

Socialist Challenge

**ANTI-H.M. Government WARNING
CRUISE MISSILES CAN
DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH**



GIVE UP NATO—YOU KNOW IT MAKES SENSE

OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name.....
Address.....

Labour - step up the fight for democracy

THE report of Labour's Commission of Enquiry on the election of the party leader and the drafting of the manifesto is the result of the massive campaign which has been waged by constituency activists for more democracy in the party. The monopoly of effective decision making by the predominantly right-wing parliamentary party has rightly been challenged — the victories at last year's conference are reflected in the report of the enquiry. But it would be a mistake to believe that the recommendations of the report are anything like a total victory for the left and democracy.

In the first place, the electoral college recommended by the enquiry still gives 50 per cent of the votes on the election of the leader to the parliamentary party — in other words they would still have a decisive say in who was elected. Moreover, the enquiry recommended that this same electoral college should sanction the party's election manifesto. This is of course a step forward over the position of leaving the final say on the manifesto to the party leader alone. But it is less democratic than having the manifesto sanctioned by the NEC, and even less democratic than leaving the final manifesto to conference.

The recommendations of the enquiry represent a compromise — an unsatisfactory compromise which leaves a lot to be fought for. The architect of this compromise, not surprisingly, was Moss Evans of the Transport Union. It was Evans who, as Benn openly challenged for the leadership of the party last week, came out in support of Callaghan



as leader of the party. Whatever Machiavellian plans are in Moss Evans' head, whether or not he thought that support for Callaghan now meant less chance of Healey replacing him, this kind of manoeuvring and horse-trading will neither achieve democracy nor defeat the right.

On the contrary, the decisive way to undermine the grip of the parliamentary party and the right wing is an open fight to defeat their crucial base — their alliance with the right-wing trade union leaders. It is the block vote of the right wing-dominated unions which continues to ensure the predominance of the right. That's why the fight to rebuild the left in the unions remains decisive, not only for the unions but for the struggle in the Labour Party.

The first initial steps which have been taken to organise Labour supporters in the unions — for example the forthcoming LCC conference for trade unionists — are important for beginning the task of dislodging the trade union right.

The recommendations of the commission now go to the party conference. Socialist Challenge believes that these recommendations — with the exception of the proposal on compulsory reselection of MPs — should not be accepted by the conference. What we need is to step up the fight for democracy in both the unions and the Labour Party, so that the party conference is the final arbiter. The conference is the most representative gathering of the party. Now we have to ensure that it makes the decisions as well.

Unemployment: a best-seller on Teesside

By Dave Carter Secretary, Cleveland Association of Trades Councils

If the covers of Socialist Challenge are any indication of what the person on the street is concerned about, it's apparent what worries most folk on Teesside.

The issue with the cover headline 'Unemployment — the only growth industry in Tory Britain' was a best-seller in Middlesbrough's shopping centre.

It's not hard to see why. After local government re-organisation in 1973, the name 'Teesside' with its dour, polluted, industrial image was dropped, and suddenly the area became the dynamic, thrusting 'County Cleveland'.

The area had a consistently better jobs record than the rest of the North-east. It was a time when the construction boom was at its peak. Think of a multi-national chemical company, and it was sure to be investing heavily in plant on the River Tees.

ICI, Monsanto, Phillips, BP were all expanding, and British Steel was constructing the massive Redcar complex, the biggest blast furnace in West Europe.

Today the white hot heat of Harold Wilson's technological revolution has burnt itself out. The *Guardian* reported last week that Middlesbrough's male unemployment rate has reached a staggering 17.6 per cent, while Hartlepool's is 15.1 per cent.

Handful

The thousands of skilled workers who built the petro-chemical sites find that a relative handful of technicians are needed to run them.

John Gains is secretary of the Middlesbrough branch of the Engineering Union's construction section. He explains the effects on his branch:

'Almost half our members are on the dole. Of those who are in work, over a third are working outside the area. The complete lack of investment means that projects which have been promised to us — like the number two blastfurnace — are lying idle.'

John blames the private profit system as the main cause, but adds: 'There's no doubt that Thatcher is making us pay for being a strong Labour area. She is de-industrialising Cleveland.'

He considers that only a massive cash injection and a programme of public works is likely to change things — something which is highly unlikely under the Tories.

ly moans in the press that Margaret Thatcher won't invite them to Downing Street to discuss 'the problems of the North'.

Meanwhile, on 14 May, not one of them turned up to the rally against the government's policies called by the Cleveland Association of Trades Councils. The only policy of the Labour MPs is to plead for more government handouts, which the multinationals happily pocket as they lay off more workers.

But the first nine days of June saw the beginnings of a fightback. That was how long 840 steel workers from the beam and rod mills at BSC Lackenby stayed out when management tried to reduce the number of fitters' mates in the plant.

After a stormy meeting union leaders persuaded them to go back pending 'negotiations'. The importance of this strike was proved in the same week as BSC announced plans to 'shake out' 2,650 jobs by Xmas, as part of a produc-

tivity deal which the unions are discussing.

The deadline for the deal is 30 June, but if the jobs aren't sold by then it's widely expected that the bosses will chop them anyway. A further 600 are to go with the closure of the Cleveland mill this summer.

Slowly, anger is beginning to mount on Teesside, as more and more people realise that they can only rely on themselves and their organisations to protect their jobs and to guarantee some for their children.

As part of this process, the International Marxist Group in Middlesbrough is organising a public meeting:

'The Fight to Save Jobs on Teesside and the Lessons of the Steel Strike' Speakers: Bernard Connolly, Allied Crafts, BSC Rotherham; Brian Grogan, National Organiser. Friday, 20 June, 7.30pm at King's Head Hotel, Grangetown.



By Jude Woodward

AS long as union leaders like Frank Chapple, John Baldwin, Eric Hammond and Terry Duffy carry on as they are over the Isle of Grain dispute there will be little need to push through Prior's union-bashing Employment Bill — these working class leaders are doing the Tories' job for them.

The mass picket at the Isle of Grain power station hit the headlines recently, but the dispute dates back over many months. It involves skilled members of the General and Municipal Workers Union and erupted last August when a new wages agreement was introduced.

Workers on the Grain site were employed by contractors operating on behalf of the Central Electricity Generating Board. Bonus systems meant that some workers were paid higher rates than others. As work progressed on the site different groups of workers bargained for higher bonus rates as their skills came into special demand.

When the CEGB stepped in last

August the lagers, members of the GMWU, had won especially high bonus rates. The lagers' skills — doing the final insulation for pipes and turbines before they go 'on stream' — meant that the lagers could threaten complete shut down and hence command high bonuses.

A complex system of on-site bargaining and bonus payments is common to the whole construction industry, particularly on big sites. By taking on the lagers at Grain, the CEGB saw its way open to changing this situation once and for all by playing sections of the workforce off against each other.

Board

The board began negotiating a new wages agreement to standardise bonuses. For most workers on the Grain site it meant an immediate wage increase — while bargaining away the possibility of high bonuses in future. But for the most highly paid workers, the lagers, it meant a wage cut; for many of them their wages would have

been halved.

The unions representing the other workers, the Electricians Union (EETPU) and the construction section of the Engineering Union (AUEW), jumped straight into management's trap and accepted the new agreements in return for promises of permanent work.

The lagers began strike action and work was stopped on the site. The CEGB stepped up threats to stop work at Grain altogether.

The leaders of the EETPU and the AUEW lined up with management to insist that the lagers accept the wage cut. Eventually, the leaders of the construction section of these two unions, Eric Hammond and John Baldwin, said that they would provide unskilled members of their own unions to do the lagers' work.

When the two unions actually carried out this threat they broke with a fundamental principle of trade unionism and a root source of organised workers' strength — that

no union will do jobs traditionally done by another group of workers. To put it another way, unions do not scab on each other.

Why are the leaders of the EETPU and the AUEW construction section prepared to ignore these principles on the Isle of Grain? Baldwin, the AUEW leader, has given two reasons for his action: that he is protecting his members' jobs, and that he wants to see 'fair' rates for all workers on construction sites. Neither reason justifies his scab role.

Power

The power station being built on Grain is nearing completion, and it is highly unlikely that the CEGB would jeopardise the entire project for the sake of the higher wages they would pay to the site's 28 lagers.

The board is, of course, keen on a new set of wages and bonus agreements that provide even greater superprofits and lower overheads — that's what the bosses always want.

The experience of the steel strike and the settlement at BL show that workers in the public sector will be on the receiving end of some of the fiercest attacks on their level of organisation and living standards — attacks organised under the auspices of the Tory government. The power workers employed by the CEGB are no exception.

Fight

Trade unions exist to fight. They recognise that the workers' interests are invariably opposed to those of the boss, and that without superior organisation the bosses' generally win. But in Grain, Baldwin didn't even begin to call the CEGB's bluff. He just echoed the bosses' threats to the workers.

He says he is seeking a 'fair' rate for all workers on the Grain site, but he did not put up any battle to raise the wage level of his workers to that of the lagers. On this, too, he just went along with the CEGB and what it was

prepared to offer.

The agreement undermines the potential of all workers in the industry to argue for higher bonus rates when their productivity is especially needed.

Trade union solidarity in support of the lagers is now urgently needed, not just for the sake of their rates of pay, but in the interests of the whole trade union movement.

Terry Duffy, president of the AUEW, played a similar forelock tugging role in dealing with BL. The longer such leaders are allowed to remain at the helm the task of the Tories, in breaking up the organised strength of the trade union movement, becomes that much easier.

But leaders like these can be kicked out if workers in their unions get organised to replace them. A first step towards this in the Engineering Union can be taken at the Engineering Charter conference on 27 June. Duffy must not be re-elected for a further five years next year.

All workers, throughout the trade union movement, can start the fight by insisting that Len Murray and the TUC discipline the EETPU and the AUEW construction section unless they honour the Bridlington agreement and take their members off the lagers' jobs.

Ford, robots and jobs Exterminate! Exterminate!

By Mick Drake

FORD workers across West Europe face a ferocious attack on their jobs and working conditions that will make the present loss of over 1,500 jobs in the foundry and engine plants at Dagenham look like chicken-feed.

Secret management documents leaked last week reveal that at a recent '10 Year Business Plan' meeting in Cologne, every European plant manager was instructed to compile 'shopping lists' for 'cost-saving actions in an "after Japan" situation'.

The list for the Halewood transmission plant runs to four pages and 54 suggestions.

These include: elimination of all forms of demarcation and the replacement of fitters and electricians by technicians; increased use of robots, computer-controlled operations, and more interlinking of machines through automation; integration of quality control inspectors into production; and the increased use of selective layoffs.

The drive behind this onslaught is the crisis of the world car industry — particularly the three US giants: General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler.

They have been caught building oversized, overpriced gas-guzzlers when, because of rising oil prices, people want smaller cars. Japanese manufacturers have stepped in and will take 21 per cent of the US market this year compared with Ford's 17 per cent and Chrysler's 7.5 per cent.

The world recession has compounded this crisis for the US-based car giants. In May, for instance, car sales were down 37 per cent in the US and 33 per cent in the UK on this time last year.

In the United States, Ford lost \$1 billion in 1979 and is expected to lose \$1.5 billion this year. Up to now, Ford's European operations have kept it floating, contributing \$2 billion to the corporate treasury in 1979 alone — including nearly £500 million from Britain.

But the slump is drying up this flow of cash and the knives are coming out. Management calls it 'Japanisation'.

This means more automation, more computers in direct manufacturing, and a form of worker par-

ticipation to muzzle union opposition as jobs are eliminated.

The latest issue of Ford's house journal claims that if Ford UK was to effectively compete with Japanese manufacturers it should have a total workforce of 30,000 instead of the present 76,000!

What's in store for Ford's UK plants?

Automation: The use of robots in the Halewood body and paint shops in preparation for the new Escort will cost 200 jobs. New £1m presses in the Dagenham press shop will amalgamate the jobs of die setters, press operators, and automation setters.

Computerisation: Initially visual display units were used in the receiving and shipping departments. This has been extended at the Langley truck plant to the full computerisation of stock control.

The next step is to introduce computers directly into the manufacturing process, meaning minute-to-minute control over the remaining production and maintenance workers.

Participation: The aim of management is to go straight over the heads of the union leaders at national and plant level and to introduce shopfloor worker participation schemes in the form of 'quality circles'.

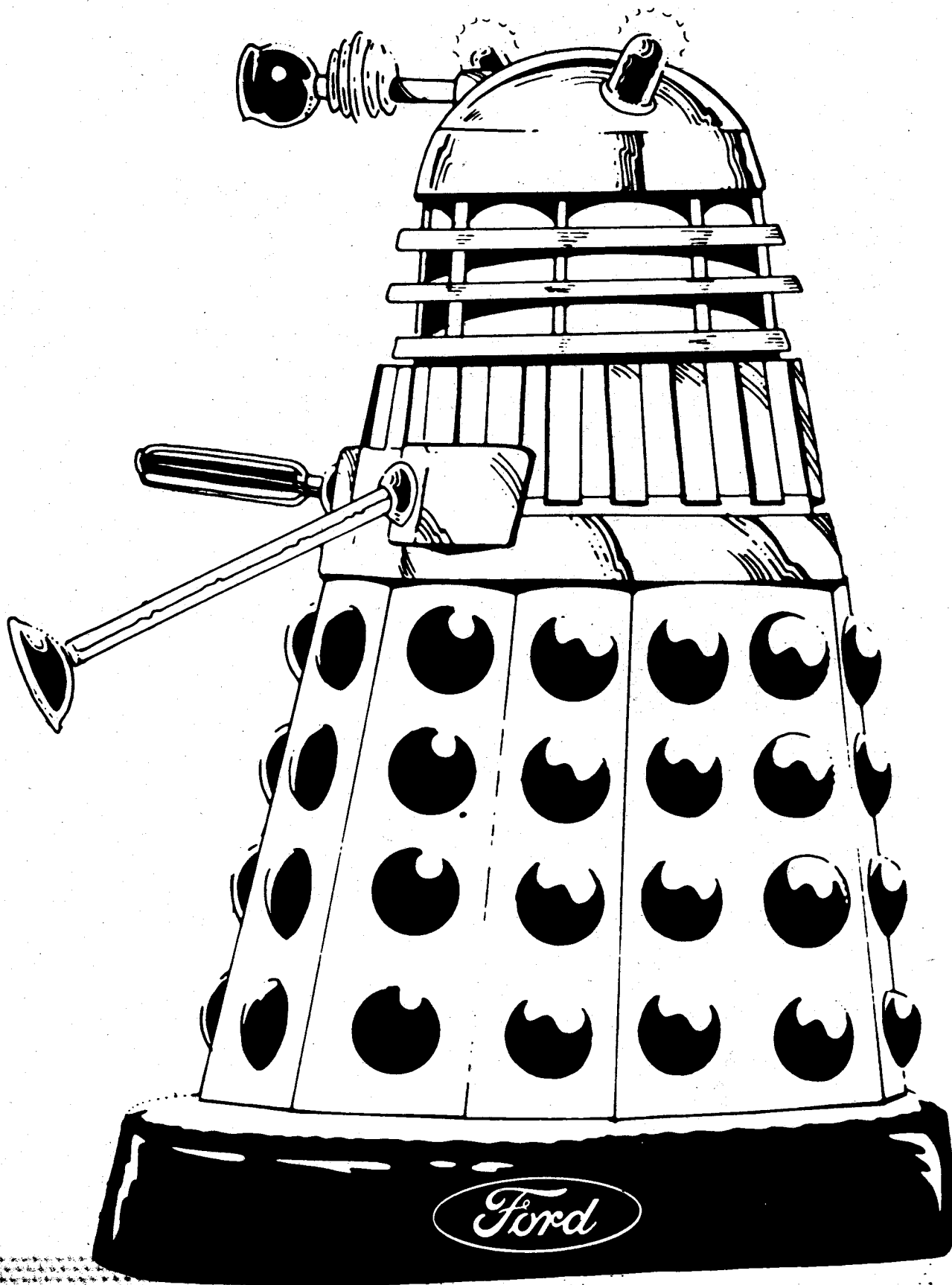
The workforce is broken down into small groups of no more than 15 people, including a foreman and superintendent. This group discusses a 'quality' problem — usually in a soft hour's overtime.

How long before we go fully 'Japanese' and every worker has to make at least one suggested improvement a month?

The shopfloor has not been prepared for this onslaught. But mass meetings throughout the country last week rejected Ford's proposals for a double day-shift system which would not have cut the working week.

A renewed fight now for the 35-hour week is the first move in turning new technology to our advantage and protecting jobs.

The second move should be a campaign for union control over its introduction, rejection of any form of worker participation, and European co-ordination to stop the management implementing its plans plant by plant.



Women's Fightback holds second conference

By Rachel Lever

FIGHTBACK for Women's Rights holds its second conference this Saturday, 21 June, at Digbeth Hall, Birmingham.

At the first conference, 500 women from different political backgrounds in the women's movement and the labour movement — including 150 from the Labour Party — came together to confront the Tory government's attacks on women's rights.

Informally, the conference launched a number of areas of work. These included a fight against sexism in the labour movement; a rallying of women for the TUC Day of Action; and an attempt to relate Labour women's sections to the wider movement for women's liberation.

Newspaper

Other plans were to develop the pre-conference broadsheet into a regular newspaper, and to organise a second conference to decide on firm policies and plans for action and how the campaign should be run.

Resolutions for the second conference include a draft policy prepared by an interim volunteer planning committee, which situates the campaign in relation to the women's movement and the labour movement and indicates the general areas of activity the campaign should concentrate on.

In addition, detailed resolutions have been submitted on cuts, women in the trade unions, women's right to work, the Employment Bill, the National Women's Festival, and other initiatives.

Campaign

There will be a separate discussion on publishing a newspaper.

The conference is open to individuals as well as delegates, and all those interested in mounting an open, popular, non-sectarian campaign to push back the Tory offensive are urged to attend and take part in formulating the campaign's policies.

There will be a creche, food, and a lunchtime play by Midland Red. Transport is being arranged from a number of major cities. Ring Marian or Sue on 021-471 1964 for details. From London, two coaches will leave from Midland Road (by St. Pancras) at 7.45am.

