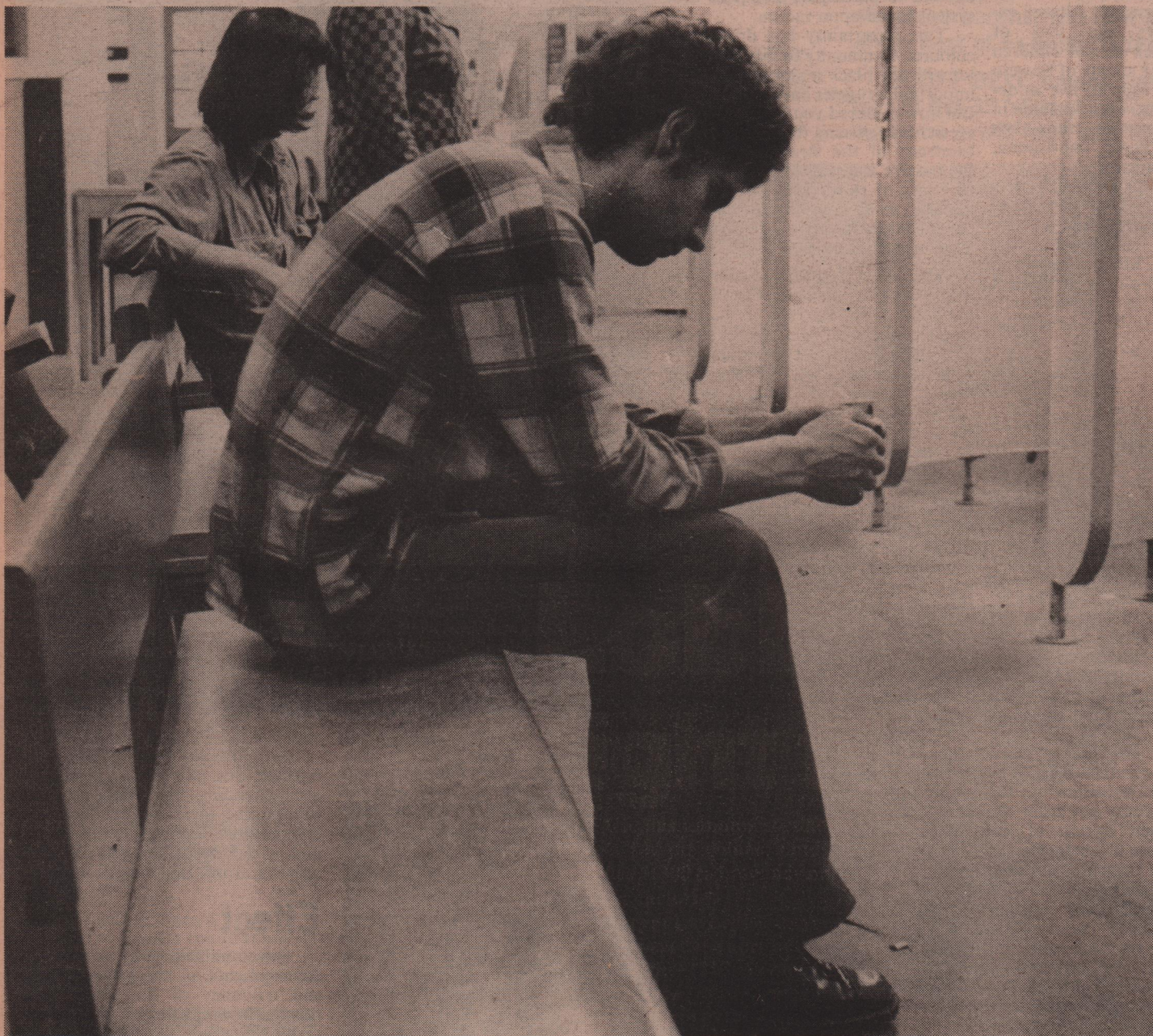


Socialist Challenge

1,600,000 unemployed

TORY JOBS HOLOCAUST



TUESDAY's announcement that 1,600,000 people are out of work is just the visible tip of a jobs catastrophe hitting working people in Britain.

The 1.6m figure conceals the fact that hundreds of thousands of women and others are not registered for work — the real figure is certainly around 2 million.

Tory spokespeople say that the figures are due to the new school leavers — but that is only part of the story. Every day brings news of more redundancies — almost every part of the country is being hit.

* At Fords 2,300 jobs are to go, including 1,300 at

Dagenham and 438 at Swansea. In addition there will be 700 fewer jobs than planned at the new Bridgend plant.

* 30,000 jobs have been lost since the beginning of the year in the West Midlands region. Thousands of redundancies are proposed at the

Lucas car components plants in Birmingham and Coventry.

* 6,500 jobs are under threat in the South Wales' pits, in addition to the 11,000 jobs about to be lost in the Llanwern and Port Talbot steel plants.

* In the North West there are now 296,000 unemployed with only 14,374 vacancies. In Warrington, where thousands of steel redundancies are threatened, there are 45,000 unemployed against a paltry 1,500 vacancies.

The response of the TUC and Labour leaderships to this appalling situation has been pathetic. Despite protest demonstrations, no serious fight against unemployment

is being waged.

Colin Herd, ISTE convenor Warrington, told Socialist Challenge: 'Working people are being caught in the holocaust of Tory policies. But Murray and the TUC leadership are just twiddling their thumbs — the only sign of a fightback is coming from the rank and file.'

'What we need is for our national leaders to organise a fight. That's why I'm supporting the Lobby for Jobs at the TUC.'

The catastrophe of unemployment is not inevitable. A sustained fight for the 35-hour week and work sharing with no loss of pay

could point the way to a real struggle against unemployment. But despite pious resolutions, no action has been forthcoming from the trade union leaders.

