

# Socialist Challenge

## UNIONS' FUTURE AT STAKE LEYLAND — IT'S NOW OR NEVER

By Pat Hickey, Deputy Senior Steward, SDI, Rover Solihull

WHEN British Leyland workers clocked in after the Easter break the company began imposing new working conditions which were the strings attached to its original 5 per cent pay offer.

Only the Land Rover and Range Rover plants at Solihull, and the Birmingham Common Lane plant which produces the Sherpa van, went on strike against the company's imposition of the deal. The Jaguar Brown's Lane plant came out over a grading deal.

The union leaderships had refused to call an official dispute. Terry Duffy, president of the Engineering Union, had deliberately sabotaged the possibility of a united response at British Leyland. After a rigged ballot of the AUEW membership in BL — in many plants no vote was taken — he instructed all the Engineering Union members to work normally.

### Control

The Transport Union refused to call its membership out, but promised support to members who did fight the Company's plans. The Leyland Combine Joint Negotiating Committee and the convenor's conference failed to give any lead, effectively leaving control in the hands of the union officials.

The result was that most of the major plants did not take action. At the SDI plant in Solihull, which produces the Rover saloon car, a mass meeting before Easter was split 50-50 on a call to join on strike

the Range Rover and Land Rover plants, despite the fact that these plants were intending to picket the SDI gates.

### Picket

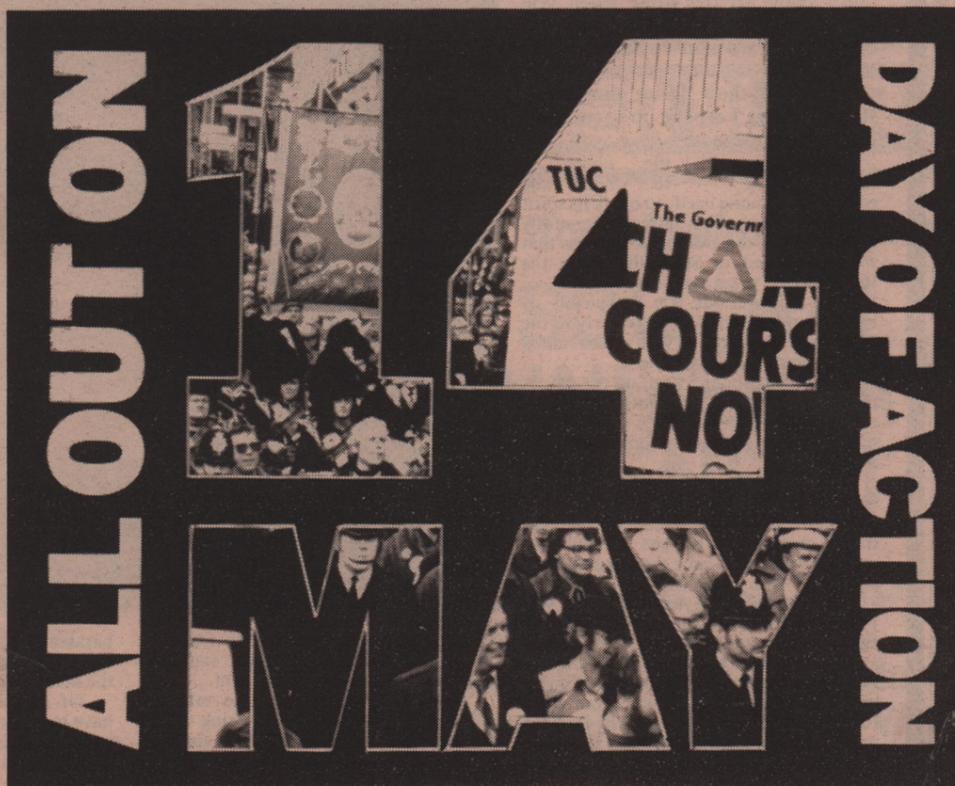
The result of the leadership's failure at national level was that SDI workers crossed the picket lines on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of last week.

International Marxist Group members at the SDI plant made the difficult decision to cross the picket lines to fight inside SDI to win action against the company's plants.

This decision was vindicated at a mass meeting on Friday when the strike call was put again. There were 3,500 votes in favour of strike action and only 200 votes against, despite the fact that with strikes and lay-offs the SDI plant has only worked for three months since last summer's holiday.

The turning point was the TGWU decision to give official backing to the striking plants, but the reality of what was happening with the implementation of management's package played a major role.

At the SDI plant the company refused to give out back pay due on the deal until every shop steward had made a personal undertaking not to resist any aspect of the new



BUILDING for all-out action on 14 May — see page 2.

working conditions.

When management was asked what these conditions might be, the reply was: 'What the foreman tells you they are.' The workers at the SDI plant realised that the package meant the destruction of shop floor organisation in the company, hence the turnaround in the votes at the mass meeting.

The main task facing BL

workers now is the spreading of the dispute to the whole of British Leyland.

The first targets for this have to be Longbridge and Cowley, the main plants still at work. If they are not brought out, serious obstacles will be put in the way of winning the dispute.

But the smaller plants must

also be won. A difficult problem is presented by Canley and Castle Bromwich, since both these plants face closure by the end of the year.

The strike must be turned from one of resistance to the company's imposition of new working conditions to one of opposition to the Edwardes' Plan.

The demands must be for a revival of the full claim; £24 across the board; for a 35-hour week with no strings, and smash the Edwardes' Plan.

Together with the task of spreading the strike will go that of forging a new unity at British Leyland. At Solihull we will be establishing a strike committee for the whole site, then trying to link up with Common Lane and Jaguar.

As more plants come out a national strike committee should be established to put control of the dispute in the hands of the strikers and prevent any sell-out deals.

Such a body could replace the Leyland Combine Joint Negotiating Committee, which is entirely undemocratic and has shown itself incapable of fighting its way out of a paper bag.

### Victory

As the strike develops, management and the government will threaten wholesale closures and job loss. We will have to respond to such threats with occupations, and by taking the fight to the components industry, which is already facing massive job loss.

The stakes in this strike are the highest ever in the car company. Edwardes wants to destroy shop stewards organisation in the company completely, and a defeat for union organisation in BL is important for the government.

The company has already threatened victimisation. A victory for BL workers would be a massive blow to the Tories and a vital boost to the whole trade union movement.

## OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Address.....

## HOME NEWS

### Building the action on 14 May

SUPPORT is mounting for the one-day action on 14 May called by the TUC against the Tories' economic policies. Every day brings news of more trade union support.

Unions as diverse as the National Union of Seamen, the health union COHSE, and the Fire Brigades Union will all be involved. But the full impact of the day of action could be seriously compromised by the attitude of the union leaderships.

The possibility of 14 May beginning any really decisive movement against the Tories was undercut from the beginning with the failure of the TUC to call an official one-day general strike on that day. This has allowed virtually every union executive to get away with leaving it up to workers in the localities whether to strike or to take more limited forms of protest action. This decentralisation of the activities planned for the day will limit their impact.

An example of how this can undermine the

effectiveness of the protest can be seen in London. The South East Region of the TUC is calling for demonstrations in the London boroughs, rather than organising a central all-London demo.

Many workers will be uncertain whether they will be backed by their colleagues nationally and locally, and will hesitate to come out on strike. This will inevitably decrease the potential numbers on strike. This could badly affect the morale of the growing movement against the Tories — there can be no doubt that the Tories will claim a victory if the number of strikers is very small.

However, the real root of the problems in organising action for 14 May does not lie in the disorganisation of the union leaderships, but depends much more on the problems of organising one-day actions at all.

Reports from Socialist Challenge supporters across the country indicate that there is a sceptical attitude on the factory floor towards one-day action. 'What kind of one-day action can possibly

defeat the Tories?' is the question that thousands are asking. There is clearly a sense in which this attitude is right. One-day action will certainly *not* defeat the Tories.

However if militant workers do not respond seriously with efforts to build the biggest possible protest on 14 May the results will be even more disastrous. Forcing the TUC to take more effective action depends on seizing every opening, no matter how small.

If the action on 14 May is weak, then every bureaucrat will turn round and say: 'See, our members don't want action!' It is up to us to make sure that their self-fulfilling prophecy of limited support does not come about.

We can only convince workers to take strike action on 14 May if it is seen as the first step towards more prolonged strike action to defeat the Tories. In this context the perspective of a general strike becomes even more relevant than ever.

### The Labour Party's one-day conference

THE LABOUR PARTY'S national executive at its meeting last week decided to go ahead with its special conference, which is to be held at Wembley on 31 May. This conference is almost unprecedented. It could act as a major focus for opposition to the Tories' offensive. But what use will the Labour Party leaders make of it?

At the executive meeting, the Labour left accepted that the conference would only discuss and vote on a declaration from the executive, and that no amendments or other resolutions would be accepted. Apart from being in flat contradiction to the Labour left's demand for democracy, this decision will effectively render the conference

powerless.

What is needed from the conference is not a declaration full of platitudes but a programme of action to fight the Tories. It should include a series of labour movement conferences, demonstrations, and other activity up to and including the demand for strike action to bring down the Tories.

The declaration that will be put forward will inevitably be a compromise with the right wing, a compromise agreed by the Labour left on the party executive for the sole purpose of allowing Callaghan to be able to vote in favour of holding the conference. Without a clash of ideas, without counterposed resolutions, neither the left

leadership nor the rank and file in the Labour Party will effectively be able to make their voices heard.

Socialist Challenge supporters in the Labour Party will be taking up the fight to make the conference open and democratic, so that the constituency parties and the union rank-and-file can make an effective contribution.

They will be waging a campaign in the unions, the Labour Party wards, and the GMCs to demand that resolutions can be put and action organised. Unless the conference is able to organise action against the Tories, it will simply be a display of anti-Tory demagoguery, in which even Callaghan can participate — full of sound and fury, but signifying nothing.

## Bristol police take revenge

By Jude Woodward

POLICE in Bristol are out to show that you can't chase the police off the streets and get away with it. In the last week over 1,500 people in the St Pauls' ghetto have been questioned in connection with the Easter revolt.

The friendly atmosphere of the area has been subtly changed; people don't come to the door when you knock but peep from behind curtains or the kids are sent to say they are out.

Plain clothes police linger on street corners keeping up a constant threatening presence.

The aim of the police is straightforward — to divide the community among itself, to break its spirit which is riding high after successfully beating back the police, to ensure that what happened in St Pauls before the Bank holiday never happens.

The police raids, on 'suspicion of looting', nearly all take place early in the morning. No one knows who will be raided next; everyone is vulnerable.

One of the shops looted on the day of the revolt was a newsagents, so having more than 20 cigarettes or a few magazines is enough excuse for police harassment.

400 cigarettes was the excuse for picking up one black guy. In another case the police carted away the Easter eggs that a mother had bought her children, when she got them back they had all been smashed.

One woman's 8 year old child was picked out for close questioning when the family were taken to the police station.

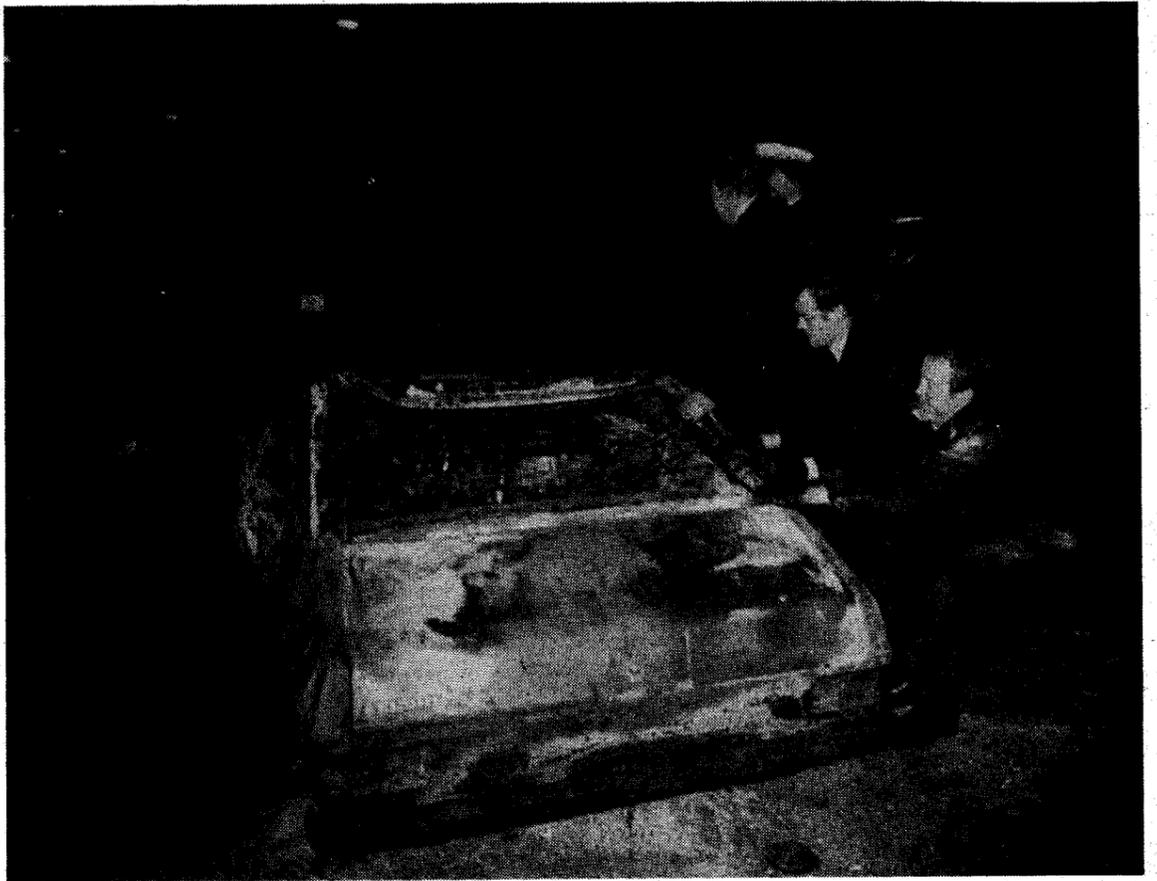
A house was raided at 5am, and the man was rushed straight out of bed into a waiting police car. He wasn't even given time to dress, as he was pushed into the car he still only had one trouser leg on.

Even now the raids continue at the rate of a few each night.

Being in a car doesn't even make it safe to be out.

Last Thursday, as a car driven by a white with a black passenger pulled up at traffic lights, a police car stopped with them and in seconds the black guy had been grabbed and pulled out of the car. He was viciously pushed about while being hustled into the cop car and carted off 'on suspicion of carrying drugs'. The white driver was left untouched.

The police are having a hard time hiding the racism in their reprisals against the St Pauls' community. The volatile situation threatened to erupt again when a



demonstration was planned to leave the ghetto and march to the police station in protest against racist harassment.

The police were forced to take the exceptional measure of opening police cells to public inspection before rumours that they were holding large numbers of blacks could be dispelled.

The Bristol police have 110 people under suspicion following their extensive house to house searches and of those at least 71 are black. Actual charges have only been brought against 42 people and of these exactly half are white.

Their problem is to simultaneously reassert police control over the ghetto without appearing overtly racist.

The police may hide its racism from the readers of the bourgeois press, who believe the truth of statistics and nothing else, but it cannot hide it from the people of St Pauls. Only 42 arrests and half of them whites doesn't help them forget the

harassment of over 1,500 people, the huge majority black, which is the background to the actual arrests.

Of course the police in Bristol now have to be careful. They cannot round up and demoralise whole black community, as they did in Southall a year ago, because this time the police were defeated and the community of St Pauls is left feeling self-confident. This is precisely what the police is out to change — they lost in the military-style confrontation, but the fight to maintain morale is only just beginning.

The only long-term barrier to police attempts to break the back of the community lies in permanently established black self-defence and political organisation.

