

Socialist Challenge

HALT US WAR DRIVE



BRITAIN OUT OF NATO

Planes may crash in the desert but... US builds the world's most powerful war machine

By A Duret

'THE THREAT of a third world war' arises, according to the media, from the 'aggression' of the USSR, Vietnam, Cuba, etc. against a world insufficiently 'protected' by the great powers of imperialism! What is the reality behind this smokescreen?

Since 1975 and the victory of the Vietnamese revolution, there has been a change in the global relation of class forces to the detriment of imperialism. The American defeat in Indochina, along with its repercussions inside the USA, has combined with the decline of American dominance in the capitalist world, and the crisis of the international capitalist economy, to produce a worsening of social contradictions and increased inter-imperialist competition. All this is reflected in the crisis of imperialist political leadership — what the media means when it refers to Carter as 'indecisive'.

Major

In this context there have been a series of major upheavals: the overthrow by an unprecedented popular mobilisation of the dictatorship of the Shah, who played the role of local policeman for the imperialists; the upsurge of the revolution in Central America and the Caribbean, with the removal of Somoza through a popular insurrection; a new rise in anti-imperialist mobilisations in Iran around the US embassy hostages, finding an echo in a number of 'Islamic' countries.

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan underlines the relative decline of the US's ability to intervene in a vital region. Carter couldn't simply barge in at will.

But all these blows to imperialism should not allow us to ignore an apparently paradoxical aspect of this crisis: on the military level, the USA is still the world's major power. It has at its disposal the greatest and most terrifying means of military destruction in history.

Force

But to make effective use of this military force, to be able to enter a new stage of the 'arms race', to be able to strike directly at an advancing revolution, American imperialism first has to 'cure' its working people of their post-Vietnam 'shock'. This has been Carter's aim, since he won the presidency.

First of all, Carter launched his 'human rights' policy, with the intention of creating an ideological climate similar to that encouraged by Kennedy until it crumbled under the blows of the Vietnamese revolution. As the radical American professor Noam Chomsky has noted, 'it is striking that the "discovery" of the Gulag took place at the end of the Vietnamese war, when it made sense to distract attention away towards other atrocities'.



An imperialist campaign took shape focussing the danger of 'Soviet tanks' on the frontiers of capitalist Europe, the 'discovery' of the Soviet brigade in Cuba, the attack with racist overtones on the Iranian revolution (launched when the embassy hostages were taken), and lastly the 'tramp of Red Army boots' in Central Asia.

All this had a purpose: to make the American masses accept the idea of a military intervention — American if necessary — against a people's anti-imperialist mobilisation, along with a major increase in the US military budget at a time when austerity dictated massive cutbacks in social expenditure.

It is well known that when imperialism wants to open a new stage in its arming and reorganise its forces to prepare a counter-attack, it talks about 'disarmament' and kicks up a big fuss about the 'imminence' of war. So what are the real facts of the situation?

Between SALT 1 in 1972 and last year's agreement in principle on SALT 2, the arsenals of the great powers have carried on growing — not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively. The levels fixed in the accords are so high that they can have nothing to do with disarmament.

Furthermore, the limitations are also an incentive for research into the production of arms in areas not covered by the regulations. The huge investment necessary for these technological breakthroughs means a big emphasis on exporting arms, including those of the previous generation. So there is no disarmament.

American imperialism has embarked on a new stage of

arms production either combining longstanding techniques with new electronics or covering new technical areas. In a period of economic crisis these new projects come just at the right time to revive imperialism's key industries.

According to the *Herald Tribune* in January: 'If the arms planners have their way, the next decade will inaugurate a period of such innovation in weaponry that it will transform war as we know it on land, on the ocean, in the air and in space.'

Robert Fossum, director of research projects of the Pentagon, was quoted in the paper as saying: 'Such developments have been made possible by the appearance of such things as micro-computers, no bigger than a fingernail but with thousands of active elements. And that is an area of technology where the Russians are lagging and will fall even further behind.'

Part of this new phase of American arming already has a name: the Trident submarine, capable of launching twenty-four missiles each with seven nuclear warheads. Then there are the Cruise missiles, flying bombs, which in response to the new Soviet Backfire bomber can alter their programme in flight in line with satellite observations on the course of the Backfire. There are the mobile MX missiles with ten nuclear warheads each, which should become operational between 1985 and 1989.

And that's not to mention the neutron bomb, the high energy laser beam, the vast network of satellites which is essential to the functioning of these missiles, the planes, and so on.

This is what is behind the campaign on 'disarmament' and the 'need to strengthen the defence of the free world'. This is what explains the military budgets.

To cover up and justify these developments, the myth of Soviet supremacy on the military level has been created. As Claude Julien pointed out in a *Le Monde* dossier:

'No expert can ignore the fact that the real relationship of forces does not correspond to the superficial impression which is derived from a purely quantitative comparison... The insistence with which certain figures are cited can only give a false impression; widely repeated by the press, such arguments are basically intended to convince Congress to be more openhanded with regard to the military budget. The Pentagon chiefs are not the only ones to play this game; industry finds it equally profitable. But this bidding up the stakes does not disturb their serenity, for everyone in charge knows that American military might is qualitatively superior.'

This superiority is reflected in different levels of technological development in specific but decisive areas. Explaining the campaign in NATO circles to get the European powers to take PGMs (precision guided missiles, such as the Pershing II and Cruise), Alain Joxe wrote recently in *Le Monde Diplomatique*:

'The alarm is being sounded because the time has come for a general redeployment of the PGMs, and a vast industrial and commercial operation is at stake. The threat of a surprise attack by an armoured column

is resurfacing in the mass media at a time when the armoured column is considered to be obsolete. To justify the deployment of anti-tank and anti-aircraft PGMs, you have to have a suitable object for these weapons. If the Russian tanks did not exist, they would have to be invented.'

Indicating the Americans' technological superiority, including against the USSR's key weapons (the Backfire bomber and SS20 missiles), Andrée Jallon recently concluded that 'the cost for the Soviets of installing such an anti-missile system (in response to Pershing II and Cruise), estimated at \$24 billion, could not be borne by the economies of the Warsaw Pact countries.'

This illustrates another aspect of the arms 'race' as 'above all an American economic weapon aimed at damaging the Russian economy' (Alain Joxe in *Le Monde Diplomatique*). 'In the Western countries the production of war material is an economic necessity... For the Eastern countries, such industry is a heavy burden on the economy and constitutes a brake on development' (Andrée Jallon in the same journal).

It is certainly the case that through the qualitative (and also quantitative) development of its arsenal, imperialism exerts important pressure on the Soviet bureaucracy with direct consequences in the sphere of productive investment.

Finally, while the USSR has undoubtedly strengthened its military capacity — including its navy and fleet air arm — the USA's intervention force remains far superior. 'The

numerical superiority of the American intervention forces is accentuated by the quality of their performance: the Soviet transport planes' lack of refuelling capacity in flight, the absence of helicopter units integrated into the amphibious forces... More important still, the USSR has no real assault aircraft-carriers; lacking aerial supremacy on the field of battle, the Soviet ground forces would be highly vulnerable', writes the American researcher Michael T. Klare.

Advantage

It is one thing for the USSR to take advantage of the temporary difficulties of American imperialism to carry out a classic military intervention in a country on its own borders, like Afghanistan, or even to lend logistical support as in Angola or Ethiopia. It is another matter entirely to launch operations of the type carried out by American imperialism in Korea or Vietnam.

For several years now, and especially since the overthrow of the Shah, the USA has made a considerable effort to strengthen the military (and repressive) arsenal of numerous allies. Thus in May 1978 the American Senate decided to deliver more sophisticated combat aircraft to Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel. At the start of this year the Carter administration decided to make F16s available to several of its allies, with Israel being the first to receive them.

Arms

In relation to arms deliveries in the Middle East, it has been calculated that for the fiscal years 1976 and 1977 the total of government-to-government sales rose to \$10.4 billion (not including those to Iran); for the years 1978 and 1979 the figure was \$16.4 billion.

Mainly involved in these sales were Saudi Arabia, North Yemen, Egypt (a project involving \$10 billion), Israel (\$12 billion in military aid since 1973), Morocco (a 50 per cent rise in military aid), and Oman. The USA is constructing a new 'safety belt' in the region, preparing troops to intervene in the Persian Gulf.

To this one must add the consolidation of the military positions of Thailand, South Korea, arms deliveries to Taiwan (\$240 million worth of anti-aircraft missiles at the beginning of January), the military support given to Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, and the measures taken to intervene in Central America and the Caribbean. Today Pakistan is being offered new instalments of military aid, and is acting as intermediary for the 'Afghan resistance' with the USA. Turkey is also getting massive doses of aid.

Contrary to all the propaganda, what is actually happening is the preparation of a counter-offensive by the imperialists. Imperialism has suffered many reverses. It's in a



Fight imperialism's war drive

IN 12-foot high letters outside the United States embassy in Tehran a poster proclaims: 'The Americans can do nothing.' It was there before the attempt to rescue the hostages last week. The failure of Carter's military adventure in Iran might seem to confirm that slogan, but the reality is much more complicated.

The American forces may have botched their attempt to free the hostages, but the United States still possesses immense military might. In the short term the effect of the failure in Iran may well be to clip the Americans' wings. But the trend is towards US imperialism adopting a much more assertive military role on a world scale.

The threat of war, possibly leading to a clash between the USA and the USSR, is escalating. Tony Benn was absolutely right to warn last week of the danger of the US dragging Britain into a war. It is not difficult to see why.

The successive upsurges in the colonial revolution are threatening the vital interests of both the United States and its imperialist allies. For the US in particular, things seem to be going from bad to worse.

In Central America vital US strategic, military and economic interests are being threatened not only by the development of the revolution in Nicaragua (see page 12), but also by the escalating revolutionary process in El Salvador and Guatemala.

Over the past few months relations between the USA and the FSLN-dominated government in Nicaragua have progressively worsened. Not only have the bourgeois ministers been ejected from the Nicaraguan government, but the failure of the US Congress to approve aid to Nicaragua has meant that the government has signed a trade agreement with the USSR instead.

Cuban road

In Washington they are openly talking of Nicaragua 'taking the Cuban road'. Such a development would be disastrous for American imperialism; they cannot allow it to happen. If necessary, they will have to resort to military force to prevent the Americas being cut in two by a new workers' state.

The situation in the Middle East and South-west Asia threatens US interests even more. The name of the problem is very simple — oil. The removal of the Shah was a severe blow to American interests, both in terms of the loss of oil and because the Shah was imperialism's cop for the whole region.

The new Islamic regime can only lead to instability in the whole region.

The international strategic mess for imperialism is made a hundred times worse by the fact that it coincides with a period of grave economic recession. Most economists agree that a new recession, which will probably be more severe than that of 1974-5, has already started.

This means that the United States is under sharp pressure to assert its interests militarily, while relations between the capitalist states deteriorate as they wrestle to maintain their share of diminishing world trade.

Much of the war preparation being made by the USA is directed against the USSR. The United States and the other imperialist countries are furiously re-arming with ever more sophisticated and expensive nuclear weaponry.

This has the side effect of putting immense pressure on the Soviet economy, because the USSR is forced to respond by extending its defensive systems.

From the point of view of working people in Britain and Europe, the re-arming of the USA has an increasingly dangerous aspect. Much of the new strategic disposition of the USA will be based on the Cruise missile. Since these missiles have a limited range of 1,500 miles, they will nearly all be deployed in Northern Europe, especially Britain. The working class in Europe is being stuck in the front line for Carter's war drive. The result can only be an increase in the number of Soviet missiles pointing at West Europe.

Anti-militarism

For the workers' movement in Britain and the rest of West Europe there can be only one response to the events of the past week and the mounting war hysteria of imperialism.

First, we have to oppose every US military adventure, however much we disagree with the regime in Iran or anywhere else. No intervention by imperialism will make the situation one bit better.

Secondly, we have to launch a massive campaign against British support for the US war drive. This means complete opposition to the placing of Cruise missiles in Britain. And above all it means a campaign to get Britain out of the major imperialist alliance — NATO.

The only defense available to working people is to disarm imperialism before its headlong rush towards war ends in catastrophe for us all.

In the late fifties and early sixties, the question of Britain's membership of NATO was a constantly debated issue in the Labour Party and the trade unions. We have to resurrect that tradition of militant anti-militarism and anti-imperialism.

We need to launch a campaign to commit all the major bodies of the labour movement to oppose Carter's war drive; for the removal of American bases and missiles from Britain; and for Britain to get out of NATO.

mess — as we have seen in relation to the Iranian revolution and the overthrow of Somoza in Nicaragua — but it is by no means paralysed and has an enormous military force at its disposal.

To retrench its positions and be able to respond militarily in a 'localised' fashion to prevent the fall of an ally, the development of a revolutionary upsurge, or the loss of previous positions — that is the axis of imperialist policy today as it seeks to extricate itself from the period of the 'defeat in Vietnam'. The arranging of a preemptive coup last October in El Salvador was an indication of this approach, though in this case the crisis is far from being resolved.

Carter's response to the USSR falls within the framework of this perspective. It applies from SALT 2, which the Senate would certainly have rejected, at least in the election period, to the measures to cut down on grain exports. This response is not simply a means of lining up the electors in a presidential year. It is also intended to introduce a new cohesion in the leadership of

the imperialist world; this has been clear in relation to the economic blockade of Iran.

It is also a way of preparing the ground for putting this counter-offensive into practice if necessary through a military intervention in Central America, the Caribbean, or in the Persian Gulf so that the political price to be paid is as low as possible. In this sense there has been a certain change in the climate of detente — which should not, however, be confused with the suppression of the agreements between the Kremlin and Washington.

The bureaucracy, as history has shown since 1947, can profit from a situation of imperialist crisis, can go along with the development of the anti-imperialist struggle of the masses as a way of scoring points and developing links with the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships.

Adherence to the status quo does not mean that any change is ruled out, but rather that it has no intention of overturning the global relationship of forces, and so acts as a brake on the rise of world revolution. This has its roots in the conser-

Picket of US Embassy
Hands off Iran
No to Carter's War Drive
4-6pm Thurs 1 May
(directly after London May Day march)
US Embassy, Grosvenor Square W.1.
Called by Socialist Organiser and Socialist Challenge.

vative social nature of the bureaucracy — its methods of intervention reflect those by which it assures its domination.

Nevertheless, the deep crisis of the imperialist system and the relationship of class forces mean that any imperialist intervention will have important political repercussions and will in turn become an element prolonging the crisis. Only the defeat of working people in a series of decisive countries in

the imperialist world and the colonial countries can allow imperialism to take a decisive step towards military confrontation.

In this sense the only guarantee against the threat of nuclear war, the image of capitalist barbarism, is the struggle of the workers and poor peasants against capitalist and imperialist domination, for the overthrow of the capitalist system.