Two actions in the autumn will be spearheading the fight for jobs. First, the Right to Work Campaign is organising a march from South Wales to the Tory party conference.

But more important is the fight inside the labour movement. That's why Socialist Challenge is calling on every reader to actively build the lobby for jobs at the TUC in September, around the demands: 'For a 35-hour week' and 'Fight now to kick the Tories out'.

Apartheid murderers on the rampage

WHILE Britain's Rugby Union 'Lions' were voting unanimously to continue their tour of South Africa, South African riot police were out in the black townships of Cape Town killing black and 'coloured' (mixed-race) demonstrators.

The demonstrators took to the streets to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the black uprising in Soweto, in which thousands died at the hands of South African security forces.

Ceremonies

The demonstrations started on 15 June when 400 blacks turned up at a church in Soweto, despite a government ban on commemoration ceremonies. Riot police moved in to attack the demonstrators, using clubs, tear gas, and their own contribution to anti-riot technology, the 'sneeze machine' which pours out a mixture of tear gas and sneezing powder.

At the same time a widespread strike against the apartheid regime was beginning among black workers both in Soweto and the Cape.

Photographers

On 16 June the riot police announced that reporters and photographers were being banned from the black townships. The excuse given was that the presence of cameras 'provoked' the blacks in these areas, and that reporters deliberately started riots.

The real reason for the banning of reporters was clearly shown by the events of 17 June — the riot police were sent back to the townships with orders to kill. Up to 60 blacks were shot dead and more than 200 wounded. The next day an unknown number of blacks were killed.

The killings in the townships followed hard on the heels of the latest South African incursion into Angola. The raid was aimed at refugees from Namibia and guerilla fighters of SWAPO, the South West Africa People's Organisation, which is spearheading the freedom struggle of the Namibian people. Hundreds of people were killed in the South African attack.

Domination

The events in Angola and the black townships show that the apartheid machine of white domination keeps itself in power through violence and the forced subjection of the blacks. But if that were the sole basis of white supremacy the South African *reich* wouldn't last long. It survives above all because of the tacit economic and military support of the West, and above all Britain.

The present rugby tour by the British Lions is just symbolic. The blood of murdered South African blacks and Namibians is also on the hands of those who pour investments into South Africa's cheap labour/high profit economy.

Pages 2 and 3 — The bloodsuckers who exploit South Africa's blacks

LOBBY THE TUC FOR JOBS

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.

Name
Address
Tel no

INTERNATIONAL

South Africa: the storms that are to come

By Roy Alexander

ONCE again the police of the racist South African state are killing unarmed demonstrators. The latest toll is 40 dead and 200 wounded. Among the 'hooligans' and 'criminal elements', as the South African police contemptuously call those they gun down, are a nine-year-old girl and an eleven-year-old mentally-retarded boy.

This new round of bloodshed is not hard to understand. Almost exactly four years ago tens of thousands of black school children came out on to the streets of Soweto to fight for their right to live as decent a life as any white person in South Africa. For that crime they were beaten, murdered, imprisoned, and driven into exile.

For four years the political leaders of 'white' South Africa have been discussing, and rediscussing, what to do about black opposition to the apartheid system. Millions of words have been poured out by government commissions, in politician's speeches, and in newspaper editorials.

Reforms

But almost nothing has changed. A few cosmetic reforms now allow black people to stand in the same queues as whites and sit on the same park benches. But they remain classed as 'foreigners' in the land of their birth. They remain in poverty in a country whose wealth they produce. A small white minority continues to benefit from their suffering. They remain daily at the mercy of a heartless machine of racist employers, bureaucrats, and policemen who can — and do — separate husbands and wives, children and parents, in order to preserve the logic of the apartheid system.

But there are some new developments in South Africa. The current wave of resistance to the government has come not from the most downtrodden section of the population — those officially classed as 'black' — but from the so-called 'coloured' community.

This group is technically made up of all those of 'mixed' racial origin, but in fact most are descendants of the Khoi people, the original inhabitants of western South Africa whose communities were destroyed in a genocidal holocaust launched by the first white settlers from the 17th century onwards.

Privileges

Throughout South African history the whites have always tried to give the 'coloureds' small privileges over the main black population, in order to use them as a source of support for white rule. Thus for many years they (along with the small Asian community) were the main source of clerical, professional, and skilled workers used to carry out those jobs which the whites could not themselves do.

Apartheid

The apartheid system has never really been able to fit the 'coloureds' into its grand design for South Africa, however. According to this the bulk of the land — and the cities in particular — belongs to the whites and the blacks are only entitled to a few backward rural areas as

'homelands'.

But the coloureds have been living in the cities for as long as the whites, have no connection with the countryside, and there is no territory which even by the most roundabout and twisted logic could be said to be their 'home'.

Participate

At the same time they are obviously not white and cannot be allowed to participate as equals in a system based upon racism.

This uncertainty has driven the coloured community to throw in their lot with the black majority whenever important struggles have taken place. But now coloured youth and students are actually placing themselves in the forefront of the struggle, rejecting the passive and wait-and-see attitude of many of their elders. They have knocked away any illusion that they could be transformed into a prop of a 'new model' apartheid.

The other significant development has been the growing role of black workers. In 1976 it was the students of Soweto who led the struggle. The workers — their parents — while sympathetic were involved in a mainly passive way, supporting the 'stay-at-homes' (general strikes) called for by the student leaders.

The present upheavals in South Africa include a big wave of strikes in the same region as the demonstrations, with workers in sixteen factories in the industrial town of Port Elizabeth (which includes the main Ford factory) and in the neighbouring town of Uitenhage fighting for their own demands.