FIGHTBACK FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS CONFERENCE 2
JUNE 21st 11 to 5
DIGBETH HALL
BIRMINGHAM
 DETAILS FROM 41 Ellingborg Street, London N7

Women need more than equality

By Denny Fitzpatrick

'IN general the Equal Pay Act can do nothing to tackle the disproportionate concentration of women in low-paid industries and occupations.'

That was the verdict of the Women's TUC on the last Labour government's attempts to give women equality with men at work.

Women's pay in 1978 and 1979 fell even further behind men's. The declining number of discrimination cases refer-

red to the Equal Opportunities Commission (from 1,742 in 1976, to 108 in 1979) indicates the dwindling enthusiasm that working women have for the commission.

More often than not the EOC dismisses their case and has in any case puny powers to force employers and institutions to stop discriminating.

The time has come for the labour movement to re-assess its attitude to equality at work.

The programme of the Labour Party, discussed at the special conference on 31 May, makes no mention of new

equality legislation. Yet Tony Benn and others on the left in the Labour Party have begun to make overtures to activists within the women's movement, suggesting that they join the Labour Party to integrate feminist demands into the labour movement.

Equality at work will not be gained simply by attempting to compare men's work with women's work as the basis for equal pay.

Because women's work is largely different from men's the only way to immediately boost their wages is to fight low pay by forcing employers to establish a minimum wage level for all workers.

Oppression

But even tacking low pay is not enough. Because women face centuries of discrimination and oppression they have to be positively encouraged to gain skills and training, and above all to see it as our *right* to do the same jobs and earn the same money as men.

Equality legislation is not enough. Legislation must be passed and an education programme launched so that there is positive discrimination in favour of women entering jobs, professions, and institutions which are presently dominated by men.

Employers have to be forced to set quotas for the employment and training of women, and the Equal Opportunities Commission must be given powers to financially punish employers who refuse to meet these targets.

No waiting

But women cannot wait for such legislation to be passed sometime in the future. Our livelihoods are under attack *now*.

The Equal Opportunity Commission has already pointed out that 'the automatic practice of laying off part-time workers first in redundancy situations is likely to hit women hardest and could well be unlawful indirect discrimination'.

Women need union backing now to take such cases to the EEC and win.

The labour movement will not take up the demands of women in the present economic situation unless women themselves come forward and articulate their demands, both in the Labour Party and within the trade unions.

whole labour movement that women need positive action if we are to move nearer to equality with men at work.

The Women Fightback conference takes place in Birmingham at Digbeth Hall this Saturday, 21 June, 11am-5pm. Socialist Challenge supporters will be meeting on Friday night at 8.30pm

Women need to ensure that we are fully represented when negotiations between employers and unions take place.

The *Fightback* conference called for this weekend in Birmingham provides women active in the labour movement with an excellent opportunity to discuss how a campaign can be mounted which tells the



Tower Hamlets women's festival

Tower Hamlets trades council is planning a Women's Festival for Saturday 21 June.

The aim of the event is to highlight the way in which the Tory government is trying to whittle away many hard won rights of women and to discuss how to fightback.

Women in Tower Hamlets feel confident that they can organise a fight back. 'We have had our successes,' says Trina Shane, a member of the women's sub-committee of the trades council. 'We fought for a day-care abortion clinic and won it. We built a local anti-Corrie group and helped to defeat that Bill. We're having a festival to celebrate our ability to organise in this way.'

Tower Hamlets Women's Festival, Saturday 21 June, 12-6pm, Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, E2. Social in the evening with 'Jam Today' at Fairholt House, Commercial St., Aldgate East, E1.



CATHIE Dobie (above) an engineer at Rolls Royce in Hillington, Scotland, was sacked for changing her name when name when she seperated from her husband.

Two journals or one?

TRADE unions up and down the country have passed thousands of resolutions calling on their members to support women's rights over the last ten years. Now it's time that words were turned into action.

Many women activists in the labour movement have come to realise that if women's needs are really going to be discussed special attention has to be paid to actively involving women.

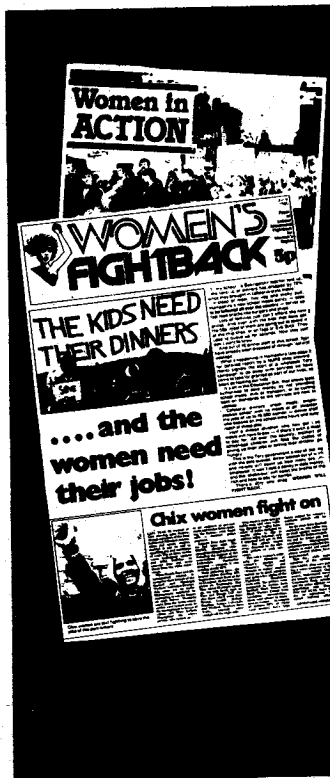
Two new journals have been launched which both have this aim in mind. *Women in Action*, coming out of the Working Women's Charter Campaign, decided to campaign around the TUC Women's Charter urging the trade unions to act to defend women's rights.

Women's Fightback, initially launched a couple of months ago by women activists in the Labour Party after the first Fightback conference, aims to reach out to women fighting the cuts in social expenditure, and to coordinate the activities of women in the Labour Party and the unions.

A broad based regular newspaper that could involve as many working women as possible would be an invaluable asset to women fighting back against the Tories.

Let's hope for the biggest possible turnout for Women Fightback's second conference so that we can discuss pooling resources of the two journals.

Hopes are high that it might be possible to insert such a journal in official trade union newspapers, which would massively expand the audience for feminist ideas in Britain.



Women's liberation and socialism

REVOLUTION Youth is holding an educational event on 'Women's Liberation and Socialism'. Revolution members have been very active in the abortion movement pointing out that young women face particular problems in controlling their own sexuality.

Now Revolution Youth intends to learn more about the politics of the women's liberation movement. This weekend event takes place in Brighton on the 19-20 July. It won't be hard work either. They'll be a gig in the evening and plenty of time to discuss.

Saturday: Noon - 5.15pm.

Session 1 How it all started — the origins of women's oppression
Session 2 Sexual politics and sex role stereotypes

Sunday: 10.30am. - 5.15pm.

Session 3 'There will be no revolution without women's liberation; there will be no women's liberation without revolution.' true or false?

Film *Take it Like a Man Ma'am*

Session 4: Summary on Revolution Youth and the fight for women's liberation.

Women's Liberation and Socialism event Brighton 19-20 July

I/we are interested in attending the weekend educational event.

Name/s
 Branch
 I/We enclose.....For Documents.....I/We will need Accommodation.....

Please complete and return to: PO Box 50, London N1.

THE victimisation of Phil Cordell is just one example of the kind of event which will be commonplace when the Tories' Employment Bill becomes law. The Bill has emerged from its committee stage in the House of Commons with even more restrictions on trade union rights than were originally proposed.

Besides attacking many established trade union rights to engage in effective industrial action against an employer, the Bill contains a number of proposals which will strengthen the hand of the employers in disciplining the labour force and seriously undermining women's rights.

Outlined here are the main proposals in the Bill.

At present all peaceful picketing in connection with an industrial dispute is lawful. It may take place anywhere, except near a person's home, and there are no restrictions on who can picket.

Under the terms of the Employment Bill, lawful picketing will be restricted to:

- * Workers picketing at or near their own place of work;
- * Trade union officials who are picketing at or near their own place of work;
- * Workers sacked because of a trade dispute, who are picketing their former place of work.

No other picketing will be lawful. Secondary picketing, or picketing by supporters of strikes — like the Grunwick or Chix pickets — will not be lawful. Many forms of boycotting, ('blacking') will be made illegal, as will the advocacy of boycotting by 'outsiders' or sympathisers of strikers.

The rôle of the arbitration body ACAS and statutory procedures — such as ballots — to determine union recognition will be abolished. It will be left to the workers and the employers to slug it out. But because of the limitations on picketing and boycotting it will be much more difficult to win union recognition struggles.

The main provision in the Bill on the closed shop is that workers can opt out of the closed shop, or get reinstatement or compensation if

Anatomy of the Employment Bill



they are sacked for not joining a closed shop, if they 'genuinely' object to trade unions on the ground of 'deeply held personal convictions'.

At the moment the only legitimate way to opt out of a closed shop arrangement is on religious grounds. The new provisions will amount to an open scabs charter, allowing in-

dividual reactionaries to begin to opt out of and disrupt closed shops.

New closed shop arrangements will have to have over 80 per cent of the workers voting in favour to be 'approved' — that is, to make it enforceable.

Under the new provisions on unfair dismissal, industrial tribunals will have to take into account the size and resources of a company in deciding whether dismissal is unfair. In other words, small firms are given a free hand to dismiss whom they want.

There will be no minimum compensation for workers found to have been wrongly dismissed — in other words, especially with small firms, they could get nothing at all.

Tribunals will be able to reduce compensation on the basis of the employee's conduct before or after dismissal. This means that workers dismissed unfairly could have their compensation reduced if the tribunal takes a poor view of their trade union activity in trying to win reinstatement!

Employers will be able to argue that trade union activity before dismissal was unreasonable conduct.

Under the provisions of the Bill, maternity rights for women are seriously restricted. Small firms with five workers or less will be under no obligation to re-employ a woman who takes maternity leave if it is not 'reasonably practicable' for them to do so.

All employers will be able to refuse to give a woman her job back if it is not 'reasonably practicable' to do so and she 'unreasonably' refuses suitable alternative employment. This alternative job can be anything, as long as the terms and conditions are not 'substantially less favourable' than her previous terms and conditions.

The conditions of notification of maternity leave and intention to return to work are considerably tightened up.

These are just some of the provisions of the Employment Bill. It also contains provisions on trade union membership, taking it out of the hands of the unions themselves to decide who can be a member, and on public funds for union ballots.

For the full details of the Bill send for a copy of 'The Tory Employment Bill' published by the Labour Research Department, 78 Blackfriars Rd, London SE1 8HF. Price 35p plus p&p.

DEFEND PHIL CORDDELL

By Patrick Sikorski

MORE than five hundred Civil Servants took part in a protest in Brixton, South London, on Friday over the victimisation of two local activists in the Civil and Public Services Association.

The demonstration and rally at Brixton Town Hall were just part of a nationwide campaign for the reinstatement of Phil Cordell, secretary of the CPSA's Department of Employment branch in South London, and Richard Cleverley, the branch organiser.

Messages of support were received from all over London and the South-east, the Midlands, the North, and Scotland — indicating that many branches and sub-branches had taken strike action for the day or a half-day.

Reasons

Three reasons were given for Phil Cordell's dismissal: that he picketed the CPSA executive during the 1979 pay campaign; that he signed, as branch secretary, an Anti-Nazi League advert in a local newspaper; and that he attended the TUC Lobby of Parliament to oppose the Corrie anti-abortion Bill.

In fact, on each occasion, Phil was acting on the full mandate of his branch.

Action last Friday, in sup-

port of reinstatement was strongest in Scotland, where 3,500 CPSA came out on strike. The offices hit by their action included the DHSS, unemployment benefit, customs and excise, the Sheriff's office in Glasgow, and the Scottish Office.

Stewart McLennan, assistant regional secretary of the union's Scottish DHSS committee, which had called on all members in its section to strike, brought fraternal greetings to the Brixton rally.

Lies

He says that the campaign had been built in the face of lies and slander from management by way of official circulars. There was intimidation of members who took action last Friday, in addition to a national ban on Phil Cordell entering practically any Civil Service premises to talk to union members.

Yet since he was informed of his sacking on 30 April, Phil and other members of the Brixton unemployment benefit office where he works have addressed some 120 meetings around the country.

Stuart Holland MP was just one of the speakers at the rally who emphasised that Phil, and Richard Cleverley, have been sacked, first because they are effective trades unionists, and secondly because they are trades unionists who believe that issues like the National Front



and abortion rights should be of vital concern to the labour movement.

Victimisation has not stopped at the two Brixton activists. Disciplinary procedures have been started against Stewart McLennan and Alison Korce, the Scottish regional DHSS secretary, because they have organised meetings on DHSS premises in support of Phil and Richard Cleverley. In other parts of the coun-

try, however, meetings had to be held in car parks and in members' own time. This is because the CPSA leadership is dragging its feet.

A fortnight ago the union's annual conference unanimously carried a resolution instructing the executive to give full support for industrial action in the Brixton office, the branch and the union as a whole. But Assistant General Secretary Alistair Graham refused to commit the union at the

Recall the Defend Our Unions conference!

ON 23 June last year 1,100 trades union delegates met in Manchester to plan a campaign against the Tories' Employment Bill. The conference adopted the Defend Our Unions 'Code of Practice', which has been widely discussed inside the labour movement.

Last month the annual conference of the National Union of Public Employees unanimously adopted the Code of Practice. Yet despite the adoption of the code by many organisations, virtually nothing has been heard of future action from the Defend Our Unions conference.

No plans for a recall or for any other co-ordinated action have been announced. This is a foolish waste of a tremendous opportunity for stoking up the campaign against the Employment Bill, which is at the centre of the government's attack on the unions.

It now seems certain that the strengthened Bill will become law in July. The Defend Our Unions conference last June voted for a recall conference when the Bill became law. There are no signs of this mandate being carried out.

But there is a vital need for trades unionists to come together to map out a plan of campaign for defeating the implementation of the Bill.

Even if the Employment Bill becomes law, there is no reason for complacency. It is difficult to believe that John Deason and the other organisers of Defend Our Unions believe that we should sit back and wait for a Labour government to repeal the anti-union legislation.

Brixton rally to calling out the 90 members at the Brixton office.

It is quite possible that following a meeting of the union's national disputes committee last week, the leadership may decide to refer the case to various appeals procedures rather than sanction all-out action in Brixton.

Clear

Phil Cordell made it clear in his speech at the rally that the members in Brixton, while they needed proof from the union of its official support were prepared to take a cut in their strike pay as the action spread. They came out for three days when the dismissal was first announced.

With 40,000 jobs already lost in the Civil Service through natural wastage, another 40,000 being chopped at the moment. The Tories are now talking of the need to axe

another 75,000 jobs over the next three years.

As Phil Cordell says, supporting his reinstatement is part of the fight to defend the union and the job of every member.

The next mobilisation in the campaign will be on 27 June when Richard Cleverley's sacking starts. In the meantime every CPSA branch should send the following resolution to the union executive.

'This branch demands that the NEC holds a special delegate conference to organise for indefinite strike action, with full pay, by CPSA members at Brixton UBO until reinstatement of Cordell, Cleverley et al, has been achieved.'

'This branch agrees that if the NEC instructs the NDC to organise such action, then this branch agrees to reconsider the call for a Special Delegate Conference.'

Inquiries, messages of support, and donations to: Brixton UBO CPSA Defence Campaign, 16 Knowlton Hse, Cowley Rd Estate, London SW9. Tel 01-582 1645.

Leyland militants assess the damage

By Pat Hickey, Rover SDI Solihull

THE first national conference of the Leyland Action Committee attracted 50 carworkers from the major BL car plants when it met in Birmingham last Saturday.

The conference discussed a balance sheet of the struggle against the implementation of the 'Slaves Charter' in BL — the 92-page productivity document that Michael Edwardes had successfully imposed in April — and went on to debate what the next steps were for militants in BL.

Cowley

Alan Thornett, from Cowley, opened the conference with an assessment of the strikes against the 5 per cent pay and productivity deal. He pointed out that management had won not because workers were unwilling to struggle, but because the trade union leaders, including 'left-wing' Moss Evans, had not given continued official backing to workers' protests.

The combine committee and the Leyland cars joint negotiating committee, Thornett considered, had given Evans and Duffy a completely free hand. The rank and file had nowhere to turn.

Management has since moved in to consolidate its gains. An appeals system has been negotiated for grading disputes between management and union officials which excludes strike action by setting up a 'final appeals' body for disputes consisting of a member of the TUC, a member of management, and an 'independent' negotiator.

This is the nearest any British company must have ever got to the Australian system of forced arbitration!

But rank and file workers at BL are not letting the company have it all its own way. The discussion on the full implementation of the 92-page document showed that regrading, 'new manning' levels, and forced mobility were still being opposed.

Claim

The next wage claim was also discussed. The Leyland Action Committee decided to campaign for a claim of £120, index linked to the cost of living, and a 35-hour week. BL workers are not likely to take kindly to another wage cut after the insulting 5 per cent deal.

The Communist Party's stranglehold on the combine leadership has to be challenged by militants in BL. The CP has proved itself totally unwilling to lead a fight without official backing. It hailed the recent sell out by Moss Evans as a 'victory'.

The Leyland Action Committee gained a good reputation in the recent dispute by campaigning for everyone to come out against the 92-page document.

The grouping of militants now intends to fight for democratic control over wage negotiations by calling on Moss Evans, Bill Lapworth, of the regional automotive group, and Jack Adams, Chairperson of the region 5 cars council, to call a national delegate conference.

The aim is to elect a negotiating committee that can stop the BL workers being sold out again by their official representatives.



Post Office engineers—how to win

By Dave Ward
Branch secretary, Horsham POEU

THE City of London must be dreading 4 August. On that day the Post Office Engineering Union is due to start industrial action in support of its pay claim. The first to be hit will be the parasites of Threadneedle Street.

Telephone engineers run the telecommunications system that keeps British finance capital running. Telex, telegrams, telephones, computer-links, all run through the Post Office and the members of London City branch of the POEU will be more than willing to pull the plugs.

That's exactly what they did in 1978 during the fight for a shorter working week. The action was so effective that a delegation of bankers and stockbrokers went scurrying to Downing Street to plead with Callaghan to get the dispute settled.

Since 1978 we have all learnt a lot of lessons about how to run an effective dispute in telecoms, and we're under no illusions about how tough a fight we're in for. We know that the Tory government is out to impose a wage freeze in the public sector. That's why we've been offered 15 per cent and the nurses only 14 per cent. So we know that we're taking on Thatcher. All the experience of '78 will be needed to help us win.