PESHMARGA Kurdish guerillas: resisting the 'soldiers of the Iman line' in Iran

KHOMMEINI'S OTHER WAR

Over the past few weeks Iran has been paralysed, not so much by the real economic and military threats posed by imperialism, as by the vicious and bloody attacks which have been taking place against the left and the Kurds.

The Kurdish fighters have been facing the army and the Islamic militias in numerous battles.

The dispute with Iraq and the brutal mass expulsion of the Iraqi Shi'ite community by the country's Ba'athist regime has been skilfully used by the Iranian government to justify a military build-up on its Western borders, around Kurdistan.

Several villages have been flattened. Hundreds of civilians have been massacred on the grounds that they were providing sanctuary to 'counter-revolutionary anti-Islamic armed groups' — a reference to communist and nationalist groups in Kurdistan.

On Friday 18 April, President Bani-Sadr gave a three-day ultimatum to all political groups to evacuate their university headquarters. He said they were free to have headquarters outside the campus, but it was necessary to end all ideological battles in order to 'protect academic freedom.'

Ransack

Bani-Sadr forgot to mention that all the 'outside' headquarters of left political groups had already been ransacked, burnt and closed down last August. The university headquarters were, in fact, the very last 'sanctuaries' of the left.

The following day, before Bani-Sadr's three-day period had run out, groups of Islamic fanatics, the well-known 'followers of the line of the

By Saber Nickbin

CARTER's bungled attempt to release the Tehran embassy hostages took place at a time when the internal situation inside Iran was rapidly deteriorating. A massive witch-hunt against the left was combined with a fierce military assault against the Kurdish minority.

Socialists in the West are thus confronted with a complex and contradictory situation. At the

Imam', began to attack the left headquarters, causing hundreds of casualties in Tehran and the provincial universities, with several dozen reported killed. Bonfires were made of all left literature on campuses.

Swift

On Monday, 21 April, Bani-Sadr personally marched to Tehran university at the head of a crowd of ten thousand to celebrate their swift victory, declaring that a similar operation was needed in Kurdistan. Islamic nationalism clearly was not satisfied with the confrontation with 'the great Satan, American imperialism'. It had also declared war on the left and the national minorities.

It would, however, be wrong to think that the left has been smashed. On Thursday 25 April tens of thousands of supporters of the left groups, mainly the Fedayeen, marched through the streets of Tehran. They made clear their implacable hatred of American imperialism, but defended their right to organise, and attacked the regime for unleashing a war against the left. The left-wing demonstration was

same time we defend the Iranian regime against imperialism, Iranian socialists are fighting for their lives in Tehran.

Our tasks are clear. We must direct our fire against imperialism and its plans to bring Iran to its knees while simultaneously making it clear that we do not defend in any way the repressive measures being carried out against the Iranian left and national minorities.

attacked by 'supporters of the Imam's line' armed with knives and bricks, but they defended themselves.

The continuing instability in Iran reflects the failure of Khomeini and his clerical parties and state institutions to stabilise the Islamic project. It is true that Islamic demagoguery is still capable of mobilising sections of the masses. Indeed it would be surprising if it were not given the role of the Mosques in the overthrow of the Shah.

But these mobilisations do not constitute in themselves a stable political project for the Iranian ruling class, which is now hopelessly divided and lacks a strong instrument of repression — the Iranian army has still to be reconstructed.

Armoury

Mass anti-imperialist sentiment was also an important part of Khomeini's armoury and it was an important factor in maintaining public support. However even that has not been totally successful. The fact that 40 per cent of the voting population refused to participate in the Presidential elections demonstrated very sharply the divisions within the masses.

A political line which could unite the masses in a set of concrete anti-imperialist measures is clearly what is needed, but an essential prerequisite for that is freedom for the left and the national minorities.

There can be little doubt that in the eventuality of a military invasion (which seems unlikely) the left would fight the hardest against American imperialism. In pre-revolutionary China, the occupying Japanese had a clear attitude to the different class forces confronting them. The nationalists (Chiang Kai-shek) were regarded as a 'disease' which could be cured, but Mao Tse Tung's partisans were to be treated as a 'cancer' which had to be rooted out of the body politic.

The State Department has a roughly analogous attitude to Khomeini and the forces of the left.

Project

However the main threat to Khomeini's project comes today from the embattled Kurdish fighters in Iran. The Kurds, as a whole, represent a nation that stretches into Iraq and Turkey and numbers several millions.

In Iran itself there are two major

groupings. The Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDP) is a multi-class alliance and the major base of the Communist Party. Its main leader is Sheikh Hoseini, who fights forcefully for autonomy within an Iranian federation.

Toilers

The second major force is the Revolutionary Organisation of Kurdish Toilers (KOMALA), which is explicitly Marxist and is strong in the Southern portion of Kurdistan. Both have a substantial number of *pehmarga* ('those who face death') guerillas in their ranks and it is they who are resisting the 'soldiers of the Imam line'.

A KDP leader stated at the beginning of the month: 'There are clerics in the government who overestimate their own strength, believing in a military solution to the Kurdish problem. It is a grave error, which could prove fatal to the government.'

Battle

It is true that the left and the Kurds have suffered heavy casualties, but they are fighting back and the outcome of that battle is by no means certain at the present moment. Socialists in the West must defend Iran against imperialism, but in no circumstances should they give up the task of solidarity with the victims of government repression.

To imperialism we say: hands off Iran, stop the economic sanctions. That is *our* main task in the West. To Iranian socialists and the national minorities we say: brothers and sisters we solidarise totally with your struggle and will render all necessary assistance.

The Cairo connection

By Adrian Yeeles

'HARD LUCK.' That was Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's reaction to the failure of the American raid on Iran.

It's a sentiment Sadat may also be privately using to describe the effects on his own future of the news that Carter's desert fiasco had been launched from an Egyptian air base on the outskirts of Cairo.

This revelation originated with a brief news item first broadcast at 10am last Friday by, ironically enough, the state-controlled Israel Radio.

The Egyptian Minister of Defence categorically denied the report, but Sadat himself refused to deny the claim, repeating instead his earlier offer of facilities to help the Americans in a rescue attempt. He urged the Carter administration to try again.

Insight

Just how surprising is this spectacular insight into the extent of Egypt's ties with US imperialism? In the days of the Arab-Israeli

wars it would certainly have been inconceivable for American military personnel to have been on Egyptian territory — except perhaps as advisors to the Israeli occupying forces.

Ally

But from the time Anwar Sadat ordered the expulsion of Soviet advisers in the early '70s, Egypt has come increasingly under American influence to the point where — according to Edward Cody in the *New York Herald Tribune* on 30 March — it has 'in effect replaced Iran as the most powerful and dependable US ally in the Middle East, after Israel.'

But allies don't come cheap these days. The US is currently allocating one billion dollars a year to Egypt making it top of the league for receipt of US aid. As one military specialist put it: 'It's just

like Iran — except the Iranians were paying for it.'

Pace

As the Iranian crisis deepened so did the pace of US involvement in Egypt. 'US diplomats and Egyptian officials agree,' wrote Cody, 'that Washington's commitment to Egypt, particularly military, has grown quickly in recent months primarily because of Washington's attempt to replace Iran as a strategic friend in the Middle East — and even faster since Soviet forces intervened in Afghanistan last December.'

The US felt able to step up its aid programme because of Sadat's willingness to co-operate.

Betrayal

Despite massive opposition from the Arab world, he signed a 'peace treaty' with Israel which is a total betrayal of the Palestinian cause. He was prepared to use Egyptian forces and arms for

causes supported by the United States, making military aid to them possible without direct US help. Egypt has trained Afghan rebels and dispatched advisers to Morocco, Zaire, and Oman.

As part of the peace treaty with Israel, Egypt was allocated \$1.5 billion in military aid, including 35 F-4E Phantom jets and improved Hawk anti-aircraft missiles. With the developments in Iran and Afghanistan the amount and quality of aid has risen sharply.

F-16s

In February the Pentagon agreed to provide 40 F-16 fighters and 250 M-60A3 tanks as part of new credits expected to reach \$4 billion over five years.

Carter also informed the Egyptians of his willingness in principle to provide F-15 fighters, the most advanced jet in the US arsenal.

As the aid has increased so has Sadat's desire to please. On 24 March he drove in person to Cairo airport to greet the Shah of Iran

and his family when they arrived from Panama. After escorting the exiled dictator to hospital, Sadat assigned him a 15-strong team of Egypt's best doctors.

Base

Late last year Sadat allowed US AWACS (airborne warning and control system) reconnaissance planes with about 250 US personnel to participate in joint training exercises at an Egyptian air base at Kenna in Upper Egypt.

The aircraft — at \$135m the most expensive plane in existence — is packed with electronic gear and was used several times in exercises with the US fleet in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf region — presumably practice runs for the abortive raid.

What effect will the news of Sadat's participation in the American adventure have in Egypt?

The opposition has condemned

the operation and Egyptian participation, and according to the *Guardian*, 'there is little support for President Carter in the street.'

'Are they going to push us into a war over the Shah?' 'Why didn't Carter keep the Shah in his own country or send him back to Iran?' and 'Why did Sadat invite him here?' were typical comments.'

Food

Memories are still fresh of the food riots which took place in Egypt three years ago. As Edward Cody explained: 'US and European diplomats in the Middle East question the wisdom of investing so heavily in Egypt — after the Iranian experience — as a strategic partner and as the only channel for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict despite opposition by other Arab nations.'

After the Iran raid this policy is likely to be put to the test, and this autumn may well see the end of two presidents, not one.

By Joe Stork

US Secretary of Defence Harold Brown, at the end of 1978, confided to a reporter that in the years ahead the US would 'have a very difficult time avoiding the choice' between armed intervention in the Third World and 'severe damage to our national interests and resources'. 'You say how could it be worse than Vietnam?' he asked rhetorically. 'I guess what I'm saying is that our vital interests are more likely to be involved...'

It was another month before Brown and other administration policymakers got specific about which part of the world they were most concerned about, a month that saw the overthrow of the Shah in Iran, a border war between the two Yemens, and the conspicuous dispatch of warplanes, military advisers and arms to Saudi Arabia. The wraps came off such neutral terminology as 'non-NATO conflict contingencies'. President Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, requested that the Pentagon firm up contingency plans for a Rapid Deployment Force, with the Persian Gulf as the main target.

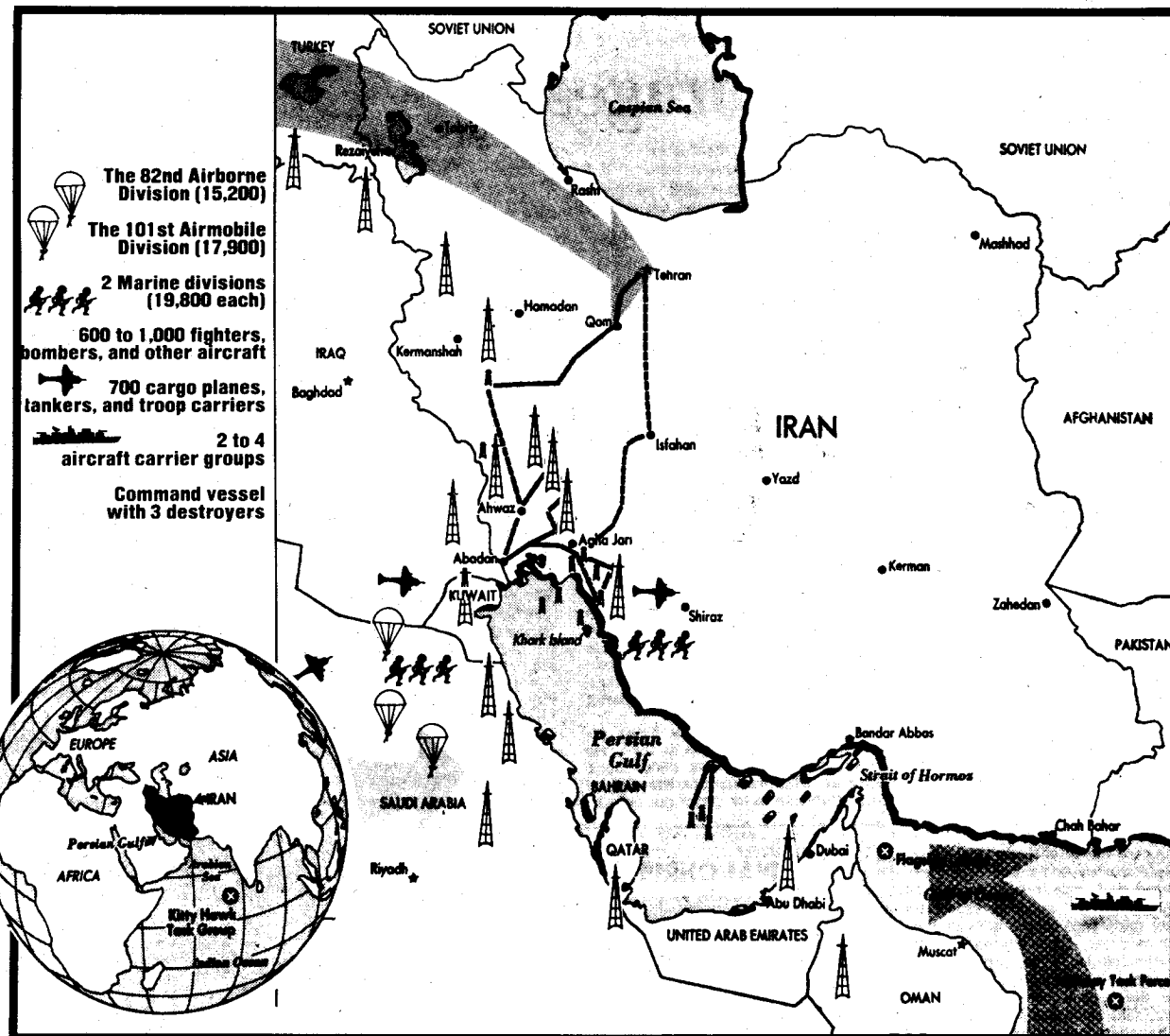
Oil

The 1,000 miles or so of oil reserves and producing complexes that stretch across the Gulf from Saudi Arabia's eastern province through the small sheikdoms, Kuwait, southern Iraq and into Iran's Khuzestan Province is the source of 34 per cent of US petroleum imports, 61 per cent of Western European imports, and 72 per cent of Japanese imports, and the site of more than half of the world's proven oil reserves. The growing dependence of the US and its major industrial allies on petroleum imports from the Gulf intersects with the increasing political instability of the region.

The latest events in Iran and Afghanistan have tipped the balance within the Carter administration towards the proponents of possible armed intervention. Brzezinski has been emboldened to announce that 'Rapid Deployment Forces will give us the capability to respond quickly, effectively and perhaps even pre-emptively in those parts of the world where our vital interests might be engaged...' (emphasis added).