As yet there are only the small beginnings of this in St Pauls. A defence campaign for those arrested in connection

with the events of Easter weekend has been started. There have been a couple of meetings involving the people around the Black and White cafe where the revolt started and among local black youth to discuss how to organise.

Donations to the defence fund should be sent to Albert Villas, 146 Grosvenor Rd, Bristol 2.

Two events promise to give a focus to the mood of resistance in St Pauls:

**Campaign Against Racist Laws** launching meeting, 7.30pm Friday 18 April, Central Hall, Oldmarket. Speakers: Defence campaign, Kim Gordon, Tariq Ali and Vishnu Sharma.

**Blair Peach memorial march.** Remember Southall! End police harassment! Drop charges in St Pauls! 23 April, 6.15pm at Eastville Junction, 7pm rally the Metropole, 8pm picket of Brideswell.

## HOME NEWS

# BLACKS ROUT NF IN OLDHAM

By Pete Clifford

IN OLDHAM last Saturday over two thousand people came out onto the streets against the National Front. The vast majority of them were Asian workers, demonstrating a militancy rarely before seen in the North-west.

The counter-demonstration to the National Front was called 10 days earlier by Oldham Campaign Against Racist Laws. Between then and Saturday there was a frenzy of activity in the area.

Thousands of leaflets were circulated door-to-door, as well as to local trade union bodies. In Pakistani and Bengali areas, daily meetings were held. The day before the demonstration Asian youth toured the streets mobilising people.

In the lead up to the march, the fascists had made violent attacks on black people, so it was to be no ordinary march.

Gangs of fascists armed with bricks and iron bars attacked the Bengali area of Westwood; there were three petrol bombings in the Pakistani area of Glodwick. The NF march was ostensibly against the town's Labour MPs, but in reality it was held to bolster the self-confidence of the racist thugs.

For black people, the counter-mobilisation was an extension of the self defence which they were organising against these attacks.

More than that, angry at growing numbers of deportations and threats under the immigration laws, attitudes to the police were hardening. Specially assigned community police officers were given no joy in trying to get the march called off.

On the day, it was clear from early morning that the mobilisation would be big; textile mills in the area were either closed or had whole departments missing as black workers opted for fighting racism.

People started organising three hours before the rally. By 10.30am in the Bengali area of Westwood 500 workers had assembled, and to the horror of the police they began to march on the town centre.

When they arrived the police pushed them into a car park. But then the Bengalis were joined by hundreds of Pakistanis and Bengalis from Glodwick. Embracing one another and shouting slogans, they swept the police aside and marched onto the main street towards the NF assembly point.

Within minutes the main entrances to the town were occupied. The whole action was led by the youth.

The infuriated police began to attack the demonstrators, pulling them across the road and grabbing the megaphones of the leaders. As news got through that the NF were in a nearby car park, many black youths broke through to stone the 60 scared fascists.

### Escort

The fascists, with their pitiful demonstration overshadowed by the counter-mobilisation, were escorted back to the railway station by hundreds of police — their own transport having been wrecked.

The fascists had clearly suffered a major defeat; they were only able to march because of the major effort by the police to defend them. Over 35 people were arrested.

When the fascists had gone, over 200 people picketed the police station to demand that the charges be dropped. Others marched back to Glodwick. On the street corners black people were discussing how to maintain the unity built on the day, and plans for self-defence.

A large defence meeting has already called for a picket of Oldham court on 7 May, and plans are under way for a mass rally in Oldham to greet the Asian youth on the Black Freedom March in June.

Contributions to the defence fund for those arrested, to OCARL, c/o Socialist Challenge. Witnesses of those arrested should contact OCARL at the same address.

\* The article on Oldham in last week's Socialist Challenge was written by Pete Clifford, and not — as was stated — by Janet Gardner.

## Support Anwar Ditta

By Lewis Emery

THE CASE of Anwar Ditta has become a symbol of the resistance of black people to the racist policy of the Tories. Born in Rochdale, Anwar married in Pakistan and returned to this country with her husband to find jobs and prepare a home for their children.

But when the children, who had been staying with relatives, were subsequently sent for immigration officials refused them entry.

The Home Office has already been forced to let up on its delaying tactics and make her appeal a 'priority'. But this is not enough — she demands her children be returned now.

A demonstration has been called in Manchester on 26 April two days before her appeal is to be heard.

\* Assemble noon, junction Chichester Rd/Lingbeck Crescent near Mosside, Manchester.

\* Financial help to: ADDC, c/o 127 Crawford St, Rochdale.

## ANNIVERSARY OF SOUTHALL

### PICKET

YOUR LOCAL

POLICE STATION

WED APRIL 23rd

Friends of  
Blair Peach  
Committee



# DISBAND THE SPG

# NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION SUN APRIL 27th

Assemble 1pm Speakers Corner Marble Arch  
March via Scotland Yard to Rally in Trafalgar Square  
**REMEMBER BLAIR PEACH**

Rock Against Racism  
**SOUTHALL  
ANNIVERSARY  
BENEFIT**

Saturday 26 April

7.30pm, University of London Union,  
Malet Street, London WC1

**THE PIRHANAS AND  
THE AU PAIRS**

Admission £2

# 'The spark to light a flame'

By Redmond O'Neill

THE LAST stage of the South Wales Youth March against unemployment was by far the most exciting. The enthusiasm for the march grew stronger as we went along and by the time the march went its way into Cardiff, on the Wednesday after Easter, it was 200 strong and very noisy.

Support for the march reached a high point as we went through the mining valleys of the Ogmore and the Rhondda.

The closure of large numbers of pits, the threatened closures in steel and other job losses ensured that the marchers got a warm welcome wherever they went. As the march went through mining villages hundreds of people came out on to the streets to clap and express their support.

The efforts of the police to stop us collecting money were useless in the face of this level of local support for the march.

## Ogmore

As we went into the Ogmore valley we were met at lunchtime by a welcoming committee. The Mayor of Ogmore greeted the marchers at the lunchtime meeting and they were also addressed by Emlyn Hughes, a member of the South Wales executive of the National Union of Mineworkers.

That night, Monday, was spent in Treorchy, where a meeting on Ireland, organised by Revolution, was attended by 30 of the marchers.

As we went through Tonypany, in the Rhondda valley, we were met by Annie Powell, Communist Party member and Mayor of the Rhondda. She explained why there was such a high level of support for the marchers in the valleys.

Unemployment in the Rhondda is 18 per cent and 26 per cent for school leavers. Factories built by the Welsh Development Agency stand empty and many workers in the area are on four, three or even one day weeks.

'You must remember that at one time there were 59 pits open in the Rhondda, now there's only one — that's Mardi. Even at Fern Hill they're now taking the coal out at Tower Number 4, on the other side of the mountain, so from our point of view, Fern Hill to all intents and purposes is closed,' she said.

'As a matter of fact I have been invited to speak at a meeting in Fern Hill later this month because it will be the last meeting of the Lodge.'

For the people who were greeting the march in the Rhondda our slogan: 'No return to the '30s' had a particular meaning. They could remember when there was 60 per cent unemployment in their valleys.

People were equally enthusiastic about the slogan for a general strike to bring down the Tories. One miner told a joke that summed up the feeling in the valleys:

'Margaret Thatcher was driving through the Rhondda when her car broke down. She sent her chauffeur to find help, and he found three local lads who fixed the car.'

'As a reward she said she'd grant one wish each. One asked for a summer holiday, and another asked for a job, but the third wanted a state funeral.'

'What do you need a funeral for at your age?' Thatcher asked. He explained that although he felt okay now, he knew that when he got home and told his parents whose car he'd fixed he'd be needing a funeral.'

## Rhondda

Over £300 towards the cost of the march was raised as we marched through the Rhondda.

On Tuesday night the march stopped over in Pontypridd where we had a big meeting and a showing of the film 'Harlan County USA'.

The meeting was addressed by Dai Francis, former secretary of the South Wales NUM.

Other speakers at the meeting included Ray Davies, from the Llanwern steel plant, who expressed anger at the sell-out of the steel strike and pointed to the necessity of keeping up the fight against the planned closures in South Wales steel.

To the marchers he said: 'You



young people are the spark to light a flame in the struggle against unemployment in South Wales. This march is the best thing that's happened here since the war.'

The marchers were also presented with a signed copy of 'The Fed', the newly published history of the South Wales Miners' Federation. The authors, Dai Jones and Dai Francis' son, were there to make the presentation.

After Pontypridd we marched into Cardiff on Wednesday. Despite five days of walking everyone was chanting at the tops of their voices. Our spirits and sense of unity were high as a result of the support we had got along the way.

We are determined that the campaign will go on, whatever the reaction of the Wales TUC and other bureaucrats, who want to divert the struggle into requests for regional aid and import controls.

The Youth March was a start, now we have to keep up the pressure on the unions to fight for unity of the employed and unemployed in action to save and create jobs. 14 May and the fight to build general strike action to kick out the Tories is the next big step along that road.

## Tea and sympathy but no action

By Patrick Sikorski

WHEN the youth march against unemployment arrived outside the Wales TUC in Cardiff it found the doors locked. Lucky George Wright, the general secretary, was away on holiday.

After the marchers had kept up a continuous chant of 'We want to see the TUC' the doors were finally opened. A delegation of marchers met Sylvia Jones, chairperson, Archie Kirkwood, chairperson of the employment committee, and David Jenkins, research officer.

Richard Rozanski, a spokesperson for the marchers and a member of Revolution, argued that the only way to halt the closure plans for South Wales was through united strike action.

The Wales TUC was much clearer about what it wasn't going to do about unemployment than about what it would do.

'There will not be an attempt to repeat the demonstration of 28 January in Cardiff on 14 May,'

said David Jenkins at the press conference that followed the meeting.

They also rejected the call that had been raised by the marchers for a general strike to bring down the Tories.

'This is a democratic government, which has been elected to office. Because of this it is responsive to the people of this country. It is therefore not necessary to move to a general strike to bring down the government. It is necessary to impress on this government the wrong nature of its policies and force it to change them.'

The discussions with the Wales TUC revealed that the total job loss

in the area flowing from the intended closures at BSC Port Talbot and Llanwern would be in the region of 200,000.

In the face of this kind of attack on the living standards of the people of Wales, the Wales TUC has virtually nothing to offer in response. It is not even certain that there will be a major demonstration in Cardiff in 14 May. The excuse offered by the TUC was that public transport workers would be on strike so it would be strike breaking for people to travel in to Cardiff.

However the TUC did welcome the idea of youth contingents on any demonstrations that did take place, and offered to approach affiliated unions to provide subsidised transport.

The specific problems of young blacks and young women were pointed to and discussed sympathetically, but all they offered as a solution was 'special research'.

The obstacles faced by young workers trying to influence the trade unions on the problems specific to young workers and apprentices, were also given an airing.

One positive change would be the calling of a youth TUC in Wales as in Scotland and England, but the Wales TUC said it didn't have sufficient resources to organise one. The Scottish TUC has a full time Youth Officer, the Wales TUC does not.

The main concession won from the Wales TUC was that a proposal for a Wales Youth Conference on Jobs would be taken to the General Council at the beginning of May.

The Wales TUC are being rather complacent in the light of the industrial devastation that is about to fall on Wales. If the conference on jobs is to happen then pressure will have to be kept up on the Wales TUC.

If the conference is not just to be another talking shop we will have to carry on campaigning in Wales in the way we began — in the streets, factories, workplaces and pits. This kind of movement, linked up with national initiatives, could be the kind of movement that really can fight unemployment.

A movement which puts the responsibility for unemployment squarely on the shoulders of the bosses and the Tories, and which can refuse to let the working class pay the price for falling profits.

# 'We're fighting for jobs, not one sex against the other'

ANNIE POWELL is mayor of the Rhondda and a member of the Communist Party. She is the only CP mayor in the country.

She was born into a family that had been miners or small farmers in South Wales for generations. As a young woman in the '30s she experienced first hand the poverty and hopelessness of unemployment.

A campaigner all her life, she was out to meet the South Wales Youth March Against Unemployment when in got to the Rhondda.

Why do you support the youth march?

Well, because I feel very strongly about the question of young people being unemployed. You see I started my career unemployed for six months and I know the effect it had on me.

Don't forget I lived through the '20s and '30s when 60 per cent of the men in the Rhondda were unemployed and I knew the desperate poverty and hardship of those days. I made up my mind as far as I was concerned those days shall never return again.

What's being done about unemployment in the Rhondda now?

They built what they call advance factories. Then the Welsh development agency came in.

They closed a big factory without any need in Treorchy because they had plenty of orders. Those orders were transferred to Derby.

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The factory was suitable for the type of engine that they were doing so, with the aid of the Welsh development agency, they pulled that factory down and they built two small factories.

I think one of them has been now let.

They also built some factories higher up in Treherbert. There have been inquiries about these but nothing definite has been settled.

So out of the six new factories that have been set up, and these are very small, they've only got two that are definitely going to start work.

The number of people that will work in them is negligible compared to the number of people that have lost their jobs.

What effects will the redundancies have on women?

Well of course the unemployment rate amongst women is even sharper than among men and we're going to see more. And you're getting this call from among, let's be honest about it, some men trade unionists, that married women shouldn't be in work.

You're getting that old cry that I haven't heard since I was almost a teenager. That's not a solution at all.

For example last week they opened a new International Stores in Treorchy. They were taking on 40 people and they had over 300 applications.

It's just the same if we advertise jobs in the council offices. The lowest clerical job, clerical I, 91 applications for just one job. The qualifications had to be seen to be believed — people with university degrees, people with 11

O-levels, 3 A-levels. You've got that level of intelligence and ability — that makes me madder than ever.

What do you think is the solution to unemployment?

I think to start with they could be making cuts in the army, the navy, the police force. They're not making any cuts there and they're not making any cuts in the top strata of the civil service who rule this country.

To me it's a mad situation where you pay millions to keep people unemployed and they don't produce anything. It would be far better if, instead of importing some of the stuff that we do — telephone equipment, bricks and all kinds of things like that — we should be manufacturing it in this country.

What about the situation in the Rhondda in the '30s?

It was dull; it was drab. You made your own pleasure, you walked or cycled everywhere. Wage levels were low — even if he was working the miner's wage level was only £2.12s a week.

A majority of people in the Rhondda were unemployed and houses were drab. You weren't able to repair houses and that's why when it came to the end of the war, a bit more was a bit easier, and money was a bit more plentiful, you immediately saw a transformation as far as the houses in the Rhondda were concerned. Especially when this question of improvement grants came in.

It really was that people were as hungry as

this.

We never had playing fields at the school I went to. You had to bag a part of the school yard, if you wanted to play cricket or something. I could grab a boy and say I'll give you my sandwiches if you'll bag the playing pitch for me.

Were there particular difficulties for women like yourself becoming political?

Not so much for me, but in the early days, in my parents' day I think it was more difficult. But by the time it came to the '20s, there were quite a number of women who had begun to take part in politics.

Of course the women had joined and marched on the hunger marches over to London. When there were demonstrations of unemployed, the women and children came along, so that the women themselves, out of force of circumstances, had got involved.

That's why I was so pleased today to see so many women among you marchers today. It's important that people see that we're fighting for jobs, not the one sex against the other.

In the '30s it was seen as absolutely important to involve women. For a start the men could never have done what they did without the support of the women. For the men to go off on these marches and demonstrations — and don't forget hundreds of men went to jail — the women had to carry on.

They were proud to have their man in jail for the movement. The same kind of pride as there was when the men went to fight in the Spanish Civil War. Quite a number went to fight from the valleys.

# Welsh holiday homes go up ... in smoke

By Derek Davies

**THE CRISIS in Wales is not just about job loss and falling real wages. Although unemployment is the biggest threat to the stability of Wales as a whole, it is not the only issue to have grabbed the headlines in recent weeks.**

While the core of the South Wales working class teetered on the brink of general strike, the predominantly Welsh-speaking people of the North and West directed their anger against the selling of local property as holiday homes.