We also know that our executive, or at least its right-wing majority, has no intention of mounting a serious fight. It opposed the wage claim — 30 per cent plus 7 per cent bonus — at the union annual conference. They were defeated by the militant branches from the industrial centres — London, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Glasgow. But the first half-way decent offer they get they'll try to sell-out and they certainly won't be going all out for

effective action.

That's why it's up to the left to win this dispute. As soon as we got back to our branch we had a well-attended special branch meeting to explain the claim. The response was overwhelmingly in favour of action and of the claim. We're following this up with special leaflets detailing the claim and the arguments for it, with an elected industrial action committee which will meet weekly and with proposals to the other branches in our area for meetings to co-ordinate. This is the first step in getting solid support for action.

The executive is likely to do three things: a national overtime ban and work-to-rule, pulling out London City and the international exchanges, and a national one-day strike. While this will have a quick effect, it won't be enough to defeat Thatcher. And this sort of partial action opens the way for divisions in our ranks. We'll be arguing for continual escalation of the action, leading to an all-out strike if necessary.

To start with we need a national demonstration to kick off the action and create solidarity. Regional demonstrations and pickets could also help to create the spirit we need. We will be arguing for the Broad Left activists around the country to take these sorts of initiatives, because it's down to us to win.

The other action we're planning is to get out to other unions and trades councils to win support. We know we're fighting a pay-freeze and so do the nurses. It's about time the rest of the workers' movement woke up to it too. If we lose this dispute the nurses don't stand a chance, and everyone who's got a wage claim in this autumn had better watch out. As the steelworkers said: 'Us Today — You Tomorrow'.

Charting a course for Engineering Union

By Rab Bird
Carbrook No. 2 branch,
AUEW Sheffield

THE Engineering Charter conference on 28 June is a must for every militant in the engineering industry.

We are being squeezed from both sides — by a decline in living standards and by a leadership that's out to crush grass roots opposition in the union.

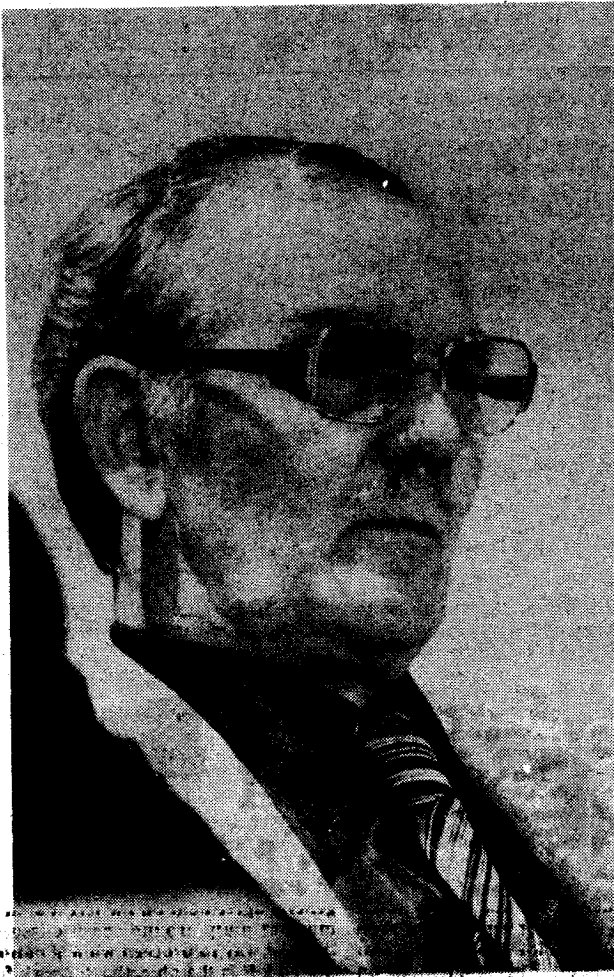
Engineering workers need a leadership that can tackle unemployment and inflation, and sees the need for policies that can unite workers in the struggle against the Tories.

To combat unemployment and inflation we need a fight for worksharing and index-linked wage rises. We have to encourage the struggles of the low-paid and the unemployed and to support the fight against racism and equal rights for women.

We have to fight around the issues and policies that challenge the right wing in the AUEW. The national pay dispute last year showed that the will to fight is there. The main problem in the union is now a political one — how to overcome the lack of credibility caused by years of right-wing rule.

The Engineering Charter pamphlet produced to build the conference does not mention these issues; instead it concentrates on the organisational effects of the right wing, and the gap between the stewards and branch officials and the ordinary members.

Yet this gap was caused by the erosion of militancy through voluntary redundancy and support for the Labour government's social contract, not — as the pamphlet implies — by the existence of full-time convenors.



The right-wing leadership has to be removed before there is any hope of the AUEW adopting such policies. This can only be done by a grass roots campaign that is organised in the factories and branches around fighting policies that can challenge the right nationally.

The 'Broad Left', the biggest left group in the union, has been weak in this respect. Its preoccupation with elections has led it away from much of the routine work of organising in the factories.

After the disastrous effects of workers' participation in Leyland and the failure of Scanlon to defend the membership under the last Labour government, the Broad Left has to change its strategy.

It doesn't follow, though, that militants can simply look to Engineering Charter to provide all the answers. The pamphlet doesn't even mention the existence of the Broad Left, and doesn't take up the difference between the Broad Left and the Charter.

Bizarrely, the pamphlet pushes the Charter as the only organisation fighting in the AUEW. This approach only confuses militants further.

The forthcoming Charter conference will provide an important focus for the fightback against the right. But we need to go further; we need a fighting group of the rank and file which can unite against the Tories and for class struggle policies like the 35-hour week, work sharing and equal pay for women.

These are the policies which can win the membership to fighting both the right wing and the Tories.

*What's wrong with Engineering. The case for change in the AUEW (plus p&p) from 'The Charter' 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

Nurses lead action on pay

By Norman Lockhart, NUPE

THREE hundred nurses in uniform led a 700-strong march through Glasgow on Saturday. Organised by the Glasgow nurses action group (NAG), the demonstrators opposed the rent increases for nurses' accommodation, the recent 14 per cent pay package, and the continuing cuts in the Health Service.

At a rally after the march Avril Mitchell, a student nurse from Glasgow western district, said that nurses wanted a 30 per cent pay increase like the doctors, and they would have to take action to win it.

She also called for rent to be frozen, and hospital closures to be stopped.

The Edinburgh NAG was represented by Veronica Leadbetter, a trainee nursing tutor and also a delegate to NUPE's national nurses advisory committee.

She said that nurses should vote against the offer in their union branches and prepare for a nationally co-ordinated fight, including working to rule and strike action.

A possible focus for a national day of action will be when staff and management resume negotiations on 8 July.

The appalling conditions in the nurses' accommodation were described by Christine Shand, from Eastern district NAG, who welcomed the rally as the first step in the fightback.

Jack Lyttle, a nursing tutor, called for more local action groups to be set up in hospitals.

Banners on the march included: Glasgow Trades Council, Lothian NALGO, Talbot shop stewards, General and Municipal Workers Union, NUPE, Glasgow students, and the teachers' action group.

From the platform, Willie Hamilton MP compared the nurses' pay offer to the huge awards given to the police and the army. He said that the £900m being spent on a new torpedo would pay for half the NHS pay bill.

George Anderson, a NUPE official stressed that nurses need to join unions. Speaking for the CPSA, International Marxist Group member Stewart McLennan said that more trades unions should support the nurses who were vulnerable to victimisation.

James Milne brought greetings from the STUC, of which he is general secretary.

Transport Union rules not so okay

By Mike Eaude

THE large majority of the motions submitted by TGWU branches for the union's rules conference later this month concern democracy in the union.

One reason for this can be seen from the method by which delegates to the conference itself are elected. As with every other ballot in the TGWU, all that appears on the voting paper is the candidate's name and branch.

Most delegates to the rules conference, which is held every six years, are convenors from large plants. Many of the motions call for details of the background, political views, and platform of candidates to be circulated.

Elections

By far the largest number of motions on any topic is for the election of full-time officers, who are presently appointed by the executive. Several motions call for periodic elections for the general secretary.

Another proposal that has been submitted to the conference, which begins on 24 June, is for the setting up of branches for unemployed workers who would have the status of full members.

Women's rights are also on the agenda. Circulars in the Transport Union begin 'Dear Brother', as if the third of a million women members don't exist.

The executive has put in a motion stating 'words importing the male gender include the female!' But a branch motion calls for the rule book 'to be made relevant to the whole membership, which includes the female sex'.



Claimants take up the struggle

By Alison Cooper

OVER the past week claimants and consumers of social services have taken to the streets in two demonstrations in London.

Since the Tories came to power, claimants and their standard of living have been under attack through:

- * Cut-backs in local authority social services;
- * An uprating of benefits which goes nowhere near meeting the cost of inflation;
- * Actual cuts in some benefits, including unemployment, sickness, and invalidity benefits;
- * A £12 reduction in benefit paid to strikers' families;
- * Massive restrictions on additional supplementary benefit payments.

The Social Security Bill

was passed with only minimal amendment, but resistance is now mounting.

On Wednesday of last week over a hundred claimants and people with disabilities demonstrated outside the headquarters of the Department of Health and Social Security and went on to lobby MPs in defence of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act.

This is the Act under which services such as home helps, personal aids, adapta-

tions to the home, and telephones are provided by local authorities to people with disabilities.

These services are being chopped by local authorities in response to the government's call for a 6.7 per cent cut in personal social services.

Isolated and unorganised as they are, disabled people are not prepared to see this toothless Act weakened even further. Their call was to defend and extend it.

'Bread and water will be just about all claimants can afford after November,' was the message put across by the National Campaign Against the Social Security Cuts at its bread and water lunch outside

Alexander Fleming House on Monday.

Claimants and rights workers from as far afield as Wales and Sunderland were supported by members of the headquarters branch of the Civil Service union CPSA.

Speakers at the rally included John Tilley MP, and two CPSA members, David Haywood and Doug Murdoch, who are campaigning against the scrounger myth and the policing role which DHSS officials are being increasingly asked to play.

They gave their support to the National Campaign Against Social Security Cuts, which can be contacted c/o John Wadham Tel. 01-228 9734.

Llanwern steelworkers warned over jobs

By Celia Pugh

PESSIMISTS who think the jobs fight in the South Wales steel plants is over received a surprise last week.

A steelworkers' picket outside the threatened Llanwern steelworks was joined by 40 miners representing seven lodges, local Labour Party representatives, Sylvia Jones from the Wales TUC, campaigners from the South Wales health cuts committee, and from local women's groups.

Publicity was assured by a contingent of Musicians'

Union strikers, complete with tails and instruments, who came along to show solidarity in the common fight against government cuts.

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

The protesters were warning Llanwern steelworkers that the 3,600 jobs recently signed away with a 'slimling' agreement could be followed by total closure. This would have devastating consequences for the Gwent community.

An action committee with broad support was formed to challenge BSC's claims that the 'slimdown' is uncontested. The action group was set up by Llanwern supporters of the Steel Sheet bulletin.

It aims to lay firm foundations for a fightback against job loss, thus challenging the refusal of national and local union officials to fight redundancy and closure.

Plans are now being laid for lobbies, marches and rallies to follow the lobby of the Labour Party's special conference last month.

Ealing Tories reach for the law

CLASS conscious Ealing's Tory council most certainly is. It attempted to ban by High Court injunction a local rally on the TUC's Day of Action. The unsuccessful court action cost the ratepayers £1,500.

Now a sub-committee of Tory councillors is proposing to prosecute Labour MP Syd Bidwell and three trade union officials who spoke at the rally in Southall.

The Tories allege that the four broke a council by-law which prohibits meetings on council pleasure grounds.

Says Syd Bidwell: 'If I end up in Wormwood Scrubs there are lots of people in the House of Commons who will come and visit me to make sure I'm all right.'

Sunderland council ditches overseas students

SUNDERLAND'S Labour-controlled council has vetoed a bursary scheme that would have helped overseas students to pay the two hundred per cent increase in their fees at the town's polytechnic.

The huge rise in fees, imposed by the government for racist reasons, means that it is cheaper to be a foreign student at Harvard University than at Sunderland Poly.

The bursary scheme had been approved by the poly authorities, but the local council says that it would be illegal. This is in spite of the fact that Teesside and other polys are already running such a scheme.

Peter Brabban, student union president at Sunderland Poly, describes the council decision as 'disgusting and prejudiced'.

Anti-nuclear campaign opposes weapons

By Carol Russell

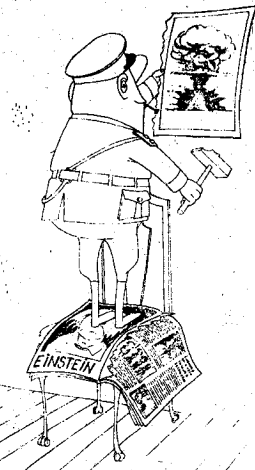
THE demand for 'no nuclear weapons' was added to the objectives of the Anti-Nuclear Campaign at its first annual meeting last weekend.

Over 120 people attended, with the majority of voting delegates from local and regional anti-nuclear groups or from national organisations affiliated to the campaign. The latter includes the International Marxist Group and the Socialist Workers Party.

A proposal to adopt a demand for unilateral nuclear disarmament was defeated. But a later resolution called for the campaign to make unilateral disarmament by Britain one of the campaigning priorities, and this was passed with specific reference to the Cruise missiles.

Most speakers agreed with unilateral nuclear disarmament, but the debate explored how divisive it might be to adopt this as a major objective.

Other resolutions dealing with national campaigning focuses called for an anti-nuclear carnival sometime next year, education of the public on nuclear power, and work within the trade union movement.



NALGO conference backs pay fight

By Dave Burn

LAST week's NALGO conference saw lots of noise, but few proposals for action, from the union executive. While they loudly protested against the cuts, the Employment Bill, unemployment and closures, they strongly resisted policies which could stimulate action from the membership.

Resolutions spelling out action to fight the cuts and the Prior Bill were strongly opposed and defeated by the conference. A similar resolution which called for industrial action to fight council house sales was the subject of a card vote at the end of conference. The card vote occurred as the chair had ruled that an extremely close vote was lost.

As a result of strong campaigning by the branches, the executive was forced to change its attitude on allowing branches or sections to take action against cuts in local government services. Previously

NALGO policy had only been one of supporting action where jobs were threatened.

The union's emergency committee had turned down requests to make action official where branches had been fighting the closure of old peoples' homes, but where no job loss was involved.

The executive managed to persuade a majority of delegates to support state pay policy. The golden days of the social contract were contrasted with 'Tory savagery'.

Nonetheless backing was given for industrial action in support of the pay claims by administrative and clerical staff, and supplementary professions.

One victory for the left was the defeat of a special report on procedures for taking industrial action prepared by the NEC which whitewashed the present situation.

NALGO's procedures are among the most bureaucratic in the trade union movement — union members are even supposed to be balloted on whether to cross picket lines! The momentum on

this issue will have to be maintained to put up comprehensive proposals next year.

The right-wing in the union was behind attempts to change union policy on abortion — currently support for NAC — and the union's policy of boycotting Scarborough as a venue for conferences, because of Scarborough council's discrimination against gays.

Both resolutions were defeated, but the large number of delegates voting in favour showed the executive's unwillingness to really fight in the membership on these issues.

The continued fragmentation of the left in the union was very obvious. Unfortunately the left seems to be split between its English and Scottish components — with the latter moving towards the bureaucracy.

It is also split between the NALGO Action Group, supported by the SWP, and other left forces. There seemed to be general agreement on the left that at the moment unity around specific issues is the best way to proceed while a national united left is the objective to work for.

Jobcentre aids bosses in Adwest lock-out

By Stuart Cumberpatch

MANAGEMENT at the Adwest engineering firm in Reading is taking a lead from the Tories and pursuing a tough line with its workforce.

Sixty workers are now locked out for going on strike for higher pay. A work to rule led to one worker being sacked, so others escalated the action and were also sacked.

The convenor, Danny Broderick, went on hunger strike outside the plant, while other workers kept up a 24-hour picket. Most of the night shift joined the strike immediately, and most of the day shift is now also on strike in solidarity with the sacked workers.

Management has had a helping hand from the courts and from the local Jobcentre. The High Court granted an injunction to keep the pickets off the factory forecourt, and the Jobcentre is making special efforts to find new workers — scabs — to replace those sacked.

Eight of the sacked

workers responded by occupying the government-run Jobcentre until private security guards were called in to remove them. A picket on the Jobcentre has helped dissuade potential applicants from scabbing on the sacked workers.

Solidarity with the Adwest workers is urgently needed. There is to be a day of action on Monday 23 June, beginning at 6.30am at the factory in Headley Rd East, Woodley, Reading.

Messages of support and information to: Danny Broderick, Flat 4, 46 Berkeley Ave, Reading.

HOME NEWS

MX missiles —insanity costs a fortune

THE insanity of the nuclear preparations of the United States is vividly revealed by the scope of the proposed MX missile system.

The MX missile is a huge and murderous weapon: 71 feet high, 8 feet in diameter, weighing 192,000 lbs. Each missile carries 10 hydrogen bombs, each of which is 25 times as powerful as the bomb which destroyed Hiroshima.

By contrast, the Minuteman, the most advanced US missile to date, carries only three warheads. But the genocidal capacity of the MX is only one of its novel features.

It will almost certainly be the most expensive weapons system ever constructed. The US government plans to spend 100 billion dollars on it. It will be the largest public works project ever undertaken in that country.

The MX system will involve a huge underground network in Nevada and Utah, covering a subterranean area of 24,000 square miles. Each missile will be in constant motion along a grid, able to be fired from over 20 'shelters', each over 7,000 feet apart.

Complex

The complexity of this system makes it an extremely difficult target for Soviet missiles to completely knock out.

According to MX advocates, the missile system is defensive. They call it a 'second strike' weapon, capable of weathering a Soviet attack and emerging sufficiently intact to strike Soviet targets.

But the nature of the MX indicates that its purpose is offensive. The missile is designed for extreme accuracy, able to drop its nuclear warheads with pin-

point precision on targets half way around the globe.

Such accuracy is not needed if the aim is retaliation against Soviet cities and industry after a supposed Soviet attack. The only possible reason is to be able to destroy Soviet missiles on the ground — that is, to enable the Pentagon to launch a preemptive 'first strike' nuclear war.