The concept of rapid deployment finds its pedigree in the weapons development programmes of the McNamara-Kennedy years. Much of the planning and production of ingredients such as the giant C-5A transport aircraft, Landing Helicopter Assault Ships, and 'bare bases' originated in the 1960s as a consequence of US intervention in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic.

This doctrine came to take a back seat in the late '60s and early '70s to the so-called Nixon Doctrine, the mercenary strategy that placed primary responsibility for counter-insurgency combat on regional allies. Iran was thus undisputed 'pillar' of this policy in the Middle East, as exemplified by its intervention against the revolution in Oman. The main test of rapid deployment was a very partial one: the massive airlift of weapons and munitions to Israel during the October War of 1973.



Persian Gulf target for US intervention

The rapid deployment concept surfaced within the Carter administration in August 1977, in Presidential Review Memorandum 10, which considered it an essential component of the 'one and a half wars' doctrine. Yet only in December 1979 was an officer designated responsibility for implementing it. Behind the inaction lie inter-service rivalries, some dubiousness even within the military establishment of the utility of such a force, and unwillingness to commit funds that otherwise could be thrown at multi-billion dollar aircraft carriers, strategic missiles and the like.

Recent developments in the Middle East have strengthened the hand of proponents of this force, but the chief factor has been Carter's commitment of up to \$10 billion to the force over the next five years, allowing the services to have their cakes and eat them too. A jurisdictional struggle between the Army and the Marine Corps has apparently been

resolved with the appointment of Marine Corps General Paul X. Kelley to head the force, thus insuring that the Marine Corps will not become extinct for lack of missions. Kelley's approach is gung-ho: before his appointment he remarked that 'in looking at the 1980s, it becomes obvious that we need a sharper focus for the Third World. The US would do well to sharpen that focus before we let it slip through our fingers.'

The Corps has been practising Middle East-type landings for some five years now, but lacks the means of getting there fast. The immediate budget commitment of fiscal year 1981 is \$220 million for the first two of a fleet of 'floating bases', and \$80 million towards developing a successor to the C-5A transport planes.

The big bills will come over the next five years: the development of airlift capabilities is expected to cost \$6 billion, and the 'floating bases' another \$3 billion, before the cost of over-runs for which the

Pentagon is famous. As a Library of Congress study observed, the Gulf 'is more remote from the US than any other source of petroleum imports' — 7,000 nautical miles by air, and much further by sea.

The Army's 82nd Airborne based in Fort Benning, Georgia, has been the primary unit designated for Third World interventions, with a third of its 15,200 men on continuous alert. But the build-up of heavy weaponry in the Gulf region over the last decade makes the lightly-equipped 82nd ill-prepared for armed intervention in that region.

A former Army staff officer with Strike Command, as Rapid Deployment Forces was known in the early 1960s, is sceptical about the latest flush of activity. 'There's nothing new about it', he said. 'Now, they're publicising something out of deep standby and giving it a sexy title. If the RDF was committed anywhere, we'd

be uncovered in eight other places.

Other less-publicised elements of what could emerge as the Carter Doctrine are integral to any potential US armed intervention. US naval presence in the region increased throughout 1979 with the addition of two destroyers to the three-ship Middle East Task Force ported in Bahrain, and carrier task forces now appear regularly in the Indian Ocean waters off the Gulf.

Talks

The Indian Ocean base at Diego Garcia will be 'enhanced', and several Pentagon teams have visited the region recently to coordinate base usage in Oman, Saudi Arabia and Somalia. The Saudis have pushed the US to look to Somalia for permanent basing rights at the Soviet-built facility of Berbera, and turned down the offer of a permanent US base presence in Arabia itself.

This is a mere formality. The US military presence in Saudi Arabia is already quite large, in the form of training teams, technicians, and 'white-collar mercenaries' who come in the employ of the large arms-manufacturers. A high-level US 'planning and command structure' team spent the spring of 1979 in Saudi Arabia supervising the reorganisation of the Saudi Ministry of Defence and establishing a planning unit within it.

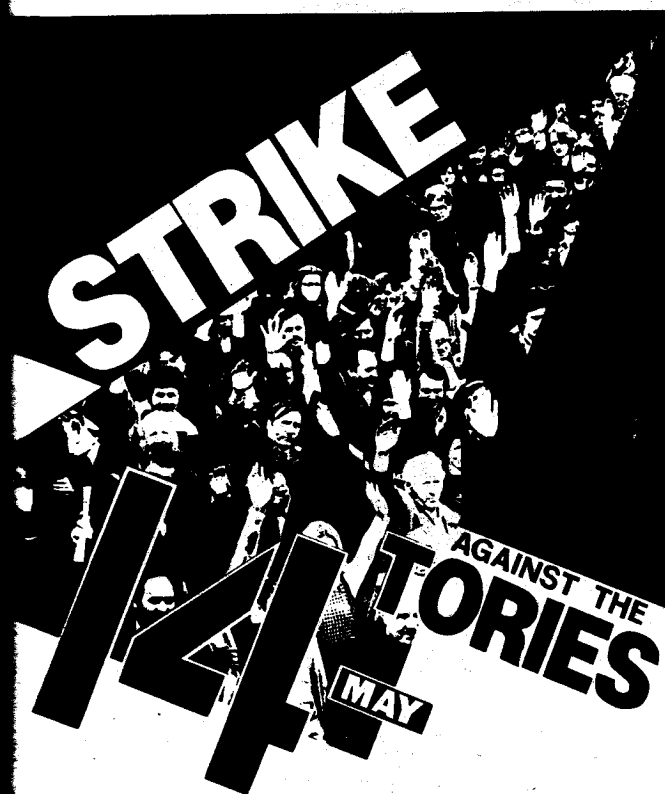
The head of the team was Major General Richard Lawrence, who also participated in joint US-Israeli-Egyptian military talks in Washington before taking up his Saudi assignment. Lawrence is regarded as a strong candidate to head up a proposed Middle East command, if that responsibility is shifted from US military headquarters in Europe.

A RAND Corporation report for the Pentagon in December 1978 recommended that US planning 'assign a more prominent role to the performance by US forces of certain key non-combatant functions, such as airlift, logistic support, communications and intelligence... to facilitate more effective military collaboration among friendly countries of the region...'

Bases

Brown obviously subscribes to this approach. In December 1979 he said: 'I don't believe that American bases as such in that area are the right way to go. A number of countries in the area can maintain bases which, in an emergency in which they asked our help, we could then come in and use.' Certainly the huge Saudi military complexes being constructed by US firms — Al-Baten, Tabuk and Khemis Misheyet — as well as the former US base at Dhahran would serve this purpose. Base facilities have also been offered by Morocco, Egypt and Israel, as well as Oman and Somalia.

While publicly eschewing a formal military alliance with the US, the Saudi regime has, behind the scenes, used the rush of military equipment and advisers around the Yemen crisis in February 1979 to increase the US military presence in Saudi Arabia itself. *The Economist*, not usually given to exaggeration in such matters, wrote in October: 'We believe... that there is a two-squadron revolving flight of American combat aircraft using Saudi airfields and serviced there by American personnel. We also believe that there are about 1,000 American servicemen, including army engineers, stationed in Saudi Arabia.'



advertise your 14 May activities with this colourful poster. The poster comes in brown and red on yellow and it's available from the Other Printshop, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester 1. Tel: 061-236 005. It's a quality screen print and costs 40p plus 20p p&p. Bulk orders: 50 for £17, 100 for £30. Cash in advance please

'We're backing 14 May'

Micky Boulter, Deputy Convenor, British Oxygen

THE aim of this Tory government is to make the ordinary people suffer. We'd like an all out, all union strike. BOC helped to fetch the Labour government down because it was not helping working people. We'd like to do the same with this government but you've got to start somewhere. Thatcher thinks she'll be able to give us sweeteners from North Sea oil before the next election and then she'll really put the boot in. But in the end things will rebound against her. The job situation could be solved tomorrow with a proper government in power.'



Bernard Connolly, Craft Convenor, South Yorkshire STC

ON the 14 May Action I have heard branch secretaries say "We're not supporting the TUC", but I argue that any action they take on 14 May is not in support of the TUC, it is in support of themselves, the working class. We have to let it be known that we are ready to stand up and be counted — that the working class of this country, the producers, are not going to put up with it. Personally I would also like to see a situation where we also go out on the 15 May — just to let them know we are not supporting the TUC hierarchy but defending the trade unions.'

Tories fear a tinder box

By Valerie Coultas

THERE will be no trains running on 14 May; there will be no newspapers; the docks, factories, offices and shops will be closed down; schools will have a half day; hospitals and fire stations will be staffed for emergencies only.

Every major trade union in Britain is urging its members to support the TUC's Day of Action on 14 May — except one, the Electricians' Union. Its leader, Frank Chapple, is waging a campaign against it.

The press has fallen over itself to praise Chapple's stand. The *Daily Express* and *The Sun* cannot believe their good luck. 'Day of Shame', shouts the *Express*. 'Misery Murray's Day of Woe', wails *The Sun*.

Using Frank Chapple's point that trade union action is being used for political ends and that 'this is not the way to conduct ourselves in a democracy', *The Sun* defends the policies of Thatcher's government: 'While she is supported by Parliament, she has the right to govern'.

Bad

We completely disagree with Frank Chapple and *The Sun*. Our answer is unequivocal: Working people do have the right to challenge and overthrow bad governments, governments that are not serving the interests of the bulk of Britain's population — the working class.

This Tory government is in power to serve the interests of big business and the bosses, like every other Tory government before it. Thatcher's Tory government is particularly slavish in serving these interests, by encouraging unemployment, restricting strike action, cutting social security and dismantling the welfare state.

One side of industry, the bosses' side, has a powerful voice in the Cabinet, Parliament and the civil service, while the other side of industry, labour, has no voice at all.

The 'opposition' put up by the Labour Party in Parliament is not going to frighten the Tories, if the Employment Bill debate is anything to go by. But even if the Labour Party was putting up a real fight the huge Tory majority of MPs means it can afford to ignore parliamentary protests.

'The ballot box rules in Britain NOT the union card', *The Sun* continued on 28 April. But do the Tories really respect the ballot box?

When mass trade unionism first developed in Britain it was not opposed through Parliament but through actions in the courts. Unions were sued for enormous damages.

It wasn't because if faced opposition in Parliament that the last Tory government under Heath ceased its attempts to crush the working class with the Industrial Relations Act. It was because working people used their own organisations, the trade unions, to force the government to release the Pentonville dockers, who had been imprisoned under the Act, and thereby made the core of the Act unworkable.

In 1951, when a Labour

government nationalised the steel industry, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express*, which today are so concerned about Parliamentary democracy, supported the steel barons in attempting to sabotage the decisions taken in Parliament. The ruling class can ignore Parliament, the working class cannot!

'Lenin' Murray, as the *Express* has branded him, has no intention of organising anything more than a polite protest to put pressure on the government. His timid instruction to trade union leaders to 'encourage maximum participation' is not a call to bring down the government.

But the *Sun* and the *Express* know that this Tory government is becoming more and more unpopular. They want to

push discontent into the safe channels of the ballot box and away from the explosive power of strikes and demonstrations.

A consistent and strong lead from the TUC, would mean a tinder box was lit. The core of the labour movement — the miners, the railways, steelworkers — are waiting for just that lead so they can really take on the Tories.

The right-wing press's campaign has one very powerful weapon on its side and that weapon is the British Labour Party. Not only is its opposition in the House of Commons lacking in real fighting spirit, but its record in office in 1974-79 leaves trade unionists without a clear socialist alternative to the Tories' policies.

A mass socialist party would be waging the kind of struggle in Parliament that Bernadette Devlin waged against the Tories when she was an MP — denouncing every attack on working people and urging them to fight for their rights.

Revolutionary socialist

MPs would campaign up and down the country for workers to come out on 14 May, as the first step to preparing a general strike movement that would show the Tories that they can't get away with walking over the old, the sick, the poor and those that produce the wealth in Britain.

But the present Labour leaders keep quiet. They leave the door open for the attacks on the trade unions. In opposition the Labour Party fears trade union action going too far on the road to challenging the authority of the government. When Labour is in charge and running the country they completely forget their commitment to socialism and pursue capitalist policies.

Building a socialist alternative is therefore vital in Britain today — one that is not afraid to use trade union action for political ends, and one that fights for working people at every opportunity, inside and outside Parliament, unlike the cowardly leaders of our so-called Labour Party.

Everybody out!

TO MAKE the Day of Action as strong a show of solidarity among trade unionists as possible it's vital that every member is brought out in your workplace, hospital or school.

There are obstacles to achieving this level of activity on 14 May, so here are some ways to overcome them now:

*Press propaganda should be countered point by point. Use your local newspaper and radio station as much as possible. Even occupy it and demand the right of reply if it starts a campaign against the Day of Action.

*Make sure everyone at work is fully informed. Call workplace meetings now to have out the arguments about what such a day of action is for. Set up a committee to

go and talk to any sections that don't attend. Publicise the action now using trades council leaflets or produce your own.

*Trades councils should use the opportunity to take the arguments to less organised sections. Go into the schools, go into the shops and offices, get out to the housing estates, stand outside the Social Security offices and put the case for mass participation on 14 May.

*Special leaflets should be produced for women, for young people, for old age pensioners. All of these groups are under Tory attack in a special way. They will not automatically support the Day of Action. Community backing is crucial to make the day a success.

WOMEN's Fightback has already produced one leaflet which shows how Tory policies affect women. Write to: Fightback for Women's Rights, 41 Ellington Street, London N7.

14 May... What's going on

MIDDLESBOROUGH: Cleveland Associated Trades Councils are organising a mass rally on 14 May in the Town Hall at 1pm. 2,000 leaflets have already been distributed and dockers, boilermakers, engineers and building workers are committed to strike action in the area.

TEESIDE: the local Campaign Against the Employment Bill is organising a public meeting at AUEW Hall at 7.30pm on 9 May. Speakers include: John Deeson (Defend Our Unions), Dave Carter, Secretary of Cleveland Association of Trades Councils and Cyril Wheat, ISTC. John Gains, the president of AUEW construction section will be chairing the meeting.

BRISTOL: the May march in Bristol starts at 11am at Canon's Marsh, Bristol and is called by the South West Region of the TUC. The 14 May Action Committee is calling a public meeting on 7 May at 7.30pm at Central Hall, Bristol. On 6 May the South West Region of the TUC is calling a meeting for all shop stewards in the area at 6.30pm at the Corn Exchange.

MANCHESTER: local youth are building a 'Youth Against the Tories' contingent. They have a disco planned for 14 May. On 5 May, at the Stockport Mayday Festival, Manchester Revolution will be campaigning for support.