Arson attacks have resulted in over 30 'second' homes being burnt down since Christmas. The fact that widespread police operations have only just succeeded in rounding up some suspects shows the sympathy of large numbers of Welsh people for the motives of the arsonists.

## Rocket

The buying of holiday homes undermines the Welsh-speaking communities in particular. In some of the 'well-sited' villages more than half the houses now belong to outsiders, usually English, who use them at weekends, holidays and for retirement.

The middle class English who move in often have little regard for Welsh language and traditions, treating them with arrogance and disdain, or viewing them as 'quaint'. The intrusion of large numbers of English has even influenced voting — for the first time Anglesey returned a Tory MP at the last election.

The biggest disruption resulting from the purchase of holiday homes is that it literally causes homelessness, particularly among young Welsh people. Buyers from England can pay much more for homes than local workers, causing house prices to rocket out of the reach of local people.

## Publicity

Young people either have to live at home with their parents, or move away to new areas. With hardly any rented accommodation available, the communities are broken up; villages become ghost towns, the Welsh language suffers and so on.

Despite the adverse publicity the conversion of housing into holiday homes still continues apace. Official figures estimate that there will be a 10 per cent increase in holiday homes from 1976 to 1981; in some areas the rate is as high as 13 to 14 per cent. For parts of North Wales the rate is

shown at 47 to 49 per cent, and over 20 per cent for parts of the West. 20,000 homes in Wales are already owned by non-residents.

The new Tory Housing Bill, will allow even more Welsh homes to find their way on to the holiday home market as council-owned homes are sold to private tenants.

The Tories have supposedly included safeguards in the Bill to protect those who live in rural areas. The clause applying to such areas states that council homes once purchased can only be re-sold to someone who has lived in the area for at least three years, or to the council.

But despite repeated requests the Tory minister at the Welsh Office has refused to say which areas will be classified as 'rural'.

## Militants

The campaign against holiday homes was begun jointly by Plaid Cymru and Shelter, but they did not attempt to build a mass movement, confining their activity to lobbying MPs and trying to win over the media.

It was this campaign's failure to achieve anything that led some people to turn to arson as a tactic.

The turn to arson also indicates the extent to which Plaid has lost the allegiance of Welsh nationalist militants. It has repeatedly failed to act decisively on the issues that affect Welsh people. Even in recent weeks when Plaid members and parliamentary candidates were arrested in police swoops, on no evidence other than their known nationalist sympathies, the leadership of Plaid Cymru failed to act.

When Gwynfor Evans, president of Plaid, finally got round to commenting on the police raids, he didn't condemn the purchase of holiday homes or police harassment. The police were 'over-reacting' was all he had to say.

The Labour Party has done no better. Leo Abse appeared on TV to denounce Welsh tenants for worrying about homelessness and to denounce *Nationwide* for revealing that the arson attacks had wide sympathy in Wales.



# Police face wall of silence

By Derek Davies

**'THE police have called on scores of people without a shred of evidence', said Robert Griffiths, secretary of the Welsh Socialist Republican Movement, describing present police activity in Wales.**

In a desperate attempt to get a lead on the holiday home fires, the police have detained and arrested many people for questioning. Incendiary bombs at the Tory offices in Shotton and Cardiff have added to the frenzy of police activity.

The harassment has been aimed at the left of the nationalist movement, the Welsh Socialist Republicans, and the militant language groups Cymdeithas and Adfer.

At least 10 Welsh Socialist Republicans have been arrested and had their homes searched, including Robert Griffiths. Three of Plaid Cymru's 1979 election candidates in South Wales — all recognised as left-wing Plaid members — were also arrested.

The Special Branch have denied detainees access to solicitors and have retained their possessions like address books, files and documents although not making any charges whatsoever.

'Suspects' have been picked up coming off work, at home with their families, going out

for the evening, at all times of the day and night. And what reasons have the Special Branch given? None except the people concerned have certain political views, which the police consider 'extremist'.

As Robert Griffiths says: 'Search warrants are coming down like confetti. The police have obtained them so easily,

Griffiths has been sacked from his job as recruiting officer by the Banking, Insurance and Finance Union.

The Special Branch have also singled out Gerry MacLochlainn, a Provisional Sinn Fein member living in South Wales. He has been detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The intention is obvious — to deport

door enquiries are carried out. In Blaenau Festiniog, the police ended their doorstep interrogations with 'Who did you vote for in the last election?' Any Plaid Cymru

voter, any person with known nationalist sympathies, is a suspected 'terrorist' and 'arsonist' in police eyes.

But the wall of silence from the Welsh people shows where their sympathies lie. Thirty holiday homes have been burnt and still the police have no lead. Even while their round-up was underway, more holiday homes went up in flames.

Campaigns to oppose the police harassment are already picking up steam in Cardiff, Newport and Pontypool. A public meeting is planned this week in Cardiff by the Welsh Campaign for Political and Civil Liberties; a letter of protest is being signed by prominent trade unionists and politicians; a detailed report on Special Branch and police practices will be published within two weeks; support resolutions are going to union branches.

Every day, Newport and Pontypool campaigners are picketing the police station where Gerry is being held.

Wales' wall of silence is about to become a wall of protest and condemnation.

**'SAVE Wales' badges. Send a stamped addressed envelope and 20p to Cardiff Socialist Challenge, c/o 11 Berthwin St, Canton, Cardiff. Orders over 20, 10 per cent discount.**

you might as well dispense with them as worthless. The police come and go as they want.'

Clearly, the Special Branch are using the recent bombs and fires as a pretext to gather information on the Welsh nationalist and socialist left, and to launch through the media a campaign of slander and innuendo. Already Robert

Gerry and prevent him from raising the Irish struggle in the Welsh labour and national movements.

In North and West Wales, police activity has been aimed at the entire predominantly Welsh-speaking population. Here road blocks are set up and cars searched, whilst in the towns and villages door-to-

# Abortion: women must be up front

**EVEN** the popular press has pointed out that abortion is a class issue and that the Corrie Bill was a class attack.

There's no doubt that the arrival of the Corrie Bill had a lot to do with the election of a Tory government that is out to attack the position of women; they think it's where they'll be least resistance and rely on dividing the working class on sex lines.

The campaign against the Corrie Bill has shown that pressuring and working with the labour movement is a correct and successful approach and that it is important that we win trade unions and men to our side.

At the same time it must be remembered that 40 per cent of the TUC membership are women and that a major reason for the TUC being the first in the world to call what was probably the biggest ever demo for abortion rights was because women had not waited for any men to act on our behalf. The TUC went into action because women had started organising to win our demands.

If we are to achieve NAC's demands we need the support of the labour movement — but on what basis? If the Corrie Bill had gone through it would be women's lives that would be disastrously affected, and I don't think we should underestimate its results. It would be a major attack on women, affecting who they

## Abortion opinion column

**AT** the 1972 Skegness Conference of the women's liberation movement, women were so outraged by the arrogant behaviour of some of the men who attended that they decided to kick them out.

Ever since that time a debate has raged among socialists and feminists as to whether or not men should be involved in meetings and campaigns on

marry, when they work, if they work, who they are dependent on.

Abortion is a class issue for backstreet and economic reasons but to rely too heavily on an economic analysis and an economic solution is to fall into the trap of the anti-abortionists' arguments: provide better material conditions and all women will want to perform their 'natural' reproductive duties and will never want or need an abortion.

We are fighting for choice and the fight for abortion rights is essentially a struggle for sexual freedom. We must win the support of the labour movement on this understanding as

issues that directly affect women.

The National Abortion Campaign is likely to discuss this issue at its conference that will be taking place in May.

Below, Jan Parker, a member of the NAC steering committee and a full-time worker for the recently successful Campaign Against Corrie, expresses her personal views on this issue.

well as for class reasons.

To defeat attacks and to obtain a woman's right to choose we need a campaign, (and an organisation?), that includes the power of the labour movement with the strength and politics of the women's liberation movement. It is an uneasy alliance as events have shown and to sustain and grow on this alliance will be difficult as a result of these tensions. Women have been in their 'rightful place' in the abortion campaign — right in the forefront, but how do we continue to lead the campaign and get maximum involvement from men and

the labour movement and involve more women, including more women in the women's movement?

Historically the trade union movement has ignored women, the change is recent and to change consciousness takes even longer. NAC must be quite firm about its principles and demands in future activities with the labour movement.

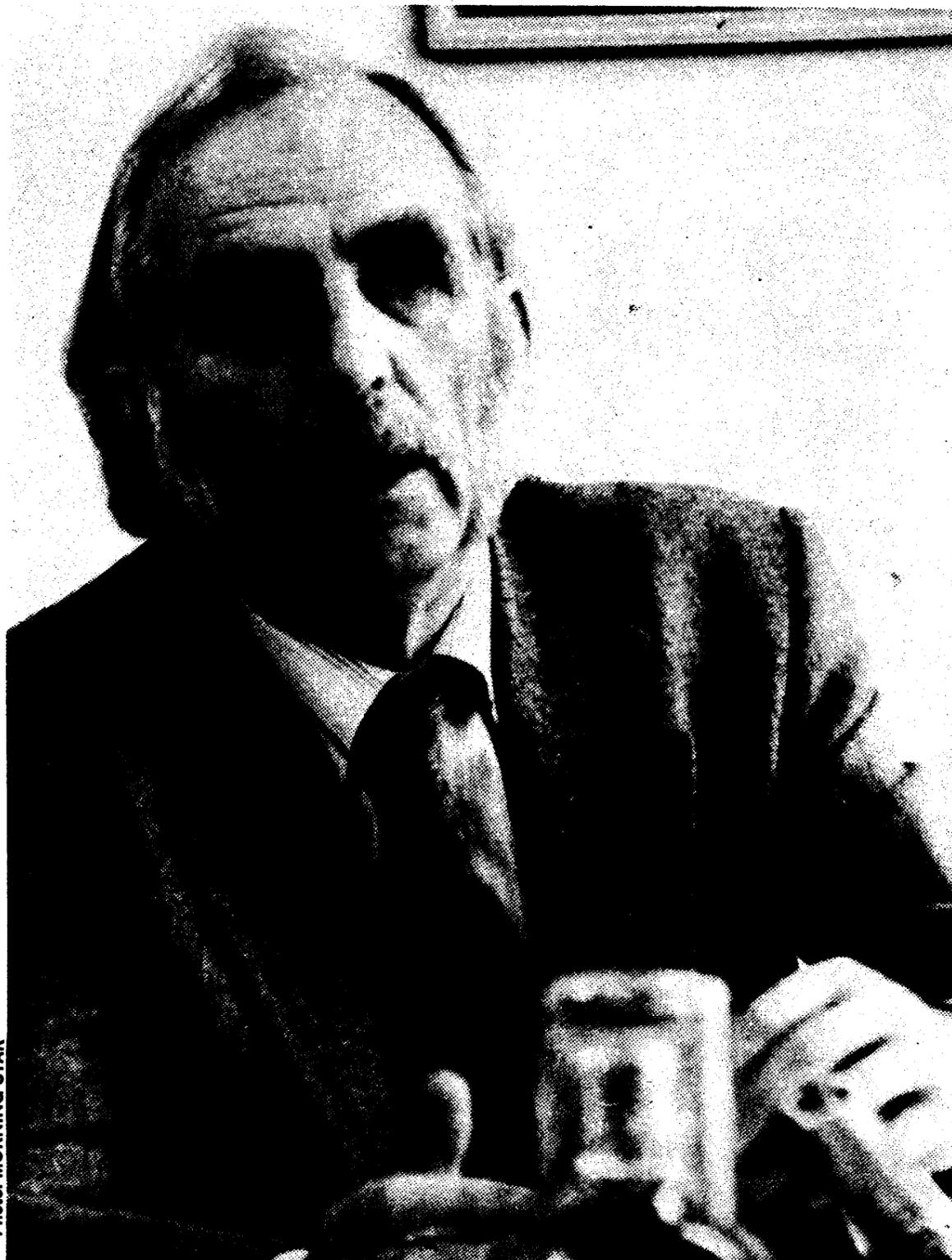
If we decided to go for positive legislation we must make no compromises in the interests of parliamentary tactics and stick to our position of 'No legal or medical restrictions'. 'A woman's right to choose' is a very subversive slogan — it means total control over our reproduction.

It is a demand for women's rights and for women's liberation, which means that means we have no choice but to confront men's ideas and power if we are to change anything: women's autonomy in NAC is central to how we assimilate this into the campaign.

**This article is substantially based upon Jan Parker's contribution to the latest NAC newsletter. This is available from 374 Grays Inn Road, London NW1.**

**We welcome contributions from any Socialist Challenge readers about where they think the abortion struggle should go from here.**

# Teachers leaders get a kick up the backside



**THE** right-wing executive of the National Union of Teachers had a hard time at its annual conference last week.

Its most sorry blows were when invited speaker, Tory Education Secretary Mark Carlisle, was greeted with heckling and walk-outs as he began to address conference, and when the executive's 'non-political' stance was shattered by being forced to call half-day action on 14 May.

But these were not isolated incidents, as HILDA KEAN, a conference delegate, explains.

When the NUT vice-president, and ex-member of the Communist Party, Jack Chambers, asked: 'Do you seriously expect the NUT executive to fight for security of tenure for jobs?', the response from the delegates was a massive shout: 'Yes, this is a trade union.'

When John Perry, ex-Militant supporter and executive member, said: 'There is a huge problem confronting this union and I'm part of it', the delegates cried out: 'Hear, hear', and 'Resign'.

Every executive member who got up to argue against a proposal for a special conference on pay, or against the use of the strike fund for leaflets, was hissed before they started to speak.

The mood of the whole conference was epitomised by the first debate, on defending comprehensive education against Tory attacks. The motion under discussion had been drawn up by the Socialist Teachers' Alliance, and had been put forward to conference by the support of thousands of other teachers. It argued for action in defence of post-war gains.

## Card

The motion was proposed by Graham Lane, Socialist Education Association (Labour Party teachers) and seconded by Ken Jones, convener of the STA. The motion won 80,000 votes, at least one third of the total card vote.

Socialist Teachers' Alliance motions, calling for cooperation with the TUC in discussing schools' curriculum, and calling for a public inquiry into the murder of Blair Peach, were both carried overwhelmingly.

That 300 delegates walked out when Carlisle spoke was a symptom of the mood at the conference, not an isolated incident. There are a large number of teachers who want to take

action, and are only too willing to hear about alternative policies to those of the executive.

Support for positions in favour of national action, closer links with the broader trade union movement, and for a woman's right to choose, even when not actually passed by conference, revealed a perceptible move to the left among sections of the union membership.

## Services

The experiences of the Avon and Trafford delegation revealed the hopeless failure of this executive to meet the needs of the membership. Both areas have taken extended local strike action against cuts in the services they provide, but had met with limited success. Their motions calling for a discussion of their action and for a national meeting of all areas contemplating strike action, won widespread support but were defeated with the executive's opposition.

After the failure of these motions the two areas called a fringe meeting to discuss their experiences.

The executive was defeated on the question of calling action on 14 May. Pressure from their own members, and from the wider trade union movement forced the executive to back half-day action on that day.

But the NUT still clings to 'professionalism' to distinguish it from other trade unions. Those who walked out when Carlisle began to speak were accused of bringing the 'profession into disrepute'. It is still only ten years since the NUT affiliated to the TUC; it still refuses to wholeheartedly oppose the Prior laws as they 'don't affect teachers!'; there were still only two left-wing candidates elected in the recent executive elections.

The next months will be crucial in mobilising support among teachers for action on 14 May. And we haven't even begun the task of building a permanent opposition to the executive in the localities.