One of the claims made for the MX, by General Lew Allen, air force chief of staff, is that the area of the MX system would function as a 'giant sponge' for Soviet missiles — so that the Minuteman system located elsewhere would be safe.

Residents

But the residents of Utah and Nevada don't feel like being nuclear sponges. Town meetings have been held all over Utah.

It was in this part of the USA that the early nuclear tests were held in the 1950s. Despite assurances from the Atomic Energy Commission, there were many cases of death and illness resulting from the nuclear fallout from these tests.

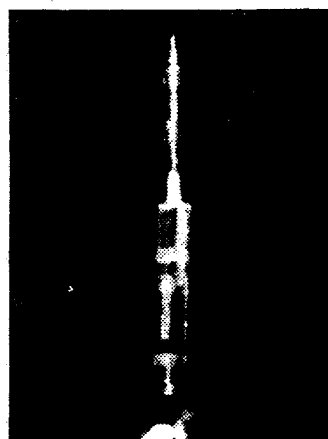
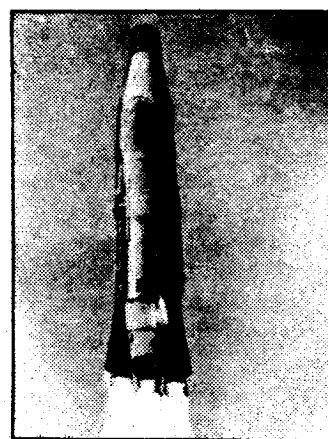
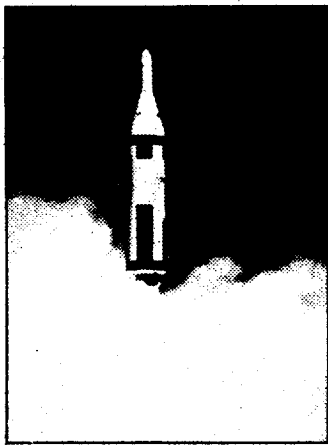
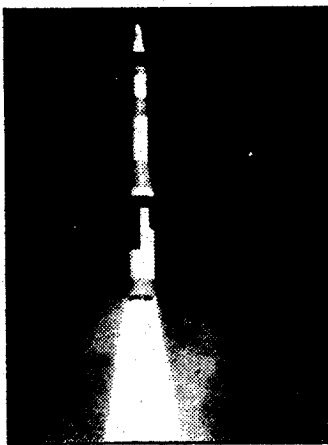
Over a thousand people from Utah, Nevada, and Arizona have filed suits against the government because of cancer related to nuclear fallout.

1980 is election year in the United States, and the Socialist Workers Party is running a candidate for governor of Utah. Its candidate, Bill Hoyle, says: 'The new weapons system is a perfect example of the government's priorities.'

'While working people are being asked to sacrifice our standard of living and social programmes are being slashed, billions of dollars are set aside to construct one of the most dangerous weapons devised.'

'The billions squandered on war spending should be used to put America's 10 million unemployed back to work on socially useful projects.'

HOW TO THE WAR



By Jude Woodward

WHENEVER the government wants to spend more money on arms, or when it wants to site doomsday weapons all over the British countryside, it starts talking about world peace. Imperialism's major justification for rearmament and war drives is always its commitment to 'peace'.

Millions of men and women, horrified by war and needless bloodshed, want to believe what their governments tell them. They think that American presidents and Tory ministers are equally afraid of war. They don't believe that they would talk about peace if they didn't mean it.

They also believe the barrage of propaganda which says that the real threat to world peace comes from the Soviet Union, which supports 'Marxist totalitarianism' in the semi-colonial countries with the aim of taking over countries one by one until it can launch an assault against the major 'Western democracies'.

It is this kind of propaganda that has led many people who call themselves socialists to argue for policies of 'detente' and 'peaceful coexistence' between the Soviet Union, Cuba and the United States.

They argue that the Soviet Union should play a progressive role, not by arming South African guerrillas and sending military aid to Cuba,

Imperialism is the t

but by taking a lead by thoroughly disarming itself.

But is this a realistic approach to achieving world peace?

It is clearly the case that the development of nuclear weapons in the 1950s and the start of the nuclear arms race brought a new factor into considerations of war. We have no need of dire warnings that global nuclear war would lead to the total destruction of human civilization, and possibly human life as well. Today, to be conscious is to know this danger, hence a major task for revolutionaries is preventing the outbreak of such a war.

However, those who argue for detente and peaceful coexistence as the route to world peace are in fact arguing that imperialism can reconcile itself to the existence and economic success of the non-capitalist countries, so long as these countries in no way assist the extension of revolutions elsewhere and do not build up their own stocks of arms.

This is highly unlikely. Whatever assessment one makes of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (provocation, necessity, or something in between) it is obvious that the preceding ten years were not years during which steady steps towards world peace were being taken. SALT talks and similar diplomatic exercises were clearly a matter of jockey-

ing for position, and winning concessions useful in a future confrontation — not avoiding that confrontation altogether.

For imperialism the very existence of the 'socialist' camp is a threat to the survival of world capitalism. Friendly relations with China, or the Soviet Union itself, is a tactical question for US imperialism. Its treaties with China seek to deepen the quarrel between the Soviet Union and China so as to strengthen the global position of imperialism: it does not reflect a long term rapprochement with China, except insofar as the Chinese bureaucracy is prepared to repudiate the gains of its revolution and institute pro-imperialist policies itself.

But even if imperialism could reconcile itself to the non-capitalist countries as they presently exist, can it reconcile itself to the outbreak of new revolutions? For the 'socialist' camp will not just continue to exist while international revolution fades away. To hope for the disappearance of revolution is to hope that millions of working men and women will reconcile themselves to degradation, oppression and exploitation.

Such a hope is entirely illusory. Revolution is not caused by 'foreign aggression', or by the acts of 'agents provocateurs'; but springs from deep conflicts and contradictions

within capitalist society itself.

How could we have hoped in the interests of world peace that the people of Nicaragua would accept bloody dictatorship of Somoza? How can we suggest that the black people of South Africa be persuaded in the interests of world peace to refrain from taking up arms against apartheid?

Such hopes are laughable. They completely ignore the needs and demands of these peoples. The national revolution can be suppressed, held back, distorted by imperialism and by the misdeeds of the bureaucracies of the non-capitalist states, but it cannot be done without.

Imperialism will not reconcile itself to this gradual shrinkage of its domain, remaining passive in the face of world revolution. It will be persuaded in the interests of world peace to ignore new revolutions; rather it will seek to crush them quickly against them, using all the means at its disposal, including nuclear war.

Those who press detente and the imperialist powers fail to recognise the basic drives of capitalism. Imperialism can only be forced to give up war; they will be persuaded. And force will be the destruction of imperialism. Thus the best way to end the world revolution is to aid the world revolution.

FIGHT DRIVE



The success and failure of CND

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was one of the most successful mass campaigns ever conducted in Britain. Today, after years at a very low ebb, it is undergoing a revival.

PHIL HEARSE looks at the rise of the CND, its gradual demise in the early sixties, and the lessons we can draw from its history.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament got off the ground in 1957 — no accident. In 1956 the world had been shaken by two dramatic events: the brutal suppression of the Budapest uprising by Soviet troops, and the joint British, French and Israeli invasion of Egypt to prevent the nationalisation of the Suez canal by the Nasser regime.

Out of these two events crystallised an increasing awareness of the imperialist nature of the Western powers, and the truth of what Stalinism represented. People left the Communist Party in droves, and the 'New Left' began to emerge.

At the same time people became increasingly disturbed by the escalating level of nuclear tests. Evidence of ill-effects on health of above ground nuclear tests came to light. It was clear that nuclear weaponry was getting more effective and sophisticated and that a future nuclear war could wipe out humanity completely.

The founders of CND included left Labour Party members, scientists, religious figures and a wide range of supporters from every walk of life. In 1957 CND initiated its annual Easter marches from the Aldermaston nuclear plant in Berkshire to London. Progressively CND's activities drew in wide support. Huge public meetings were held all over the country to launch the campaign.

Unilateral

At first the campaign was centred on one demand — unilateral nuclear disarmament. But gradually the campaign was extended to include opposition to nuclear alliances, and thus support for British withdrawal from NATO, and opposition to nuclear bases in Britain.

CND's biggest impact, however, was made inside the Labour Party and the trade unions. Virtually the whole of the Tribune left of the Parliamentary Labour Party became unilateralist, despite Nye Bevan's refusal, supported by left-leaning trades unionists, the most important of whom was the leader of the Transport Workers, Frank Cousins.

The polarisation inside the Labour Party led to CND's finest hour — the debate at the 1960 Labour Party conference. Cousins moved a resolution from the Transport Union for unilateral disarmament.

It was opposed in person by Hugh Gaitskell, leader of the party and spokesperson of the right wing. Against a rising crescendo of heckling which made parts of his speech virtually inaudible, Gaitskell, in his famous 'fight, fight, and fight again' speech, staked the future of the right and his own personal future on the struggle against unilateralism in the party.

The right-wing organised the Campaign for Democratic Socialism, which, with huge funds, began the task of defeating the left on unilateralism. But for a year the official position of Labour was for unilateral disarmament.

Alliance

The changes in the world political situation and the development of the radicalisation in the left of British politics began to put strains on the alliance around CND. The attempted US-backed invasion of Cuba in 1961 led directly to the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.

American U2 spy planes over Cuba discovered the setting up of Soviet missiles on the island. President Kennedy ordered the blockade of Cuba by the US Navy — all boats heading for Cuba were stopped and searched.

The world held its breath, awaiting a clash between the Soviet and American navies. CND

mobilised its supporters in a protest that was overwhelmingly directed against the United States — the supporters of the campaign were beginning to take an anti-imperialist stance; CND was becoming identified as a campaign of the radical left.

Two developments in 1963 confirmed this trend. A more radical wing, led by such figures as Bertrand Russell and Pat Arrowsmith, was developing. They wanted direct, non-violent action to confront the war mongers. Already they had organised sit-down demonstrations in central London and at US bases which had been met with considerable police violence.

This radical wing — known as the Committee of 100 — exposed the existence of the Regional Seats of Government (RSGs), underground shelters where government personnel would go in the event of nuclear war. During the 1963 Easter march, a section of the demonstration broke away and marched to an RSG near Reading.

Fight

Although 80,000 marched on the last day of the demonstration in London, that evening, Easter Monday, CND's best known figure, Cannon L John Collins of St. Paul's, appeared on television and denounced the extremists sheltering under CND's umbrella.

Later that year, the campaign against the visit of Queen Frederika of Greece confirmed the trend of CND supporters to the left. The regime in Greece was still holding thousands of political prisoners — mainly Communists — in jail. Right-wing thugs, in league with the police, had recently murdered the left-wing pacifist deputy Lambrakis (the murder of Lambrakis is the subject of the film 'Z').

One of the most celebrated political prisoners — Tony Ambietelos — was the husband of a British Communist. In 1963 he had been in prison for 17 years. Against this background of repression in Greece, Queen Fredrika was received by the Queen at Buckingham Palace.

For a week in July 1963, thousands of people, organised by CND and the Communist Party, fought nightly battles against the police, trying to march to Buckingham Palace. CND had never before been so closely associated with the militant left. The CND alliance started to break up.

As CND's more moderate support began to ebb away, the left began to turn its attention from simple unilateralism towards the issue of Vietnam, as the United States began to draw the line against Communism in that country. CND began to peter out as a mass campaign.

Positive

CND's impact on British political life, however, was overwhelmingly positive. It had the immeasurable merit of breaking with cold war consensus. From being opposed to a particular type of weapon, it moved towards active neutralism in world politics, while many of its supporters went a stage further towards anti-imperialism.

Thousands of young people were drawn into support for the Young Socialists through CND — at a time when CND was dominated by the SLL-organised *Keep Left* tendency and the IS supporters around *Young Guard*. Hundreds of today's left-wing activists were brought into politics by CND.

Any campaign on nuclear weapons will eventually have to start to confront the questions of world politics, above all the question of the reason for the existence of nuclear weapons and the threat of war. No explanation of these things can be found without explaining imperialism.

For many of the early supporters of CND who opposed nuclear weapons on moral grounds — or who thought that Britain could make an outstanding moral gesture to the world by unilateral disarmament — anti-imperialism was a step they couldn't take.

Without doubt there is a place in British politics today for a single issue campaign against Cruise missiles and for unilateral nuclear disarmament. That campaign should be based on these simple demands — and not like today's CND on a wide range of neutralist policies.

Threat to peace

Soviet Union were to behave in a consistently revolutionary fashion it would go quickly to the aid of each new revolution as it occurs, offering military and economic aid without strings. Hesitation and appeasement in the face of aggression does not make war less likely. History has shown that retreat simply gives confidence to the aggressor and makes the escalation of the conflict more likely.

In the years between the First and Second World Wars the leaders of the imperialist states and of the Soviet Union tried to appease Hitler. Stalin sabotaged the revolution in Spain, objectively playing a decisive role in the victory of Franco, because his policy was to 'appease' imperialism in order to avert an 'imperialist united front' directed against the Soviet Union. This simply allowed imperialism to grow stronger.

The Soviet Union was not spared the worst of the bloodshed and destruction in World War Two. That should have showed once and for all that the ultimate victory of the world revolution in no sense depends on avoiding 'provoking' imperialism — it is provoked already.

If we look at the world situation from the viewpoint of avoiding world war it is clearly more advantageous to argue for the Soviet

Union to intervene rapidly with arms in aid of revolutions. Strengthening the camp of world revolution will confine the imperialist's room for manoeuvre.

As world imperialism enters a severe economic crisis it becomes ever more pressing for it to reclaim areas outside its influence. If there is hesitation then it will simply encourage imperialism to press forward its advantages. At first in the semi-colonial countries — in Nicaragua, Cuba, Iran — but East Germany, and Eastern Europe as a whole would not be immune for long.

In this situation the targets for world imperialism would be near to the nerve centres of the Soviet Union itself, and the Soviet Union would have to respond for reasons of military self-defence. Then the dangers of nuclear war would be infinitely greater than they are today. Better that the Soviet Union intervenes at an early stage, to defend and aid new gains for world socialism, than to leave it until its own existence is threatened — for then the whole world is in danger.

Nuclear war means nuclear suicide, and this is true as much for imperialism as for the international

working class. Only in a desperate situation would American imperialism risk collective suicide.

While nothing can stop imperialism getting weaker, a special duty is incumbent upon the American working class: it must disarm the US monopolists before they turn their guns on us and themselves as well.

As long as capitalism survives there will be class struggle on a world scale, and as long as class struggle continues all talk of peace and disarmament is pure illusion. Revolutionaries do not favour war, but revolutionaries cannot be pacifists, for that is to fly in the face of necessity.

To avoid war, to end war, we have to step up the class struggle on every front, and take it through to its conclusion most rapidly.

This means supporting revolutions in a various and growing number of countries as the conditions for revolution mature across the globe. Such support means demanding aid from Moscow, Cuba and other non-capitalist states, and simultaneously fighting against the war drives that imperialism will try to unleash against each successive revolution.

In the final analysis the question of whether or not there will be a nuclear war will be decided by the course of the class struggle in the imperialist heartlands — in West Germany, Britain and above all in North America. When the working class of the world has finally overthrown the imperialist war-mongers, then human kind will be free of the threat of war and nuclear annihilation.

That is why we oppose Cruise missiles in this country

NO TORY PLAN

'WHAT the government has done, and continues to do, is to underwrite the perpetuation of the Northern Ireland state as it was set up in 1921. This is the most dangerous of the options open. It offers no solutions. It is not a recipe for peace in Ireland, but for peace between the parties at Westminster.

'It should now be clear that bipartisanship over Ireland means that policy is dictated today, as it has been since the end of the last century, by the Tories and the Ulster Unionists.

'The violence in Northern Ireland, which has logically spread to Britain, is the result of repression and injustice.'

Andrew Bennett MP, Sydney Bidwell MP, Maureen Colquhoun MP, Martin Flannery MP, Tom Litterick MP, Eddie Loyden MP, Joan Maynard MP, Ron Thomas MP, Stan Thorne MP, 1976

'The British have always been the root of the trouble in Ireland for the past 400 years...The British governments have successively failed to solve the problems of Northern Ireland. They should therefore hand it over to the people to solve...

'I don't know what the term bloodbath means. If it means native is not between an entirely peaceful Northern Ireland and a Northern Ireland in which a lot of people will be killed. If the British withdraw some sort of settlement would be arrived at. British withdraw some sort of settlement would be arrived at.

You can't tell what it is because the forces in play can't be judged until they can operate. I have very grave doubts whether, faced with the responsibilities of a position after the British withdrawal, the Protestants would, in fact, resort to an all-out civil war....

'The Irish problem is undoubtedly difficult because British people have been interfering there for four hundred years and I suspect that many of them can't get it out of their heads that the British know much better how to rule Ireland — how to run Ireland — than the Irish know themselves. It is a view which has made them tolerate the troubles for quite a long time.'

The historian AJP Taylor, 1976.

'The essence of the "Irish Dimension" is this: the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland — some 40 per cent of the population as a whole — form part of the political majority of the Irish people.

'They are so by virtue of the fact that they are mainly nationalist in politics and would prefer to be ruled by the Irish rather than by the British governments, their predecessors having been incorporated in the United Kingdom against their will in 1920-21.

'Partition has denied them their rights as a majority, therefore, and turned them into a minority within the North and within the UK.

'It seems to me that a permanent settlement cannot be achieved unless it recognises the injustice of this fact and comes to terms with it by opening up a way to a situation in which the political rights of the Northern Catholics and nationalists to be part of the political majority of the island as a whole can be reasserted.'

Michael Mullen, general secretary, Irish Transport and General Workers Union, June 1979.

'...all the injustice the minority population has suffered springs from (partition). Particularly, I think, whatever you did on civil liberties you would still have the fact to face that the Catholics have been made a political minority in Northern Ireland when in the country as a whole they are a political majority.

'And the only way you could solve that would be by uniting the country. After all Ireland is one country, and we undoubtedly divided it in order to divide and rule as we've done in so many other parts of the world in the past.'