Manchester Trades Council is calling on all trade unionists to assemble at 10.30am at Manucian Hall on 14 May. In Stockport the demonstration starts at 11am at Heaton Rec to Hollingworth Park.

NEWHAM: Newham TUC Action Committee is moving into action and calling a march and rally starting at 1pm from West Ham Recreation Ground ending in a rally at Central Park 3pm. Already busworkers, underground staff, railwayworkers and factories in the area such as Tate and Lyle at Silvertown have agreed on strike action.

HACKNEY: Hackney trades council are organising a march and mass rally in Victoria Park on 14 May. The march starts at 10.30am from Hackney Town Hall, the rally starts at 12 noon.

British Oxygen workers at the Hackney, Greenwich, Wembley and Ipswich depots will be on strike on the day.

Officials force sell-out at Jaguar

By Paul Shevlin

JAGUAR workers at the Browns Lane and Radford plants in Coventry last Tuesday voted by a majority of ten to return to work. They had held out against acceptance of BL management's 'slaves charter' after the return to work at other plants.

Jaguar workers did not immediately give in even when Moss Evans, general secretary of the Transport Union, suddenly accepted the new working conditions and wages package without any concessions from management. A mass meeting at Jaguar on Wednesday 23 April voted to stay out on strike despite a threat from the company that they would all be sacked by 4pm that day. After the mass meeting the company 'postponed' the sacking threat until the following Monday.

The new BL agreement imposes immediate regrading on many jobs at Jaguar, in many cases leading to downgrading of jobs.

The intransigent stand of the vast majority of Jaguar workers was overturned through the offices of TGWU district organiser, Bill Lapworth, who persuaded stewards that the company would go ahead with the sackings unless a further mass meeting decided on a return to work.

The decision to go back at Jaguar has big implications for the whole of BL. The strike was constitutional and official — the threat to sack the strikers was a straightforward attack by BL management on the right to strike.

The fight is on in Jaguar and the whole of BL to build a new fighting leadership that will stand up to the management's offensive. The Leyland Action Committee is calling a national conference for 7 June to begin organising the fightback.



Special one-day conference for 31 May LABOUR - WHICH WAY?

SOCIALIST Challenge is backing a campaign for a trade union lobby of the 31 May special Labour Party conference, calling on the party to commit itself to build and support mass action to remove the Tory government.

The proposal at the Labour Co-ordinating Committee to organise direct links between Labour Party and trade union activists to plan united action should also be supported.

To explain why, ALAN FREEMAN looks at the party's left-right battle and the limitations of the strategy put forward by the left on the party's national executive.

The decision by the national executive of the Labour Party to hold a special one day conference was prompted by a call from transport Union leaders to 'join together all factions of the party to go forward united with alternative policies to those currently being pursued by the present government'.

At first the conference decision was regarded as a victory for the left. The media said it would embarrass Callaghan in the run-up to the annual conference, and marshal the party membership behind policies counter to those which the Labour leader advocates in parliament.

Even such a small victory would be welcome. Labour's shadow cabinet has fought the Tories with all the verve of a wet jelly.

Leyland

During the steel strike, for example, it made a stirring call for the government to intervene. It has had nothing but praise for Edwardes' smashing of the Leyland workforce. And its timid criticism of the draft Employment Bill could easily be mistaken for endorsement of Prior's proposals.

Only on the cuts has Labour's front bench put up the shadow of a fight. But it ducks the real issue, which is whether local councils should join workers in a concerted attempt to defeat central government, or try to circumvent the cuts.

The latter course, involving rate rises, lets the government off the hook, places the financial burden on the working class, and leaves Labour councils open to Tory attacks on

'free-spenders', leading to a cut in the rate support grant later this year.

This spinelessness isn't surprising. The Tories are pushing policies which were initiated by Callaghan.

The Steel Corporation's lay-off plans were hatched under Labour. Edwardes, the BL boss was brought in by the Labour government. The Employment Bill merely puts Labour's 'Code of Conduct' into law. And Callaghan and Wilson more or less invented cuts.

James Callaghan was a disaster in government. In opposition he is an encumbrance.



Victory

brance. If the Labour left kick him out they would rid themselves of a millstone.

But such a victory is a fraction of what could be done if the Labour Party threw itself into a fight to unseat the Tories. Both the right and left

still want to sit back and wait, hoping that the Tories will obligingly let them back in four years' time.

Meanwhile the trade unions will be half wrecked, the welfare state in ruins, unemployment in the millions, and the workers' movement demoralised and split.

The Labour Party has half a million individual members. It is tied into the unions at every level. The party, especially its MPs, has access to the mass media, unlike struggling workers.

If it behaved as a real workers' party should, and threw its weight behind even a single struggle, let alone a serious fight to defeat the government's policies in action, the Labour Party would transform the relation of forces in Britain.

Cuts

If it broke down the barriers between the union rank and file and the constituency ghetto; if it committed its councillors to refuse any collaboration with the Tory cuts and put the resources of the town halls and local party offices at the disposal of anti-cuts activists, the Tories would be unable to carry out their plans.

Such policies would undermine the trade union bureaucrats. Their argument is that we have to be realistic; we have to deal with the government in office, stick to constitutional means, and so on — any excuse to avoid a fight. If the movement were fighting to remove the Tories, this argument would collapse.

But will the 31 May conference, and the annual conference to follow, make any difference? Will the left win? Can they promise any better?

The run-up to the special conference doesn't bring much hope. A left-wing resolution will come from the national executive, but on examination this resolution turns out to be no more than a restatement of established party policy.

No amendments or alternatives will be allowed — not a very good advert for the democratic party the lefts are

fighting for. And because the left won't mobilise the party ranks in an open fight, they have made a series of compromises.

Perhaps the best judgement on the resolution is that Callaghan felt free to sign it.

He could do so for a simple reason: it commits the party to nothing. He will stay free to peddle his line from the front bench, and the party will not launch any action which can give these policies any practical importance for the labour movement.

The labour lefts are caught in a trap of their own making. They are fighting on the same ground as the right. They are stuck in the confines of a party built for parliamentary reform.

The Labour Party is committed to use the state machine as its main policy instrument. It rejects the idea that workers should take over the running of the country, and looks for compromises to secure concessions from the bosses — instead of abolishing them.

Mess

Yet the capitalist economy is in such a mess that the small minority of the wealthy and powerful are not prepared to make these concessions. What we need can't be bargained for — it has to be taken.

Even to win minor reforms, a totally different strategy is needed: the strategy that defeated the Corrie anti-abortion Bill — mass mobilisation and direct action for our demands.

This doesn't exclude a fight in parliament. But instead of dictating our tactics, MPs should be under the discipline of the workers' movement. They should use their influence to back working class actions, and refuse to compromise on its demands.

Crumbs

The Labour Party is dedicated to putting a small band of MPs and councillors in office. When it comes to carrying out its policies, the only way it knows is for these people to bargain with the state for crumbs.

It isn't surprising that this small band of representatives dictate policy, not just to half a million Labour Party card-carriers, but to millions of trade unionists who pay them and vote for them.

Right

A serious challenge to the Parliamentary Labour Party and its right wing will only emerge when a section of the party begins to base itself on mass action.

There would then be no need for backstage deals to preserve 'party unity' — this phrase always seems to mean 'unity of the leaders' — because the goal of class struggle leaders would be unity of the working class; unity in the streets and factories, not in the corridors of power.



They would take their lead from ordinary working people, not from Whitehall or Westminster.

But this is not the whole story. The PLP is solidly backed by the trade union bureaucracy. It swings the block vote. It packs selection conferences. It acts as a buffer between ordinary trade unionists and the party apparatus.

The bureaucracy is solidly committed to parliamentary reform. Its business is to compromise between labour and

capital. It always intervenes — just as the Transport Union is doing in calling for the special conference — to preserve the unity and stability of the PLP and the leaders, and to bolster policies of 'moderate reform' without risking a head-on clash with bosses.

This is why the lefts have such a hopeless job. They base themselves on the constituencies — the weakest section of the party in all internal disputes; Labour's doorstep army, endlessly collecting the pensioners' two bobs, building for the 'next big conference fight', leaving conference sick with another rotten compromise.

Hook

To win anything they have to find a formula that the union heavies will accept — which always means a compromise to let the right off the hook.

The left will only make headway when it looks out of the constituency ghetto and begins to organise where the working class's battalions are organised for struggle — the union rank and file.

This is why socialists should support proposals, such as those of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, to turn the Labour Party outwards, to develop it as a campaigning party based on mass action, and to establish direct links with the trade union rank and file.

This strategy will work only if the links are formed for action, and not mere discussion; and if the aim is to organise the trade union rank and file, and not to court the very officials and bureaucrats who form the collar of the PLP's dogleash.

This is not an issue just for the party faithful. It is a matter of concern to all workers whether the Labour Party stands — in the words of steelworkers to the ISTC — 'on our backs or by our sides'.

The problem we face is this: how can workers discipline, even partially and temporarily, a party that is built to betray them?



THATCHER YEAR ON WIN, LOS

By Steve Potter

WHILE in opposition, the Tories used the Centre for Policy Studies to draw up the most careful strategy for their first year of office.

They well knew that they faced the opposition of a working class which had brought down the last Conservative prime minister.

Thatcher has survived the first year through a combination of confrontation, encouragement of the right wing, and attacks on women, blacks and youth.

The result has been a stalemate. But for how long?

The problems that the Tories faced when they were elected one year ago were formidable. The chief of these was the imminent onset of a new international recession.

Gloomy forecasts started to land on Thatcher's desk. An absolute decline in industrial production was predicted for 1980, and a further decline in 1981. Unemployment was projected to rise to 2¼ million by the end of 1981. Inflation would rise above 20 per cent in one year and not fall below 12½ per cent until 1983.

The Tories' answer has come in a series of spending cuts culminating in Sir Geoffrey Howe's April Budget. The Tories' immediate aim is to bring inflation under control and to reduce the enormously high interest rates which made borrowing money prohibitive. The underlying strategy is to cut back those sectors of the economy which are less productive in order to increase the rate of profit.

Cuts

While spending cuts have been the main instrument another has been the attempt to claw back £1000m from the European Economic Community. Given the failure, albeit temporary, of last week's EEC summit to reach an agreement British workers can prepare themselves for even more radical cuts in public services to make up the difference.

But other deep tensions divide the governments of the EEC as was demonstrated in the response to the crisis in Afghanistan. Lord Carrington was forced to admit to the *Times* newspaper: 'We made a mess of it.' And a mess it was. It took three months for President Carter to whip his European allies into line behind the boycott of a sports competition.

Mines

The reason for the miners' victories in 1972 and 1974 and Heath's 'U-Turns' in policy after the Pentonville dockers' case and the Upper Clyde Shipbuilder work-in was the capacity of the workers leading these struggles to unite the rest of the labour movement behind them.

These groups of workers were not seen as fighting for their own interests alone, but for the interests of the whole of the working class. The UCS workers were fighting against the 'lame duck'

industrial policies which threatened to bring devastation to whole areas. The Pentonville dockers were seen to be fighting the hated Industrial Relations Act whose provisions affected millions of workers. The miners were fighting against a hated government.

This sort of unity is what Thatcher fears above all.

TUC

The Tories in the first year have used many varied weapons to weaken this unity. Racism, attacks on women's rights, 'law and order campaigns' have all been encouraged by the Tories. Overt appeals are made to the 'men of moderation' in the trade unions. The employers have responded by attempting to isolate and then remove leading trade union militants. The aim is to disunite the working class, promote the cause of the right wing inside the unions and in society as a whole.

The policy has born some fruits. It has produced a division in the TUC General Council over the provision of state-financed postal balloting. Frank Chapple, the electrician's leaders, has felt capable of openly campaigning against the 14 May Day of Action. The right wing now dominates the national committee of the AUEW and the removal of Derek Robinson from his position as convener of British Leyland's Longbridge plant will encourage further attacks of the same type by other employers.

Ridley

But this strategy had received significant rebuffs too. The Tories obviously miscalculated in their estimation of the fighting capacity of the steelworkers and Mr. Ridley will be kicking himself for making the basic error of confusing the temper of rank and file workers with that of their leadership.

During the steel strike there were significant developments of inter-union solidarity. The last days of the strike were marked by the threat of a national docks walk-out in support of solidarity action with the steel workers.

Thatcher's international pre-occupations are not limited to Europe. Seemingly intractable problems faced her in Zimbabwe. The toppling of the Smith-Muzorewa regime by popular revolt would have destabilised the whole of the

R'S BRITAIN

E: E, OR DRAW?



African region and jeopardising the extensive interests of imperialism in the area. Furthermore the Rhodesian situation had always been the white stalking horse of the right wing in the Tory party and substantial progress has to be made to avoid a party split over the issue of sanctions. The elections were held under enormous disadvantages for the Front forces. Despite 88 per cent of black voters for the parties which had led the war of liberation; the Tories and ZANU. The Tories, dismayed by the result, tried to abide by it; confident any excesses on the part of Mugabe government would be dealt with in extremis by the honoured device of coup d'etat.

Ireland
The apparent success of the colonisation of Zimbabwe has emboldened the Tories considerably in respect of Ireland. Next month the Tories unveil their constitutional proposals for Britain's last and oldest colony. However very little progress has been made by the Tories in tackling the undiminished resistance of the nationalist population of the north of Ireland.

But while the Tory foreign policy, in slavish alliance with the White House, is under strain the fundamental obstacle facing the Tories in restoring the fortunes of British capital is the rock on which Heath smashed; the huge working class of Britain and the strength of its organisations.

Wales

The Tories strategy to deal with this situation was carefully prepared before the last General Election in Sir Keith Joseph's Centre for Policy Studies. The Centre did not believe that the new Tory government could survive a headlong collision with powerful unions such as the miners or the engineers. This was confirmed by the findings of the so-called 'Ridley Report', a confidential memo drawn up by a junior shadow minister which specified those unions which could be confronted (like the steel workers) and those which should be left alone (like the miners and the Waterworkers). In South Wales, workers from steel, rail, mines and docks planned united action to save jobs. Action was only averted by a last minute intervention by the British TUC aimed at postponing and then dumping the indefinite strike action planned from 21 January.

The development of rank and file organisation among steel workers since the end of the strike shows that they were not defeated despite the sell-out of their national leadership. Mass action has defeated other attacks on the working class. The mobilisation of women and the historic demonstration called by the TUC against the Corrie Bill has repulsed the first wave of attacks on the rights of women. Likewise the youth who fought back against police harassment in Bristol scored a stinging defeat on their local police in an example which will not be lost on black communities all over Britain.