But to return to the positive side: fringe meetings on Nicaragua, Gay teachers, Women in the NUT, Friends of Blair Peach and others were well attended by delegates previously outside the left's ambit. The STA will be holding a national school very soon to consolidate the gains of the conference and to mobilise for 14 May; details from 13 Bloomfield Rd, London N6.

Whether the NUT conference gains can be extended or whether the executive will reestablish itself with its prestige untarnished will be decided by the actions of teachers themselves over the coming months.

**Professor Clegg:** His report recommends 17 to 25 per cent pay increases without being tied to changes in teachers' conditions of service. Tory-dominated

councils, backed by the government, are likely to resist implementing his proposals.

By Anibal Yamez

**THE EVENTS** in El Salvador are part of the developing revolution in the whole of Central America, at the centre of which is the victory that has been won by the workers and peasants in Nicaragua.

The victory of the FSLN fighters on 19 July last year was a blow against the common enemy of all the oppressed and exploited of the Americas: United States imperialism. The US multinationals are the chief beneficiaries of the misery of the people of Central America.

The US is desperately trying to head off a repeat of Nicaragua. That's what lay behind the American-backed coup in El Salvador which took place on 15 October last year. It was an attempt to give Washington's domination a new mask, to replace the bloody and discredited mask of General Carlos Humberto Romero.

But since the new junta came to power more than 900 workers and peasants have been killed by the police and army. The rights of free speech, assembly, and travel have been suspended. The much-touted 'agrarian reform' is no more than an excuse for military occupation of the countryside.

## Why the revolt occurred

What are the conditions which the people of El Salvador have been rebelling against? El Salvador is the most densely populated country in the Western Hemisphere, with about 5 million inhabitants living in its 8,260 square miles.

The average yearly income is \$450, but even this miserly sum is misleading. The population is divided between a tiny number of very wealthy people and a vast mass of impoverished working people — with very few in between.

Hunger stalks El Salvador. Recent studies rank it among the Western countries most seriously affected by malnutrition. At least 74 per cent of children under the age of five show signs of protein-calorie malnutrition.

About half the infants of El Salvador die before their first birthday. There are fewer than three doctors for every 10,000 inhabitants.

The roots of this misery can be easily seen. Central America as a whole has an annual product of more than \$12 billion with a relatively small population of 18 million. But this wealth is systematically expropriated by US imperialism.

Private investment in the region by the United States came to \$734m in 1977, of which \$248m was invested in industry. These investments gave US corporations a return of 17 per cent on their investments. The latifundia system of land ownership means that a mere 2 per cent of the population own 60 per cent of the cultivable land.

## Workers movement

In the 1950s and 1960s there was significant industrial development, related to the establishment of a Central American Common Market. This slowed down considerably in the late 1960s.

The economy still revolves around the export of coffee, cotton, and sugar cane, which together account for 60 per cent of foreign earnings. Industry and services make up the remainder.

Most industry is foreign-owned, with US investors predominating.

The result has been the growth of a strong trade union movement, based on an urban as well as rural working class. Industrial workers now make up 8 per cent of El Salvador's labour force.

There are more than 80,000 trade union members. Many smaller unions have tended to unify as class consciousness has risen.

The power of these workers was impressively demonstrated in March 1979, when a co-ordinated strike was called by several unions in different

# El Salvador: roots of the freedom struggle



electrical industries, especially those owned by the state.

By pulling a few switches, the electrical workers cut off the flow of electrical energy to the whole country for 48 hours.

Not a single factory ran. There was no transportation, because electricity is needed to operate the petrol pumps. Lifts in office buildings didn't work. The government had to give in to the workers' demands — a big blow to the ruling oligarchy.

Struggles have multiplied in the context of a constant lowering of the masses' standard of living, a consequence of the world-wide capitalist economic crisis which began to take hold in the mid-1970s, and of massive repression against the workers and popular movements.

This led to the rise of new militant mass organisations, and to armed struggle in the cities and countryside.

In the recent period, El Salvador has gone through tremendous class confrontations. Strikes and factory takeovers to demand a rise in wages and a halt to repression against the workers' movement occur one after the other, as do street demonstrations, occupations of churches, and other actions in support of democratic rights — in particular freedom for political prisoners.

In the countryside the masses are organising to resist the terrorist activities of right-wing bands hired by the landowners and aided and abetted by the government.

Throughout El Salvador the repressive forces on one side and popular mobilisations on the other have brought the country to the brink of civil war. Despite the repression, the masses show no sign of drawing back.

The Salvadoran workers and peasants — in revolutionary organisations, unions, and peasant federations — have been standing up to the unofficial and official armed forces in the service of the landowners and US imperialism, and drawing revolutionary conclusions about what is needed to change their country.

Massacres and brutal repression are meeting a combative, organised response on the part of the masses.

## Unity on the Left

There is an increasingly united response from the left. Three revolutionary organisations have moved towards fusing their forces, inspired by and understanding the

effectiveness that the Sandinista-led struggle gained when the FSLN in Nicaragua healed a split among its three tendencies.

The three Salvadorean organisations are the People's Revolutionary Bloc (BPR), the February 28 People's League (LP-28), and the United Front for Popular Action (FAPU). Each of these is a mass organisation with its own collective leadership, and they are made up of trade unions, peasant organisations, teachers' unions, high school and university students' associations, and slumdweller and market vendors' organisations.

They also each have an armed wing. The Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP) is identified with the LP-28, the Farabundo Marti Popular Liberation Forces (FPL) with the BPR, and the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN) with the FAPU.

Initially, the pro-Moscow Communist Party of El Salvador supported the junta which replaced General Romero, and its members even joined the cabinet. But the rising mass struggle, the repression, and the pressure of the revolutionary organisations led the CP to withdraw.

Now the Communist Party through its legal expression, the Democratic Nationalist Union (UDN) has been drawn into a front with the revolutionaries. This is the Revolutionary Co-ordinating Committee of the Masses.

## Mass action and mass murder

On 22 January this year 300,000 people marched through the streets of San Salvador to protest against repression and to support the economic and social demands of the workers and farmers.

The demonstration, one of the largest in the country's history, was called by the Revolutionary Co-ordinating Committee of the Masses.

Workers, peasants, teachers, students, slumdweller, market vendors, and many others participated marching in disciplined contingents.

This united mobilisation was met with reactionary terror. When the march approached the Metropolitan Cathedral of San Salvador, police and para-military sharpshooters opened fire on the peaceful demonstrators from adjoining buildings, leaving more than 300 wounded and 20 dead.

But this did not stop the struggle of the masses. Strikes, occupations and takeovers continued throughout February. And on 17 March the Revolutionary Co-ordinating Committee of the Masses called a 24-hour general strike in opposition to the junta's avowed policy of 'reforms with repression' and to denounce US intervention in El Salvador.

The strike totally paralysed economic activity for one day.

Once again the government resorted to mass murder. More than 150 people were killed as the army and right-wing terrorists bombed and machine-gunned factories and attacked peasants in the countryside. Workers who had taken over factories and farms were lined up and shot.

The National University, where many of the left groups have organising centres, was a special target. Witnesses say that it was even bombed from the air.

The government forces reported had new helpers in carrying out the bloodbath — US Marine 'advisers'.

This measure was aimed primarily against the agricultural and industrial workers, rather than the armed left-wing guerrillas.

The government's aim is to paralyse the mass movement with terror in order to then take on the armed struggle organisations in strictly military confrontations, which the army's fire power and logistic support systems would be far superior to those of the guerrilla groups.

## US intervention grows

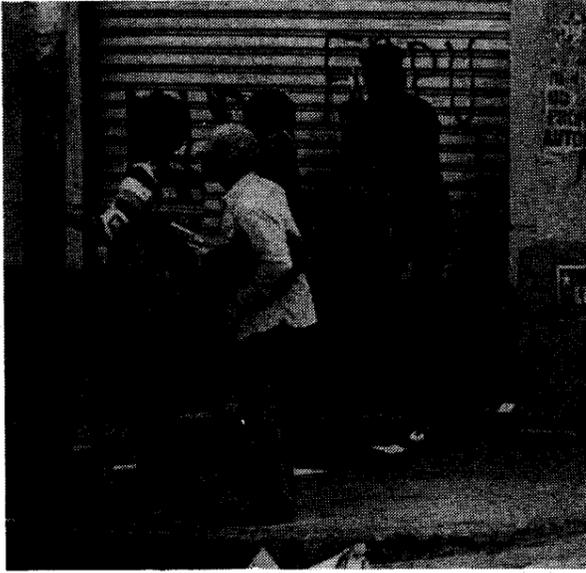
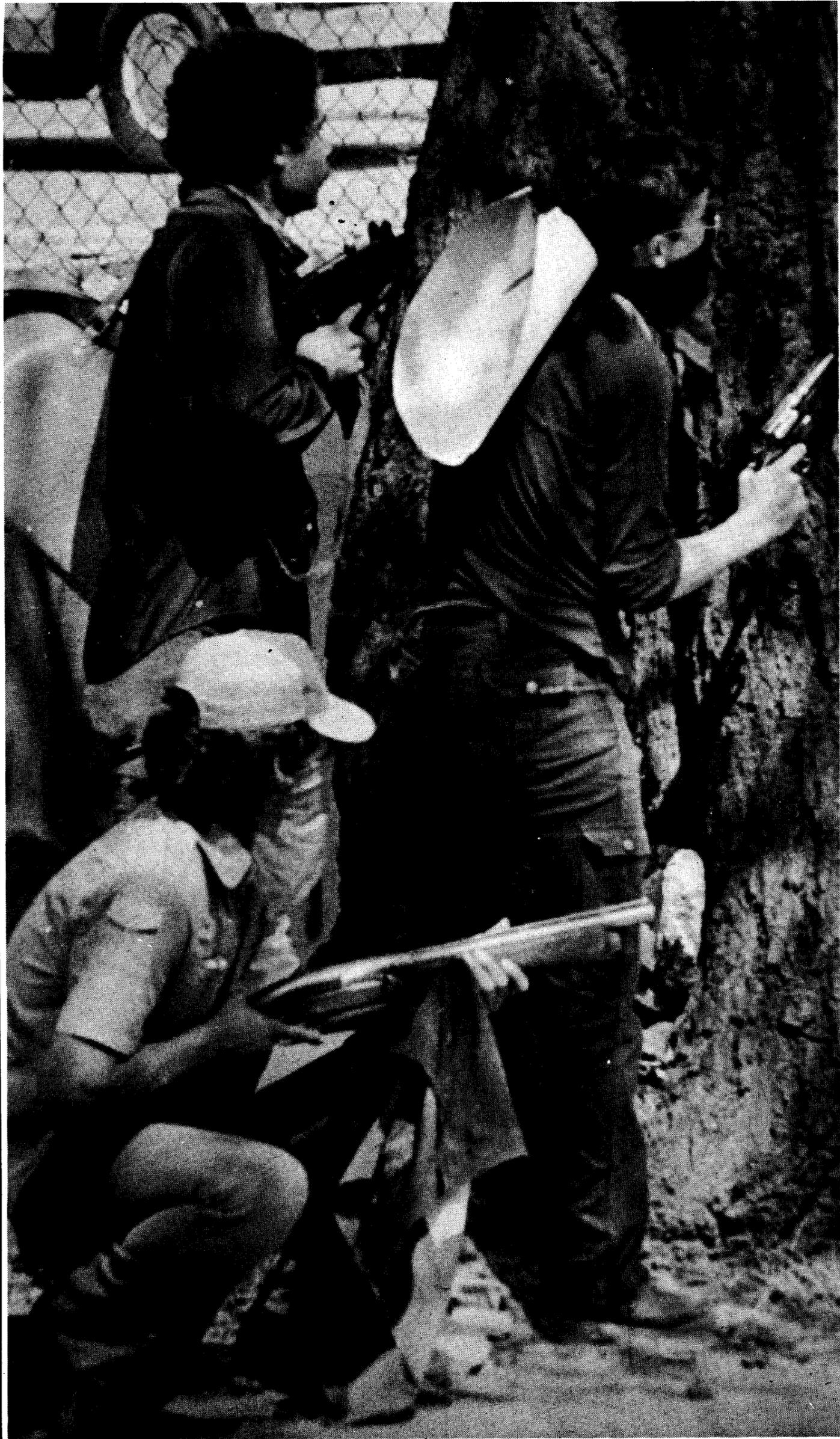
This policy has the full backing of the Carter administration, despite its claims to be supporting a peaceful 'moderate' government which is trying to implement reforms. Carter's slogan is 'No More Nicaraguas — any price'.

In January, two days after the massacre against the march of 300,000, Carter sent Assistant Secretary of State William Bowdler to El Salvador. He loudly reiterated Washington's support to the murderous junta.

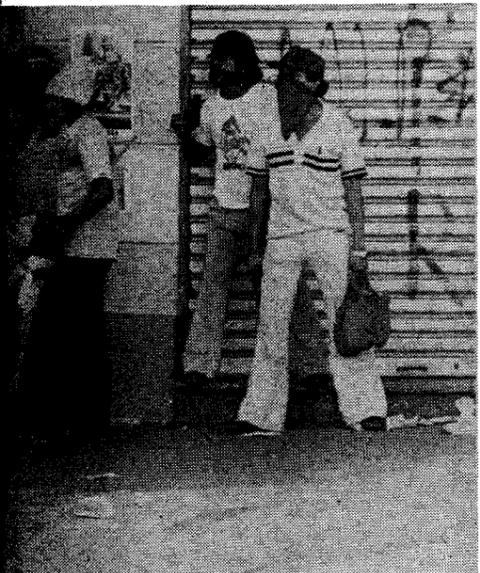
According to a report by the Institute for Policy Studies: 'Security assistance from the United States to El Salvador between 1950 and 1979 has totalled ...\$16.72m.'

'The United States has trained a total of 1,971 Salvadorean officers including at least 17 in urban counter-insurgency, 14 in military intelligence, 108 in basic combat and counter-insurgency, and 124 in basic officer preparation.'

This is a continuation of nearly 30 years of US government backing of brutal military regimes in El Salvador.



All photos: JOSE LAVANDEROS



## A photo-report from the streets of San Salvador by Mexican photographer José Lavanderos

The pictures on this page show what a civil war is like.

For fifty years the people of El Salvador have suffered the brutal tyranny of a right-wing dictatorship. Now, inspired by the example of the Nicaraguan people, they are fighting back.



But the El Salvador ruling class is not willing to give up its coffee, cotton and sugar plantations without a fight. They, like every other ruling class, will use any means at their disposal to protect their privileges and their profits.

But the workers and peasants of El Salvador are no longer prepared to live in squalor, brutally treated by the regime, while the ruling class lives in luxury.

On 22 January they protested against repression by calling a general strike. Thousands of people supported the action and stayed away from work, or travelled into the capital, San Salvador, to march through the streets.

There were reprisals because the action was so successful. That day and the next peasants and workers were shot down, or brutally mutilated with vicious machete knives, by the army, police and right-wing para-military groups.

Virtually every day there is street fighting or repression. On 12 February LP28, one of the three major left groups in El Salvador, stormed the headquarters of the Christian Democrat Party to protest at its involvement in the government of the ruling junta. The army took back the building and six LP28 members were killed.