There are over 2.5m black workers in the cities of South Africa today, and another 750,000 'coloureds'. While the 'coloureds' are allowed to join unions (and there are 250,000 of them in trade union organisations) the law has until recently hindered black workers' organisations being formed. Despite this fact some 85,000 black workers joined 'unofficial' unions and mili-

tant action forced many employers to negotiate with them.

In the face of this the South African state is in the process of granting trade union rights to black workers, but with all sorts of strings

attached to limit their fighting ability.

By and large black workers have rejected this poisoned offering and are extending their organisations beyond the factories and into their communities, fighting for civil rights and social needs as well as better wages and working conditions.

Effect

The combined effect of these two developments — the growing unity and militancy of the entire black population, rejecting all attempts to divide them, and the central part being played by the powerful black working class — is creating in South Africa today the most dangerous situation the racist state has faced in its history.

Assistance

In the storms that are to come South Africa is counting upon the sort of international assistance it has always had from foreign business and their governments. The biggest backer has always been Britain, with over 700 British companies investing in South Africa.

Many of the workers on strike in South Africa today work for British firms or multinationals with an important base in Britain. British works and their organisations should be fighting for the international isolation of the South African racists; but they should also be building links with black workers' organisations in South Africa to provide them with the sort of help that they so desperately need.



IF THERE is a typical blood-sucker of the South African blacks it is a certain John Ferguson, chairperson of the Associated Engineering Group, one of the infamous 33 companies.

Under Ferguson's leadership Associated Engineering have supported all the 'right' causes. Last year they donated £10,000 to the Tory Party, £1,400 to the extreme right wing Economic League, and £1,000 to the anti-trade union Aims of Industry.

Ferguson's political views were summed up when he wrote in the company's 1979 annual report: 'As we have seen, the new government is pursuing very different policies from those previously implemented. I believe there can be little doubt that there was need for change. In particular I welcome the reduction in direct taxation.'

This 'welcome' is hardly surprising since last year Ferguson paid himself a £20,000 salary — a figure worth a good deal more in real terms thanks to Thatcher's tax cuts.

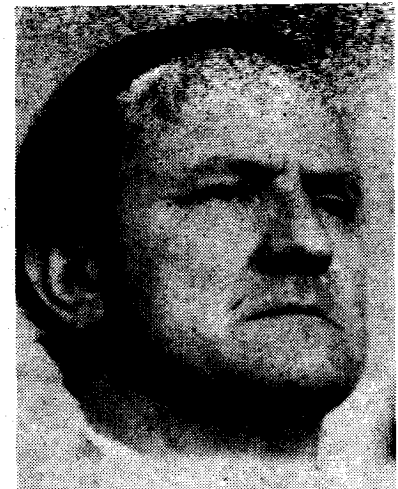
In the annual report Ferguson also boasted that the 'prospects of the Group in South Africa are very encouraging'.

Strength

A similar claim was made by Sir John Boden, chairperson of Metal Closures, another of the 33. In that company's 1979 annual report Boden said: 'Our South African group continues to go from strength to strength.'

Boden is another supporter of the Tories. He has written: 'The government policies, if they are to be really effective, require more than one term of office. Hopefully they will implement the country's mandate to abolish secondary picketing and, indeed tertiary picketing, and to legislate for secret ballots in strike issues.'

It's not just supporters of the Tories who are involved in the starvation companies — there's also a number of leading members of the



EARL JELlicoe, Tate & Lyle Tory Party. There's the example of Earl Jellicoe, former Tory leader of the House of Lords and chairperson



LORD ALDINGTON, GEC of Tate & Lyle; Lord Toby Aldington, deputy chairperson of GEC, a Tory Minister at the Board of Trade from 1954-7, and a deputy chairperson of the Conservative Party from 1959-63; and Earl Cadogan, a director at Eagle Star Insurance and a former Tory mayor of Chelsea.

British bosses behind apartheid The men who get the blood money

THE racist regime in South Africa could not survive without the support of Western capitalism. Hundreds of British companies provide the money to keep apartheid in business. Usually they make huge profits from their investments — thanks to the scandalously low wages paid to black workers.

In particular, 33 British-owned companies have recently been named as paying 'starvation wages' to black workers.

Who are the individuals — the company

directors — who prosper from this exploitation? Again, there are hundreds of them, but the most prominent are found in the 'top drawer' of the British ruling class.

They include members of the Royal Family, the Tory Party, the House of Lords, even the trade union bureaucracy. There are press barons, top civil servants, and a whole host of ex-public school boys.

GEOFF BELL names the leading directors of the 33 'starvation' companies — the men who profit from apartheid.



Another former Tory MP, and now chairperson of GEC goes under the title of Lord Henry George Nelson of Stafford. From 1959 Stafford has been on the civil service selection board which makes sure the right type of people get appointed to 'advise' the government. People like Sir William Gorrell Barnes, a director of another of the 33, Tarmac. Barnes had a long career in the Colonial Office and was personal assistant to Labour Prime Minister Clem Atlee from 1946-8.

Another ex-civil servant involved

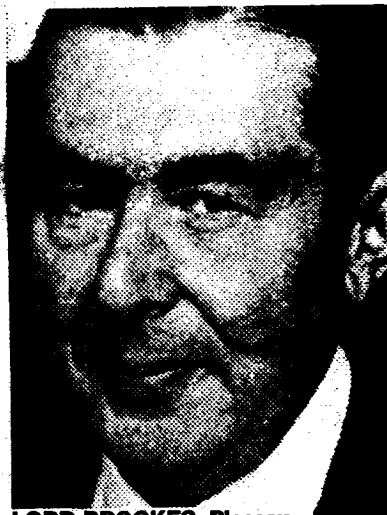
is Sir Denis Wrighthead, head of Economic Relations at the Foreign Office from 1951-3. From there Wrighthead went on to be British chargé d'affaires in Iran immediately after the British-inspired coup brought back the Shah to that country. Wrighthead is a director of the blood-sucking Michael Cott company.