Joan Maynard MP, 1979.

'The London Co-op Political Committee has chosen as its resolution to the forthcoming Regional Conferences of the Labour Party to support the growing call for British withdrawal from Northern Ireland....

'Our aims are still those of the Better Life For All Campaign some years ago — to end the violence, the discrimination, and the deprivation in Northern Ireland. However the policies of the last ten years have failed and it is now clear that the aims of A Better Life For All cannot be achieved until there is a commitment to end British rule.

'This is the only policy which has not been tried, and the only policy which deals with the cause, as well as the symptoms of the Irish problem.'

London Co-op Political Committee, 1980

IN A few days, the Tory government is to publish its plans for the future of the North of Ireland. Whatever their exact nature, one thing is certain: the Tories will insist that the north-east of Ireland remains under British control.

But that is easier said than done. In the North of Ireland the resistance to British rule continues, while in the South the Irish Prime Minister, Charles Haughey, under pressure from his electorate, is demanding that Britain declare itself in favour of Irish unity and British withdrawal.

In Britain, too, there is a growing realisation that the only peaceful solution Britain has to offer Ireland is to get out. In London last weekend 250 people attended a 'Forum for Withdrawal'; there

By Geoff Bell

THE Tory plans for Ireland should be opposed by all those who call themselves socialist. That can be said without even knowing the precise details.

The reason is simple: the Tories have no intention of giving, to all the people of Ireland, the right to determine the future of all the people of Ireland.

The importance of the principle of self-determination and what it means in the specific Irish context is explained in the extracts from *Ireland — Voices for Withdrawal* reprinted on these two pages.

This pamphlet also provides ample evidence of the breadth of feeling in this country for British withdrawal. For that reason, and for the general excellent quality of the pamphlet, it is a welcome addition to the material presently available on Ireland.

One thing the pamphlet does not do, and this is not meant as a criticism, is to map out how the sentiment expressed within it can be harnessed into building a strong and effective movement which can play its part in forcing Britain out of Ireland.

Organisations

At present there are three organisations addressing themselves to this problem. The first and largest in terms of membership is the Troops Out Movement, whose conference will be held in Edinburgh at the end of this month.

Involved in TOM are a number of left-wing groups — the International Marxist Group, the Socialist Workers Party, and Big Flame — as well as many individuals belonging to no political organisation.

The TOM is not a 'front' for any one political group or collection of individuals — that is one reason why it has been successful in building 40 odd branches up and down the country.

The TOM is based on two demands: troops out now, and self-determination for the people of Ireland as a whole.

A newer organisation is the Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland, which produced the *Voices for Withdrawal* pamphlet.

The CWI was established to organise the demonstration last August which attracted between 6,000 and 10,000 people. The TOM and the other groups involved in the TOM are part of the CWI, as are a number of other organisations such as the Young Liberals and the New

Communist Party.

The CWI is different from the TOM in that it does not set a specific deadline by which Britain should get out of Ireland, nor does it explicitly endorse the demand for self-determination for Ireland as a political unit. Organisationally the CWI is also different from TOM in that it has no branch structure, but is organised and run by a London-based committee.

The third and newest organisation is the Labour Committee on Ireland, set up specifically to raise the issue of Ireland within the Labour Party.

The basis of the LCI is

are growing signs that Ireland will become a significant issue in the Labour Party; and the recent launch of Charter '80, a campaign seeking 'human rights for Irish political prisoners', promises to make an issue of the conditions under which prisoners are held in the H Block at Long Kesh and the women's prison in Armagh.

These two pages chart the growing movement in Britain for withdrawal from Ireland. Extracts from a new pamphlet, *Voices for Withdrawal*, are reproduced.

On the opposite page the Provisional Republican Movement expresses its view of how an Irish solidarity movement can be built in Britain. Below GEOFF BELL, one of the speakers at last weekend's Forum, gives his view.

sum total has managed to build what is necessary — a movement with mass support in this country dedicated to getting Britain out of Ireland.

The failure of such a current to emerge is largely due to the political circumstances that have existed in Britain for several years.

That is, the success of British governments in misrepresenting what is happening in the North of Ireland as, in the first instance, the British Army 'keeping two sides apart', or more recently, the Army defending the community from 'criminals' and 'terrorists'.

There are real signs that this is beginning to change.

movement. On the political level, to agree that Britain has no right to be in Ireland but to say that Britain should not leave immediately is contradictory and confusing.

On the practical level, the immediate withdrawal of troops is less likely to produce a Loyalist backlash than the announcement of withdrawal within a couple of years. In the latter case the Loyalists would have time to organise and mount such a campaign of terror, both in Ireland and Britain, that the government could be pressured into staying.

Mobilising

Even on the level of mobilising people in this country, the twin demands of self-determination and troops out now have attracted more people to their banner than any other.

This is not to say that the CWI or the resolution adopted by the LCI should be opposed. Rather they should be seen as one step in an evolutionary process in educating people on the demand that Britain should leave Ireland now.

To ensure that this does happen means continuing to build the Troops Out Movement as the major campaigning organisation in this country.

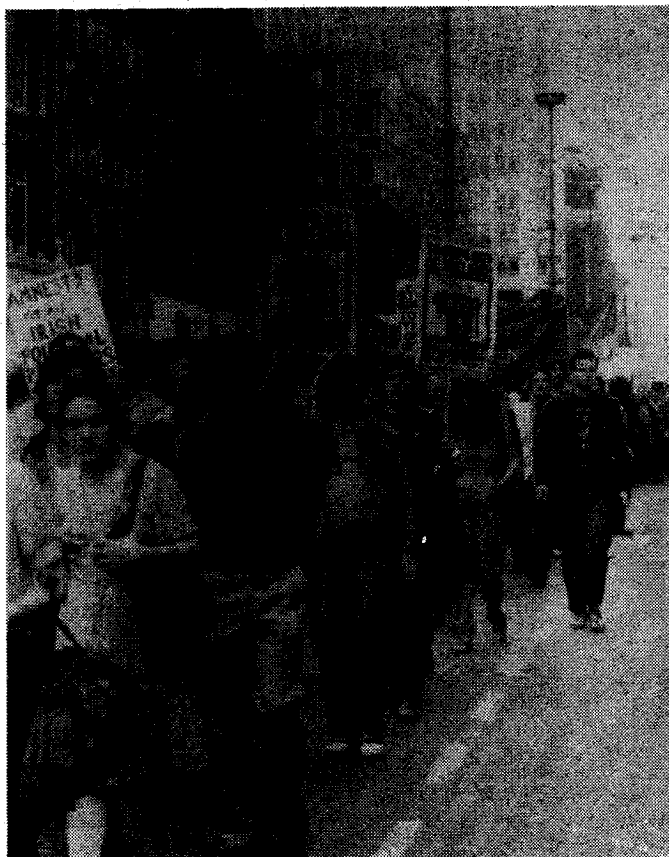
In an attempt to aid this process the International Marxist Group will be proposing to the TOM conference that the next national initiative which should be supported by the TOM should be to call or support a national demonstration in the autumn on the demands of 'No Tory Plans for Ireland' and 'Self-Determination for all the Irish people now'.

The organisers of the CWI forum have also called for a demonstration, the basis of which would include opposition to the forthcoming Tory proposals. Hopefully the LCI can also be drawn into such an initiative.

In this way the three organisations can organise together and build a quantitatively bigger demonstration than even the 12 August march last year.

The IMG believes that such a demonstration should be built as vigorously as possible by the TOM, the LCI, and the CWI, and by all socialist organisations in this country.

But in the run up to such a demonstration, during it and after it, the building of a mass troops out current remains the priority.



'troops out now', but the model resolution it is circulating in the hope of it being debated at the next party conference is not quite so explicit, saying that 'the next Labour government should immediately begin the process of full political and military withdrawal'.

It would be wrong to see the TOM, the LCI, and the CWI as competing organisations. Each has specific tasks, addressing different, although at times overlapping, audiences.

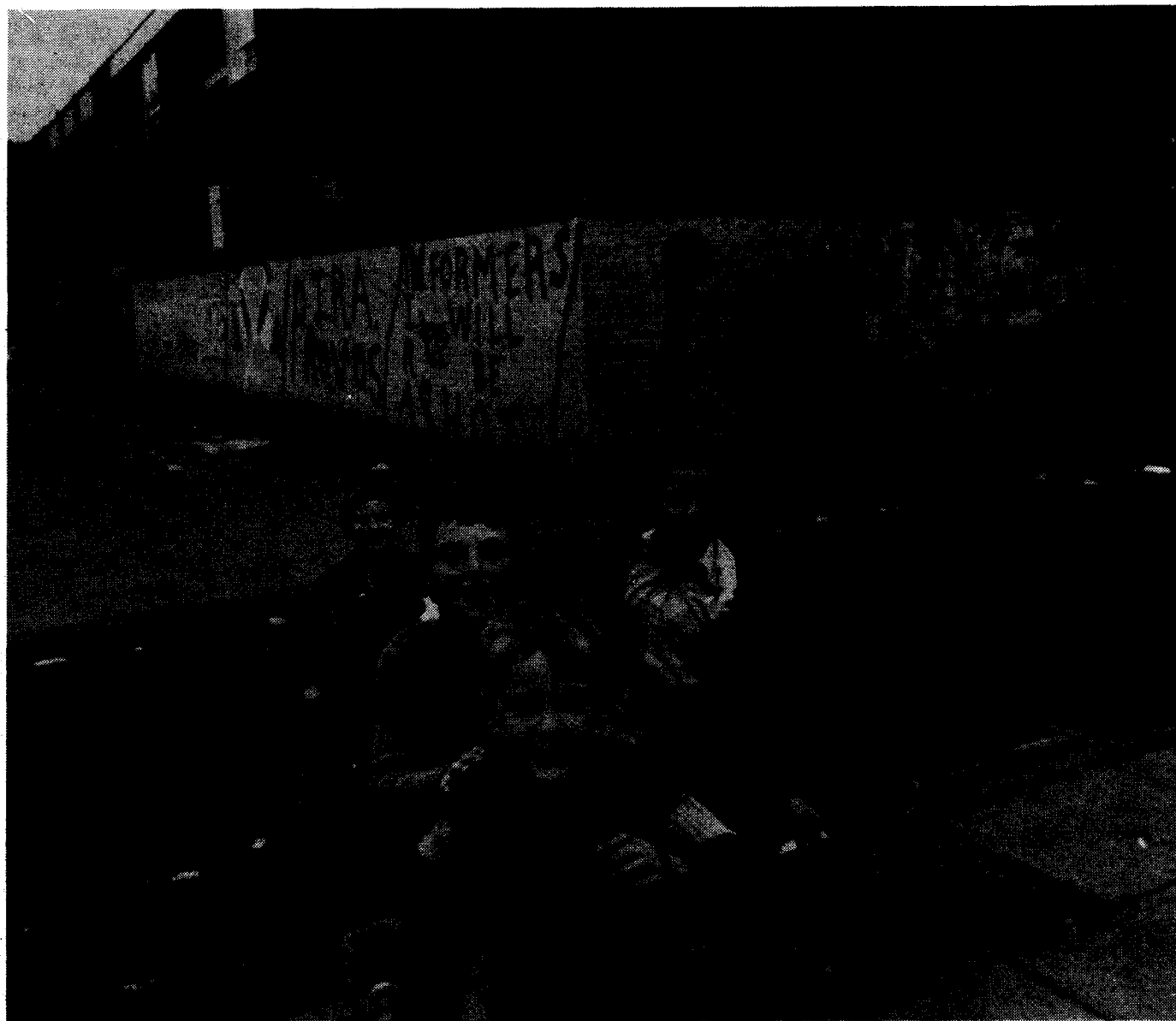
And yet this is not an entirely satisfactory situation. While the three organisations can complement each other, neither in themselves or in their

The scope of the contributions in the *Voices for Withdrawal* pamphlet is just one indication of this. Another is the increasing interest being shown in Ireland within the Labour Party. All of which suggests that it may now be possible to realistically build the type of mass campaign which has evaded the Irish solidarity movement in this country for so long.

How can this campaign be built? What should be its basis?

Socialist Challenge believes — as it always has done — that the two political demands of the Troops Out Movement are, at this point in time, the only principled basis for such a

S FOR IRELAND



Building a troops out movement — the Provisionals' view

THE leaders of the national liberation struggle in Vietnam always recognised the importance of a broad-based movement against the war being developed in the Imperialist heartland itself.

They did not find it pointless or impossible to build a troops out movement in spite of widespread support in America for the war — including among the trade unions.

Vietnam

The Vietnamese leaders always appealed for unity in action among the various anti-war organisations in America.

Xuan Thuy, ambassador to the Paris peace talks, put it like this: 'Facing the serious situation as it presents itself now, I call upon the progressive American people and all anti-war organisations in the United States to unite closely, to associate all forces and strata of the population irrespective of their skin colour, religion and political trend, thus making a united and strong movement so as to curb in time new military adventures by the US administration, to demand an end to their war of aggression in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, to demand the withdrawal of all American troops from Indochina and let

the Indochina people settle their own internal affairs.'

The principle is that an anti-war movement in an imperialist country must unite the broadest possible forces behind the basic demands of 'troops out' and 'self-determination'.

The stress of the American anti-war movement was always on action, rather than, for example, on working in Congress.

So there were huge demonstrations against the war over a number of years, such as the 800,000 who marched in Washington in 1971. There were protests, teach-ins, and mass mobilisations up and down the country throughout the war, especially after the draft was introduced.

This movement had two main principles. First it had a non-exclusionary line, in other words anyone who supported the basic demands was free to participate.

Programme

Secondly, it was a single-issue campaign, which did not include in its programme points on broader political issues.

If these principles are applied in Britain what is the result?

If the Young Liberals or Cyril Smith or a number of Labour MPs say 'troops out of Ireland', but take reactionary positions on other issues, then clearly this conflict is their pro-

blem and not that of activists in the troops out movement, so long as their actions help in some way to build a troops out movement.

It is always the danger in building an anti-war movement in a hostile situation of making it politically factional. Republicans would obviously like to see hundreds of thousands marching through London calling for the withdrawal of British troops on a principled, anti-imperialist basis.

Protest

But it may well be more likely that a 'Bring the Boys Home' movement will develop based on British self-interest and chauvinist sentiment. This would seem to be what the *Daily Mirror* has been advocating. In a purely objective sense this could unwittingly result in action against British interests.

While a progressive anti-imperialist movement would be the more welcome, Republicans cannot ignore the prospect of a movement saying 'troops out' for its own chauvinist reasons ('let the Irish sort themselves out').

Protest action is what is wanted, no matter what the basis. However, within this movement the radicals should, of course, try to educate people around the issues raised in the war.

The trade unions in America were mainly favourable to the war in Vietnam. This was basically on a pro-imperialist basis, and purely for self-interest because the war meant more jobs. Building workers in New York, the 'hard hats', even violently attacked anti-war demonstrations in the streets.

Gradually, the building of a mass movement against the war, mainly supported by students and black people, turned the tide in the trade unions, and many came out against the war.

In Britain, it would seem the situation is more favourable for building a 'troops out' movement within the organised labour movement. Support for the Chile Solidarity Campaign (set up after the bloody military coup in 1973) was, for example, quite widespread among trades councils and unions.

Ignorant

On Ireland, most trade unionists seem to be not so much hostile as ignorant of the situation here.

It is for those active in the troops out movement to decide themselves how best to pursue their activity. But the prospects look good, if a principled yet flexible approach is adopted, based on the 'non-exclusionary' and 'single-issue' principles.

'I'm an Irish-American and a reporter. I've lived twice in Ireland for periods of more than six months and have visited Belfast almost 30 times since 1963. I'm certain that I've spent more time in Ireland, North and South, than Shirley Williams or the editorial writers of the London newspapers. And what I have seen is very simple: I've seen a state ruled by British arms....

'I've been shot at in Belfast and teargassed in Derry. I've talked to the IRA. I've looked at the British concentration camp at Long Kesh, seen British soldiers bash kids on their head and fire four-inch hard rubber bullets at crowds of women. I saw the blood on the streets of Derry after the British paratroopers fired into a crowd and killed 13 people. My attitude to the North of Ireland is not sentimental. It is made of sheer cold anger....

'The British press might thunder and say that this is not the business of America. But if Israel is our business, if Egypt is our business, if South Africa and Rhodesia are our business, if Soviet Jews are our business then Ireland is our business....

'Everybody wants the killing to stop. And there is only one way to stop it forever. Get the British out and make Ireland one country, as it was at the beginning.'

Pete Hamill, *New York Daily News*, 1979

'Belfast is filled with British soldiers in camouflage uniform. They man the check-points, stand guard at petrol stations, on roads to the airport, at the seaport, in front of the banks and the bigger shops.

Stealthily clinging to house walls, they patrol the streets keeping an eye on all pedestrians and the upper stories of apartment buildings. They are always on the alert, with their finger on the trigger. Add to this the constant drone of helicopters patrolling over the city and of the roar of the armoured vehicles riding in the streets....

'Northern Ireland is a land of total surveillance. The British Army has a computer file on practically every adult, listing facial features, date of birth, occupation, religion, address, licence number, colour and make of car, even type of television and colour of the wallpaper in the home.

'This is complemented by telephone bugging and a network of paid informers. And all to keep the people in a state of constant intimidation, compel them to give up the fight for their vital rights.'

Vladimir Pavlov, journalist of the Soviet journal *New Times*

'Since 1169, when Henry II invaded Ireland, troops have been in that country against the wishes of the majority of the Irish people, as they are against the wishes of the majority of the Irish people today.

'Throughout those 800 years, every generation has produced Irishmen and women who have been prepared to assert the right of their nation to national freedom.

'And every time they have done that they have been met with the brute force of British imperialism.

'The irony is that Ireland was Britain's first colony and is Britain's last colony, while the institutions which were built up to hold Ireland in submission were institutions that have been systematically used against the working class of this country....

'What is being done in Northern Ireland is being done in the name of the British people, in the name of the millions who go day in, day out, to factories, who create the real wealth that we see about us.

'While there are troops in Northern Ireland and while there is a system in this country which supports them there, the working class will never be free.