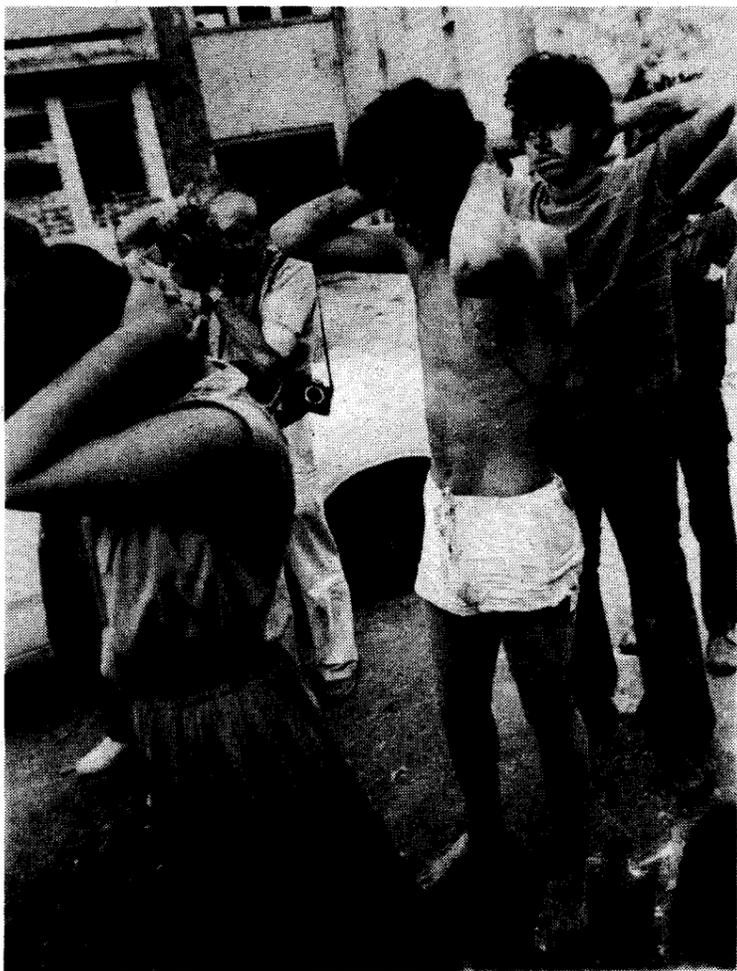
On 17 March the Revolutionary Coordination, the joint front of the three main far left groups and the Communist Party, called a 24-hour strike against US intervention in the country. The army is supplied with tanks, guns and bombs by the United States. It used them to massacre workers in factories and peasants in the countryside on 17 March.

Carter, the champion of self-determination and non-intervention in Afghanistan, sent over military advisors especially for the occasion.

El Salvador shows that Carter's claptrap about human rights in Afghanistan is motivated simply by opposition to the Soviet Union — and it won't do his election chances any harm either.

But the masses in El Salvador are prepared to take on US imperialism along with their own ruling junta if that is what's necessary. They continue to strike and protest despite the most savage reprisals.

Socialist Challenge is proud to publish these pictures of a courageous people and urges every socialist to build solidarity with the El Salvador revolution. The El Salvador Solidarity Campaign can be contacted c/o NSC, 20 Compton Terrace, London N1 or tel: 01-487 4397.



# FROM PRAGUE TO KABUL

## By Rudolf Bahro

*THIS critique by RUDOLPH BAHRO, the East German Marxist, of the Russian invasion and occupation of Afghanistan is published as a contribution to the debate within the labour movement.*

*Bahro's views do not accord with those of Socialist Challenge. His framework is that of Euro-communism, and he therefore relies on conceptualist theories which are, paradoxically, of Stalinist origin.*

*Thus his main criticism of the Russian action is that it threatens 'detente and peaceful coexistence', as if this policy originated by Stalin was a prerequisite for democratic socialist advance.*

*Socialist Challenge considers that the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan at this stage, far from aiding the fight for socialism in that country, could only lead to the victory of pro-imperialist and obscurantist forces and a bloodbath of left forces in Afghanistan.*

**I PREVIOUSLY** believed and indeed have written that the Soviet military action against the Prague reform was the greatest crime of the Soviet leadership since the Second World War.

This is no longer quite correct, though if sanity had survived in Prague, in Warsaw, or even in East Berlin, and Moscow had subsequently shown at least a trace of adaptation to this new reality on the western periphery of East Europe, then there would not have been the invasion of Afghanistan.

Whatever may have been in the minds of the Kremlin gerontocracy, this is a crime against peace that goes far beyond Afghanistan, both in place and in time. It is a crime against detente and disarmament.

It puts the subjugation of the Prague Spring into the shade, and goes even beyond Deng Hsiao-ping's shameless 'lesson' to the Vietnamese.

Back in 1968, the flagrant Soviet breach of international law had a defensive motivation that public opinion everywhere could at least understand. In all countries of the Soviet bloc the Novotnys were trembling with fear for their positions of power, shaken to the marrow and to their Moscow centre.

By flexing their military muscles right from the beginning of the Spring movement, they themselves produced the mood in Czechoslovakia that could subsequently have led to that country breaking with the Warsaw Pact.

### Peace

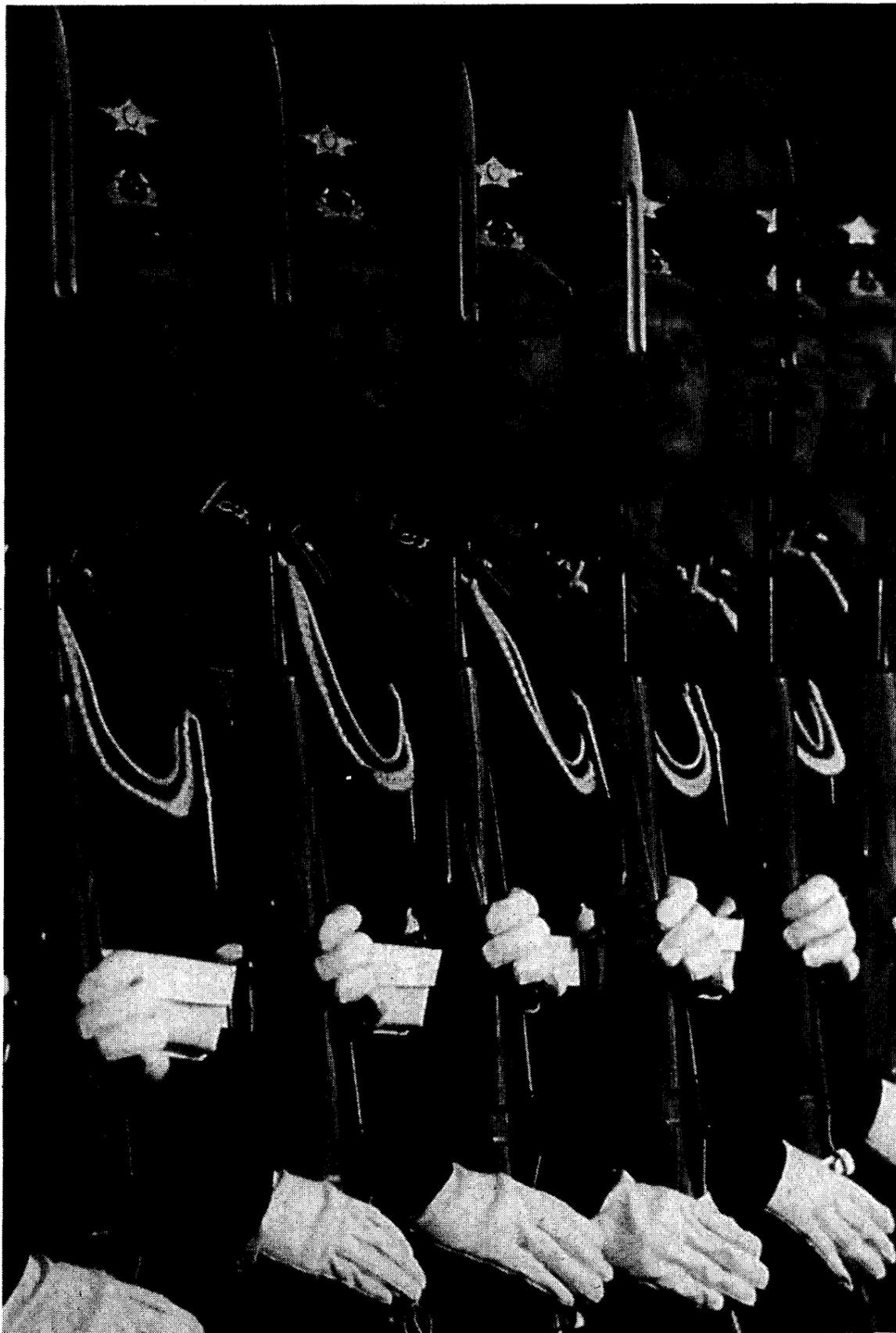
Yet Czechoslovakia was an integral member of the 'socialist community'. For all its particularities, it shared the same basic social and political structure. In this case, then, the Soviet Union had something to lose, and this against the background of its sacrifice for the liberation of Czechoslovakia in the struggle against Nazi Germany.

And so, while the 1968 intervention certainly destroyed a hope shared by all democrats and socialists, those of us in East Germany above all, it in no way posed a direct threat to peace and survival.

The entire fate of the human race hangs on peace, detente and disarmament. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan shows us that these values and goals are not the prime consideration of Soviet policy; that the Soviet leaders are prepared to use methods that blatantly trample over them.

### Arms

This action can have no other result than to fuel the psychology of the arms race throughout the world. It will accelerate the ominous process whereby the conditions of human survival on our planet can be destroyed in a relatively short space of time.



Occupying Russian troops on parade in Kabul

Afghanistan may well become the Soviet leadership's Vietnam, showing with unprecedented nakedness the face of great-power chauvinism and bureaucratic imperialism. It is particularly important to bear in mind that these leaders, isolated as they are from their own people, are so little aware of the world as it really is today that they are honestly terrified by the game they have initiated.

They are entirely serious in feeling misunderstood. I would quite believe it if someone told me that one of them was crying again.

Everything is set, however, to destroy the residue of confidence bound up with the non-capitalist foundation of the Soviet Union and its objective mission of providing

support for the rise of the underdeveloped peoples.

In the summer of 1968 we hoped they would not dare invade, though we certainly saw this as possible. With Afghanistan we had necessarily to reckon with the possibility of invasion but we did not see this as likely. The grim reality has taught us a lesson.

It is as if the Moscow Politburo actually wanted to confirm what the Chinese and Herr Strauss have been saying.

These men in the Kremlin, far too old in every sense, must have known that their action would destroy the atmosphere needed for detente and arms control, and provide the arms lobby on the other side with powerful arguments for the next round of the

arms race, which it was of course already planning.

They must have known that they would give the finishing touches to the other side's plans, already drawn up, to 'secure the sources of oil'.

What is only too clear, however, is that they do not attach even the slightest importance to the psychological factor of the gradual yet clearly progressive movement of public opinion, to the resistance that innumerable people in the West put up against the uninhibited play of power interests.

Their partner in negotiations is the Pentagon alone. And the result is that the countries of the Third World, objects of exploitation, have to defend themselves with one hand also against Moscow instead of with both

hands against Washington and NATO.

With this invasion, the Soviet leaders are acting as unrestrained accomplices of world reaction. They have assumed a role which we did not want to ascribe them, and still do not want to ascribe them — that of being one of two superpowers waging their deadly rivalry on the backs of the world's peoples.

How did the tragedy of the Afghan people come about? For more than 20 years, the Soviet Union has been building up its positions there by alternate use of (objective) anti-imperialist solidarity and conventional power politics.

The internal contradictions of this extremely backward country were deep enough to generate an autonomous national revolutionary resistance movement, which, given the country's conditions, could only find its core and its leadership in the intelligentsia, including the military intelligentsia.

### Moslems

If not directly, then at least indirectly, Afghanistan's powerful neighbour intervened to preordain and deform the parts of this movement. It gave the Afghan vanguard a false model and time scale.

In 1978, Nur Mohammed Taraki and his comrades did not make a revolution, they effected a putsch, so as to bestow on their people this exhibition of a revolution from above. With good intentions, I still believe, they decreed an agrarian reform that destroyed the peasants' way of life, so that they gained nothing from the land newly granted to them.

In effect, the peasants of Afghanistan found themselves in a similar position to the peasants of Iran under the dictatorship of the Shah. What was conceived as a benefit turned out an unmistakable misfortune, for the whole country and its people.

The Afghan game was lost as soon as it began, particularly given the coincidence in time of the Iranian revolution, which gave unbeatable support to the Islamic resistance, this quite naturally linking up with the traditionalist forces internationally.

It is not to the Americans that the invaders will lose Afghanistan, but to the Moslems. This is a lesson we can only wish on them. Here, as opposed to the Prague Spring, the Soviet leaders have made a hefty mistake even from the most orthodox standpoint of the apparatus.

### Kabul

For this reason Kabul may well have more direct consequences for the Soviet Union internally. It is still impossible to see where the madness of pouring oil into the flames of Islam may lead.

Kabul underlines how badly the peoples of the Soviet Union and the country's allies need to pension off their Novotnys and to fundamentally transform their entire political superstructure.

Left organisations in the West must speedily jettison the role of responsible politicians who give cover to the Soviet leaders even in their Afghan adventure. Anyone who supports this intervention shows that he or she is of the same kidney as the bureaucratic apparatus.

The forces of reason in the West now face a great responsibility: not to support in any way the escalation of tension being pursued by ruling circles in both the Soviet Union and the United States; and in West Germany in particular, to defend the East European treaties achieved in the heyday of the socialist-liberal coalition.

Peace, detente and disarmament — today more than ever!

This article was translated by David Fernbach

## IRELAND

# Women students speak out

By Valerie Coultas

THE executive of the National Union of Students, in its search for a new and respectable image to appease the right wing in the NUS, want students to return to the days of the cold war when sport, welfare, entertainment and representation was the ABC of student union life. But they have had a lot of trouble in achieving this with the NUS Women's Campaign.

Nowhere has the antagonism between the CP-led executive and the NUS Women's Campaign been sharper than around the issue of Ireland.

In the early '70s the NUS had a policy which supported the liberation struggle in the North of Ireland. But today the executive has not only backed down from supporting campaigns to protest at the arbitrary arrest of Irish immigrants in this country, it has also deliberately tried to stifle the attempts of the Women's Campaign to protest at the torture of women prisoners in Armagh jail.

Helen Bevan from Manchester Polytechnic, Stephanie Green from Goldsmiths, and Sarah Veale from Oxford Polytechnic, take a dim view of these compromises when Irish women lives are at stake. They talked to Socialist Challenge after attending the recent NUS Women's Campaign conference.

Women in Ireland have always played a part in the fight to free their country from British domination. Today in Armagh jail they are suffering sexual and physical abuse because they dare to fight for a free Ireland.

'The NUS executive has done everything it can to stop us discussing the torture of Irish women in prisons under British control; they have censored women's mailings and tried to take this subject off the agenda of the women's conference,' explained Helen.

But Armagh was discussed. 'The majority of the women at the conference felt strongly that we should be supporting our sisters in Armagh not only in their fight against sexual harassment but also in their fight for political status,' said Stephanie.

Anna Summerskill, from Keele, thought that women shouldn't support terrorists and give any credibility to their campaign for political status but we should protest against specific sexual attacks.

Francis O'Grady, from Manchester University and a member of the Women and Ireland Group, argued strongly against this. The reason for their sexual harassment was because they were fighting a war in the North of Ireland. She explained that Irish women

are fighting not only against their subjugation as women but their subjugation as a nation. The two issues could not be separated.

Francis also alluded to the hypocrisy of the NUS in supporting struggles in South Africa, Chile, Zimbabwe but refusing to do anything about brutal torture on its doorstep.

If the executive has its way future NUS women's conferences will not be allowed to discuss issues 'external' to students like torture in Armagh.

Women at the conference realised that the women's campaign would not be seen as a priority by an executive that supported the proposed new policy for NUS. The women's conference passed a motion overwhelmingly condemning the 'priorities review', being put forward at the NUS conference.

'Women students have gained political awareness on "women's issues" inside the NUS and they soon realise how their oppression relates to other forms of oppression, like national oppression,' said Sarah.

Women don't seem to agree that the way students should deal with the present government is by being respectable. The NUS executive had better watch out.