Reed International is also one of these companies and its head is Alex Jarratt, who, as secretary to the National Board of Price and Incomes, told us what we were all allowed to

earn from 1965-68. From there Jarratt proceeded on to the Department of Employment and was the brains behind the unsuccessful plan to restrict trade union rights under the auspices of the Industrial Relations Bill.

The Bill was strongly supported by the bosses' organisation, the Confederation of British Industry, and a number of leading lights in the CBI also profit from the exploitation of black South Africans.

Lord Roots is a director of the starvation firm Rank Hovis McDougall and a member of the CBI



LORD BROOKES, Plessey council since 1973. Yet another Lord, Baron Raymond Percival Brookes is a director of Plessey and was, for seven years, a CBI council member. Considering Plessey pay such low wages in South Africa it is hardly surprising that Brookes was a member of the United Kingdom-South Africa trade association from 1967-69.

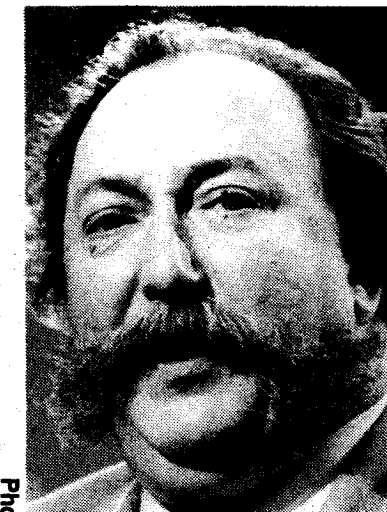
The president of this association from 1977-79 was William Lake. At present he is a member of the council of Aims of Industry and the chairperson of Lindustries, another of the 33.

Sitting alongside Lake on the Lindustries board is Sir Ian Morrow, and should anyone complain to the Press Council about the media's treatment of South Africa they will come up against Morrow, a member of this 'independent' watchdog of the media.

There are a number of those who control the media who also run the starvation companies. Companies like Norwich Union whose chairperson, Desmond Longe, is a director of Anglia TV; BP of which Campbell Fraser, a trustee of the Economist magazine and chairperson of Scottish Television is a director; and Cavenham, whose chairperson Sir James Goldsmith owns Now magazine.

Anyone who thinks there might be a 'conflict of interest' between running these top capitalist concerns and ensuring the 'freedom of the press' might have expected the Royal Commission on the Press from 1974-77 to comment on such a conflict. But on that commission was Sir George Bishop, a director in two of the starvation companies — Rank Hovis McDougall and Barclays Bank.

And don't expect some trade union leaders to do much about what



TOM JACKSON, BP is happening in South Africa. For instance, Tom Jackson of the post office union is a director of BP.

There are many others who as members of the boards of these companies are implicated in the gross exploitation of South African blacks: Angus Ogilvy, member of the Royal Family and director of GEC; John Camm, managing director of Dickinson and Robinson, and a council member of Bristol University; Lord Cydesnuir, otherwise known as Roland John Bilsland Colville, a director of Barclays, and a member of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

These then are some of the people who have prospered from the South African regime, who run the companies which exploit blacks more than most others — the men who last week had the blood of those blacks on their hands.

Democracy and the Labour Party

Trade union chiefs give thumbs down

By Alan Freeman

ON Sunday 15 June in a quiet country house in Hertfordshire, eleven men and two women met to discuss the future of the Labour Party — a party of half a million members.

This 'commission of inquiry' was established last year by the party's NEC to carry out a thorough overhaul of the party's organisation and structure.

The weakness of the party's finance and membership was one question on which it had to report; but the most controversial part of the commission's work concerned questions of inner-party democracy, especially the three issues debated at last year's Labour Party conference: the election of the party leader; mandatory re-selection of MPs; and control of the party's election manifesto.

The commission was made up of leading trade unionists, members of the NEC, and representatives of the parliamentary party.

Teeth

In the teeth of bitter opposition from party leader Jim Callaghan, they recommended that constituency parties should re-select their MPs before each election. This was a victory for the left: a victory for democracy.

It was a victory made possible by the decision of Moss Evans, leader of Britain's largest union, the Transport and General Workers' Union, to vote with the left-wing members of the NEC. Ranged against the proposal were Callaghan and his deputy Michael Foot, and all the other trade union leaders present at the meeting.

This was the last victory for the left. Moss Evans deserted his temporary alliance with the left and two disastrous proposals were voted through.

It was agreed that in future the party leader is to be chosen by a completely new body, an electoral college, which will be overwhelmingly weighted in favour of Labour MPs and the trade unions. This decision was later described by left MP Michael Meacher as 'a coup by those who wish to preserve the status quo'.

Manifesto

The commission then went on to discuss the procedure by which the party manifesto is drawn up. At present, the manifesto is agreed 'jointly' between the Shadow Cabinet and the NEC but there has been strong pressure from the constituency parties for the executive alone to be responsible.

The commission came up with a new proposal, the brain-child of David Basnett of the General and Municipal Workers Union, that the electoral college will be responsible for the manifesto.

At one fell swoop the commission had overturned the decisions of the last party conference on the election of party leader, and deprived the members of what little say they had on election policy.

Despite its name, the commission of inquiry was a re-run

What the commission of inquiry decided

1 Mandatory re-selection of MPs

Constituency Labour Parties should automatically re-discuss and, if necessary, change their parliamentary candidate before each election.

The alternatives:

- a) the present system (no re-selection procedure);
- b) optional re-selection (a selection conference will be held if two-thirds of the general management committee agrees).

Some constituencies (about 55) called for a new selection procedure in which every party member could vote.

2 Election of the leader by an electoral college

This college to consist of 50 per cent MPs, 25 per cent union representatives, 20 per cent constituency representatives, and 5 per cent affiliated bodies.