'The campaign to get the troops out of Ireland is a blow against British imperialism, is a blow against the British ruling class in this country, is a blow for the Irish working class, and their natural ally, the British working class.

Mike Cooley, former president AUEW/TASS, 1975

'The way forward clearly lies in united working class struggle. But that kind of unity of action cannot be built on a situation where a whole layer of the working class is given certain privileges — the best jobs, education and homes — and where that privilege is backed by the forces of the sectarian statelet.

'A united struggle of the working class can only develop when that situation is no longer possible. When the Orange state is dismantled, then and only then can a realistic dialogue leading to united action develop....

'In a sentence, the presence of the troops perpetuates the divisions of the Irish working class.'

Phil Flynn, deputy general secretary, Local Government and Public Services Union, 1976.

Thatcher's Olympic hypocrisy

With the Olympic games just a month away, Tory leaders are still appealing to members of the British team to ignore the British Olympic Association and stay away from Moscow.

By Dodie Wepler

Thatcher is not happy with the results of the boycott campaign so far. She is no doubt equally unhappy about the labour movement campaign to raise money to pay the fares of British athletes who decide to go to Moscow.

The recent decision of the Labour-controlled Hackney Council to send £1000 to the Olympics Association followed similar donations from Newcastle Council, from at least five Scottish local authorities, the Stirling Trades Council, and a number of national unions, including the construction section of the Engineers' Union.

None of the imperialist powers is able to come up with a coherent political solution to the Afghan crisis which is mutually acceptable to Western governments. Carter alone has a

clear policy: to use the presence of Soviet troops to boost his war drive and to justify the stepped-up military presence of the US in that region.

But even in his own country, other government leaders haven't been convinced by his approach. Secretary of State Muskie, for instance, argues that the SALT treaty should be tackled independently of developments in Afghanistan.

President Giscard of France has now supported the proposal for a supposedly 'neutral' Afghanistan put forward by Lord Carrington. They want a negotiated settlement on Afghanistan, made part of a wider Middle East settlement so as to attract Soviet leaders to a conference table. West Germany's Chancellor Schmidt, however, seems to want to drop Afghanistan and prioritise other issues like arms control in dealings with the Soviet Union.

Of course all these powers share a common end, even though they differ over means. None have at heart the interests of the Afghan people. Western leaders are eager to defend them

from Soviet tanks but not from the reactionary alliance of Afghan landowners, clergy and tribal leaders presently being supplied with arms by Egypt and the Gulf states.

Thatcher denounces the 'butchers of Kabul' but congratulates the British Army on its work in the North of Ireland. Carter waxes indignant about human rights in Afghanistan but remains silent about the hundreds of thousands of Iranians killed and maimed by the Shah, or those oppressed in South Korea by the dictatorship of Chan Too Hwan.

The boycott of the Moscow Olympics is not inspired by concern about the bureaucratic methods of the Soviet leaders but by a desire to attack the gains of the October revolution. In condemning the Soviet Union, Western powers are seeking to prepare the working class to accept moves of their own against revolutionary developments in the Third World. Today, Central America is especially threatened.

However, it is not all smooth sailing for the USSR in Afghanistan. Soviet troops intervened there to stabilise the civil war situation that

threatened the *status quo* in the entire region.

They chose to strike a blow against the right-wing opponents of the People's Democratic Party, defending, whatever their intentions, the radical reforms undertaken by the PDP government. But the blow was struck in a bureaucratic way, with no serious attempt being made to win over a section of the peasants or the middle class of the cities who support the reactionaries. By mobilising around a radical social programme a small core of militant Afghans, such as those who organise the militias, the Soviets could undermine support for the reactionary alliance.

Today the Soviet troops ensure that a vicious right-wing regime is not installed in Afghanistan. But the methods and policies of the Soviet bureaucrats can't be relied upon to win the sort of deep-going gains which could benefit Afghanistan people. This can only come from the independent mobilisation of the masses, something which would turn back the offensive of the rebels and check Carter's war drive.

The forgotten story of the Korean War

BRUTAL repression has been used by the South Korean regime to try to smash the massive mobilisations that shook the country last month. Then, hundreds of thousands of Korean people went on strike against the dictatorship. The cities of Kwangju, Mokpo and Polkyo were seized. Committees of citizens and students were organised. Police stations, armouries, and a military vehicle factory were raided to obtain weapons for defence.

The key to understanding these events lies in the war that began 30 years ago this week. Jonathan Silberman traces the origins of today's struggles.

The 38th Parallel

WHEN the city of Kwangju was seized by its inhabitants last month, top US government officials called a special White House meeting. The result? US troops stationed in Korea were placed on alert.

General John A Wickham Jr, head of the joint US-South Korean Military Command, released Korean combat troops from regular duties to help put down the unrest. An American aircraft carrier was sent to the South Korean coast, to be replaced by the giant warship, *Midway*, as soon as possible.

Hodding Carter III, US State Department spokesperson, declared that the White House was 'deeply concerned by the civil strife'. For over 30 years this kind of 'deep concern' has been expressed by successive US governments. America still has 40,000 troops in the country, backed up by the mighty Seventh Fleet, by enormous US bases in Okinawa, and by untold numbers of tactical nuclear weapons.

The US government became directly involved in Korea in 1945, when the Japanese surrendered at

the end of the Second World War. Then, the US military decreed that Korea would be divided along the 38th Parallel. The Soviet Union, which had joined the war against the Japanese, withdrew its troops from the South.

US troops landed in S Korea on 8 September, 1945, supposedly to disarm the Japanese troops. Just two days earlier, the Korean People's Republic had been proclaimed. The coalition government was committed to a programme of land reform, equality for women, and other radical reforms. This highly popular government, based on a network of over a hundred People's Committees, was recognised by the Soviet Union.

The American troops were nothing less than an invasion force, opposed by the overwhelming majority of Korean people. Yet one month later, the US military government in Korea declared itself the sole government — despite the fact that it did not have a single member who spoke Korean!

At the beginning of 1946, the US established the Representative Democratic Council headed by Syngman Rhee. It's true Rhee was



a Korean, but he was flown back to Korea in General MacArthur's private plane, after decades in the United States as an emigré!

US imperialism and its puppet ruled with a rod of iron. All political activity was banned. Despite the repression, the Korean people fought back. In the autumn of 1946, a pre-revolutionary situation exploded. Like today's events, it was met by brutal methods of terror. By 1949, some \$440 million of military aid had been pumped into the South since the end of World War Two.



US carnage

AMERICAN imperialism was especially pre-occupied with Korean events because of the effects of the victorious Chinese revolution. In 1949, one third of the world's population liberated itself from the international capitalist system, with the prospect of helping to stimulate further revolutionary developments in the entire area.

General MacArthur, US military commander for the region, led the policy adopted by the Truman government: to smash any efforts by the people of South-east Asia to take their destiny in their own hands. Just four weeks after the Chinese victory Rhee's defence minister stated: 'If we had our own way, we would I'm sure, have started up already. But we had to wait until they (the Americans) were ready... We are strong enough to march up and take Pyongyang (the North Korean capital) within a few days'.

US and South Korean policy also stemmed from the outcome of the elections in the South. They were held on 30 May 1949 following pressure from President Truman to establish a more 'democratic', more stable base for American interests. Despite grave electoral restrictions, the South Korean people overwhelmingly rejected Rhee. He won less than 20 per cent of the seats in the legislature. The prospect of a government prepared to peacefully negotiate reunification was on the cards. Its first meeting took place on Monday, 19 June. Just six days later, Korea was at war.

America was well prepared for the war. British, Australian, and US military authorities held top-level conferences in the Pacific area just before the fighting started. MacArthur also met John Foster Dulles, a leading US Republican Party member who had spent three days in Seoul with Syngman Rhee. Dulles predicted that the US would soon be taking 'positive action... to preserve international peace, security and justice in the world'. He refused to say what 'positive action' meant.

MacArthur's biographer, John Gunther, was more specific however. Hours after the conflict began, Gunther was informed by one of MacArthur's aides: 'A big story has just broken. The South Koreans have attacked the North'.

In official Western histories the Korean war was started by the aggressive moves of the North Korean

puppets of the Kremlin. The truth is that the seeds of the war — the civil war — were sown by the American policy itself which denied the right of the Korean people to determine their own future and cracked down on any independent political organisation.

Nevertheless, in the name of 'peace' and 'freedom', Truman authorised the bombing of 'specific military targets in North Korea', a naval blockade of the entire Korean coast, and the use of American ground troops.

Far from the claims that the war was a plot by the USSR, the Moscow bureaucrats failed to give adequate aid desperately needed by the Korean people. In the first months of the war, the South Korean army was almost swept off the Korean peninsula. Soviet air and naval aid could have clinched it early on.

People throughout the world paid a heavy price for Stalin's treachery. In addition to the US, 15 other Western and pro-Western governments sent in troops, following a US resolution to the United Nations. At the end of the war, America's own figures put the US-UN military casualties at 142,091.

But it was the Korean and Chinese people who suffered the most terrible devastation:

*By as early as September 1950, the US airforce had dropped 97,000 tons of bombs and 7.8 million gallons of napalm on the North.

*By the end of the war, the population of North Korea had dropped from 9.5m to 8.5m.

*The population of Pyongyang was 400,000 at the beginning of the war; 80,000 at the end. Only two buildings remained intact. In one raid alone, the US dropped 697 tons of bombs and 10,000 litres of napalm on the Northern capital; 6,000 civilians were killed.

*The imperialist armies pursued a 'scorched earth' policy burning everything in their wake. After six months of war, 22 villages and 300 haystacks were razed to the ground in the Wonju sector alone.

*The US used germ warfare, with untold damage.

The war was not limited to the Korean peninsula. US planes repeatedly bombed and strafed Chinese cities. On 8 October, two US planes even attacked an airport in the Soviet Union. Finally, MacArthur got the green light for his counter-revolutionary war against China. On 24 November, he ordered 100,000 troops into an offensive designed to reach the Yalu river — the North Korean border with China. China joined the war and the US offensive was pushed back.

But the war continued. And with it, the carnage. Altogether three million Korean and Chinese people were killed in the forgotten war. Twenty million refugees were left to face the 'peace'...

The British involvement

The British Labour government followed the US lead fully. 'British support was instantaneous and unqualified,' wrote Michael Foot MP. 'No word of dissent was raised in the Cabinet, and few in Parliament or outside'. The decisive speech in Parliament was made by Nye Bevan, which committed Britain to £4,700m over three years. 'We shall carry it through; we shall fulfill our obligations to our friends and allies...' he proclaimed.

Almost 700 British troops were killed during the war, with over 2,500 going missing or wounded. The only opposition to the war came from the Communist Party, and from the tiny forces of the Trotskyists of the Fourth International. The fore-runners of the British Socialist Workers Party took a neutral position as the imperialist forces invaded the North. The SWP continues to defend the view that the Korean war was an inter-imperialist conflict.

It's hard to estimate just how much blood is on the hands of successive British governments, but they have faithfully supported the 'Seoul lobby' at the United Nations. An 'Honour Guard' of British troops is still deployed in South Korea, Britain is still opposed to a policy of re-unification, and is heavily committed economically through both expanding trade and investment programmes.

South Africa: the flames grow higher

By Tom Marlowe

'BETWEEN the anvil of united mass action and the hammer of the armed struggle we shall crush apartheid and white minority rule.'

These words were written two years ago by Nelson Mandela, leader of the African National Congress. They were the last sentence of a letter smuggled out from Mandela's prison camp on Robben Island off Capetown which finally reached the outside world last week.

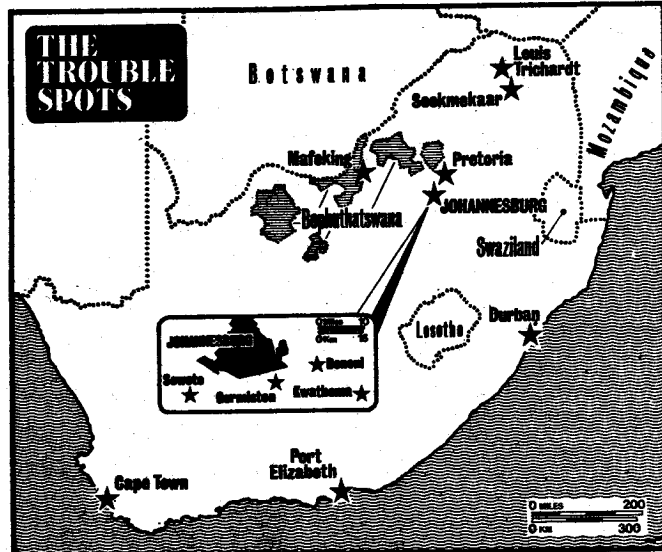
Despite the time it has taken Mandela's message to get to his supporters it is remarkably timely.

Monday was the fourth anniversary of the Soweto uprising when thousands of blacks rebelled against the racist regime in South Africa. As many as 600 blacks were killed, and four times as many injured, when the rising was put down with a brutality which is part and parcel of the apartheid system.

The anniversary was marked in Soweto by a general strike and repeated clashes between blacks and the South African security forces. The government was so scared of what the anniversary would bring that not only were public meetings banned, so were church services.

The announcement of the ban was accompanied by a statement from the South African prime minister P W Botha which gave, 'a final warning to those who underestimate the government's determination to maintain law and order'. This followed a threat from police minister Louis Le Grance: 'As far as I am concerned we have had enough.'

All the signs are that the blacks in South Africa have also 'had enough'. Botha has maintained tight the wave of anger and protest which has



FOUR YEARS OF TROUBLE

JUNE 16, 1976-JUNE 1977: Riots in Soweto and black townships throughout South Africa. Boycotting of black schools.
NOVEMBER 26, 1978: Two policemen injured in grenade attack, Eastern Transvaal.
JANUARY 1, 1977: One killed in Soweto bomb explosion.
JUNE 13, 1977: Two whites killed in Johannesburg shooting.
SEPTEMBER 9, 1977: Black security policeman shot in Durban.
SEPTEMBER 12, 1977: Death in detention of Steve Biko, Black Consciousness leader. Renewed demonstrations.
SEPTEMBER 28, 1977: Two guerrillas captured near Mafeking. Large arms cache discovered.
OCTOBER 19, 1977: Mass detentions of black leaders and banning of two newspapers and 18 black consciousness organisations.
NOVEMBER 25, 1977: Bomb blast in Carlton shopping centre, Johannesburg.
NOVEMBER 28, 1977: Bomb explosion on Pretoria train.
DECEMBER 12, 1977: Germiston police station bombed.
DECEMBER 14, 1977: Bomb at Benoni railway station.
FEBRUARY 1978: Two police killed in clash near Swazi border.
MARCH 9, 1978: Bomber kills himself in Port Elizabeth.

MARCH 10, 1978: Woman killed in Port Elizabeth bomb blast.
AUGUST 1, 1978: Police clash with guerrilla group, arms cache discovered.
OCTOBER 27, 1978: Two guerrillas killed in gun battle in Bophuthatswana.
OCTOBER 30, 1978: Police sergeant wounded in gun battle west of Louis Trichardt.
DECEMBER 7, 1978: Bomb blast at urban Bantu council chambers, Soweto.
DECEMBER 16, 1978: Bomb blast on Eastern Cape rail line.
JANUARY 13, 1979: Guerrilla killed in gun battle with police near Botswana border.
MAY 3, 1979: Policeman killed in guerrilla attack on Moroka Police Station, Soweto.
MAY 15, 1979: Bomb explodes in Cape Town Supreme Court.
NOVEMBER 2, 1979: Policeman killed in attack on Orlando Police Station, Soweto.
JANUARY 4, 1980: Attack on Soekmekaar police station, Northern Transvaal.
JANUARY 25, 1980: Two hostages die after gunmen occupy bank in Silverton, Pretoria.
FEBRUARY 17, 1980: Attack on store near Mozambique border, Natal.
MARCH 8, 1980: Major arms cache found in Kwa-thema township, Springs, including rocket launchers.
APRIL 4, 1980: Attack on Booyens Police Station, Johannesburg.
APRIL 1980: Coloured pupils' school boycott begins in Cape Town.

shaken the regime in the last two months is 'the work of professional agitators', but the breadth and depth of the protests exposes such claims as ridiculous.

Whether it be the schools' boycott campaign involving hundreds of thousands of youth, the increasing number of black workers taking strike action, or the armed struggle of which the latest success was the

blowing up of the SASOL oil plant two weeks ago, the Botha government is now faced with the most determined and widespread opposition in South Africa's history.

The government is reacting with a traditional carrot and stick approach — except a very small carrot is being dangled, and a very big stick is being waved.

The carrot is the establishment of a 'President's Council' to replace the existing all-white Senate. Its 60 members will be drawn from the four principle minorities, totalling, seven million people — whites, Indians, Chinese and those of mixed parentage. The 20 million blacks will not be represented on the council, whose members will be appointed by the government. The council will only have 'consultative' powers.

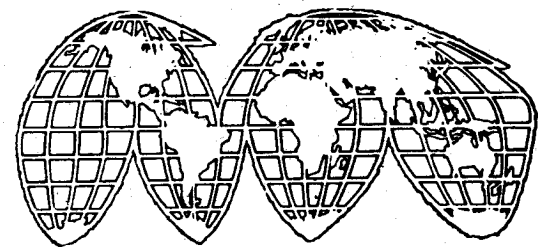
The stick consists of a big, 55 per cent, increase in military spending, and the rise to prominence of the South African military establishment within the country's ruling clique.

Masterminding the new strategy is General Magnus Malan, chief of the South African Defence Force, and widely considered to be Botha's closest advisor. Malan is a beneficiary of American General Staff training. He now sits on the powerful 'inner-cabinet' in the Botha government — the state security council.

Other members of the security council include the head of the national intelligence service (formerly BOSS), the chief of the police and police minister Le Grance. Together this bunch are plotting what Botha has called a 'total strategy', which includes military attacks on South Africa's black neighbours.

Both Malan and Botha know that their problems are increasing. At the start of the year Malan predicted that what he called the 'communist enemy' would 'attempt to create confusion, unrest, discontent and disloyalty'. Admitted Malan, 'the total revolutionary onslaught against our entire population has escalated alarmingly'.