## Carworker arrested in Bedfordshire

LATE at night on 9 April, 60 year-old-Willie Higgins, an Irish car worker at Vauxhall's Luton plant, was arrested by the police under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

He was taken to Luton police station where he is still being held. No charges have yet been laid.

Higgins' arrest follows a week of police harassment. Over the weekend he crossed on the ferry to Belfast to deliver a mini-bus to a prison welfare organisation. The mini-bus was impounded on arrival in Belfast. It has subsequently been released.

On his return to Luton, Higgins was picked up by the police and held for 24 hours. The police released him to go to work — but threatened to arrest him again. The next day Higgins' daughter's house was raided by the police and Higgins was again arrested as he made his way home after work.

The PTA is nothing new to the Higgins family. In 1977 Willie's son, John, was charged under the PTA and served two years in prison. On his release in March last year he was immediately deported.

Higgins' arrest is the latest in a series of raids and interrogations in Bedfordshire. On Easter Monday two Provisional Sinn Fein members, Jim Reilly and Gerry MacLochlainn, were charged with conspiracy to cause explosions, after being held for seven days in police custody under the PTA.

It has been alleged that they were connected with the recent burnings of holiday homes in Wales.

Five supporters of Hands Off Ireland, a journal edited by the Revolutionary Communist Group, were also arrested on 6 April for protesting against the arrest of Jim Reilly and Gerry MacLochlainn under the PTA. They will appear in court on 13 May in Luton.

Troops out supporters will be picketing Leicester jail, where Jim Reilly and Gerry MacLochlainn are being held, on Wednesday 16 April.



Republican Volunteer reading the 1916 Easter Proclamation in Belfast's Milltown cemetery

## Scottish TUC to debate H-Blocks

By George Kerevan

**ACTION** by a Scots Euro-MP, a public demonstration in Stirling this weekend, and a debate at the forthcoming Scottish Trades Union Congress indicate a growing campaign in Scotland over the plight of the 'blanket men' in the Long Kesh H-blocks and the women in 'A' wing of Armagh jail.

Scottish Nationalist Party Euro-MP Winnie Ewing has presented a petition demanding an end to the 'cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment' of H-block prisoners to Simone Veil, President of the European Parliament.

The petition is signed by 373 Derry relatives of the 'blanket men', and calls for international observers to be sent to the North of Ireland to investigate conditions in the jails.

The European Parliament is shortly to consider a motion from French Communist Party leader Georges Marchais, instructing the Parliament's legal committee to 'conduct an inquiry into the denial of human rights in the Six Counties'.

In Scotland, there was a demonstration in Stirling last Saturday 12 April, calling for political status for Irish prisoners. The march had been called by the Troops Out Movement and was supported by Hands Off Ireland.

The Stirling demo was partly in response to the ban on political demonstrations imposed in Glasgow after the threatened

National Front 'smash the IRA' rally. The NF rally was abandoned after an ANL counter-mobilisation, but it is expected that the ban may be used as a precedent to stop Troops Out protests.

Among the speakers at the Stirling demonstration was Des Loughney, full-time secretary of Edinburgh Trades Council, which has submitted a motion to this year's Scottish Trades Union Congress. The motion calls on the STUC, which meets on 21-5 April, to organise a special conference to review policy on Northern Ireland.

Currently, the STUC has to accept as policy whatever positions are held by the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trades Unions. This means Scottish unions are barred from exposing human rights violations in the North or calling for troop withdrawal, as the Northern Committee is notorious for trying to avoid the whole issue of British domination of the Six Counties.

When Edinburgh Trades Council first took up the case of the H-block prisoners two years ago, the Northern Committee immediately wrote to the STUC claiming there was no problem in the H-blocks, and telling Edinburgh to mind its own business.

It is unlikely that the Edinburgh STUC motion will be passed, but it will at least legitimise the discussion of Northern Ireland in the Scottish trades union movement for the first time since Bloody Sunday, and provide a platform to expose the infamous H-blocks.

## Loyalist's bomb misses its target

A bomb exploded in Milltown Cemetery, Belfast, Easter Sunday minutes before a Provisional Republican 1916 commemoration march reached the spot.

If the march had not been 10 minutes late a large number of people would have been killed. As it was no-one was injured although a woman, a man and a child had to be treated for shock.

The bomb was placed under a cornerstone of the official Republican plot a few yards from the Provisional memorial by a Loyalist group calling itself 'Tara'.

Elsewhere in the North marches passed off peacefully in bright sunshine although numbers were low ranging from 50 in Ballymacnab, County Armagh to about 3,000 in Belfast.

Provisional Republican gatherings were told that the movement was 'geared for and dedicated to a long war'. But they went on to urge their members to be politically active and 'embrace the small struggles going on in the community.'

'Just as Pearce embraced the cultural struggle and as Connolly led Labour,' the statement continued, 'so we too must tie together all aspects of nationalism and socialism and all the strands of rural and urban discontent into a surging wave of Republicanism.'

## Big boost for Stirling Troops Out supporters

By Charlie Baird

THE Troops Out movement in Scotland received a tremendous boost last Sunday when Stirling supporters organised a march through the town which succeeded in reaching its destination.

The 400-strong march led by the James Connally, Bryson Mulvenna, Kevan Barry and Liam Reid flute bands with a tricolour at the front set off in a militant mood from the Raploch housing estate, where many working class Catholics live.

A new alliance of Loyalists and fascists called the Scottish Loyalist Brigade could not resist the temptation to flex their muscles.

As the march reached the town centre, two hundred of them began to pelt the marchers with bricks, bottles, and coins. They gave Nazi salutes and sang the 'Sash my father wore'.

At a rally after the march, messages of support were read out

from H Block men on the blanket, with speeches from the Irish Republican Socialist Party and Provisional Sinn Fein.

A particularly rousing call for troop withdrawal came from Dave Halsworth, Honorary secretary of Tameside Trades Council, and NUPE member Mike Napier.

Although the march was not as large as the 21 April march in Glasgow stopped by Loyalists and police it has made morale high in Scotland.

It shows that it is possible for troops out supporters, socialists and Republicans to march in protest at the conditions in H Block and call for British withdrawal. For once the loyalists in Stirling must be feeling sick.

## Women in ACTION



### Against the Tories



A Paper for Action in the Unions on Women's Rights

'THAT was a good paper, love,' said a delegate to the Women's TUC to the

**Women in Action** seller. She had bought a copy at the March 9 TUC demonstration, where this new paper for action in the unions on women's rights was launched.

In just over a month, half the print run has been sold — at demonstrations, conferences, and through distribution to existing supporters and the ever-growing number of new ones.

Plans are underway for a second issue, beginning with an opening meeting to discuss articles on Saturday, 26 April at the City University, Northampton Square, London EC1, from noon to 5pm. (Nearest tubes Angel and Barbican.)

# Massey Ferguson occupiers call for strike action

By John Kirby

**WHEN Len Murray visited Liverpool last Sunday he was confronted by representatives of the 550 Massey Ferguson workers who have been occupying their plant for seven weeks.**

They told him that they want to see a one-day general strike in Merseyside on 14 May in support of their fight to prevent the closure of the plant in Knowsley.

Massey Ferguson wants to transfer production to its Manchester factory as part of an international effort to restore the company's fortunes, which slumped to a loss of over £100m in 1978.

The first major British casualty was the Kilmarnock factory, which closed 18 months ago, with the loss of 1,500 jobs. Now Knowsley is in the firing line.

Massey Ferguson workers in Peterborough, at the Perkins Diesel plant, and in Coventry have pledged their full support for the occupation and are refusing to shift components that would have gone to Knowsley.

Workers at the Manchester factory initially responded to a mass picket by taking one-day strike action and refusing to accept any transferred work. But they reversed this decision after pressure from management.

Now 800 of the 1,200 workers at the Manchester factory have been laid off. It is suspected that this is part of management's plan to fit-out the

Manchester plant for the work presently done by the Knowsley plant.

The Transport Union has given official backing to the occupation, but the Engineering Union — which represents half the workforce — is dragging its feet.

One AUEW officer said that the action would be made official — if the Knowsley workers went back to work!

The Knowsley workers are asking AUEW branches to send in resolutions to the union executive to demand official backing for the occupation. Earlier this week they lobbied an AUEW executive meeting.

Support and donations to: c/o Hayden Burns, 46 Kempton Park Rd, Aintree, Liverpool 10.

## Tube staff fight assaults

By Martin Eady, President, NUR London Transport District Council

**AN increasing number of assaults on London Transport underground workers has led to a spate of official and unofficial strikes by tube staff.**

The unofficial action at some stations last weekend will be followed by an official shut down from 10pm on the next two Fridays and Saturdays. This follows an escalating level of unofficial stoppages which led the National Union of Railwaymen and the train drivers' union ASLEF to call an official strike on 29 March.

These stoppages have had almost unanimous support. But many feel that little will result, especially as the NUR's main demand is for improvements in police availability and mobility.

## Black

Yet the police have been known to attack black ticket collectors, while they let white bully boys who refuse to pay their fares go free. So it is foolhardy to rely on police protection.

Proposals such as that for vandal-proof boxes for ticket collectors are of some help in shielding staff from the worst effects of violence, and a reduction in fares would remove one pretext for attacks.

But until the trade union movement takes the lead in combatting unemployment, bad housing, racism, and the other economic and social conditions which give rise to hooliganism, London Transport workers will be left with little choice but to close down services during danger periods — for their own protection.

## A penny for our thoughts

**HERE's something every reader can do just before going to bed. Reach into your pocket or your purse or wherever you keep cash and remove the copper coins that you've collected during the day.**

They'll amount to something like 10p. This is not a large sum of money — and hence the excision is quite painless — but in a month the coppers will add up to £2 or £3, a very handy contribution to Socialist Challenge's fund drive.

We're full of good ideas.

This week our thanks to:

Birmingham IMG	£75.00
A Acheson	15.00
M Boulter	5.00
P Hazell	2.50
MB	15.00
Mrs S	5.00
Newcastle IMG	5.00
Hackney IMG	26.27
E Mahood	10.00
J Avery	3.50
D Stevens	5.00
N Manchester IMG	15.50
Camden supporter	4.00
J Irvine	3.50
Hackney supporters	11.70

Week's total £201.97

## SC EVENTS

**OLDHAM:** SC readers meeting, 23 April, 8pm. Grange Arts Centre, Rochdale Rd — with guest speakers.

**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 Newsfare 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.



## Carrington sings the desert song

**WHAT is the world coming to when a play on British TV seems to shake the West to its foundations?**

Independent Television is quite proud to have screened *Death of a Princess* without giving in to the pressures to censor the story of how the Saudi Arabian Princess Misha'al was executed with her lover in 1977 for the crime of adultery.

That the TV company was concerned with something more than sensationalism might be convincing if it had shown the same fortitude in portraying, say, the life and bloody times of the Shah of Iran before he was tipped off his Peacock Throne, or the British army's present role in the North of Ireland.

Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary, hastened to submit a grovelling apology to the Saudi rulers on behalf of the Tory government, which is anxious that their tyrannical regime should not be troubled by the kind of mass revolt which swept away the Shah.

It wasn't the exposure of the oppressive treatment of women which has worried the Saudi tyrants. The only scene in the play which they asked to be cut was the portrayal of women in the ruling circle cruising the desert in search of lovers.

They believe that by upholding feudal practices they can hold on to their power. Lord Carrington is only too pleased to help them.

## Para-medics take to the picket lines

By Vicky Anderson, Member, ASTMS national disputes committee

**THE Department of Health has been forced to back down in its attempt to make para-medical staff work longer hours.**

Now action needs to continue over the rest of the pay offer, produced by the Clegg Commission, which do not bring the wage rates of para-medical grades — including radiographers, physiotherapists, speech and

occupational therapists — anywhere near the level of previous pay awards.

The working week of most para-medical staff is between 33 and 38 hours, which can often mean being on call for 50 hours. Clegg's proposal was for a 37½-hour week, with a paltry payment of £1.50 for being on call all night.

The main union involved, ASTMS, together with the professional associations, has organised a series of one-day strikes and a large demonstration in London.

A work-to-rule and selected week-long strikes were planned before management agreed to pay the rises recommended by Clegg on our present hours of work.

If we are to keep pace with inflation, the action has to be maintained to win a bigger pay rise.

## Hull prison demonstration

By Lewis Emery

**ON 12 MARCH** opponents of British imperialism mounted a picket of Hull Prison, where a number of Irish prisoners of war are held.

Organised by the North of England Irish Prisoners Committee, the picket was attended by some 40 people and received front page treatment in the Hull Daily Mail.

Pickets have already been organised in Manchester, Wakefield, and elsewhere, and the next picket will be in Durham on 10 May.

**THE deadline for short news articles for this page is 10.30am Monday. Articles up to 200 words can be rung through on Sundays on 01-359 8189.**

## Young Workers Conference

Saturday and Sunday, 19-20 April

**How do you find a job? \*How can young workers organise in the unions? \*Why are working conditions and opportunities worse for young women? \*How well do the trade union leaders defend their members' interests? \*And other questions!**

At UMIST Students Union, Sackville St, Manchester 1. 11am-5pm both days. Adm £1 (50p unemployed and school students). Pooled fare. Phone Ann on 061-225 4218 or Rob on 061-205 8301.

Organised by 'Revolution'

## The Other Bookshop

NEW

**The Truth About Afghanistan** by Doug Jenness, Pathfinder Press 50p

**Economics, Politics and the Age of Inflation** by Paul Mattick, Merlin Press £2.40

**Leninism Under Lenin** by Marcel Liebman, Merlin Press £4.50

328 Upper St., London N1 Tel 226 0571

## SMASH THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT CAMPAIGN DAYSCHOOL

**IRELAND AND THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT: THE TAMESIDE CONSPIRACY**

Saturday, 3 May 1980

For further details write to RCT, Box 33, 164/166 Corn Exchange Building, Hanging Ditch, Manchester 4.

# NEWS FROM THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL



## Presidential Campaign in Peru

ON 18 May there will be elections for Peru's first civilian government following 12 years of military rule. The military's pledge to restore civilian government was prompted by its growing isolation and the hostility of Peru's impoverished masses.

Late in 1979 the Trotskyist Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), the Peruvian section of the Fourth International, proposed the formation of a united election front of the working class, which would explicitly and in practice be for the independence of the workers from the military land the capitalists. This proposal won wide support. Not only was there a desire for unity around a candidate who symbolised the struggles of the oppressed, but the Trotskyist leader Hugo

Blanco enjoyed immense popularity as 'the natural candidate of the hungry'.

In January, the PRT's proposal led to the creation of the Revolutionary Left Alliance (ARI), which included Maoist and centrist forces as well as various Trotskyist groups.

The formation of the ARI was a big step forward — for example on 22 and 23 February elections took place in Chimbote, the country's most important mining centre.

Spontaneously, union members of the various ARI parties got together to run a joint slate, which received two-thirds of the vote.

This success convinced some of the more sectarian Maoist groups that they would risk isolation if they refused to join ARI. The most important of these was the Revolutionary Left Union (UNIR).

There followed a period of protracted in-fighting in the ARI. The Maoists attempted to break with the line of class independence by fighting for their own slogan of 'for a non-aligned and democratic peoples government'.

## Secure

They also attempted to secure a disproportionate number of candidacies on the ARI slates for themselves at the expense of the Trotskyists. Before these disputes were settled, however, the ARI faced a further complication.

When ARI was set up it was supported by the POMR, the Peruvian group affiliated to the

Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.

But following pressure from the 'Parity Committee', the new international grouping which the OCRFI supports, the POMR decided to pull out of the ARI. Thus ARI came under the dual pressure of factionalism from both the Maoists and the sectarian Trotskyist forces.

## Division

Finally, no agreement was reached on the division of candidacies between the different parties and the ARI broke up.