The alternatives:

- a) the present system (MPs elect the leader);
- b) election by conference;
- c) election by every party member;
- d) a national council of Labour.

A minority proposed an electoral college consisting of every MP, a delegate from each constituency, and around one-third trade union representation.

3 The manifesto to be approved by the electoral college

The alternatives:

- a) no change (manifesto 'jointly' agreed by the NEC and the cabinet);
- b) the NEC to have the final say.

of a time-honoured party ritual: the forging of a bloc between the right wing of the parliamentary party and the trade union bureaucracy. 'Two distinct camps had formed,' explained the 20 June issue of *Tribune*. 'On one side were the union leaders and Messrs Foot and Callaghan. On the other were the six NEC members.'



MICHAEL FOOT

The flouting of democracy was completely cynical. The T&G's evidence to the inquiry called for no change in the system of deciding the manifesto. Evans openly flouted this decision. Of 200-plus constituencies submitting evidence, only four called for no change on the manifesto, and everyone else called for the NEC to decide. Not one called for electoral college control.

The worst case was Jenkins. His union passed by 45,000 to 9,000 a motion endorsing the demands of the 1979 Labour conference and urging its leader to 'use his position on the commission to apply maximum pressure in support' of these demands, recognising the 'strenuous attempts to alter' or otherwise sabotage' them! But it was Jenkins who actually proposed a large part of the alterations.

The union leaders want to keep the peace, to avoid too much 'upset', and to leave

themselves a free hand for wine-and-port discussions with the bosses. They want to keep the right in power to ensure that they don't have to fight the Tories.

Waiting in the wings, the bosses hold the threat of a centre party over their heads to discourage too-radical change, with the very real chance that Duffy could take a section of the unions with him in a split.

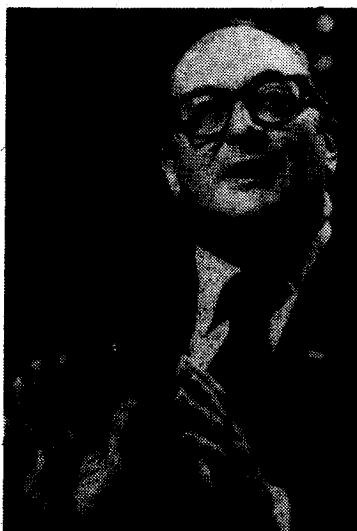
To defeat the right, the trade union leaders must be taken on. The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy has called on the constituencies to bombard the NEC with resolutions urging rejection of the majority commission report in favour of the minority, calling for an electoral college with greater strength for the unions and constituencies, and for the NEC to have the final say on the manifesto.

But to defeat the right the campaign must be taken to the rank and file of the unions. Union branches should be bombarding both their leaders and the NEC with resolutions supporting conference's right to decide. The fight is on to stop the block vote being used yet again to smash democracy in the Labour Party.

Dangerous

It isn't necessary, and in fact it is dangerous, to accept the principle of an electoral college. The danger now is that the Party's attention will be diverted to bickering about the size and shape of this body. But an electoral college in any shape or form is a manoeuvre to take power away from party members and the union rank and file. It has no place in the Labour Party.

The clear demand for the membership's right to decide must be raised: GMC re-selection of MP's, conference to decide on the leader, and the NEC to decide the manifesto in line with conference policy.



CLIVE JENKINS



MOSS EVANS — voted with the left-wing members of the Labour Party executive

The composition of the commission and how it voted

The commission

MPs: Frank Allaun, Norman Atkinson, Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Joan Lester, Jo Richardson, James Callaghan, Michael Foot.

Trade Union leaders: Moss Evans (TGWU), David Basnett (GMWU), Terry Duffy (AUEW), Clive Jenkins (ASTMS), Bill Keys (SOGAT).

The votes

Mandatory reselection

FOR: Allaun, Atkinson, Benn, Evans, Heffer, Lester, Richardson;
AGAINST: Basnett, Callaghan, Duffy, Foot, Jenkins, Keys.

Electoral College with 50 per cent MPs to elect the leader

FOR: Basnett, Callaghan, Duffy, Evans, Foot, Jenkins, Keys;
AGAINST: Allaun, Atkinson, Benn, Heffer, Lester, Richardson.

(The minority proposed instead a 30:30:30 composition for the electoral college)

Electoral college to have the final say on the manifesto

The same voting pattern as on the election of the leader.

	CLPs	TUs	LP Regions	Socialist societies
Re-selection:				
(a) mandatory*	190	7	5	2
(b) optional	14	6	0	1
(c) against change	0	1	0	0
Manifesto:				
(a) for NEC's authority	133	4	3	2
(b) against change	4	4	0	1
Leadership:				
(a) electoral college	72	4	3	1
(b) election by conference	52	0	0	0
(c) every member in the country	19	0	0	0
(d) National Council of Labour	0	1	0	0
(e) no change	13	5	0	0

* 53 CLPs wanted mandatory re-selection through a mass meeting of members and 137 wanted it through general management committees.

Forward to workers' press councils!

By Geoffrey Sheridan, National committee member, Campaign for Press Freedom (personal capacity)

TWO kinds of criticism are levelled against the mainstream press and broadcasting.

The first is that there is an essentially free press in Britain, marred by certain excesses or sensationalism, lack of taste, and occasional lapses of judgement in relation to the causes it takes up and the means by which it pursues them.

This is the approach that lies behind the Press Council, with its 'watchdog' role of accepting complaints from the public and requesting editors to publish its findings when complaints are investigated.

There is another kind of criticism which is far removed from the first.

It is that the mass media both in their form of ownership and editorial control represent capitalist interests; that the span of political views it presents is limited to that of the Tory Party and (in a few cases) the Callaghan wing of the Labour Party.