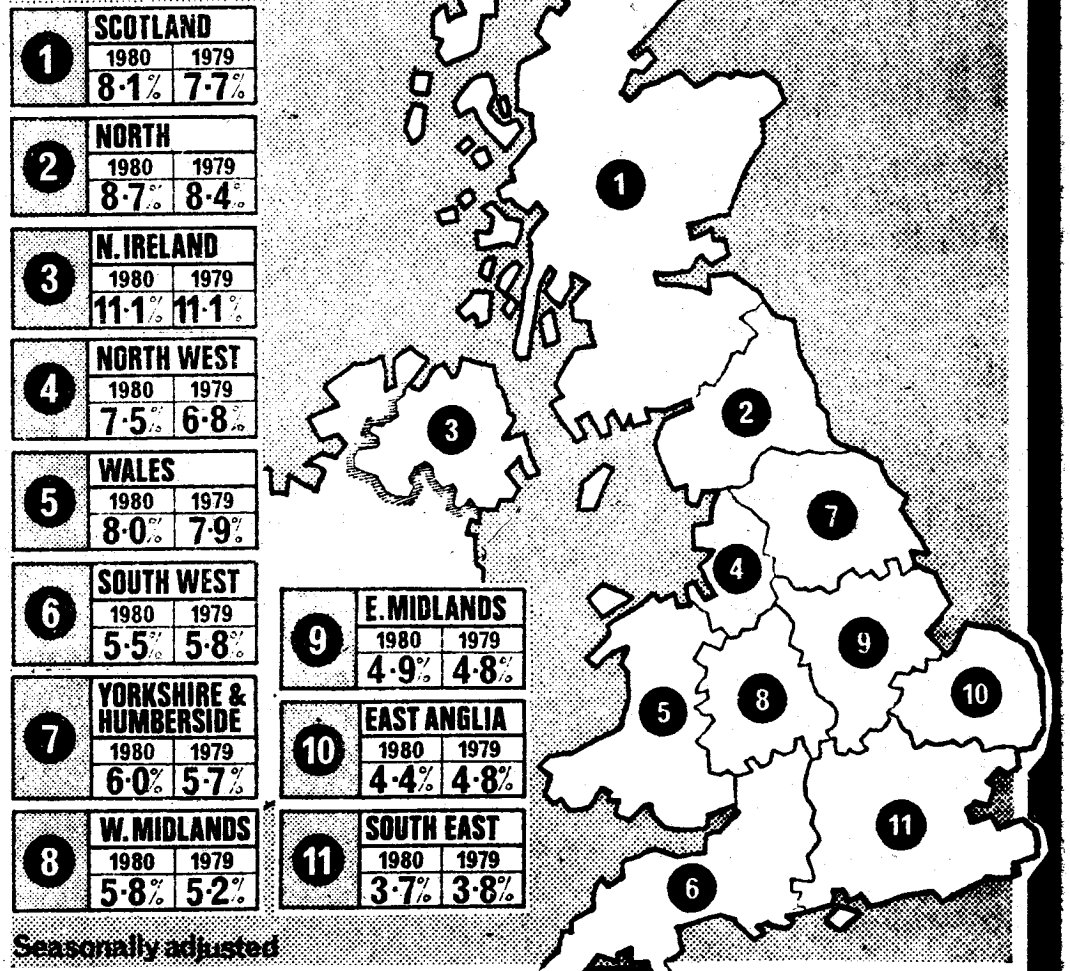
Strike

The determination of the Tories to press home their attacks on the working class, on the one hand, and the capacity of the working class and the oppressed to resist on the other are the two main factors which give rise to the possibility of global confrontation between the classes in the next period. The job of socialists will be to help to strengthen all those tendencies in the working class struggle which help to produce a united, centralised and national response to the Tories' attacks. That is why it is important to raise the necessity of a general strike to remove the government. This slogan is important as a framework for working class strategy in the year to come. The strength of the working class makes it possible to remove the Tories through a general strike which would unite the massive resources of the class. The removal of the Tories means that this power can be used to remove the main agency of the attacks on the working class, not merely to secure partial concessions.

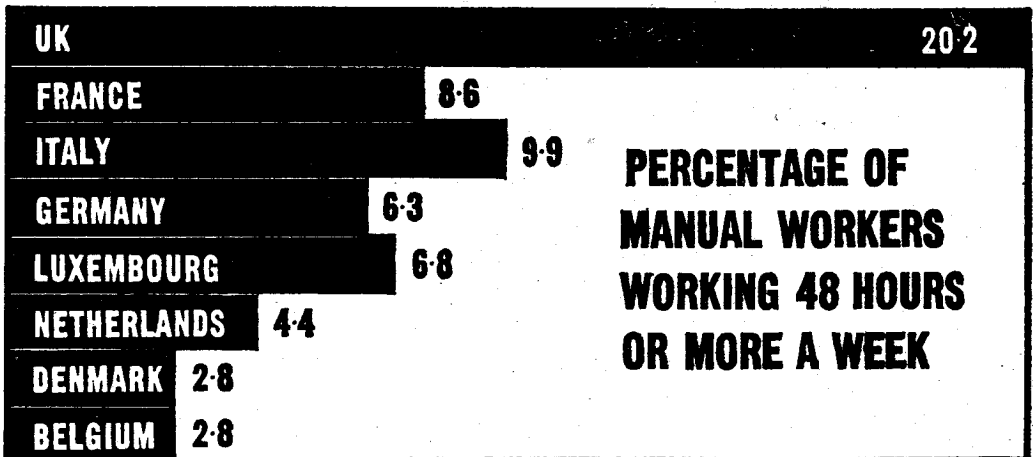
Gains

The general strike slogan is not an orientation which socialists raise lightly. But the next year of the Tory government, after this year of stalemate, will not see a scaling down of the attacks on the working class, but their stepping up. The deadline for the closure of the steel plants in South Wales for next September, the beginning of the new round of wage claims will mark the resumption of the next round of the battle against the Tories. If the Tories continue in office for their full term of five years it will be seen as a defeat for the working class. More than that it will be a defeat for the working class, because the price that will be paid for the Tories staying in power will be the surrender of some of the chief economic, social and political gains made by the working class since the Second World War.

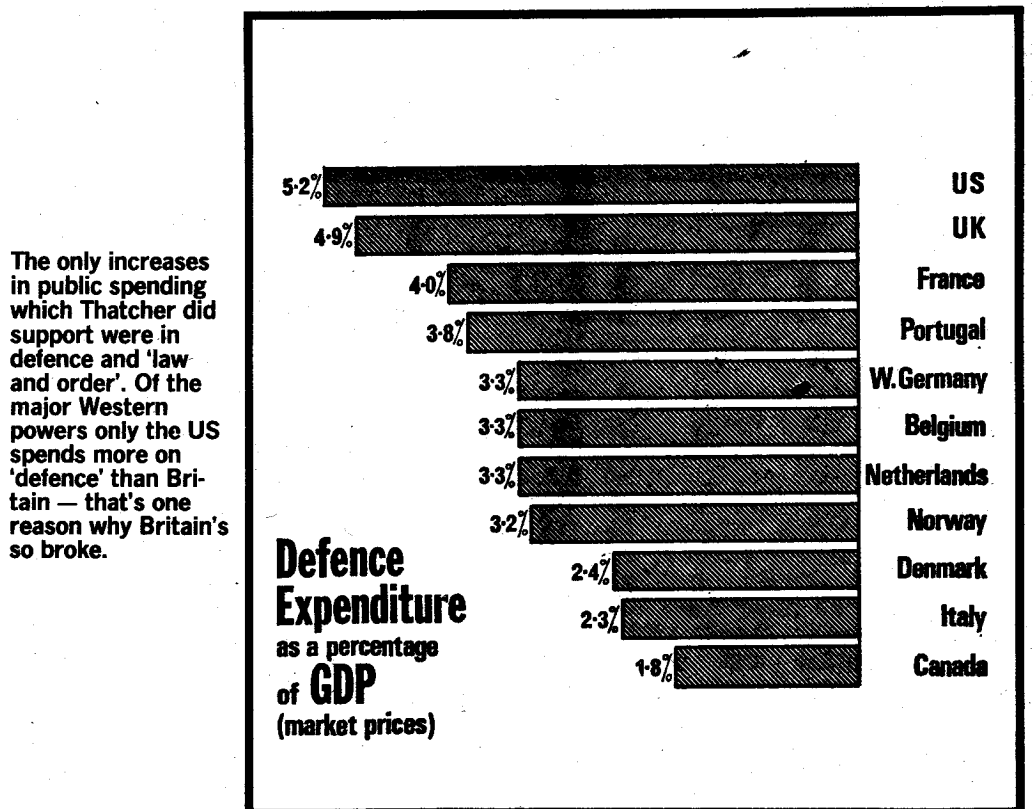
UNEMPLOYMENT March



Unemployment was about the only growth industry in Tory Britain. The number of women out of work rose more rapidly than male unemployment. From last September to March female unemployment rose by 13.1 per cent.



Everyone had to work harder, said Thatcher and the millionaires in her cabinet. The fact is that working people in Britain already work longer hours than their counterparts in the other main European countries.



HOME NEWS

By Phil Hearse

1,522,921. One in sixteen of the working population unemployed. That's the official unemployment figure revealed this week. This represents an increase of 45,000 in one month — at a time of year when unemployment should be going down. And this figure conceals an estimated 400,000 not registered as unemployed. At the same time, notified vacancies have gone down by 12,000 to a paltry 168,000.

Particularly badly hit are women and school leavers. This summer, with thousands of school leavers coming into the 'labour market', real unemployment will be approaching 2½ million. It is time that the whole labour movement seriously took stock, and began to combat the terrible resignation and apathy which exists on this issue.

According to the *Guardian* (23 April), union leaders at last week's Scottish TUC were privately noting indicators that for the first time in many years trade union membership appears to be falling — a direct result of unemployment.

Unemployment doubled under the Labour government. In part this was a result of the world slump; in part a result of Labour's deflationary policies of cuts in government expenditure. But the spiral of unemployment is being given a particularly vicious twist by the Tories' monetarist policies.

What do the Tories' policies aim to do? The basic problem that Thatcher, Joseph and Howe are trying to come to grips with is the decline



UNEMPLOYMENT: FIGHTBACK OVERDUE

in profitability of British capitalism. Monetarism — the policy of savagely cutting public expenditure and restricting the money supply and credit — aims to start to deal with this problem by forcing up labour productivity.

As the slump deepens, older and less profitable plants will be closed down. The threat of unemployment will put massive pressure on trade

unionists to give up gains in working practices and wages in order to preserve jobs. This is exactly what is happening in British Leyland. Profitability will thus be driven up as fewer workers in a smaller industrial sector work harder to produce more. The whole power and bargaining position of the trade unions will be consequently weakened.

Of course, the drive for higher labour productivity and higher profits will be broken if real wages go up as a

consequence. But what Tory ideologists are banking on is the assumption that unemployment will so cripple the power of the trade unions that real wages will not rise in line with profitability.

The whole logic of the Tory monetarist offensive can be broken by the power of the trade unions. But of course wages militancy alone is no answer to the threat posed by unemployment. On no issue has the betrayal of the trade union leaderships been so great.

Time after time the trade union bureaucracy has been prepared to trade jobs for increases in wages. Indeed, this is exactly what Bill Sirs and the ISTC leadership did at the end of the steel strike. Time after time, trade union leaders have come to accept job loss as 'inevitable'.

The fight against unemployment must begin with the employed workers. So long as workers in employment are forced to work long hours of overtime to earn a living wage, unemployment will continue to rise. The only way to combat this is to enforce the police of work-sharing with no loss of pay.

Many unions now have a policy for a 35-hour week, but hours worked in most industries show no sign of reduction. It is time that we forced the TUC to act in defence of jobs. This means every union resisting closures through a policy of work-sharing, and enforcing a 35-hour week throughout manufacturing industry.

Every threatened closure should be met by occupations supported by the whole labour movement. And the campaign to resist all cuts in social spending must be redoubled. The campaign for these policies must be brought home to this year's TUC and Labour Party conferences.

At stake is not just the misery of unemployment for thousands, but the strength of the organised trade union movement as a whole.

No lead from Scottish TUC

By Des Tierney

THE Scottish TUC met last week for its 83rd Congress. It was a week in which the jobless total in Scotland reached 201,067 — the highest level since the Second World War.

It was a week in which the management of Robb-Caledon, the Dundee shipbuilders, announced further cut-backs in its already depleted workforce, and when Scottish teachers escalated their strike action.

If Scottish workers had expected these important events to be reflected in the deliberations of the Congress, they were to be disappointed.

Under the Labour government, the STUC was usually the sounding board for those opposed to the Labour leadership's policies. The debates indicated the anger of the Scottish working class and its sense of betrayal.

Under the Tories, it seems, the Congress will revert to its more traditional role — a forum in which the Scottish trade union leadership pose as the defenders of the Scottish working class, making bellicose speeches without committing themselves to any action.

At this year's conference the Alternative Economic Strategy was overwhelmingly endorsed, with the call for import controls receiving a more sympathetic hearing than usual.

Unemployment was deplored and calls for a 35-hour week were made. Prior's Employment Bill was castigated and the Congress was horrified by the cuts in public expenditure, but at no time during its deliberations was there any outline of how these policies might be achieved, or of how the enormous obstacle of the Tory government could be removed.

14 May

Perhaps there was a hint of this in the discussion on 14 May. The STUC is requesting its affiliated unions to take action on that day.

But there are differences over the implications of 14 May among the Scottish trade union leaders. In most unions, the TUC's Day of Action is seen as a way of letting off steam, showing the Tories that there is widespread opposition to their policies in the hope that they will reverse them.

It also allows the members to believe that the leaders are taking on the Tories.

Jimmy Morrel, a member of the STUC General Council, emphasised when interviewed after the debate that 14 May would definitely 'not be a political strike'.

For some of the delegates, however, 14 May is seen as the start of the trade union campaign to bring down the Tories through independent action. Some important sections of the STUC, including the leadership of the Scottish NUM, advanced this position.

This reflects a growing feeling among the Scottish working class that only massive united action against the Tories will succeed, which was confirmed by the overwhelming support for strike action given by mass meetings at the Scott-Lithgow shipyard and the Talbot car plant at Linwood last week.

To judge by the STUC leadership's performance at the Congress, and its recent disgraceful role in shackling steelworkers' pickets, it is reasonable to suppose that these working class representatives will not be at the head of the movement to kick out the Tories.

It is in the present struggles of the Scottish working class that such a leadership will have to be forged.

Scottish teachers take strike action

By Pauline Tierney

TEACHERS throughout Scotland are taking strike action against the failure of the Clegg Comparability Commission to award adequate pay increases. They are also angry at management's threat that unless teachers accept a rise of 13 per cent in the 1980 wage award there will be sackings.

While Clegg awarded a 17 per cent rise to teachers in England and Wales on the lowest scale, and 25 per cent to those on the highest scale, the commission made no recommendation for teachers in Scotland except that any

negotiated settlement should be within the limits set for England and Wales.