## PRT campaign

As a result, the PRT has decided to run its own campaign, with Hugo Blanco as presidential candidate. The campaign is supported by the POMR and the PST, the Socialist Workers Party, which also supports the Parity Committee.

The two candidates for vice-president are Richard Napuri of the POMR and Enrique Fernandez of the PST.

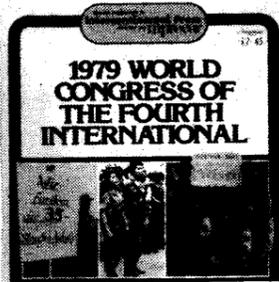
The PRT is using the election campaign to help unify the workers' struggles and is centring the campaign on the demand for a workers' government 'without generals or bosses'.

A major theme of the PRT campaign is that the struggle of the workers and peasants will not end when the elections are over, but that it is important to use the elections for the consolidation and building of a revolutionary party of the working class.



## IMG NOTICES

**ANTI-RACIST FRACTION:** Saturday 26 April, 11am, National Centre. All branches to send one representative. Pooled fare.  
**IRISH FRACTION:** Saturday 19 April, 11am National Centre.  
**BLAIR PEACH COMMEMORATION DEMONSTRATION:** Sunday 27 April, 1pm, Speakers Corner. Birmingham IMG branches south of Birmingham to support with banners.  
**ENGINEERING FRACTION:** Saturday 26 April, 11am, Manchester District Centre.  
**ASTMS FRACTION:** Saturday 10 May, 2pm, National Centre — to prepare for ASTMS conference.



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All the major resolutions of the 1979 World Congress of the Fourth International  
240 pages, price £2.45 plus 50p p&p  
The Other Bookshop,  
328 Upper St, London N1

## BRISTOL BRANCH BOOSTS PAPER SALES

TAKING the message of solidarity and the need for organised self-defence into the black community — that's what the Bristol IMG branch has been doing in the wake of the St Paul's uprising.

In the days following 2 April, IMG members responded to Socialist Challenge's coverage by taking three hundred extra copies of last week's issue.

First, they took the paper door-to-door in the community. Every second or third household bought a copy. Then they took the paper to the Asian shops, where sales have

been going well. In addition, the branch has been selling at the public meetings which followed the 2 April events. Last Thursday evening, for example, 40 people attended a meeting at the Inkwell community centre, and 30 of them bought a copy of Socialist Challenge.

The initiative of the Bristol comrades shows how events in the class struggle can be seized on to boost sales of the paper; to bring home the message of resistance to capitalist attacks everywhere.

With the 14 May Day of Action approaching, and with anger at the Tory offensive bubbling over, there

is no lack of opportunities to boost sales. What is your branch doing? Let Socialist Challenge know.

## British steelworkers to spend May Day in Switzerland

THE Queen will be visiting Switzerland on May Day. So will three leading steelworkers from South Yorkshire and Warrington.

The first event has been set up by the Swiss bourgeoisie. The counter-visit has been organised by the Revolutionary Marxist League, the Swiss section of the Fourth International.

Fritz Von Scheist, a member of the RML central committee, says: 'We thought that the ruling class case should not go unanswered and who better to be there than the steelworkers.'

## IMG branch organised in Bolsover

INTO the heart of Skinner country went the IMG. A public meeting was organised a couple of weeks ago at which Tariq Ali spoke on the 'Fight to Kick Out the Tories'. The meeting was attended by more than 30 people, over half of them miners.

Tariq stressed that trade union militancy on its own could not deliver the goods. He pointed to the lack of a socialist vision and socialist culture inside the labour movement today and stressed the need to build a socialist alternative in the labour movement.

There was a vigorous discussion during question-time, and when the meeting ended it was evident that the IMG had a new branch, consisting largely of miners who had been working with Nottingham IMG over the preceding months.

## Ernest Mandel to attend cadre school

ERNEST Mandel will be spending two days — 12-13 July — at the week-long cadre school being organised by the IMG.

Mandel will speak on: 'Revolutionary Strategy in the Semi-industrialised Countries', 'The Theory of Permanent Revolution today', and 'The USSR and World Politics'.

Further details from: Dave Hudson c/o PO Box 50, London N1.

## France: Campaign for workers' unity wins wide support

The election campaign in France in 1978 ended with the break-up of the 'Union of the Left', the joint platform of the Communist Party and the Socialist Party.

This was because the CP feared that its grip on the key sectors of the industrial working class was being threatened by the growth of the SP.

In the most cynical possible way, the CP simply exploded the 'Union of the Left' when it was within sight of winning the elections.

The result has been the creation of profound divisions in the French workers' movement — between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party, and between the various union federations — at a time when the workers are facing unprecedented attacks, and when unity in action against the Giscard government is needed more than ever.

Now campaigns have been launched both for unity in action and to demand that the leaders of the CP and SP break with the policy of disunity and initiate a campaign to get rid of Giscard.

One campaign, launched by

CP and SP militants and supported by the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, the French section of the Fourth International, puts stress on unity in action at the base and has collected more than 60,000 signatures from worker militants in support of its aims.

Hundreds of local meetings and press conferences have been held to publicise the campaign.

Another campaign, which puts more stress on demands aimed at the CP and SP leaders, has been launched by the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste, a Trotskyist organisation outside the Fourth International.

More than 70,000 signatures have been collected for this campaign.

Nearly 140,000 workers in favour of unity in the fight against unemployment, inflation, and the government itself, as well as for the reformist leaders to assume their responsibilities to finish off the reactionary government, represents an important breakthrough for French Trotskyism.

Both campaigns have met fierce opposition from the reformist leaders.

**Saturday/Sunday  
May 17th/18th 1980**

**REVOLUTION  
NATIONAL  
CONFERENCE**

at

**The University of London  
Students Union**

**Malet Street, London WC1  
(5 mins from Euston Station)**

Guest speakers; discussions; workshops; films; gig and disco; and much more besides.

Misleading advertising?

I REFER to the advert in SC 141 (3 April) from the SWP claiming that it is 'the largest revolutionary organisation in Western Europe or North America.'

The advert attributes this claim to Socialist Challenge. Perhaps all concerned with this error would like to note that an organisation usually classified as revolutionary, one that organises against the Spanish state, the LCR-LKI, a section of the Fourth International, is at least twice the size of the SWP(UK).

Furthermore, the Fourth International, an organisation present in both Western Europe and North America is considerably bigger than the SWP(UK).

I'm sure the facts will be noted for your readers.

STUART PAUL, West London

Little to offer?

IMPORTANT points were missed in your report (3 April) of the Women's Fightback conference.

I think the conference was a positive thing; even though it was not well built, 600 or so women attended. Compared to the women's movement, socialist feminist, or even National Union of Student's women's conferences I've been to, this conference had an atmosphere of fight and outgoingness about it.

Why did the IMG confine its contribution largely to the National Abortion Campaign? We had little to offer on all those other issues that have to be taken up: affirmative action, self-organisation of women in the trade unions, women's sections in the Labour Party, a woman's right to work, and so on.

Even on abortion the IMG failed to give a clear lead for the fight ahead. It was Professor Huntingford, not the IMG, who made it clear that the withdrawal of the Corrie Bill was not a huge victory, and that attacks on abortion facilities and private charities are becoming more vicious. We didn't distinguish ourselves clearly enough from those who believe that abortion on demand and positive legislation are the same thing.

We didn't challenge Jo Richardson; we didn't ask why there wasn't a woman steelworker on the platform as well. Obviously we must build the widest possible united front against the Tory attacks on women; we want to include the LCC and the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Party. But the fight must be led by women, and we must argue that women in particular and the working class in general must rely on their own strength, not on Parliament.

Why didn't we open *Women in Action* to the conference?

Instead we hung around selling it in a rather sectarian way. The many copies we sold proved that women at the conference wanted political direction. But one look at the editorial committee shows that it is not a paper by and for women in the trade unions.

No one, least of all the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, would deny that there were problems with the conference; but the IMG offered only a one-day-all-women's-carnival-in-London as the way forward.

Where does this fit into our call for a 'General Strike to bring down the Tories'? How will a carnival inspire the thousands of women trade union and Labour Party members, youth, and housewives who don't identify with the women's liberation movement? What about women isolated in low-paid, non-unionised labour?

I hope the IMG will build the next Fightback conference in an open and energetic way. We should argue for a non-delegate, broadly-based conference and we should force the Labour left to fight for us. At the same time we should challenge their ultimate reliance on some future utopian Labour government that can legislate women's liberation.

NELLE DARLINGTON, South-east Manchester IMG

General strike slogan: a failure of understanding?

AT THE risk of offending Ken Tarback, I would like to cite a few words from Trotsky in support of Dave Bailey's position on the call for a general strike.

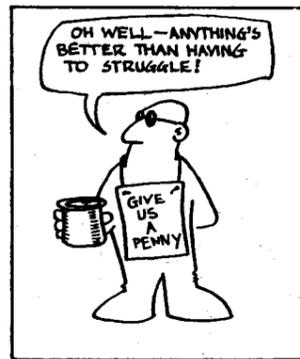
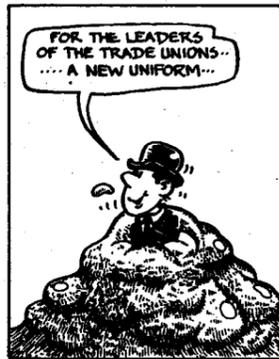
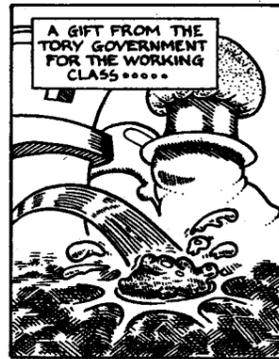
Trotsky was addressing the Moscow Organisation of the Russian Communist Party on the occasion of the Third World Congress of the Communist International.

He was referring to the call for a general strike by the Central Committee of the German Communist Party — a party with tens of thousands of members and certainly much more deeply rooted in the working class than the combined forces of all those revolutionary groups in Britain currently calling for a general strike.

'The masses,' said Trotsky, 'simply failed to understand the summons.'

He then dealt with those 'influential theoreticians of the German CP (who) ... instead of acknowledging that this summons was a mistake ... (propounded) the theory that in a revolutionary epoch we are obliged to conduct exclusively an aggressive policy....'

Trotsky was dealing with the offensive against the working class launched by the social



democratic government and went on: 'This should have been utilized in order to unite all the workers for defence, for self-protection, even if, to begin with, a very modest resistance. Had the soil proved favourable, had the agitation met with a favourable response, it would then have been possible to pass over to the general strike....' (My emphasis)

The revolutionary party would gain by this because it would have 'proved our ability to probe the working masses ... strengthened their internal ties and, what is most important, ... raised the party's authority for giving wise leadership under all circumstances.'

The failure of the labour movement to give active support to the fighting steelworkers, the disunity displayed at Leylands over the pay awards is certainly no indication that the objective situation is ripe for the calling of a general strike.

As the resolution of the 4th World Congress of the Comintern — which criticised the calling of a general strike by the French CP in 1922 — put it: we must fit our slogans 'to the readiness and ability of the masses to act.'

CHARLIE VAN GELDEREN, North London

Unions' North Sea record not good

IT HELPS when passing comment on great news events to be accurate as well as critical. The editorial in SC 141 (3 April) on the Alexander Kieldig rig disaster makes a fair point but suffers from obvious errors and omissions.

The rig is not owned by Phillips, who rent it, but by the Stavanger Drilling company. That it was used as a 'floatel' at all is testament to the overproduction of North Sea drilling rigs in recent years.

The editorial fails to mention the complicity of the North Sea governments in allowing the existence of floating death traps — for, leaving aside the structural faults, why could so few workers get off the rig and into life boats? No company faced with regulations imposed on all other operators can complain of unfair

expenses involved in safety measures.

Finally, the editorial is far too simplistic in its treatment of the unions. Yes, organisers have been harassed. But the record of unhindered organising on rigs is not too impressive either.

The fact that the North Sea oil operators work together internationally, while the unions fiercely guard their national and trade structures, ties the hands of the unions.

The answer is one, industrial, European union with its own safety regulations, backed up by land-based solidarity. That does not exist even embryonically today.

Perhaps a first step would be a conference of all unions with North Sea workers to discuss the recent disaster.

JOHN LASZLO, London

More on the Basque elections

WE'D LIKE to expand on your coverage (10 April) of the recent elections in the Basque country.

Firstly, the elections were to decide the composition of the new 'autonomous' Basque Parliament, itself the outcome of the Basque Statute of Autonomy late last year. That Statute was concocted by the government party, Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD), and the bourgeois Basque Nationalist Party (PNV).

In the referendum on the statute, the Trotskyists of the LKI, the revolutionary nationalists (Herri Batasuna/People's Unity), and the Communist Movement of Euzkadi (EMK) campaigned for abstention, winning substantial minority support.

Since that time the pernicious reality of the statute has become clear to masses of people who had placed their hopes in it. Repression has increased still further, with the appearance of armoured cars on the streets and the drafting of General Sáenz de Santamaría — an expert in repression — into Euzkadi.

Two hundred political prisoners remain in jail, suffering constant harassment and torture.

A drive for the restructuring of Basque industry is underway as

the PNV attempts to increase control and slice of the cake at the expense of its natural allies in Madrid.

Meanwhile the Socialist and Communist Parties have continued to disregard the fight for self-determination and refuse to participate in the fight against repression. Instead, they have concentrated their fire on ETA at a time of unprecedented murders and aggression by the fascists.

The LKI attempted to force an electoral coalition with both wings of the revolutionary nationalist movement, and with the EMK and PTE.

One by one, these organisations — putting their own interests above those of the working class as a whole — withdrew from discussions. So the LKI, as did the others, went alone into the elections, attempting to gain a voice in the Basque Parliament against repression, against pacts, and for self-determination.

(The coalition to which you referred in your picture caption in issue 139 (20 March) was put together in Catalonia.)

The LKI waged a very effective campaign in the Basque country. In the 'red' township of Sestao, Ernest Mandel spoke to a rally of 2,000, many of whom were old workers who had lived through the civil war; Bernadette Devlin explained the need for an intransigent working class and internationalist perspective for national liberation and socialism; and Miguel Romero, of the Spanish Trotskyist organisation LCR, described the campaign that it was carrying out in the rest of Spain in solidarity with Euzkadi, and for the revolutionary unity of all the regions and nationalities of Spain against repression and capitalist austerity.

BARBARA PASSINGHAM, DAVID PASSINGHAM, Burnley IMG

Ireland, feminism and religion

THE letter in last week's paper from Emma Craig and Charlie Baird complaining about my report (13 March) of the Armagh protest on International Women's Day seems to have fallen prey to the sectarianism it accuses me of.

The reference made in my article to 'a few Protestants hanging around' watching the protest was quite wrong because it drew no distinction between Irish people's religious background and their political positions.

But in attacking me for describing an Irish woman who attended the conference on 9 March in Belfast (but refused to attend the protest outside the prison the day before) as a 'Protestant' and a 'socialist feminist' Emma and Charlie fall into their own trap.

Protestant, as they say, does not equal Loyalist. The woman was referring to her Protestant background. This obviously influenced her views but it did not make her a Loyalist.

Neither can I agree with them that being a 'Protestant' is incompatible with being a socialist feminist, even a 'pure socialist feminist'.

Socialist feminism covers a broad range of opinion, including those who want to reform capitalism and those who wish to overthrow it, those who may believe in religious ideas and those who have rejected religion. By no means every socialist feminist is a revolutionary Marxist.

A sectarian stance to women on the Irish issue is as useless as a dismissive attitude towards all

Protestants (as opposed to Loyalists).

Irish feminists, when we visited Armagh that weekend, rather than lecture women on the 'correct position on Ireland' as Emma and Charlie seem to wish to do, explained how it was impossible to build a strong united women's movement in Ireland without confronting the border between the North and the South, without confronting the effects of imperialist domination.