That was six months ago. Today the 'escalation' is showing signs of turning into a torrent.



AROUND THE WORLD

Guyana

WALTER Rodney, Marxist historian and a leader of the left opposition Working People's Alliance (WPA) was murdered by a car bomb in Georgetown, the capital of Guyana, last Friday night. The car in which he had left a WPA meeting was blown up by a bomb placed under his seat.

This is the third murder of WPA members in the last three weeks, and follows searches and arrests of other leading members. It also comes a week after the adjournment of the trial of Rodney and other WPA members on a frame-up charge of burning down the headquarters of the ruling People's National Congress.

Walter's assassination is clearly a political killing by sections of the right, probably within the government itself, who are alarmed by the recent growth of the WPA. It echoes similar campaigns of political violence in the Caribbean, notably in Jamaica, where a situation is again developing similar to the attempted 'destabilisation' backed by the CIA in 1976.

In the late 1960s the banning of Walter Rodney from Jamaica sparked off the black power movement in the region.

WPA Support Committee mobilising meeting on Wed 18 June at Institute of Race Relations, Pentonville Rd, London, for rally on Sat 21 June.

East Germany

ALTHOUGH Rudolf Bahro and thousands of others were released under an amnesty to mark the 30th anniversary of the republic last October, the persecution of political dissidents has not ceased in East Germany.

On 15 May this year a court in Leipzig sentenced 22-year-old Simone Langrock to five years' imprisonment on charges of 'anti-state agitation'. Her crimes? Simone was accused of daubing the slogan 'Freedom for Rudolf Bahro' on a Leipzig monument in summer 1978; of distributing leaflets calling for the release of all political prisoners in the GDR and Eastern Europe; of discussing and distributing the writings of political authors like Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, and Bahro.

Simone's father, Rolf Mainz, a former journalist and member of the ruling Socialist Unity (SED) party, and his brother Klaus have been imprisoned since October 1976, also for 'anti-state agitation'. Simone's grandfather, Albert Mainz, spent four years in Nazi concentration camps for anti-fascist activities.

Letters demanding Simone's immediate release should be sent to: Embassy of the German Democratic Republic, 34 Belgrave Sq, London SW1X 8QB.

Denmark

SEVERAL thousand women from across the globe will be attending a conference in Copenhagen next month. It is to be held on 14-24 July, at the same time as a women's conference organised by the United Nations on the theme of 'Equality, Development and Peace'.

While the latter is exclusively for government representatives — a follow up to a similar event held in Mexico City five years ago — the alternative conference is open to all who wish to attend. Some 80 workshops are planned.

The UN is providing financial support for this conference. While no resolutions will be permitted, contacts will certainly be established, and international campaigns such as those for abortion rights, contraception, and against forced sterilisation can play a valuable role.

Spain

THE Spanish parliament last week began debating a bill to legalise divorce.

Spain is the only country in Western Europe, apart from the South of Ireland, where divorce is still banned. The prohibition was introduced in 1939 after the fascists' victory in the Spanish Civil War.

Opinion polls have shown that a vast majority are in favour of the legalisation, but right-wing parties and the Catholic Church are campaigning against the reform.

Intercontinental Press/Inprecor

The latest issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* carries the United Secretariat statement on South Korea. There are also articles on Iran and on developments in several Central American countries. Finally, a major article by Les Evans on China is featured.

Single issues 40p including postage. Subscription rates: £6 for 24 issues. Orders and cheques/postal orders to Intercontinental Press, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Teachers' leader shot in El Salvador

From Sara Ritcher, San Salvador

THE first time I saw Hector Ramón Guardado, the afternoon was drying the life force that flowed freely from his body. He had been vilely assassinated.

It was not until some hours later, with a call from a teacher friend, that I began to know something of this person who first appeared as corpse.

Hector Guardado was a founding member of the national teachers' union, ANDES-21 de Junio, and held various union positions since 1974.

Last year he was elected to the executive and as secretary of grievances. In this capacity, Hector was responsible for personally attending to labour conflicts and violations of the rights of his 'companero' teachers.

He spent much of his time at the Ministry of Education fighting against injustices.

On 8 May, after 13 years in the classroom, Hector lay in state at a secondary school. His forced silence is testimony to the conditions in present-day El Salvador, where teachers are a persecuted species.

At this moment there are more than two hundred teachers throughout the country who cannot go to their classes — and many to their homes — under threat of death by government forces.

Some country schools have been closed for lack of teachers. Last year 37 teachers were killed by rightists and this year the number has already reached 39.

In a country of 60 per cent illiteracy, teacher dedication is very high. Three thousand have continued to teach for five months without receiving their salary.

Despite these tremendous pressures, despite being one of the marked teachers who could no longer safely continue going to class, and despite having two young sons and a

wife who shares his commitment, Hector continued to dedicate himself to the rights of the teachers and all working people in this suffering Central American country.

Hector's body was surrounded by hundreds of teachers, secondary school students, friends, and members of his family. As I sat and talked to those who came to give their departing tribute, the figure of a truly human person arose before me.

Hector Ramón Guardado was a persecuted teacher, one of many who refuse to seek the security of silence. He sought justice although little was to be found. For this he has won the admiration and love of all who knew him or of him.

For his years of untiring struggle and his role in the national work stoppage by teachers in May to end the repression, he has become one of the too many martyrs of the Salvadoran labour movement.

Messages of support from teacher unions and labour organisations should be sent to: ANDES, Consejo Ejecutivo, 4a Calle Osiente, 620, San Salvador, El Salvador, C.A.

The struggle in El Salvador

Speaker: Rafael Menjiver, former rector of San Salvador University and representative of the Democratic Revolutionary Front.

Thursday, 19 June, 7pm
 Friends Meeting House, Euston Rd, London NW1

LETTERS

SCEVENTS

ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside CBAS — 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 643-0669.

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

BRENT: SC supporters sell every Sat Morning at Kilburn Square.

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 Cheltenham 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 available from Nelsons Newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.

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

LAMBETH: SC now available at kiosks 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).

TESSIDE: SC sales: at Newsfree shops in Cheltenham Centre and on Linsbury Rd, Middlesbrough, and at Greens Bookstall, upstairs in Spencer Mkt, Stockton High St.

TOWER HAMLETS: SC supporters sell papers every Friday 3-4pm Watney Mkt, Sat 11-12.30pm Whitechapel tube, Sunday 10.30-12.00 Brick Lane.

LIVERPOOL: SC public meeting Thurs 26 June 7.30pm, 'Miami' — Bristol: The Black Revolt. Speaker: Paul Adams, Revolution Youth national cmtee. Venue: 15a Richmond St (off Williamson Square).

WOLVERHAMPTON: SC supporters meeting 30 June 8pm, 'Benn's Road to Socialism'. Speaker: Martin Tolman. Venue: Coach and Horses, Cannock Road.

NEWCASTLE: Socialism in the 80s public meeting 25 June 7.30pm. Speaker: Valerie Coultas. Venue: the Post Office Inn, Newcastle.

Disarm West and East

'HISTORY poses this question (for or against the re-absorption of anti-capitalist states back into capitalism) defensively', thunders Noel Hibbert (5 June). Martin Shaw is but a 'latter day William Morris or Proudhon' fulminating 'against oppression, tyranny, and nuclear proliferation the world over'.

Some of us would take such comparisons with pride, but Noel is clearly not being complimentary and his argument — because the Soviet Union is not imperialist, therefore it cannot be aggressive, and so has the right to the hydrogen bomb — has to be countered:

1. Unilateral disarmament campaigns fail because in each country (or bloc) 'going it alone' in a hostile world seems impossible and utopian. Any new campaign must be international and involve both main power blocs.

2. The economic structure of the two blocs is not the only factor in assessing their capacity for aggression. The Cuban and Soviet workers' states are trying to smash Eritrea; the Soviet Union has invaded Afghanistan; China, Vietnam, and Kampuchea have invaded each other.

3. A defensive mentality does not mean defensive weaponry. The Warsaw Pact leaders are cautious men with a siege mentality but they have risked aggression — and thus world war — time and again (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan).

4. If, say, there is a crisis in Yugoslavia and troops mass on the borders, hot lines buzz, and fingers hover on buttons, then no one can guarantee that there won't be a pre-emptive Soviet strike.

5. As we live in Britain our first duty is to oppose imperialism, Olympic boycotts, and Cruise missiles. But this can only be done effectively if we are not compromised by complicity with the brutality of the Warsaw Pact.

We have civil rights and can begin a unilateralist campaign in this country. But we cannot finish it here. Only resistance in the East will finally break the logjam of the power structure and show working people here that there is not one monolithic 'Russia' just dying to blow us all up.

Difficult as it is, we have to organise resistance internationally or fail. I know a certain sort of Trotskyist thinks that this is unthinkable because if the Soviet Union disarmed her nuclear weapons the evil Americans would blow up the world.

We can leave these people to their fantasy-conspiracy dreams of history and to supporting bigger and better Soviet bombs.

Their view of history as military efficiency not political struggle leads them slap-bang into the very logic of deterrence which it is our duty to expose as the greatest lie of all time.

CHRIS ROSEBLADE,
Wolverhampton

Not all doctors are Thatcher's friends

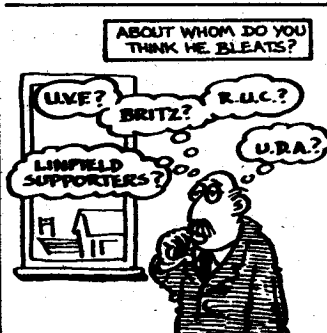
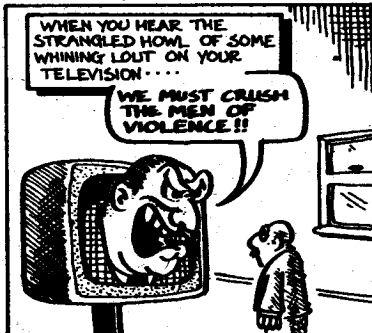
YOUR analysis of the recent doctor's pay settlement (5 May) was restricted to a front-page denunciation of the 'huge wage increases' for 'Thatcher's friends' including 'well-healed (sic) doctors'.

This analysis is woefully inadequate, if not reactionary and dangerous.

To begin with, a clear majority of doctors are neither well-paid nor well-healed. Junior doctors, for example, are almost invariably contracted to work some 80 hours a week — 40 hours of 'necessary' overtime — and in practice frequently work 100 plus hours a week.

Overtime, it should be noted, is paid at one-third normal rate, not time and a third. Their hourly rate is therefore less than many nurses and ancillary workers. Also these and other doctors are 'on call' for many nights which greatly restricts personal life.

All this occurs in a situation of demoralisation caused by staff



shortages, run-down of facilities, and so on.

Undoubtedly many doctors, especially those at the top, identify totally with the ruling class. But it is not Socialist Challenge's job to drive all doctors into the reactionary camp; it should be trying to win sections of them to side with the working class.

We should support their demands for higher salaries, fewer hours, and proper overtime rates, and in doing so try to overcome the division between doctors on the one hand and nurses and ancillary workers on the other, which the bureaucracy is fostering.

Otherwise we can expect no support from doctors for the pay claims of the nurses and ancillary workers. We should say: Good luck to the doctors! All 30 per cent for nurses and all other NHS workers!

Dr A E CLARKE, Oxford
D JOHNSTON, NUPE Oxon
Hospitals

Does Afghanistan still exist?

FOR a number of months Socialist Challenge has remained silent on Afghanistan. It is almost as if the country had ceased to exist.

The last series of articles was an attempt to dismiss the massive popular resentment which was developing in the cities against the Soviet army of occupation as a manifestation of the riff-raff, the flotsam and jetsam that exists in every city.

But since that time there have been further developments. It is now virtually indisputable that:

1. A growing movement among school students saw some of the largest street demonstrations in Kabul since the overthrow of Daud in April 1978.

2. A number of revolts have taken place inside the Afghan army and certain reports emanating from New Delhi suggest that there have been clashes between regular Afghan army soldiers and Soviet troops.

The Afghan army remains an unreconstructed bourgeois army. The links between the soldiers and the villages remain strong and clearly the general mood of the country is beginning to affect the Afghan army.

3. According to Agence France Presse there have been a number of strikes in Kabul against the Soviet presence.

Any notion that what is taking place in Afghanistan today is a civil war fought by two contending social classes and their

respective bodies of armed men (which was always a gross simplification) now becomes somewhat ludicrous.

Unless of course it is argued that the Soviet troops, who represent the interests of a degenerated workers' state and its ruling bureaucracy, are defending the historic interests of the Afghan masses. Such talk throws overboard any notion whatsoever of popular self-determination.

In reality the presence and activities of the Red Army has stimulated a new and massive opposition and made any possibility of recouping some of the real gains of April 1978 extremely remote.

4. The choice is not between dark reaction and social revolution (albeit carried through by the Red Army à la Bulgaria). The choice is either a permanent assimilation of Afghanistan into the USSR or a Soviet troop withdrawal.

The latter should be what socialists support, regardless of the regime that will result. In the long run that will be a better solution for the toilers of Afghanistan in both town and countryside.

It may appear unpalatable to many socialists in the West today, but it will be the people of Afghanistan who will ultimately decide their own fate.

VIC MARKS, Bath

French Communists and May '68

TERRY Shean's letter (29 May) regarding my comments on the French Communist Party (PCF) is a classic example of ill-informed comment based on lack of knowledge of the subject.

He claims that the PCF organised strikes in May '68 in which only a few workers took part. No mention here of the 13 May general strike called by the PCF which had 800,000 marching in Paris alone — a column four miles long and 30 abreast.

On the same day, 60,000 marched in Lyons, 50,000 in Toulouse, Marseilles, and Bordeaux, and 30,000 in Le Mans. The general strike was supported in fact by nine million workers, more than a third of whom were probably regular PCF voters.

Terry hasn't even got his facts right in the case he tries to cite against my argument. He claims that the first strike took place at Sud Aviation, led by Trotskyists. First, it wasn't a strike but an occupation and it took place on 14 May, a fortnight after the CGT (the PCF-led trade union con-

federation) had mobilised 100,000 workers in the first legal demonstration in Paris for 14 years.

In the months before May there had been literally scores of stoppages in the Renault Billancourt factory in Paris.

More disgraceful, however, is Terry's allegation that in May 1945 Tillon, the then Communist Air Minister, ordered a bombing raid on Algeria which resulted in 40,000 deaths. Here he is either completely ignorant of the facts or engaging in deliberate distortion.

Algerian affairs in that period depended solely on the decision of the President of the Provisional Government, and were being run by the Ministry of the Interior and had nothing to do with the Air Ministry.

The PCF ministers were only informed of the event several days after it happened. The *Humanité* statement Terry quotes is a fabrication, as is the allegation that it 'denounced Cohn-Bendit as a German Jew' in 1968.

Only last year the PCF unmasked a government scandal when it revealed that the French Government had appointed as a high official a man guilty of organising the mass arrests of French Jews under the occupa-

tion, and the government was compelled to accept the subsequent resignation of the official.

As for condoning the harassment of immigrants, *Humanité* and *Humanité Dimanche* printed dozens of articles denouncing this in 1979 when I lived in France. I would advise comrade Terry to stick to the facts in future and not waste our time.

DOUGLAS CHALMERS,
Dundee YCL

Backbone or rump?

WITH reference to the comment by Bernard Reagan in last week's Socialist Challenge (12 June) that the International Marxist Group is the backbone of the Socialist Teachers Alliance: speaking as one of the majority of STA members who are not in the IMG, who may be characterised as the brains, hands, feet, or just plain arse-holes of the STA, I would remind him that without us the STA would be a very tiny rump.

JOHN BANGS, STA
executive member, London

IMG 1980 CADRE SCHOOL

AN exciting programme of debate, relaxation, and a genuine battle of ideas is lined up for the summer school of the International Marxist Group from 12-18 July, 1980. Send in your money now to receive a full programme of events, details of venue, plus reading lists. Attendance at the school is open to members and sympathisers of the IMG, Revolution Youth and the 4th International.

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

..... (Town)

Name/Address

I enclose a cheque/PO for towards the £47.50 cost of the school. Cheques payable to 'The Week Society'.

LSA steps back from unity

THE League for Socialist Action is a small Trotskyist organisation with members in London and the Midlands. The International Marxist Group and the LSA have been in discussions for some time, and well over a year ago the LSA voted to fuse its forces with those of the IMG. In line with this policy, members of the LSA leadership were given the right to attend IMG leadership meetings. LSA members attended the IMG's national conference in February.

At a recent aggregate, however, the comrades of the LSA took a step backwards from this perspective of fusion. While agreeing to fuse its forces with those of the IMG 'at some future stage', and re-affirming its position of political solidarity with the Fourth International, it was decided that fusion with the IMG was impossible in the short term, because of tactical differences.

Essentially, the comrades of the LSA disagreed with the positions adopted by the IMG conference on revolutionary unity and on the orientation to the Labour Party.

The IMG considers that the decision of the LSA not to immediately fuse with the IMG reveals a fundamental misunderstanding by the comrades on the programmatic basis of

splits and fusions. If the LSA refuses fusion today because of 'tactical' disagreements, then logically it can only be waiting for tactical agreement.

The basis of party unity, however, is not this or that tactic, but the fundamental programme of socialist revolution — expressed in the programme of the Fourth International. If the LSA does, as it says, stand in political solidarity with the Fourth International, then it should fuse with the FI and build it.

There is a more serious side to the position of the LSA. Its position logically leads to a justification of splits in the event of tactical disagreement; with this irresponsible position it is impossible to build a party, since tactical disagreements are inevitable in anything but a dead-end bureaucratic sect.

While the IMG considers that the position adopted by the LSA aggregate is irresponsible and only perpetuates the splitting of the Trotskyist movement into '57 varieties' which have no fundamental programmatic difference, the IMG will continue its policy of joint work and discussions with the LSA. The door remains open for the LSA to put its programme of solidarity with the FI into practice — by fusing its forces with those of the Fourth International in Britain and jointly building the revolutionary party.