The coverage of the TUC's Day of Action on 14 May is an obvious case in point. The *Sun's* banner headline on 9 May, 'Rank and file rebel over Day of Shame', followed the next day with 'Flop of the Century!' was typical of the mass media's counter offensive.

As for the Press Council, with its predominantly middle-aged, middle class, white male composition

(to use the description employed by the National Union of Journalists' two past presidents), it is difficult to imagine that body having even the faintest criticism to make of the Day of Action coverage, or the media proprietors, managers, and editors responding with anything but a horse laugh.

It is primarily for such reasons that at the NUJ's annual conference in April delegates voted to immediately disaffiliate the union from the Press Council, and to instruct the executive to come up with proposals for an alternative body or bodies by October.

Jake Ecclestone, the 1979-80 NUJ president, said that the Press Council 'provides the ideological underpinning for our present newspaper and magazine industry'. He pointed to the NUJ's own experience of having its journal rebuked by the council for calling a fascist a fascist, and its members criticised for seeking to make their strikes effective.

As for the public's chances of

obtaining redress against the press... In some recent years the proportion of successful complaints has been 4.06 per cent and 4.51 per cent. In short, the Press Council is not so much a watchdog as a lapdog.

With the withdrawal of the journalist union's representatives from the council, such credibility as it has clung on to can be rapidly removed. What, then, of the alternatives?

It is evident that the mere issuing of reprimands — from whatever alternative source — against a mass media which almost without exception day in and day out presents a Tory-eye view of the world will have nil impact.

Any body set up to examine complaints against the media must also initiate or call for the kind of action which can secure the right of reply to the media's lies, distortion, and bias. Since that bias is overwhelmingly anti-working class and in particular anti-trade union, it follows that an alternative press council has to be located within the workers' movement.

At the national level, the TUC and the Labour Party should be called on to set up a workers' press council. At the local level, every trades council should join with the women's movement, the black community, gay organisations and every other organisation representing victims of the media's bias, to form local workers' press councils.

What kind of action will be

necessary to counter the voice of the press and other media barons?

In the NUJ's code of conduct, to which each member is signatory, there is a clause which states: 'A journalist shall rectify promptly any harmful inaccuracy, ensure that corrections and apologies receive due prominence and afford the right of reply to persons criticised when the issue is of sufficient importance.'

Until now only an NUJ member could bring a complaint under the code against another member, but the last union conference decided that a complaint could be taken up by a member on behalf of anyone else.

While that is a favourable development, and there needs to be extensive publicity in the labour movement about the existence of the 12-point code of conduct, the fact remains that there has never been a successful complaint brought under the code over the issue of bias or the failure to seek the right of reply.

The basic explanation is that few journalists on the national press or broadcasting accept the code or are prepared to countenance any union criticism of their work. The story is a little different on the local press, where a number of journalist chapels have taken action over racist, sexist, and anti-union coverage.

Yet the NUJ is not alone in the newspaper industry in raising the

issue of the right of reply to hostile coverage.

During the discussion on press freedom at the 1979 Trades Union Congress and at various meetings since, officials of the print union NATSOPA have said that those with grievances against the press should bring them to their union, and NATOPA members will take the action necessary to ensure that a reply is published.

That should be taken as an open invitation by workers' press councils at the national and local level.

The process is not, of course, automatic. There will need to be much discussion between labour movement activists and workers in the print and broadcasting industries. In the localities especially, that discussion ought to be urged now.

A useful precedent has been set in Harrow, Middlesex. Sick of the Tory *Harrow Observer's* bias, the local trades council, National Abortion Campaign, women's group, anti-racist committee, Campaign for Homosexual Equality, and other organisations came together in May to pool their experience in relation to the local newspaper and to compile a dossier on its methods of dealing with news.

When that is prepared they will approach the NUJ chapel on the *Harrow Observer* for discussions. By maintaining its monitoring and taking action to counter press

abuse, the group could achieve a thousand-times more than the Press Council has ever done.

At national level, a TUC-Labour Party press council could also carry out such monitoring, expose the nature of media bias, initiate and suggest action to counter it, and promote an 'alternative workers' media.

Discussion alone may not be sufficient to counter mass media bias. Picketing, leafleting and other forms of direct action may be necessary. In the case of the lesbian mothers story in the London *Evening News* and the *Guardian's* snide report of Gay Pride Week, it was occupation of the newspaper offices which won the right of reply. Workers' press councils should not stop short of such actions.

Discussion over alternatives to the Press Council is already underway within the NUJ. It should be widely discussed in the labour movement. The Campaign for Press Freedom — which bridges the media unions and the wider workers' movement — can play a valuable role in stimulating that discussion.

Suggestions on alternatives to the Press Council to: Bob Norris, NUJ, Acorn House, 314 Gray's Inn Rd, London WC1.

To join or obtain a speaker form the Campaign for Press Freedom, contact the campaign secretary, John Jennings, 274-288 London Rd, Hadleigh, Essex. Tel 0702 553131.

By Geoffrey Sheridan

THE British economy faces a deepening recession, with industrial output and employment falling sharply. That is not a spectre invented by socialists, but the opening words of the front page lead article in the *Financial Times* on Wednesday of last week.

The article continues: 'Official figures published on 17 June provided the clearest evidence yet of the downturn in activity and of its impact on the labour market.'

The figures issued by the Department of Employment make grim reading. Industrial production in the first four months of this year was about 3 per cent lower than the average level in 1979, the sharpest drop in output for five years.

This has resulted in what the *FT's* economics correspondent described as a 'marked change' in the labour market, shown in both the numbers of the unemployed and in the employment statistics.

Production

The latter reveal that the number of workers in production industries dropped by 233,000 — 2.6 per cent of the total — in the six months to the end of March.