Marie O'Brien incidentally, a revolutionary Marxist and a member of Peoples Democracy, also described herself as a Protestant (of origin!).

VALERIE COULTAS, London WC1

More on 'Fragments'

RAY CHALLINOR, in his attack on Hilary Wainwright (Letters 10 April) epitomises many of the points which Hilary makes about the style of the revolutionary left.

She is accused of being deficient in her understanding of Marxist politics to the point of utter ignorance. That she has been active in the socialist movement for some years and has thus presumably encountered theory and accumulated experience is evidently of no account.

Having 'smashed' Hilary by asserting her ignorance (thereby removing her right to enter political debate and asserting his own infallibility) Ray then recounts a sordid tale of intrigue from Newcastle Socialist Centre.

This is a case of substituting for taking up Hilary politically.

What do the 'Fragments' authors actually say? They make two central points. First, there is a certain style of debate and practice in the organised left. The 'hard, erect, self-contained' revolutionary ('the exile')... A tendency to polarise debate, the demand that one's opponents present complete arguments and so on. Second, that this flows from Leninist theory and organisation.

On the first point. Most of us are probably familiar with the type of exemplary comrade who eats, sleeps and breathes political activity. In some ways these comrades are the backbone of the revolutionary left. But they set standards which many comrades find it hard to meet for material reasons; working hours, personal relationships, children etc.

I've no doubt that many of us are familiar with the style of debate already mentioned. Only too often people new to politics just clam up and listen; they feel intimidated and afraid they will be 'smashed'.

To the second point: that these phenomena derive from Leninist organisation. I think that this accusation is based on a misunderstanding of Leninism.

Democratic centralism presupposes not only centralised practice but also the intake of experience. The practices mentioned in this letter cut across this intake — they are not Leninist practices.

In her critique Hilary is polemicising against a caricature of Leninism — but a caricature which is often presented as the real thing.

Lenin and Trotsky consistently stress the self-organisation of the masses; 'leadership' is gained through participating in the mass movement and in a 'dialogue' with the masses. The 'Fragments' current is tilting at a caricature. But it is time we stopped caricaturing them!

PAUL MITCHELL, Bristol

WIN A QUARTZ WATCH!

Clear instructions to all Socialist Challenge readers: complete and post the adjoining form, then sit back and smile when the next nagging appeal is printed. Your smile may well turn into a delighted chuckle because all who start or increase their banker's order will be eligible to win one of two stunning digital quartz watches (those who answered the appeal weeks ago are also eligible).

The draw will take place on May Day, so vulgar materialists with an eye on the watch and noble materialists with an eye on the paper's funds get cracking.

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 .....

Send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP

THE education college run by the General and Municipal Workers' Union for shop stewards found that it was making so much use of *Look Back at Grunwick*, a film on the Grunwick struggle made by Chris Thomas which is strongly critical of the TUC, that it purchased its own copy.

The agricultural workers' union has been using *Superman and the Bride* which is about the way in which TV reinforces men's and women's traditional roles, made by Thames Television, and *Harlan County USA*, Barbara Kopple's feature film on the battles of the Kentucky miners.

These are a few examples — and there aren't too many others — of radical films and TV programmes being shown and discussed within the trade union movement.

It was to promote such developments that Socialist Film Services was set up a year ago, with financial support from left-wing film producers and editors.

'The labour movement,' says Ken Hulme, secretary of the organisation, 'cannot continue

## At last! Socialist Film Services

By Geoffrey Sheridan

to ignore the most powerful medium. Trade unions and the left hardly ever use films, and they rarely sponsor films or experiment with the medium.'

Promoting films and TV programmes that are available for hire — there are nearly a hundred featured in Socialist Film Services' latest handbook — has meant making contact with the trade union education departments, putting together a mailing list of organisations which have shown an interest in using film, and generally acting as an advice centre on the practicalities of film showing and discussion.

The South-east Region TUC, which is

presently making a trade union recruitment commercial in Bengali for showing in cinemas, has arranged with Socialist Film Services a series of film previews so that trades unionists in the area can see what's on offer.

Promotion has also involved selecting useful films and ensuring their wide availability. Thus Socialist Film Services paid for *It Ain't Half Racist, Mum*, the analysis of TV's racism made by the Campaign Against Racism in the Media and originally shown as a BBC-TV Open Door programme, to be converted from video to 16mm colour film.

Within a day of the leaflet advertising this film being mailed out, four bookings were

received by the distributors.

'There's no doubt that the films we're popularising are doing well,' says Ken Hulme. 'The distributors find that they have to make additional prints.'

'Hopefully,' he adds, 'we're working towards the stage when trade unions will themselves promote films, and sponsor socialist film-makers to go out and make them.'

There seems to be just one example of that so far. During the local authority workers' strike in the winter of 1978, a group of film-makers called Union Media co-produced with NUPE a video film on the struggle.

Consisting mainly of interviews with militants on the issues involved and how they organised, the film includes a heated discussion on whether the union should have gone for an all-out strike. NUPE has supplied its area offices with video recorders so that the film is available to branches.

*The Socialist Film Services Handbook* is available from: Ken Hulme, Room 427, Wool Exchange, Brushfield St, London E1. Tel 01-247 0335. Price 80p plus 20p p&p.

## Interview with Ken Loach

# 'I'd like to make a film about the Steel Strike'

KEN LOACH became well known in Britain for films like 'Kes', 'Poor Cow', and 'Family Life', which brought working class life onto the big screen. He became more well known to the left for his work for television, including the acclaimed 'Days of Hope'.

'Black Jack', his new film based on a children's novel by Leon Garfield, was recently released in Britain. He was interviewed while in Paris for the film's premier



with non-professionals?

The children, yes, I found them in schools and colleges. The one playing Tolly was 15 years old then, now he is 17, he's left school and is working as an apprentice miner.

The majority of the actors are not comedy actors but stand-up comics from the clubs. They are professionals, the union demands that they are professionals, which is quite right when you consider the level of unemployment in the profession.

These people who work in the clubs weren't trying to get themselves into films, they concentrate on

physical performance rather than psychological traits.

The character played by Jean Franval, Black Jack, fits in well into this team; he needs the help of the child and to become part of the group of travelling showmen because he is a foreigner.

Doesn't the character of Belle, the little mad girl, bear many similarities with 'Family Life'?

Yes and no, in this film the situation is reversed. Belle is locked up, rejected by her family, and her 'madness' grows out of her confinement.

society, the countryside before the factories and before enclosures. It has the outlines of modern society — new economic and social relations, the birth of modern medicine, half-way between magic and fraud.

Usually in historical films the actors in costume speak 20th century middle class English. The Yorkshire dialect has maintained older elements, and is also the language of the most militant area of the country — it's the area of those who lead the steel strike, people like Arthur Scargill come from there.

In the film 'Black Jack' you worked

How did this film come about?

After making several films about children we wanted to make one for children. We were unsuccessful in mounting our last project — a film for adults on the question of the North of Ireland — but on the other hand there was money for a children's film and *Black Jack* struck me as a good story.

We have set the film in Yorkshire and not in London as in the book.

I am interested in England in the 18th century, in the pre-industrial

## Whoever Invented the Fishfinger

1. Whoever invented the fishfinger  
Ought to be transmogrified,  
Skinned, mashed and boxed into uniform blocks,  
Then covered with breadcrumbs from collar to socks  
And frozen and, finally, fried.

Because who'd do that to a fish,  
Finning its way through the seas,  
Colours in harmony, perfectly poised,  
Riding its flying trapeze?

And progress is all very well, but not when it chops up our dreams,  
And it's hard to feel at ease in the world when nothing is what it seems.

2. Whoever invented the 'Daily Mail'  
Ought to be cut down to size,  
Pulped and reduced to a nauseous juice,  
And dried out and flattened till ready for use,  
Then covered with newsprint and lies.

Because who'd do that to a tree,  
Raising its head to the sky,

Rooted in centuries, telling tall tales,  
Breathing a green lullaby?

And progress is all very well, but not when it chops down our dreams,  
And it's hard to feel at ease in the world when nothing is what it seems.

3. Whoever invented the policeman  
Ought to be licked into shape,  
Toughened and trained till the body's a cane,  
Till the arms are a chain, till the nerves feel no pain,  
Till obedience rules and encircles the brain  
With walls, so he'll never escape.

Because who'd do that to a child,  
Jumping with joy and desire,  
Floating in fantasies, drowning in dreams,  
Brimming with feelings of fire?

And progress is all very well, but not when it locks up our dreams,  
And it's hard to feel at ease in the world when nothing is what it seems.

Leon Rosselson

In *Family Life* the young girl is a prisoner to the personality of her mother.

Leon Garfield, the author, has worked in a hospital, and he based his novel on a true story — but the methods by which Belle is nursed belong to the 18th century.

How is this film, and your other films, distributed in Britain?

Very badly. Films have to be made with a view to the American market, so they make science-fiction films and so on. Films like ours, 'little' films, have a hard time surviving.

Most film workers work for television. These days even the most British of all British films has to have a touch of the transatlantic. Up to now not one of my films has been sold in the United States.

You have to work for television. I've made several films for the BBC: *Days of Hope* was a history of the labour movement, of revolutionaries thwarted by reformists, the experience of two men and a woman between 1916 and 1926. The film finishes with the General Strike.

There was also *The Price of Coal* written by Barry Hines. In the first part there is a 'bluff' leading up to the visit of Prince Charles to the mine. In the second part there is an accident, they wanted to increase production at the expense of the safety regulations.

It was a true story, but we changed the names in order to show that the system is to blame and not individuals.

I've just finished making *The Game Keeper*, also with Barry Hines. A man who was a steelworker becomes a gamekeeper for an aristocrat. In this film the interest lies in the relations between the classes, between this ex-worker and his friends, between him and his new employer.

I'd like to make a film about the steel strike. After the steel strike others will have to take up the struggle, so it will be important for them to see the experiences of different regions. This would be a film for television.

At the moment I am on the left of the Labour Party, in that left which is trying to get rid of the right of the party. It's true that this left is fostered by illusions, but workers still think of the Labour Party as their party, and I think that's where it's at.

\*NOEMIE MAS interviewed Ken Loach in Paris. The interview originally appeared in 'Rouge', weekly paper of the LCR, French section of the Fourth International.

\*Enterprise Films, the distributors of 'Black Jack', confirm what Ken Loach says in this interview about the inadequacy of the distribution of his films in Britain. At present there is no future showing of 'Black Jack' scheduled in London, although it will be shown at the Greenwich Film Festival.

If you have a local film theatre it is worth checking to see if it is due to be shown soon — it has several one-off local bookings over Whitsun weekend and it will be in the Manchester area on 20 April.

# Socialist Challenge

## THE HORROR OF EL SALVADOR

### The reality behind Carter's concern for human rights

THIS shocking picture, taken by Mexican photographer José Lavanderos, is of a peasant murdered by right-wing gangs in El Salvador in Central America.

His body was found on 23 January, the day after the general strike by peasants and workers against the military dictatorship which runs El Salvador.

Hundreds of peasants and workers have died since that strike, murdered by the right-wing gangs and the army. The dictatorship survives only because of the millions of dollars of military aid poured in by the United States.

This is the reality of Jimmy Carter's view on human rights. Remember this photograph the next time you hear Carter talking about his concern for human rights in Iran or Afghanistan.

José Lavanderos has taken even more horrific pictures which Socialist Challenge considered too shocking to publish — pictures of workers who had been hacked to death by machete-wielding National Guardsmen.

But the people of El Salvador are fighting back. The photographs we publish on our centre pages this week show the armed defence pickets of the revolutionary organisations in action on the streets against the army.

They show demonstrations during the general strike and the spirit of resistance of a people determined to bring down the brutal regime.

The people of El Salvador are today a people in arms. The only guarantee of human rights in that country is their victory, just as the victory of the revolution in Nicaragua was the way in which the Nicaraguan people conquered human rights for themselves.

\*The poverty and misery of the people of El Salvador, page 7. Their resistance illustrated, pages 8 and 9.

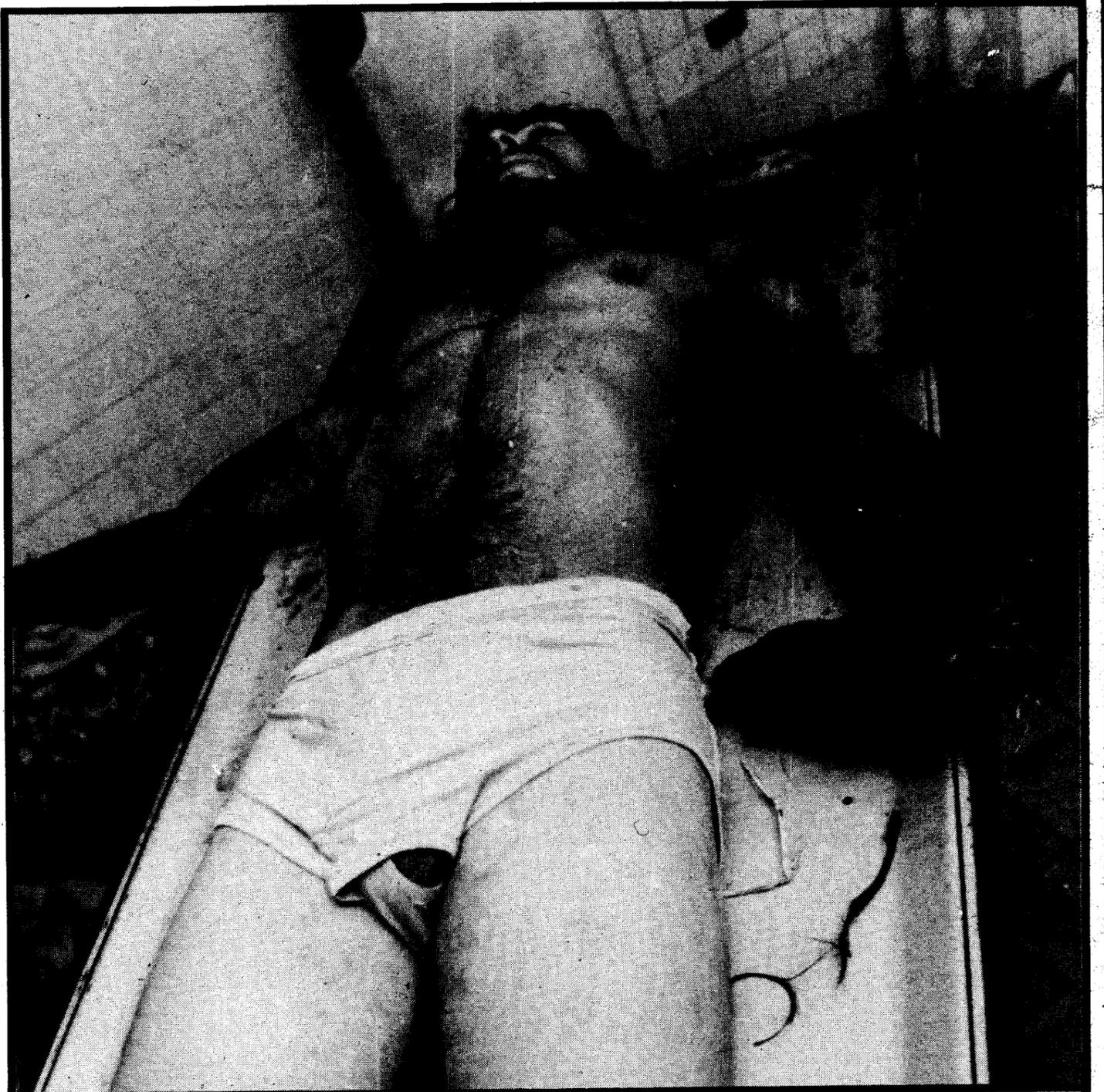


Photo: JOSE LAVANDEROS