the prospect of Margaret Thatcher becoming Prime Minister of Great Britain, despite the fact that my politics are hardly hers.

I take it as a sign of progress that in the last two decades, for the first time in history, there are women heads of state who are not monarchs. It is in the interest of all women that this has happened.

Obviously, it is in our interest to support candidates whose views are in accord with our own, but it is also in the interest of women to support women *per se*.

I am *not* suggesting that, were we British subjects, we should vote for Thatcher — but I don't think we should narrow our idea of participation of women in politics to the notion that women are going to create new or ideal types of candidates.

We're going to have candidates of every political colouring. The more the better, I think, especially since the first ones who actually get a modicum of power are likely to oppose, or at least deny, connections with feminism.

Still, just their visibility will make it more acceptable for women to succeed who *are* accountable to us. It would be ridiculous to support the candidacy (for anything) of someone like Phyllis Schlafly, of course.

Yet even those candidates who seem to profess conventional views have, for us as feminists, a great interest.

Power is not simply a substance to be shared, to be seized, to be acquired or transferred: that's the wrong metaphor. It is a way of defining relationships.

Transformation

We should be interested in women candidates because their presence in the political process at all levels will, I am convinced, change the nature of power as such.

Not, I repeat, because women stand for different values, but because traditional structures of power have been based on and reinforced by sexist values.

To remove the women's vote dichotomy as a criterion for the exercise of power will, I think, make an enormous difference.

Involvement of women who want to participate in the political process, and those who hold executive positions in the business and professional worlds as well — all these women are not only getting a part of power individually, but are contributing to a transformation of power itself.

Margaret Thatcher is the first woman ever to be Prime Minister in Britain. She sits at the head of a cabinet dominated by men, leading a party and a parliament dominated by men.

American feminist Susan Sontag, a fiction and filmscript writer, told the National Women's Political Caucus in New York City last year that Margaret Thatcher's rise to power gave her pleasure.

On the left we reprint Susan's speech and, below, Valerie Coultas explains why Socialist Challenge holds a different view.

Does Margaret Thatcher's dynamic rise to power set an example for all other women to follow? Is her Premiership a bold step forward in the feminist revolution?

Susan Sontag's view is only possible if you look at Thatcher simply as a woman and ignore her class loyalties.

Margaret Thatcher is a Tory through and through. She believes passionately in private enterprise. She is a racist who urges British people not to allow their culture to be swamped by alien values. She is a jingoist who affirms that her supreme loyalty is to her country.

While post-war Tory administrations made some accommodation to collectivism and the welfare state, Thatcher has brought a return to the world of power and money and wealth in private enterprise.

Nature

Margaret Thatcher is out to change the nature of power in Britain, not between women and men, but between employer and

employees.

It is true that women heads of state are more common today than fifty years ago, and this is of course a reflection of social reality. Women in general have more control over their lives than previously.

But there are vast gaps between what a few women at the top can enjoy and what the mass of women at the bottom experience.

Crushing

Class background, money can alleviate the problems of being female. Abortions, education, help around the house don't become such a problem if you or your husband can afford to pay someone else to do these usually menial, women's jobs.

The class divide between women is growing greater today in Tory Britain.

Thatcher proudly proclaims that if she can be a wife and mother and a Premier then so can anyone else. She throws her success in the face of the mass of women who will

never have her education, her opportunities to succeed.

She converts their collective oppression into individual failure. This can act to crush the confidence of women who are not so fortunate as Margaret Thatcher.

Contempt

But male prejudice has been stung by Thatcher's strident style of government. The 'butch monetarist', the 'bitch', the pictures of Thatcher with 'wanted for rape' displayed above them, display not only class hatred but a ready contempt for the female sex.

Justing about coping Thatcher is arrogant in justing about teaching Marxism. She is more interested in women — over for them, the Thatcher, who have big 'butch' bodyguards.

A class perspective that thinks sexual oppression is a 'joke' is obviously inadequate in dealing with Margaret Thatcher. But Susan Sontag's feminism is redundant without a class perspective.




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IRELAND **BS**
DIVIDED NATION DIVIDED CLASS

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£3.50 + 35 pence Post and Packing.



Socialist Challenge

VICTORY!



BUT THE WAR IS NOT OVER

AS the struggle against the Tories gathers momentum and a general strike mood begins to sweep core sectors of the industrial working class, money to help your newspaper continues to come in. This week Haringey IMG tops the list with a grand donation of £55. Make sure the money keeps flow-

ing as it is really the only way we can sustain a 16-page paper.

Thanks this week to:

Wolves IMG	£15.00
Swindon reader	5.00
L Folwell	1.50
Hackney supporter	5.00
J Rivers	3.50
H Wally	3.50

Oldham IMG	10.00
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A V Freeman	5.00
M Tupper	12.00
Colin's Barrel	15.00
Canterbury supporter	5.00
SW Mcr	5.00
Oldham Tax rebates	43.00
Anon	15.00
TOTAL THIS WEEK	£258.50
CUMULATIVE TOTAL	£2017.50

BOYCOTTING BAR-CLAYS BANK

How aptly named is Barclays Bank
In South Africa today:
Apartheid is the colour-bar
Standing with such feet of clay.

If Britain-with-a-Conscience chose
Not to bank with Barclays here,
Perhaps the Bank would choose to close
Such investment-in-despair.

How aptly named is Barclays Bank
Standing with such feet of clay,
Investing in the colour-bar
In South Africa today

© N. Racine-Jaques, 1980

ROBERT Mugabe's victory in the Zimbabwe elections is a defeat for the South Africans and for Anglo-American imperialism.

The South Africans were backing Muzorewa. He got the grand total of three seats. The Anglo-American bloc was backing Nkomo. He got 20 seats.

The white settlers (grossly over-represented) got the 20 seats agreed to in the Lancaster House settlement. But Mugabe won 57 seats in the hundred-seat Zimbabwe parliament — an overall majority.

Despite the slanderous propaganda against ZANU; despite the intimidation by the lumpen auxiliaries of Muzorewa; despite the murder attempts orchestrated by the White Rhodesian security forces, 70 per cent of Zimbabwe's blacks voted for Mugabe.

In this way they gave their retrospective approval of the guerilla war which was the real catalyst in defeating the settler regime.

Although a major victory has been won, the war is not over. The dismantling of the settler state has yet to take place.

It is unlikely that the armed bodies of men and women who are loyal to South Africa will peacefully accept the verdict of the majority of Zimbabwe's population.

It is too soon to predict with accuracy the future course of politics and class struggle in Zimbabwe. But we must remain on guard.

* *Robert Mugabe in his own words, pages 8 and 9.*

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