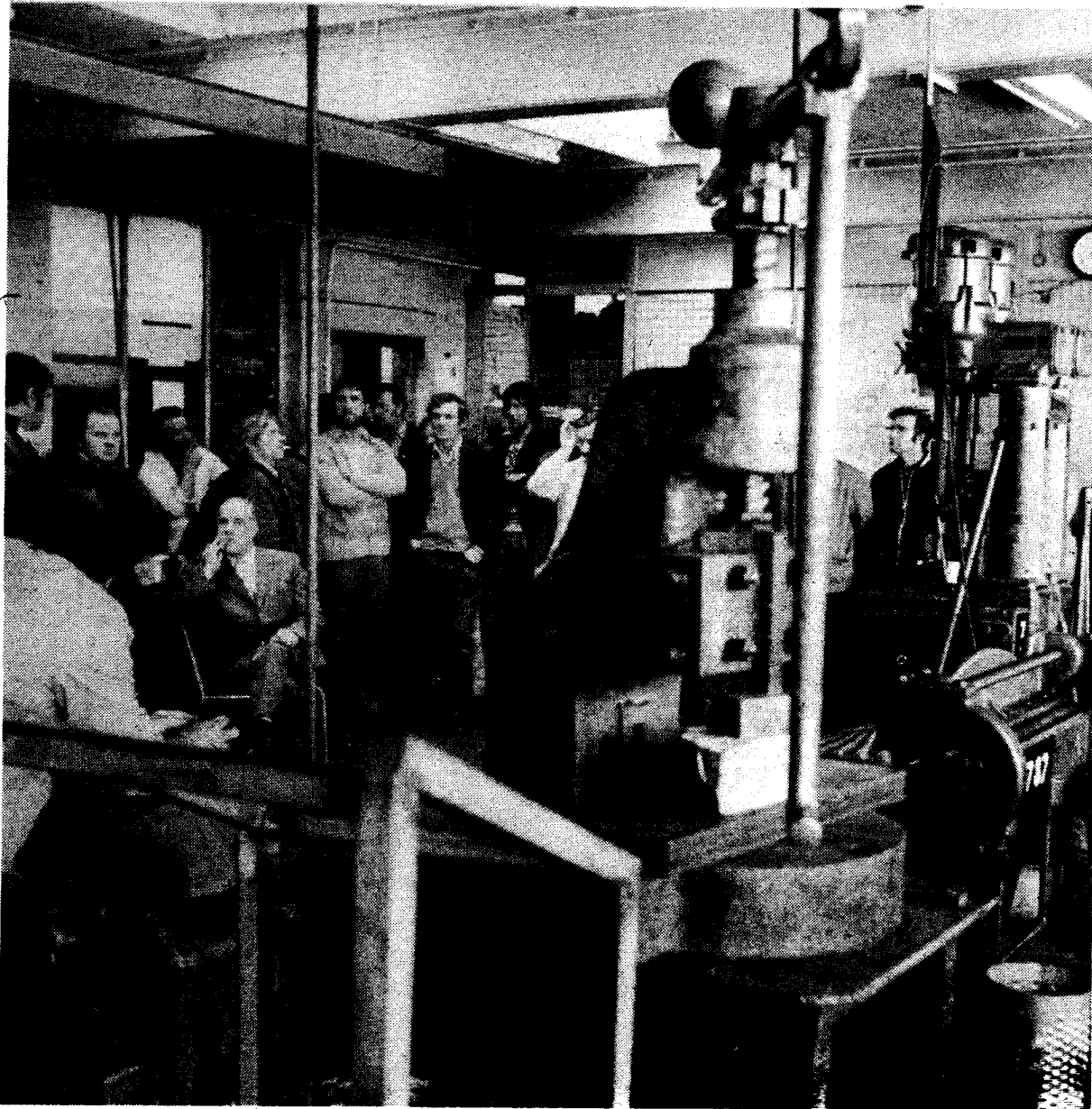
According to the correspondent, the change have been similar in magnitude to those in the early stages on the last major recession in 1975. And in the past few months this de-industrialisation process, which jettisoned nearly a quarter of a million workers from factories between October '79 and April '80, has speeded up.

To round off this evidence of the combined effects of the slump in the West, the particularly vulnerable position of British industry, and Thatcherism, the figures for production in the first four months of this year show that it was down by 3 1/4 per cent on the average level last year, which was itself nothing to write home about.

Confrontation

In short, for the employers, there is much to commend the remarks earlier this month of Sir Raymond Pennock, president of the Confederation of British Industry, who said: 'Until we have laid confrontation to rest and accepted that managers and workers are on the same side, there is little chance of real wealth creation and national pro-

On eve of Engineering Charter conference Job prospects grim



around 930 people; Associated Engineering is aiming for 500 'voluntary' redundancies; Dunlop is axing 500 workers at its Fort Dunlop plant, and both Renold and Wilmot-Breedon have announced job cut-backs. John Evans, of the CBI's West Midlands branch, says: 'Most firms wish they could get out of the car components industry'

The high rate of interest, which makes investment costly and obliges management to try and keep stock levels low, and the high exchange levels of sterling, which makes imports cheap and exports dear, are of much concern to the industrial bosses and sections of the Tory Party.

Symptoms

Yet these symptoms of the crisis of British capitalism merely overlay the fundamental need of the employers; to drive down wage levels in order to sustain profits.

The fact that labour turnover in manufacturing industry is now the lowest since statistics were first produced in 1948 shows that the weapon of unemployment is working for the Tories and their supporters.

The queues of the unemployed at the factory gates have long been one of capitalism's most effective means of persuading workers to accept cuts in their living standards and further job losses, in the hope that it won't be theirs.

The demands being raised for the mass lobby of the Trade Union Congress this September — No to unemployment, for a 35-hour week now; fight to kick out the Tories — are vital aims in combatting the employers' offensive.