The first strikes were organised by teachers in the West of Scotland the day after Clegg reported a fortnight ago. Many teachers realised that because of interim awards, the report would mean no new money. The 1979 award from Clegg has failed even to keep pace with inflation.

Reaction from the Scottish teachers' union, the Educational Institute of Scotland, has been predictable. Unwilling to launch a fight on the 1980 claim, the leadership had

oped that the comparability award would distract teachers from a poor 1980 settlement.

This strategy was completely undermined by the failure of Clegg to satisfy Scottish teachers' expectations. The EIS leadership now finds itself without an obvious way out of leading the fight, and it has responded by viciously turning on the striking teachers.

It has castigated them as an 'unruly mob' and their struggle as 'politically motivated'.

One of the major unofficial action committees in the east of Scotland is demanding that the 1980

settlement should be 20 per cent on the wages bill, flat-rated with no job loss.

Despite a high level of militancy and good organisation, the striking teachers face many problems.

Behind the intransigence of the employers and the treachery of the EIS leadership stands the most reactionary British government since the war, determined to drive home its austerity plans.

Alone, the Scottish teachers are unlikely to win. Without escalating their action and drawing in English and Welsh teachers, they will be an easy target.



Chapple flips his lid

FRANK Chapple has maintained his reputation as the trade union movement's most open scab, enthusiastically backing the campaign by the Tory press against the TUC's Day of Action on 14 May.

Writing in the *Daily Express* — whose hysteria against the TUC has reached such a pitch that it refers to 'Lenin Murray' — Chapple said that the Day of Action 'is the sure road to dictatorship'.

Not content with this hysterical campaign, Chapple persuaded the Electricians' Union executive to suspend its Cardiff branch on the grounds that 'it has been taken over by left-wing extremists'. No suggestion of constitutional irregularities, merely that it had a political complexion that Frank didn't like. This follows the suspension of the Birmingham branch on similar grounds.

To round off his dirty work for the week, as the *Daily Express* (with which Chapple seems to have a particularly pally relationship) 'exclusively' revealed, the Electricians' Union is preparing a 'report' to the Labour Party demanding a purge of the left. *Socialist Challenge* will be profiling the life and times of Frank Chapple in a forthcoming issue.

IRELAND



IRA in action — three UDR members died in this bombing

This May Day Ireland still bleeds

By Geoff Bell

THIS May Day Britain is at war. It is at war in the North of Ireland. And while that war continues the proletarian internationalism which May Day is meant to celebrate remains an unfilled aspiration for British socialists.

There is little doubt that if the British

'SHIT. Hell. I'm not going through this again. When I finish this tour, that's it'.

'We know we are winning. We have the determination to see this through. And we shall.'

The source of the first remark is a British soldier, stationed in Crossmaglen in South Armagh. The quote is taken from last week's *New Society*. The second, contrasting statement was part of the Easter address issued by the Provisional IRA.

The war statistics help to explain the two views.

Last year saw more British soldiers killed in the North of Ireland than in any year since 1972. Already in the first three months of this year five more soldiers have died. This is slightly down on the figure of seven in the first quarter of 1979, but other fatalities in the security forces have increased. No members of the RUC had been killed by the IRA by the end of March 1979.

In the same period this year seven have been killed. The increase in deaths in the British Army-controlled Ulster Defence Regiment is similar: six in the first quarter of this year compared to only two in the same period the year before.

Totalling up the death count since British troops went in in 1969 the tally is: 'security forces' (Army/RUC/UDR) 560, IRA 205.

The strain in the ranks of the British Army is beginning to tell. The article in *New Society*, based on conversations with serving soldiers in the North of Ireland, depicted demoralisation, frustration and lack of discipline. The only recorded smile in five long pages is in the following paragraph: 'I asked Rod if he intends staying in the army. "June the fourth", he grins. That's the day he gets out.'

Some cannot wait until they are discharged. Teenage soldier William Barstow was recently sentenced to six months for desertion. 'I hate it', wrote Barstow in his diary when serving in the North.

Other soldiers go berserk. Gary Gibson, who appeared in a Belfast

court in March, slipped out of his army camp on the last day of his tour of duty in Belfast, and prowled alone with a rifle in the streets of West Belfast. He shot two passers-by at random. When finally captured by other soldiers he was about to commit suicide.

These are only a couple of the most recent examples of the state of British Army morale, but they, and many similar incidents, give substance to claims made by the IRA this Easter that:

'This generation of (IRA) volunteer soldiers and the population which supports the war, in sacrifice and suffering, is proving too much for British rule. Our movement which is geared for, and dedicated to, a long war, will, nevertheless, see gains along the road to final victory, and the last 12 months, especially, have seen us take military and political strides...

'In the past year we have inflicted serious blows on the British government and its troops'.

Colony

It is a measure of this crisis that last week's *Sunday Telegraph* reported the rumour that Lord Soames, of Zimbabwe settlement fame, may soon be sent to the North of Ireland. Margaret Thatcher appears to consider that Soames is Britain's answer to Wonderwoman. Certainly wonders are required by Britain in its Irish colony.

The 'constitutional talks' convened since the start of the year by Northern Ireland secretary Humphrey Atkins have now collapsed in mutual disagreement. The government's imminent Green Paper will find difficulty in disguising this.

Thatcher seems likely to try and impose a solution. The most probable variant is a developed government, with no power sharing, but with limited powers and a bill of rights. The Tories may then put such proposals to a referendum.

Inevitably such a policy will fail. The IRA will continue fighting, the British Army will see its problems,

working class were to take up the cause of the Irish people, demand that Britain ceases to wage war and withdraws from Ireland, then the war itself would be over in a matter of weeks.

This is obvious from the current state of the Anglo-Irish conflict. Here are two current views:

and death toll increase.

It may seem remarkable that the British Army — with 20 times as many active soldiers stationed in the North of Ireland as the IRA — cannot win. But this is because they are not just fighting the Provisionals. They face the opposition of hundreds of thousands of Irish people, who, whatever they may think of the IRA, take its side against the British Army.

Fenians

But that is still not enough to secure British withdrawal from Ireland. The British Army, as the IRA, has the ability to carry on for a long time yet. The struggle of the

Irish people needs a new ally if it is to be ultimately successful.

And that is why it is appropriate to bring the Irish question to the fore on May Day, because the most important ally the Irish could have would be the British working class. The reasons why British workers should take such a stand are summarised in the quotation printed on this page. Those words may have been spoken over a hundred years ago but they remain strikingly relevant.

What the Fenians were fighting for in 1867, the withdrawal of Britain from Ireland, is what the Provisionals and others are fighting for today. The enemy the British working class faced then, its own capitalist class, is the same now; it shares that enemy with the Irish people.

More than a hundred years ago Karl Marx insisted that the Irish question be the chief issue to be taken up at the rallies of the First International.

Those who this week claim to stand in that inheritance should do the same. Today in Britain the first test of internationalism is Ireland. On 1 May, or on any other day.

Loyalists wreck Bernadette' Glasgow meeting

By Charlie Baird

LOYALIST thugs wrecked a rally in Glasgow which was due to have been addressed by Bernadette Devlin-McAliskey. The meeting, on Wednesday of last week, was part of a tour on Ireland organised by the Socialist Workers Party.

Two successful meetings had been held in Edinburgh and Dundee, although the latter was picketed by Loyalist bigots led by Pastor Jack Glass, head of the '20th Century Reformation Society'.

The rally was to have been held in Maryhill Community Centre,

Glasgow, but it had to be cancelled after 30 Loyalists stormed the hall, using bricks, batons, and boots to smash doors and windows.

Unfortunately, the manner in which the SWP had organised the rally aided the Loyalist's efforts to wreck it. The SWP kept the venue of the meeting 'secret', which meant that local Troops Out and far left supporters were unable to discover its location and had difficulty obtaining tickets.

While the Loyalists managed to discover the location, many people who would have gone to listen to Bernadette were unable to attend,

'It is well for the English to talk of legality'

'THE Council would be wanting in its duty if it remained indifferent to the Irish cause. What is Fenianism (Irish Republicanism)? Is it a sect or party whose principles are opposed to ours? Certainly not.

'Fenianism is the vindication by an oppressed people of its right to social and political existence. The Fenian declarations leave no room for doubt in this respect. They affirm the republican form of government, liberty of conscience, no state religion, the produce of labour to the labourer, and the possession of the soil to the people.

'What people could abjure such principles? Let us see of what value the reproaches are that are addressed to the Fenians by the English would-be liberators. Fenianism is not altogether wrong they say, but why not employ the legal means of meetings and demonstrations. I avow it is hardly possible to restrain one's indignation at hearing such arguments.

'What is the use of talking of legal means to a people reduced to the lowest state of misery from century to century by English oppression. Having destroyed all — life and liberty — be not surprised that nothing should be but hatred of the oppressor.

'It is well for the English to talk of legality and justice to those who on the slightest suspicion of Fenianism are arrested and incarcerated, and subjected to physical and mental tortures.

'The English working men who blame the Fenians commit more than a fault, for the cause of both people is the same; they have the same enemy to defeat, the territorial aristocracy and the capitalist.'

Eugene Dupont, leader of the French and International working class movement, speaking at a meeting of the general council of the First International, 1867.

Britain found guilty again

BRITAIN has been found guilty yet again of violating human rights in the North of Ireland.

Last week the European Commission on Human Rights condemned Britain for discriminating against gays in the Six Counties.

This followed a test case brought by Jeff Dudgeon from Belfast. Dudgeon took Britain to the Commission for refusing to extend the 1967 Homosexual Law Reform Act to the North of Ireland. The Commission has now upheld Dudgeon's complaint and the issue is now likely to

go to the European Court of Human Rights.

While the Commission's decision will embarrass the Tory government, it is the last Labour government which is chiefly responsible for refusing to extend the 1967 act.

In February 1979 the then Labour Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Roy Mason, did announce his intention to rectify the anomaly. But the reform was hysterically opposed by the most backward Loyalists, led

by Ian Paisley. At the time the Labour government was relying on Unionist votes at Westminster to survive. Accordingly in the face of Unionist pressure the gay reform was dropped.

The previous occasion when the European Commission condemned Britain's Irish policy was when it pronounced that Britain had tortured Republican internees in 1971. The European Court later changed this verdict to one of 'ill-treatment'.

REVOLUTION

LPYS: A MARXIST CHATSHOP

ON THE weekend of 17-18 May a new revolutionary youth organisation is to be launched by supporters of the paper *Revolution*. There are other youth organisations that already exist on the left, among them the Labour Party Young Socialists.

VINCENT MOSS, a member of the *Revolution* Steering Committee, presents his views on the LPYS.

The history of the Labour Party's youth organisations — there have been many since 1926 — is a sorry one. On each occasion when youth have started to take control over their own organisation and to build it in a political campaigning way, the party bureaucrats at Transport House have closed down the youth organisation, expelling the leaders.

In the early 1960s *Keep Left*, which was backed by the Socialist Labour League, tried to turn the Young Socialists outwards towards working class youth, by combining social activities with a socialist perspective.

Adult

Its success caused a great rumpus in Transport House, particularly since the adult party at that time was also having problems with the left wing over disarmament and clause four in the party constitution, which calls for taking the means of production, distribution, and exchange into common ownership.

By 1964, with a general election looming, the leaders of the Young Socialists began to be picked off and *Keep Left* was forced out — protesting all the way.

Despite the enormous hoo-ha that Lord Underhill is presently encouraging about Marxist infiltrators in the Labour Party, the *Militant* — which has controlled the LPYS for the past decade — does not cause Transport House the nightmares which *Keep Left* supporters occasioned in the early '60s.

Cosy

The leaders of *Militant* have an extremely cosy relationship with the Labour Party bureaucracy. They talk a lot about Marxist policies, but their sermons do not very often turn into a campaigning perspective.

The 5,000 members of the LPYS could become a focus for the discontented, black, female, and working class youth under this Tory government, but the political domination of the LPYS by the *Militant* prevents this.

The *Militant* tendency has always stood aloof from the mass political mobilisations of youth. It ignored the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign in the late '60s; it refused at first to show

any interest in the Anti Nazi League demonstrations; it has persistently turned up its nose at the women's liberation movement, and has even refused to help build the National Abortion Campaign.

Routine

Instead *Militant* concentrates on integrating youth into the routine activities of the Labour Party and the trade unions, making propaganda about the future socialist society, passing resolutions about Spain, rather than sticking its neck out and building support among youth for the withdrawal of troops from Britain's oldest colony — Ireland.

Its attitude to the self-organisation of black people, as with women, is that allowing sections of the oppressed to articulate their concerns is 'divisive'. At Imperial Typewriters in 1974, *Militant* shop stewards who were white refused to come out on strike in support of black workers who were fighting for the right to belong to a trade union.

Militant's perspective is one of reforming the Labour Party into a mass revolutionary party. Its path to socialism is not clearly based on overthrowing the domination of capital through mass working class action.

Vague

Despite *Militant's* Trotskyist origin, its years in the Labour Party have taken their toll. It is vague about advocating a revolutionary road to socialism.

Revolution does not believe that the Labour Party can be reformed. Although the party has the support of many British workers, it operates within the framework of capitalism.

We will work with the Labour Party Young Socialists wherever it is possible to campaign alongside its members. *Revolution* supporters, for example, were among the LPYS members who marched earlier this year against youth unemployment.

But *Revolution* has drawn the lessons of the experiences of Labour Party youth. We want our own organisation; one that cannot be closed down by the Labour Party bureaucrats; one that is prepared to go out now and mobilise every young black, every young woman, and every young worker who feels that they want to fight the Tories and organise to overthrow this rotten system.



WHAT THEY THINK OF REVO

GEORGIA HASLAM, 17, student, North Manchester.

'Being in Revo gives you a feeling of doing something, not just sitting back, because you feel involved. I feel as though we might as well do something while we can, do something for ourselves 'cos we won't be young forever.'

MONIKA MUIR, 18, student, Rochdale College.

'I've been in Revo a couple of months. I bought a paper and thought Revo was a good idea. I've been going to meetings in North Manchester and I'm coming to the conference.'

MICHAEL DAVIS, 18, unemployed from Ystrad, South Wales.

'I'd like to see how things progress after the youth march. I got interested in *Revolution* on the march — a lot of things that Revo said on the march apply to us in the Rhondda and a group of us want to start doing things.'

VINNY DIXON, 18, apprentice, North Manchester.

'I want to help decide our programme for the future. *Revo* won't be as bureaucratic as most parties run by other parent parties, *Revo* gives me something to do — I feel I'm doing something for myself and helping my ideas become reality.'

IAN McCONDACH, 20, student, Salford University.

'I'm not a member of *Revo* at the moment but it's good to have an independent revolutionary youth organisation to concentrate on youth oppression. The WRP/YS is very patronising — youth need to make their own decisions.'

GERRY KIRKHAM, 14, school student, North Manchester.