The Tin Drum: beating through the history of Danzig

By Jude Woodward

OSKAR, hero of Gunther Grass's novel *The Tin Drum*, is a strange commentator on human history. On his third birthday he achieves his only ambition, to possess a tin drum, and henceforth decides to stop growing.

This blond, blue-eyed mannikin, armed with red and white tin drum and a piercing scream that shatters glass, is the narrator of twenty years of the history of Danzig.

Danzig, now named Gdansk and officially part of Poland, was made a free state after the First World War. Before the Second World War the rise of Nazism posed the question of the Baltic port becoming part of Germany and a referendum of the people of Danzig resulted in its annexation by Germany. On Friday 1 September 1939, the Nazi invasion of Poland began and was echoed in outright repressive measures against the Danzig Poles.

In this context Oskar observes the pain, confusion and degradation of his own immediate family and the people of Danzig as a whole.

Through Oskar's eyes we see each in-

dividual as a grotesque; deformed and distorted by the daily struggle with the material conditions of their lives.

The grocer becomes a Nazi scout leader, and unable to openly express his homosexuality is a ludicrous figure. His buxom, sleazy and frustrated wife takes the diminutive Oskar under her quilt where he discovers the strong smells of female sexuality. Oskar's mother, Agnes, never comes to terms with her prolonged affair with her cousin, and fears her own passionate enjoyment of him. She finally gorges herself to death on fish — eels, tinned sardines, pickled herring.

His grandmother, the quintessence of the old folk, the history of Danzig, conceived Agnes while hiding a runaway convict under her skirts on the edge of a potato field. The Jewish shopkeeper, the Nazis, the children of the streets, Oskar's father, all come and go in weird parade against the background of salty, poverty-stricken Danzig.

When Schlöndorff's film of *The Tin Drum* opened in London last month it was hard to believe that this circus of a book could be turned into anything like convincing cinema. However, since Grass himself had collaborated in making the film, it was clear that it would not

be a total travesty.

The film is long, two and a half hours, but even so the story is hugely compressed, and actually leaves off before the end. But it is true to the spirit of the book.

David Bennent, who plays Oskar, makes the film — he is not quite as pretty as the Oskar of the book but his child's physique and utterly knowing face make the casting a complete success. The film is in German, with subtitles, but nonetheless Oskar's voice, its tone and pensiveness, is a positive element of the film.

Of course it is not just that the story is telescoped, other elements of the book are also lost in the film.

The Tin Drum is one of the funniest books I have ever read — the kind where you break into uncontrollable giggles — but the film only raises the occasional laugh.

The book's strong element of mystery and magic — Oskar as a figure of semi-supernatural power — is unsuited to the realism of the film. Even so, when Oskar stands on Danzig cathedral tower, his eyes casting majestically to and fro, we know he is capable of anything.

Similarly the book's fulsome elaboration of the particular history of Danzig — in dialogue, narrative and so on — in the film is reduced to

excellent aerial shots of the city panning over its varied architecture.

All this is forgivable because the fundamental theme of the novel is retained. *The Tin Drum* teaches us that human beings, however degraded by the conditions they have to grapple with, are not in themselves degraded. The system is degraded, and its system of relationships, but each character has human warmth.

Grass demonstrates implicitly in his book that only the materialist can be a true humanist.

Oskar is an amoral onlooker at life, so he is a real grotesque. The little people of Danzig, who fight and struggle, lie and cheat, love and hate, and who are forced into repellent moulds by everyday reality, are nonetheless real people. It is the Nazi grocer who sums this up when he lovingly caresses a potato — 'They are forced into so many ugly shapes by the clods of the earth but still I find them pure and innocent.'

It is this innocence which belongs to the people of Danzig, not to Oskar the knowing child. It is this innocence which allows them to rush to greet Hitler — 'They thought they had found Santa Claus, but it was the gasman'.

And it is this innocence that they have to surmount if the history of Danzig is not to endlessly repeat itself in each individual life.

RUDE BOY

The class of '78

By John Glover

RUDE BOY cannot be seen as a movie in any conventional sense; the plot, such as it is, is a bit thin, incidents are disconnected and incoherent and the central character is, to be frank, a boring jerk.

The film comes across as a sort of retrospective for the class of '78. This was the year of the Anti Nazi League, the Clash and punk rock. The year when, through the vagaries of fashion, force of circumstances, and the hard work of the activist left, a lot of people found themselves on the fringes of politics.

Rude Boy opens with footage of a National Front rally. Throughout the film there are clips of Anti-Nazi mobilisations, police harassment, the Clash getting busted, and the like — incidents that have little directly to do with the central character, Ray Grange.

It is Ray's story which provides the only peg on which to hang these events, and the core of the film traces his progress, such as it is, from working in a porn bookshop, through his failure as a roadie with the Clash, to his ultimate degeneration into a drunken hanger-on.

Ray is a tall, gangling Clash fan, with round shoulders and a habit of looking at his boots as he walks along, as though searching the pavement for fag-ends. He wears the regulation black leather jacket, khaki fatigues, and a hang-dog expression, a can of lager permanently in his right hand.

He is the ultimate loser, always pissed and getting pissed at everyone. At one point he is holding the punch-bag while Topper Headon (star of the Clash) works out on it. For no apparent reason — although it is

hard to blame him — Headon stops hitting the bag and sets about Ray instead.

His situation isn't helped any by the fact that besides these disabilities Ray is not very bright and never very sober.

In a hotel room somewhere on tour, Joe Strummer, the Clash's singer, is washing a T-shirt in a sink. Ray asks what message it carries. *Brigate Rosse* replies Joe, holding it up and showing him the RAF (Red Army Fraction) symbol on the chest. 'What's that?', demands Ray. 'It's a pizza restaurant', he is informed, and continues to look drunkenly baffled.

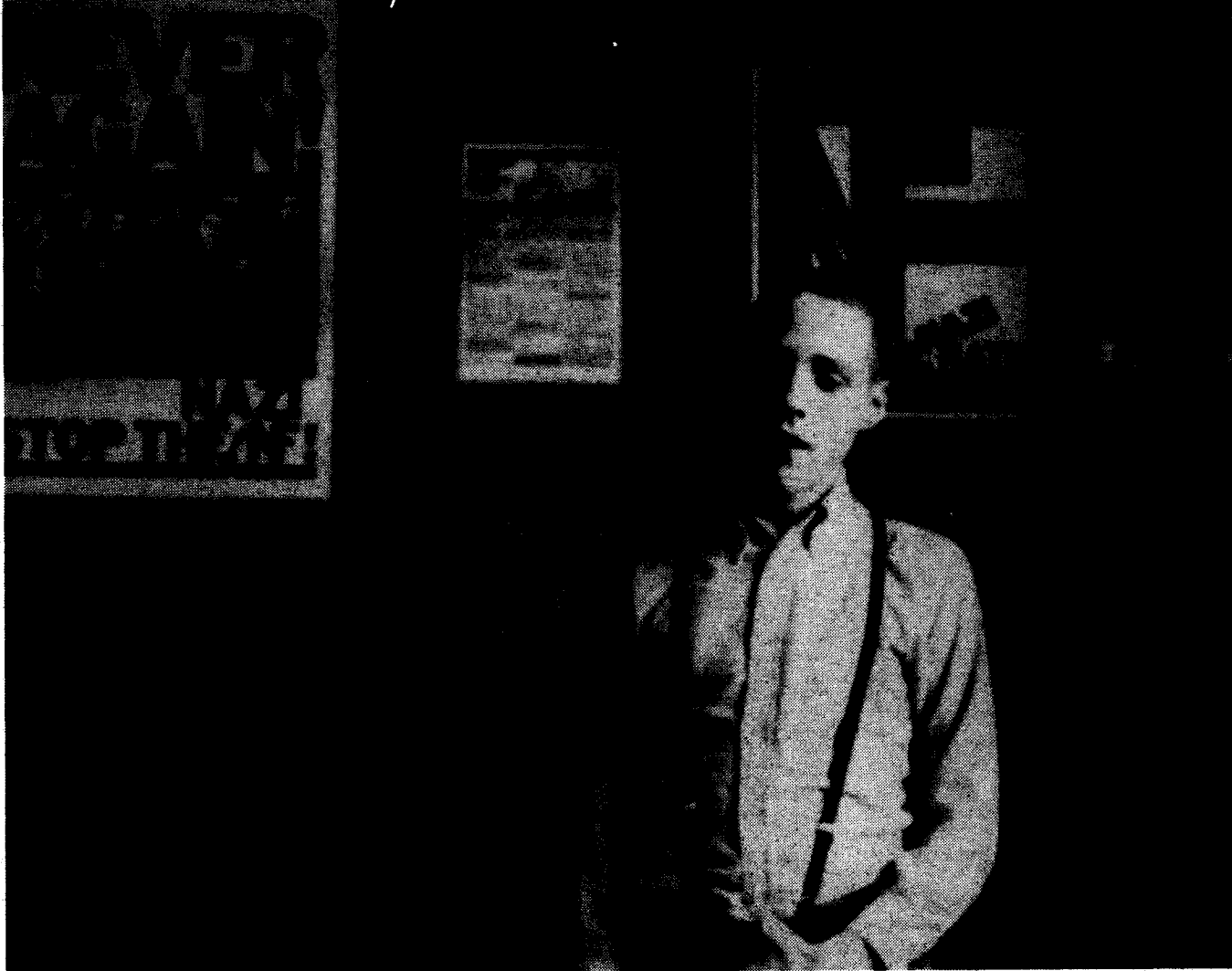
He is also something of a right winger by virtue of the fact that he doesn't like left wingers, whom he identifies totally with the 'fucking Socialist Workers Party', and is suspicious of blacks.

As his alienation from everything increases, Ray moves rightward, eventually becoming offensive to his erstwhile friends. 'We're fucking watching you, mate; we're fucking watching you', Mick Jones tells him.

Rude Boy adopts a documentary approach, never explaining or analysing, merely noting events as they occur. The enormous inarticulateness of its main character contributes to, and emphasises this aspect.

Unfortunately it fails as a documentary through its refusal to elaborate on any theme, and it doesn't have any pretensions to be a 'real movie'. It is simply a visual record of certain events which occurred in 1978, overlong at 130 minutes.

For it is merely what would seem to be a Clash fan who was involved in the ANL in 1978 and who has no convincing excuse. Unfortunately, like myself, you could meet all these qualifications and still fail to enjoy it.



Exit the animals

Belgium 1 England 1, Italy 1 England 0

By Geoff Bell

THERE we were, sitting quietly watching England's footballers play the Belgium footballers in the European Nations' Cup.

It was shaping up to be another tedious game, with England playing typical English football — boring and predictable. Then, suddenly, riots, tear gas and, at last, real action!

After the excitement had died down, with the English supporters well and truly smashed, and the footballers held to an ignominious draw, the big debate started: what was our fate?

When the news came that Margaret Thatcher had condemned the fans the answer seemed obvious: her enemy was our ally — Victory to the victimised English fans! All workers must oppose the brutal Italian police!

Then, Thatcher went on to say that the English footballers were, 'a very good team'. That showed she knew nothing about football (prime ministers never do), so perhaps whatever she said about the events of that afternoon should be ignored.

It was best to suspend judgement on the whole issue until the next encounter — England versus Italy on Sunday.

As it turned out the replay between the English fans and the Italian cops proved a damp squib. The Italian fans tried their best to get things going by chanting 'animals, animals' at the English, but to no effect. The use of the word 'animals' was a nice touch: this was the very first English manager of Italian descent to describe the Argentine footballers way back in 1966.

The English players seemed as bewildered as their fans. The Italians outplayed them in every department of the game. The 1-0

score was so close only because the Italians missed at least three or four good chances.

That was not how the English commentators and the experts back in the studio saw it. The Italians had played dirty they insisted; the good clean English gentlemen had been felled by the kicking foreigners.

Even with only the restricted vision of a television camera to go by it was obvious that this was a load of rubbish. Sure the Italians played rough, but so too did the English. The English captain Kevin Keegan was kicking and pushing all round him; Butch Wilkins performed a dirty trick or two; the Italian goal came after Phil Neal's vicious tackle missed as an Italian lay motionless on the ground and the Italian was allowed to run off.

After the game the English fans stayed behind and sang 'Rule Britannia, Britannia' 'rules the waves'. That decided what our 'line' should be. How was it possi-

ble to have any sympathy for this drunken, union jack-waving chauvinistic rabble?

So here it is. English chauvinism is a horrible and dangerous sentiment. It is fanned by the Thatchers who, whether they applaud the SAS murderers of the Embassy siege as English heroes, or, less harmfully, insist that 'our' team is 'very good', raise expectations which the more lumpen elements in English society swallow up. They then go to occasions like football matches, expecting the English to win, because they are English.

When this doesn't happen the reaction is to blame the fans for not supporting their country in the smaller event, ridiculous reasons for English failure. None of them can admit, that, quite simply, the English aren't up to it.

And so England is out of the European Nations' Cup. Exit the animals

Socialist Challenge

Czech dissident imprisoned under inhuman conditions

PETR UHL: THEY'RE OUT TO DESTROY HIM!

By Ed Murphy

PETR Uhl, one of the most respected leaders of the Czechoslovak dissident movement, is today languishing in the Mirov prison. It's clear that the Czech authorities wish to destroy this revolutionary socialist, both physically and mentally.

Although Petr Uhl suffers from chronic bronchitis, he is forced to do heavy labour and is fed on an inadequate diet. He is not permitted to keep any written material, and is allowed only one visit of one hour every six to eight months.

Today a massive campaign is underway to protest against prison conditions endured by civil rights activists in Czechoslovakia, and support is mounting in Britain.

Student

Petr Uhl, who is serving five years, became a revolutionary Marxist during his student days. According to the Czechoslovak government such a development is by no means unusual. After all, large numbers of students join the Communist Party and 'Marxist Leninist' youth organisations.

What distinguished Uhl, however, was not that he recited 'correct' views in order to pass his course, but that he took Marxism seriously as a method of analysis, of capitalist society as well as of 'real' socialism.

Between 1965 and 1968, Uhl paid a number of visits to France where he came into contact with the Fourth International. He abandoned his earlier view that bureaucratic society could be reformed, realising that only revolutionary action could topple Stalinism.

Following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, Uhl helped to organise the Movement of Revolutionary Youth and wrote his programme, the Manifesto of the Revolutionary Socialist Party.

Release

Arrested in 1969, Uhl spent nearly four years in the prisons of 'normalised' Czechoslovakia. Contrary to the hopes of the bureaucrats, however, prisons didn't break him. Shortly after his release, with 29 other former political prisoners, he signed an open letter to the Union of Czechoslovak Lawyers denouncing that body's condemnation of the Chilean junta as hypocritical.

In the words of the letter: '...we are linked with progressive Chileans through common ideals, common goals, and frequently through a common fate. However, we deny the right to express such solidarity to you gentlemen of the Union of Czechoslovak Lawyers for we are not aware of a single instance in which your union would have come forth in defence of human rights, civil liberties, or adherence to legalities in your own country, Czechoslovakia.'

This letter is reproduced in an excellent new Socialist Challenge pamphlet, *Petr Uhl and the jailed Chartists in Czechoslovakia*.



pamphlet, *Petr Uhl and the jailed Chartists in Czechoslovakia*.

Unlike many people on the Western left, Uhl's own experiences as well as his grasp of Marxism have taught him the importance of the struggle for democratic rights.

In his 'Appeal to the Western Revolutionary Left', which is also reproduced in the *Socialist Challenge*

pamphlet, he wrote: 'But it is a common belief of all of those Marxists and revolutionary socialists that already the first revolutionary phase of the communist development must bring to every member of society, more rights and freedoms than can be assured by even the best bourgeois democracy.'

Uhl has consistently refused to

accept both the Stalinist lie that a superior form of democracy exists in Eastern Europe, and the argument of Stalin's apologists that in the face of a hostile imperialist world, repression

is necessary, albeit unfortunate. He was a founding member of Charter 77 and the Committee for the Defence of Unjustly Prosecuted Persons.

In October 1979, Uhl was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. As he has already completed one sentence, he is considered a recidivist and has been categorised as a strict regime prisoner.

According to Czechoslovak laws, 'All persons deprived of personal freedom shall be treated in a humane manner and with respect for the dignity of the human being.' In fact, the treatment of Uhl in prison shows this law, like all other paragraphs of the Czechoslovak legal code, to be a cynical mockery of the working people of that country.

It should be a matter of outrage to every socialist that these things are being done at all. The fact that the perpetrators of such crimes call themselves communists only adds insult to injury.

Socialist Challenge appeals to all its readers to support the Defence Committee's campaign. Send labour movement protests against the barbaric crimes committed against Petr Uhl and his comrades to the Czechoslovak Embassy, 25 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8.

Socialist Challenge readers are also urged to support the publication of a book of Uhl's writings. Five hundred pounds is urgently needed. Please send postal orders/cheques payable to 'Alternatives in Eastern Europe', PO Box 50, London N1. Any individual/organisation which donates £20 or more will be mentioned in the book.

'Petr Uhl and the jailed Chartists in Czechoslovakia'
Excellent new campaigning pamphlet, 40p plus 12p (p&p)
From SC Pamphlets, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.
Bulk order rates on request.

TUC lobby for jobs

JACK Collins, president of the Kent area of the National Union of Mineworkers, has added his name to an appeal for a mass lobby of this year's TUC against unemployment. British Oxygen workers at the Hackney depot also recently endorsed the appeal.

Put it forward in your labour movement organisation, and inform Socialist Challenge! This is the text of the appeal:

'This Tory government is intent on destroying workers' standards of living and their organisations, the trade unions. Their main weapon is the creation of mass unemployment in order to increase profits through squeezing more production out of a reduced workforce; in order to "persuade" workers to take cuts in pay rather than fight for a decent standard of living; in order to weaken and smash union organisation by "disciplining" those who want to fight back with threats of the dole.

'The whole labour movement, the unions and the Labour Party, must unite against this threat and take united action now.

'As a first step in such a campaign this branch/ward agrees to sponsor a call for a mass lobby of this year's TUC Congress in Brighton around these demands: 'No to Unemployment — For a 35 Hour Week Now.' 'Fight to Kick Out the Tories.'

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