'We need *Revo* to tell the fascists and right-wing teachers and Maggie Thatcher and all these silly twits how important youth are and that it's our tomorrow. We want to mould the society, we want to take over, we don't want to have to pick up their left-over bits. We'll have financial problems after *Revolution* gains independence. But we must decide things for ourselves.'

The time is ripe for young workers to organise

By Ann Henderson

THE British trade union movement is one of the strongest in the world — so why is it not more prepared to take on the Tories? How did the divisions between trade unionism and politics develop? How can revolutionaries intervene in the trade unions? What are the problems faced by young workers?

At a very successful young workers conference organised by *Revolution* on 19-20 April in Manchester, attended by forty youth, we began to tackle these questions and many more.

In looking at the history of the trade union movement, and discussing the lessons of the 1926 general strike, we saw the need to strengthen rank and file organisation and not let the trade union leaders have things all their own way.

Youth are often totally excluded from trade union activity. During the steel strike apprentices were still going into work not through any choice of their own but because of an agreement between the TUC and the CBI that their training should not be 'disrupted'.

Derek, from North Manchester *Revolution* and a member of the AUEW, told the conference how he, along with the rest of his workmates, had set up a youth committee to bring together a whole group of engineering apprentices in

Revolution reaches out to working class youth and helps them come forward as active trade unionists.

Martin from Liverpool was sure that the time was ripe to build a revolutionary organisation for youth, the trade unions having shown that they were not going to bring about socialism in Britain.

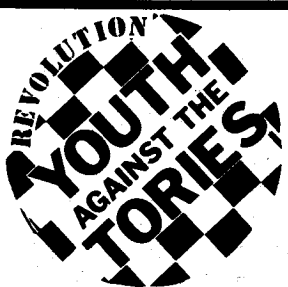
The Day of Action called by the TUC on 14 May was seen as a particularly opportune focus for *Revolution* members to get onto the streets and housing estates to help build a mass youth movement that can take on the Tories and win.

North Manchester. Already they have forced the shop stewards to make sure that apprentices get the bonus they deserve.

The South Wales youth march had given a big boost of confidence to Welsh youth. A conference is being called by the Welsh TUC on unemployment in Wales and youth will be there arguing against any deals which sell their jobs and future down the drain.

Revolution members had important lessons about mass campaigning among youth from the South Wales march. Sexism was one controversial issue. Nigel from Treorchy *Revolution* pointed out that the prominent role that young women from *Revolution* played on the march had shown him how vital women's liberation was to the struggle for socialism.

The conference decided to set up a young workers sub-committee to make sure that



NEW badge which can be yours for just 20p (plus p&p) from: *Revolution*, 328 Upper St, London N1.

Saturday/Sunday 17-18 May

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.

HOME NEWS

Gays discuss how to fight the Law

By Jamie Gough

OVER the weekend of 12/13 April, 60 lesbians and gay men met at the 'London Gays and the Law' conference to discuss how to organise against the steadily increasing attacks of the police and courts.

These attacks take many and varied forms, and the bulk of the conference — and its most useful part — was devoted to different aspects of the law and the possibilities for a fightback in each case.

One important area of discussion concerned custody of children, and in particular the fact that judges scarcely ever grant custody to lesbian mothers. Even visiting rights are likely to be conditional on the child not seeing its mother with the woman she lives with — the child might grow up with the idea that women can live independently of men!

Juries

These cases are very hard to fight in an open way and judges — there are no juries — often take an even dimmer view if the woman happens to be a militant feminist.

'Protection of youth' also figures heavily in the legal repression of gay men. The age of consent in England and Wales (21) is higher than for heterosexual sex (16). (Sex between men is illegal at any age in Scotland and Northern Ireland.) And the penalties for breaking the age of consent laws are far higher in gay than in heterosexual cases.

All this suggests to young people that homosexuality is at best 'inferior' and at worst a gnawing disease to which you may finally succumb at the age of 21.

The law is also at pains to keep male homosexuality invisible. It is illegal for one man to attempt to pick up another in public; it is illegal for two men to have sex in public — 'public' including many places where no one else is, or could be, present.

Agents

The police put enormous energy into enforcing these laws, including the use of agents provocateurs. It is very easy for them to get convictions, as most defendants are persuaded to avoid publicity by pleading guilty. Nevertheless in the absence of trade union support, many people still lose their jobs.

In the years since the 1967 liberalisation of the law for gay men, police activity has constantly increased, and

Massey Ferguson workers end occupation

By John Kirby

THE two-month-old occupation of the Massey Ferguson Knowsley factory has ended. At a mass meeting last week the 550 workers decided by a majority of 40 to return to work. The workers had occupied the factory in an attempt to prevent the planned closure of the plant.

The decision to leave the building followed an ultimatum from the management to return to work or be sacked. No redundancy notices had been issued, so the workers feared they would be sacked and hence lose their rights to redundancy payments.

The fight is not over. Last week's vote shows that workers had doubts about whether the occupation would succeed. Now in the four to eight weeks before the closure is due the shop stewards hope to win support for a renewed occupation once the redundancy notices are issued.

there are now frequent full-scale witch-hunts against gays in towns round the country.

Sus

Campaigning in London around the legal oppression of gays is made more difficult by the lack of common political perspectives between the various organisations involved. There is a strong network of advice services to help people who are in trouble with the law but this network does not key into the campaigning activities.

The Campaign for Homosexual Equality has no strategy on the law after the failure of its lobbying approach in the fight to change the age of consent. The left of the movement has tended to write off work around the law as irrelevant, and has generally been unable to organise effectively to fight the police.

We need to organise and educate so that an understanding of the legal oppression of gays becomes part and parcel of the labour movement's consciousness in much the same way as Sus and police violence against pickets already are.

Clarity

Because of the relatively weak representation of the main organisations involved in this area in London, the conference was not able to develop the discussions around individual areas of the law into greater overall political clarity and co-operation. However, the conference set up a secretariat to take this task forward in the future. This can be contacted at: 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1.

Here to stay! Here to fight!

By Dick Witcombe

'ANWAR'S children are her right' was the chant raised by the 400 demonstrators who marched through the streets of Manchester last Saturday to protest against the harassment of black people allowed by the immigration laws.

The march was in support of Anwar Ditta whose three children are being kept out of Britain 'because they are black', as Anwar herself puts it.

A demonstration of this size is a rare sight in Moss Side, Rusholme and Longsight, the areas of Manchester that it passed through. It became a real local event and in the Asian areas people crowded in the doorways to share in it.

The slogans raised by the march called for an end to deportations and an end to the immigration laws. The demonstration marked a major step for the struggle against immigration controls in Manchester.

The recent first meeting of the support committee for the Black Freedom march, which will pass through Manchester in June, attracted 60 people. An Asian Youth Group has been established and there are many people involved in various campaigns against deportations.

The next stage in the anti-racist fight in Manchester will be all-night vigils at Aldine House, New Bailey Street, Salford on 6 and 7 May. Nasira Begum's appeal against deportation will be heard there on 8 May. Ring Neil on 061-225 0548 for details.

Women bark back at Klein brothers

By Kay Bastin

'You're discussing with your members whether to come out on 14 May — we've gone one better; our bosses have told us we're not to go in on 14 May!'

That was the fighting message Ronnie Stretch, shop steward of the striking Klein Brothers' workers, gave to a meeting of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions shop stewards in Salford on 17 April.

The workers at Klein Brothers, a small, family garment manufacturer in Salford, have been out for six weeks because their employers have refused to recognise their union, the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers.

74 of the 110 employees, the majority of them women, joined the union during a dispute over canteen facilities, and when manage-

ment started laying off two workers a week shortly after, 52 of them agreed to strike.

Management responded with dismissal notices for 'irrational and unprovoked behaviour!'

The women have learned quickly from the strike. As one of them put it: 'Some say we've been too soft; women aren't soft, they're just beaten down. Once they turn, they really turn!'

They are particularly angry at the treatment they've received from the son, Raymond Klein. 'He was the master, he was right, no matter what. He treated you like dirt', was how Ann put it. She is close to retirement but has been on the picket line



throughout the cold weather and is determined to carry on the fight.

Canteen facilities are so poor that one young woman, Jackie, has to go to the chip-pee — for the whole factory! And young Raymond had to have his chips first!

Lunch at the canteen consisted of tea and toast, with soup in the evening. And woe

betide anyone who arrived late — the pots of tea and coffee were quickly drunk and no more were made.

First-aid and toilet facilities were also inadequate; there were just six toilets for 90 workers and these were in bad condition and often out of order. Creche facilities were unheard of.

The women are determined to win recognition despite the hardships involved with being out on strike: 'If we can hold out financially in the home, we can win it', explained Val.

The strikers have set up a strike committee and have sent speakers to many meetings in the area. Mass pickets have been held every week and these are being stepped up.

Raymond Klein has threatened to bring in the police if the picket line isn't quiet and orderly and the attitude of the police who have turned up has changed from benevolent and patronising to threatening that one day the pickets will get the police force they deserve, like in America!

Steps have been taken to boycott the company's mens wear products which are

marketed under the trade name 'Bendyk' (and sold at stores like Littlewoods, Woolco, John Collier and Hepworth), and this has forced Klein Brothers to resort to home-workers in an attempt to boost sales.

But the workers are determined to stick it out whatever the management do because 'A frightened dog will bark, but when you bark back...'

Messages of support and donations should be sent c/o 409 Wilmslow Road, Manchester M20 9NB.

(Thanks to: Rose, Val, Jackie, Margaret, Jean, Hilda, Ann, 'cloth-ears' Chris, Ronnie, Beattie, Beryl, Brenda, and Sandra.)

A social in aid of the workers at Klein Brothers is being held on 2 May from 7.30-11.00pm at the Dockers Club, Salford.



8,000 march in memory of Blair Peach

8,000 people marched on 27 April in memory of Blair Peach. The march coincided with the first anniversary of his death at the hands of the Special Patrol Group in Southall, and the opening of the inquest.

Speakers at the demonstration demanded that action be taken against the six SPG men named by the *Sunday Times* as his murderers, and the disbanding of the SPG.

Rail union rejects 20 per cent?

By Martin Eady, President NUR London Transport District Council.

WHEN newspaper headlines and TV news bulletins screamed 'NUR rejects British Rail's 20 per cent offer' last week, railworkers were at a loss to understand what madness had taken hold of their leaders.

With inflation running at about 20 per cent, wasn't this offer a victory (thanks to the steelworkers)? Certainly the other rail unions, ASLEF and TSSA, seemed to think so, as they accepted the offer.

The reason the NUR rejected the offer lies in the two-stage nature of the offer — 16 per cent for cost of living increase, and 4 per cent for productivity. Workers were being asked to pay for part of inflation with their jobs.

Specifically, about half the marshalling yards and no less than 80 per cent of the parcels depots would be closed down. Most, though not all, of the jobs involved would be those of NUR

members — hence the indecent haste with which the other two unions accepted (although a fightback is to be expected, at least in ASLEF).

A similar offer has been made for London Transport staff (15 per cent cost of living and 5 per cent for naming the day for the start of one person operation). The NUR executive is expected to reject this too.

The stage appears to be set for a major confrontation on the railways. But a major propaganda campaign will be necessary to convince workers to strike for jobs. The spur of an insulting offer on wages that started the steel strike is not present — the issue is clear right from the start — strike for jobs!

National Front march in Corby

ABOUT 200 National Front supporters marched through Corby on 24 April and found themselves confronted by 600 anti-fascists, among them many steelworkers and local people.

The Front chose Corby — a town threatened with catastrophe thanks to the imminent closure of the steelworks — as a place to put forward their absurd claim that immigration is causing unemployment. One wonders whether the NF has simply missed the fact that the British Steel Corporation is organising massive closures.

Thousands of police, many of them wearing their newly-issued riot gear, kept the Front and anti-fascists apart.

The paltry NF attendance, with branches represented as far from Corby as Sheffield and Gloucester reflects the almost complete collapse of the Front in the Midlands.

These developments have placed a question mark over the economic plan approved last December. At that time it seemed that a choice had been made to maintain the basic social-economic status quo in 1980. The alliance with the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie would continue, based on the hope of reaching economic agreements not only with the Latin-American bourgeoisies and the European capitalist countries, but also with US imperialism itself.

This implied an intensification of the productive effort of the working class. Wage increases were ruled out because the FSLN leadership agreed that they could only stimulate inflationary pressure in that sort of situation.

The first upset came at the end of February. The biggest wave of strikes and workers' mobilisations took place since the victory of the insurrection. The centre of the conflicts was the Fabritex factory, employing just under a thousand workers.

Here the workers had gone on strike for wage increases of up to 100 per cent, better working conditions, and the organisation of a canteen. Their union, the CAUS (Committee of Trade Union Action and Unity), is led by the PCN, one of the pro-Moscow Communist parties.

As a result of a solidarity appeal another 20 factories joined the strike, paralysing a large section of industry in the capital. Meanwhile workers in other factories such as Caracol and Polymer responded to the sabotage and obstruction of the bosses by occupying their plants and starting up production themselves. And in the countryside there were new land occupations by the peasants — although only on a limited scale.

Another factor in the situation was the 'decapitalisation' being carried out in both industry and agriculture. Companies were being liquidated, production cut, machinery sold or transferred abroad, and capital exported by various dubious means. It is difficult to estimate the extent of these operations, but their significance has been stressed in official statements. A decisive test will come next month with the cotton planting, and there are worrying indications here already.

Nicaragua - at the crossroads



Defense minister Humberto Ortega with Fidel Castro

NINE MONTHS after the revolutionary overthrow of the US-backed dictator Somoza, Nicaragua has reached a turning point. The US Senate's blocking of a \$75m loan at the beginning of March has been followed by the visit of a top-level FSLN

delegation to Moscow and now by the resignation from the ruling junta of the two leading bourgeois figures, Violeta Chamorro and Alfonso Robelo.

LIVIO MAITAN explains what is going on.

A third significant event was a demonstration organised by the small shopkeepers in Managua on 9 March. The junta was invited but did not send a representative, pleading 'previous engagements'.

The aim of the demonstration was to protest against price controls and particularly the role of ENABAS, the state body which exercises these con-

trols and is also responsible for the buying and selling of certain basic products. The gathering went so far as to threaten not to apply the official guidelines from the following day (though in practice this threat does not seem to have been carried out).

A week later came the first demonstration organised by a bourgeois grouping, the MDN (Nicaraguan Democratic Movement), which mobilised 7-8,000 people behind its leaders Alfonso Robelo, then a member of the junta. Robelo's speech was a sort of manifesto for the bourgeoisie, reaffirming the need for a mixed economy and setting the aim of the MDN as the 'conquest of power by popular vote', the meaningful summoning of the Council of State, and the calling of elections. According to Robelo, these could be achieved within the existing framework of national unity.

All these events must be understood in the context of deteriorating relations with the United States. For some months it seemed that the American leaders had determined to adopt a different attitude to Nicaragua than that taken towards Cuba in the 1960s. But the blocking of the \$75m loan changed everything.

Both the FSLN and the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie drew their

own conclusions. A campaign denouncing imperialist policy was launched, involving mass mobilisations and a general radicalisation of the situation. And the FSLN has res-

ponded sharply on every question where it has been challenged. The first measure was a law against 'decapitalisation' with penalties including not only heavy fines and imprisonment but also state confiscation of these firms. FSLN commander Jaime Wheelock threatened to expropriate the big cotton farmers if they refused to plant their land on time, and a decree confirmed the confiscation of property placed under the control of the Institute of Land Reform after the victory of the revolution.

Finally a law in defence of the consumer was confirmed, along with a proposal to reinforce ENABAS without any concessions being made to the shopkeeper's demands. Sanctions taken against shopkeepers who refused to respect the guidelines on prices were systematically reported by the radio and TV.

In response to the MDN initiative, the FSLN launched a massive propaganda operation defending its role in the revolutionary process and rejecting the demand for short-term elections. Most importantly, the FSLN has stressed in all these polemics that it stands for the interests of the exploited worker and peasant masses and is not prepared to hand back the political initiative to the bourgeoisie.

All this has deepened the social and political tensions in the country in a way that goes well beyond the intentions of the FSLN, which has combined its polemics with appeals to Robelo's sense of responsibility. Important events in the class struggle are on the horizon in Nicaragua. The cotton planting campaign could be a crucial turning point. And events in Nicaragua could also be further stimulated by the developing confrontation in neighbouring El Salvador.

BORGE ON EL SALVADOR

'THE Nicaraguan army would immediately go into action if there was an imperialist intervention against El Salvador. Any intervention in El Salvador would be considered as an aggression against our own territory.'

TOMAS BORGE (army chief and junta member), 15 April

ponded sharply on every question where it has been challenged.

The first measure was a law against 'decapitalisation' with penalties including not only heavy



Tomas Borge, army chief, at International Womens Day rally

The FSLN and workers struggles

THE FSLN has adopted a contradictory attitude towards workers' struggles. Its campaign against wage increases has been conducted in a violent way using crude polemical methods.

The basic argument has been that the kind of demands for higher wages which have been put forward by some sections of the working class tie in with the 'destabilisation' campaign launched by imperialism and orchestrated by the CIA. On the other hand, it is recognised that wages really are very low and that the workers' demands are therefore justified.

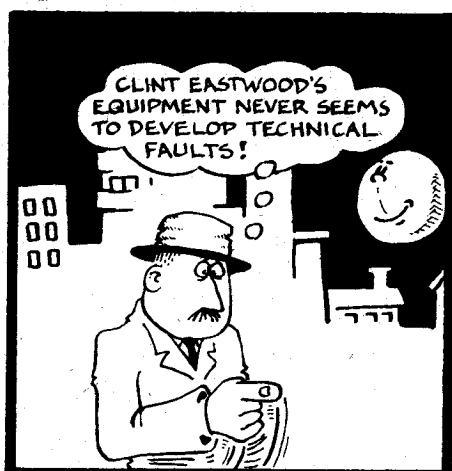
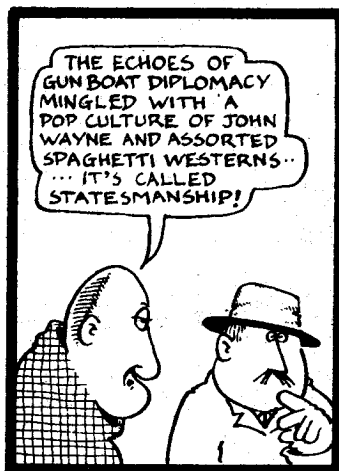
In certain cases, such as Fabritex, increases have been conceded (of around 10 per cent) as well as improvements in working conditions, the organisation of canteens, etc. But this has gone hand in hand with a campaign to denounce the CAUS and PCN (see above) as agents of the

CIA, the organisation of demonstrations leading to the seizure and ransacking of CAUS offices (including the burning of journals and documents in Managua and other towns), and the re-assignment of such offices to mass organisations.

Worse still, there have been a number of arrests (55 to date) and the PCN's leader, Altamirano, is being sought by the police. Trials are being prepared.

The fact that a distinction is made between a base which is 'mised' and 'immature' and leaders who are 'ambitious' with 'suspect' connections in no way justifies this repression, which in effect is aimed at the organisers of strikes. One can agree with many of the criticisms made of the PCN and CAUS, both as to their past and their present activity, but this cannot mean approving of the use of repression to resolve real problems of the workers movement.

AGENDA



SCEVENTS

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.

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

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

BRENT: SC supporters sell every Sat Morning at the Brent Collective Bookstall in the Trades Hall, Willesden High Rd NW10.

BRIGHTON: For info phone Nick, 605052.

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

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.

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.

ENFIELD: SC public meetings, Thurs 8 May, 7pm. 'The Middle East after Mission Fiasco'. Speaker from IMG Political Committee. At Middlesex Poly, Pounds End site.

ENFIELD: SC available from Nelsons newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.

HARINGEY: SC public meeting. 'Why the TUC should call a General Strike'. Speaker: Phil Hearse, editor, Socialist Challenge. Thur 8 May, 7.45pm, Highgate Wood Lower School, corner of Walsey Rd and Park Rd, N8.

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.

NEWHAM: SC sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Market, Upton Park.

OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.

OXFORD: SC supporters sell every Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.

STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday 1pm Mersey Square. Tel. 061-236 4905 for more information.

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

TEESSIDE: SC sales: at Newsfare shops in Cleveland Centre and on Linthorpe Rd, Middlesbrough, and at Greens Bookstall, upstairs in Spencer Mkt, Stockton High St.

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.

WE NEED MONEY

WE need money; we need it in large amounts; and we need it from you. Unless we increase our income we will be unable to expand our influence in the working class and that would be a set back for you, and every Socialist Challenge reader.

A new leadership is already developing in the working class which rejects the tired, old reformist solutions that are everywhere proving a disaster.

In the BL Rover plant, Solihull, shop stewards broke with their old leaders and decided to come out on strike. This decision began to transform the strike movement in BL as a whole. Our consistent fight in this plant was an influential factor in determining these events.

The IMG was associated with the launch of the Leyland Action Committee which groups militants from Rover Solihull, Jaguars Coventry and Cowley in Oxford. This grouping presented systematic alternative policies to those of the Communist Party and Moss Evans, general secretary of the Transport Union. 150,000 leaflets were produced and distributed in three days.

Organisers, journalists, and leaflets need money. Lots of it. The struggle in BL is by no means over. What the IMG can contribute to the struggle will play a role in determining the outcome. To be sure of making the maximum impact we need your money.

Have you made your contribution to our fund yet — a serious one?



Summer School

The school aims to look at important revolutionary upheavals in Europe and the Third World during the 20th century.

Ernest Mandel will speak on Revolutionary Strategy in the Third World and Stalinist Global Policy from Yalta to Afghanistan. Charles Udry, another well-known leader of the Fourth International, will lead off a discussion on the Portuguese revolution of 1974. Robin Blackburn will speak on the Cuban Revolution.

A series of debates will take place on themes such as Afghanistan, State Capitalism and Cuba Today. Optional courses will include Marxism and the Family, the British Labour Movement and an Introduction to Marxist Economics.

Branches of IMG and Revolution should discuss the school as soon as possible. A deposit of £10 will secure your place but the full £47.50 has to be paid in advance. This will cover your accommodation, meals, reading lists and the school courses themselves.

Send cheques or postal orders to 'The Week', PO Box 50, London N1.

IMG SUMMER SCHOOL 12-18 JULY

I am interested in coming to the summer school. I am a member of the IMG/Revolution/I am a sympathiser of IMG/Revolution from

..... (Town)

Name/Address

I enclose a cheque/PO for towards the £47.50 cost of the school.

Inter-continental Press/Inprecor

Latest issue includes major articles on the lessons of the British steel strike, El Salvador, France and the Fourth International's statement on Zimbabwe. Individual copies 30p plus 10p postage. Subs £11 for one year to: IP/I, PO Box 50, London N1.

Socialist Challenge sales on 14 May

LAMBETH IMG are taking 500 extra copies of Socialist Challenge for their local 14 May demonstration and Brent IMG are taking a further 200. How many extra copies is your branch taking — Manchester, Birmingham, Scotland? Rush your order into our distribution department immediately.

Brazil engineers on strike

200,000 Brazilian engineering workers have been on strike since 1 April demanding wage increases, recognition of stewards and security of employment.

Two weeks ago their unions were taken over by the government and some 40 strike organisers and other trade unionists were arrested. Some were subsequently released, but at the time of going to press at least 13 were still being held 'incommunicado', without access to either lawyer or relatives. They are being charged with 'incitement to strike'.

They include 'Lula', the best known of the new working

class leaders and a founder of the recently formed Workers' Party.

In spite of the repression, the strike is continuing.

Solidarity telegrams and messages to:

Comite de Apoio aos Metalurgicos, Assembleia Legislativa do Estado de Sao Paulo, 9 de Julho, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Telegrams demanding immediate release and reinstatement of all imprisoned trade unionists to:

Presidente General Figueredo, Palacio Planalto, Brasilia, Brazil.

WHAT'S LEFT

RATES for ads to appear in What's Left. 5p per word or £4 per col. incl. Deadline: noon Sat. prior to publication. Payment in advance.

'ROCK Against Thatcher'. UB 40 and Weapons of Peace. Tues 6 May, 7.30pm to midnight. Little Bit Ritzy cinema, Brixton.

'RECESSION and redundancies: the politics we need to win'. A Revolutionary Communist Tendency public meeting with speaker Frank Richards. Fri 9 May, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London WC1. Holborn tube.

REMEMBER BRISTOL! T-shirts (S,M,L) £2.95. Posters (20ins x 30ins) 75p. St Pauls, Bristol, 1980 plus photo. Discount for bulk orders. SAE for our current lists. Sleeping Partners (screenprinters), 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool 1. Tel. 051-708 7466.

'THE changing face of apartheid: appearance or reality?' Sat 17 May. Workshops and plenaries on policy changes in South Africa; trade unions and British investment; internal black politics; the military; women; white political parties. Details from JH/GW, Extra Mural Dept, Univ of London, 26 Russell Sq, London WC1. Tel 01-636 8000 ext 266.

RED LADDER THEATRE is a collectively run, socialist, feminist company which tours mainly in Yorkshire

We need two new members:
1) A flexible MUSICIAN/PERFORMER (male), keyboards/guitar, preferably with some M.D. experience, to start in August;
2) An additional ADMINISTRATOR, either full or part-time to start as soon as possible. Book-keeping skills an advantage.
Apply in writing to: Red Ladder, New Blackpool Centre, Cobden Ave., Lower Wortley, Leeds 12. Closing Date: 19 May.
MAYDAY greetings to trade unionists everywhere. Hackney Trades Council.

BIRMINGHAM MAYDAY FESTIVAL
Monday, 5 May
Digbeth Civic Hall (opp. coach station)
10.30pm — midnight
11.30pm — procession
1pm — rally, workshops, discussions
8pm — Rock and Folk 'til midnight
Children's Festival (next door)
Creche (qualified staff)
BARS & FOOD ALL DAY

NAC Benefit Fri 9 May 9pm North London Poly, Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove NS. 'Bop 'til you drop' with Poison Girls, Disco, Bar till 11pm (extension applied for). Nearest Tube Highbury and Islington, buses 19, 4, 236.

IMG NOTICES

NATIONAL Gay Fracture. Sun 1 June in London, venue to be arranged. Agenda: thesis on gay liberation printed in pre-conference DIB; perspectives for gay movement; allocation of work within fracture. A document on perspectives will be available from Sun 1 June. Documents containing a copy sent out at meeting for national centre.

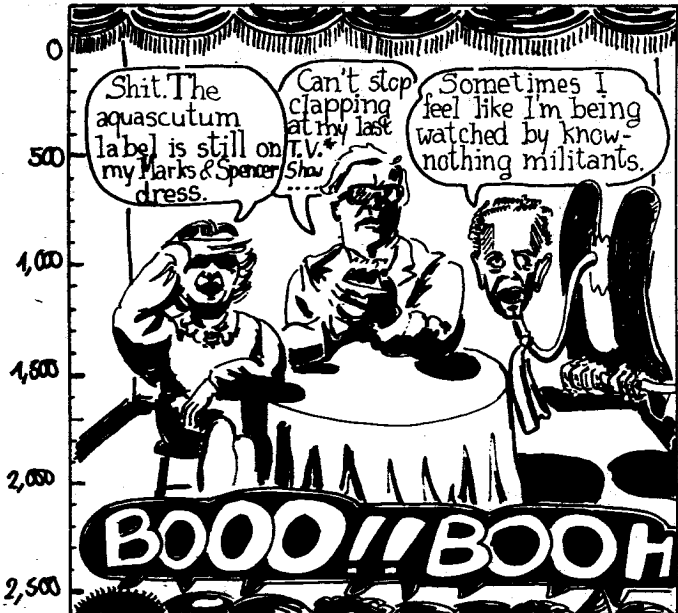
NUPE Fracture. National aggregate for all IMG NUPE members. National centre, Sun 1 June, noon to 5pm.

NATIONAL trade union leadership aggregate. Sun 22 June. For members of national trade union fracture secretaries only. Further details later.

London Notices

NUCLEAR WASTE in London. Demonstrations per branch to meet East Franchise at 3pm Sun 3 May, national centre.

MAY DAY march and rally. Thur 4 May. Organised by Labour Party, Coop, trade unions, Malet St. WC1. March to Hyde Park. All available IMG members to attend. Meet 12.30pm for Socialist Challenge sales.



What a pathetic figure to report this week! We know our readers are capable of better than this. Even our regular supporters have been sadly missing over the last few weeks. It'll take a long time to bring down the curtain on this motley Tory crew unless all our subscribers and supporters get a move on with their fundraising. Our thanks this week to:-
Canterbury IMG £5.00
A Acheson 10.00
GMC 50.00
Total: £65
Cumulative Total: £431.47



BIG demonstrations are expected to take place this year in Chile to mark May Day. Above, reproduction of the London May Day Committee postcard of greetings to the Chilean workers, hundreds of which are being sent to Chilean workers' organisations by British trade union branches and trades councils.

SUBSCRIBE NOW

Britain: 12 months £12.50; 6 months £ 6.50
Abroad: 12 months — Surface Mail £12.50
— Airmail £18.00

Multi-reader institutions: Double the above rate

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I enclose a donation for the Fighting Fund of

Check, POs and Money Orders should be made payable to Socialist Challenge. Complete and return to: Socialist Challenge, 328 Upper Street, London N1.

Socialist Challenge

WORKERS

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THE WORLD
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