The call for a shorter working week, which on paper is now the policy of most unions, is a refusal to accept the bosses' logic of making us pay for their crisis. So, too, is the demand for the available work to be shared with no loss in earnings.

Depressions

For the first time since the depression of the 1930s, it seems that trade union membership is falling — because of unemployment. This emphasises the need for the unions to organise those on the sick queues, and to put up a full-time fight over jobs.

The Engineering Charter and... (text is partially obscured and difficult to read)

sperty.'

What is certainly being laid to rest, at an increasing rate, are factories and jobs, not least in engineering which between the mid-19th century and the Second World War was the heart of British industry, and which still furnishes one of the labour movement's major bastions.

The present situation of the in-

dustry is not far short of chronic, with the *Economist* predicting a drop in output of 20 per cent over the next two years.

The state of the car industry, the largest employer of engineering workers, needs little comment. It, the largest car firm in Britain, announced 25 plant closures, with the

loss of 25,000 jobs last September. Now it wants to cut its workforce still further.

The car components industry is in sharp decline, cutting a swathe through the engineering heartland of the Midlands. Under the name...

BOC

British Oxygen workers still solid

By Tessa Van Gelderen

THE fight against redundancies continues at the British Oxygen depot in Hackney.

At a meeting last week, management argued that the majority of workers were quite prepared to accept the loss of jobs; it was only the convenor John Walsh, and deputy convenor Micky Boulter who wanted a fight.

So Fred Ferryman, the Transport Union group secretary, asked for a recess for a week.

Micky Boulter, who is also branch secretary, called a mass meeting. Everyone was there and only one worker out of the entire plant wanted to leave his job. Meanwhile the union has told management that it won't accept compulsory redundancies. Its policy is employment, not deployment.

The whole workforce at Hackney has been involved from the beginning in fighting the job cuts. No amount of negotiating, even with the best of union officials, can take the place of full involvement and solidarity of the workers in the plant.

It is the willingness of the Hackney BOC workers to fight together to save the 28 jobs that has been an important factor in the refusal of the depots in Cardiff and Bristol to handle any work that will result from the redundancies.

It will be Hackney's willingness to continue the fight that will ensure that the union officials don't give in and that if and when firm support is needed, the labour movement will support them. It is through their own independent activity and organisation in the past that Hackney is today the strongest and most militant depot in British Oxygen.

It's a lock-out

TWO hundred and fifty technicians at GEC Telecommunications, Coventry, are facing the fourth week of a lock-out for supporting six striking co-workers. The strikers were protesting at the strings attached to a 17 per cent pay offer — the introduction of shifts and compulsory overtime.

Management tried unsuccessfully to push the deal through by forcing ASTMS members to sign the agreement individually. So far one picket has been arrested.

Edinburgh fights US war drive

By Duncan Smith

Fifty people gathered outside the US consulate in Edinburgh to protest against the US war drive last Saturday.

The demonstration was jointly organised by the Edinburgh Latin American solidarity campaign and militants of the Anti-Nuclear Campaign. Placards carried slogans against the siting of Cruise missiles in Britain, and for solidarity with workers' struggles in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

President Carter's talk about human rights was contrasted with his government's actual policies. A comrade from El Salvador described how the US had stepped up its military aid to the right-wing regime in his country.

The rally finished with speeches from members of the Anti-Nuclear Campaign.

They pointed out that the development of nuclear power had, from the beginning, been intimately connected with the production of nuclear weapons. This could only be explained by the aggressive drive of capitalist governments to secure markets and investments world wide.

Protestors left feeling that the event had been a success and that there was great potential for a mass campaign against the Cruise missiles, particularly if the issue is taken into the trade union movement.

Hugo Dewar — founder of the British Trotskyist movement

By Harry Wicks

Hugo Dewar, one of the founders of the British Trotskyist movement died on 14 June after a long illness. Hugo, a member of the Tooting branch of the Communist party, was expelled with the whole of the left opposition group in 1932. During the 1930s when the Trotskyists were persecuted and slandered he devoted his energy and enthusiasm to sustaining and circulating the Trotskyist paper 'Red Flag'.

As secretary of the Socialist Anti-War Front he wrote the Trotskyists manifesto opposing the war.

After declaring his socialist opposition to the war to a

conscientious objectors tribunal, he was finally conscripted into the army. In the army he became a prolific writer, contributing poems and articles to various socialist journals.

In 1946 he stood as an Independent Labour Party candidate against Douglas Jay in the Battersea by-election. Following this he began a long period of research into Stalinism, writing a long book on the policies of the British Communist Party (later published in an abbreviated form by Pluto Press).

In 1956, when the whole left was shaken by the Soviet invasion of Hungary he, together with a Rumanian socialist Daniel Norman, wrote a topical pamphlet 'Revolution and Counter Revolution in Hungary' which helped explain these events to a new generation of socialists breaking from Stalinism.

In later years Hugo assisted socialist historians in Paris who were working on the publications of the Leon Trotsky Institute and wrote poems for Socialist Worker.

With the passing of Hugo Dewar the international socialist movement has lost a great fighter.

The biggest thing since CND

By Jenny Flintoft, Hampstead Labour Party

THE anti-Cruise missiles campaign will be the biggest thing since CND in its 'heyday'. This was the feeling at the Labour Co-ordinating Committee's meeting in Brent, North West London, on 16 June.

The Cruise missiles installation is planned for 1984, with the 'ignition' system in the Pentagon's hands, Graham Taylor of Brent Trades Council told us. 'The US will supply the technology, Europe the corpses. We must mobilise the

whole European socialist movement against these missiles.'

Speakers Aileen O'Callaghan (Brent IMG) and Frank Hanson (secretary of Brent LCC) said that the anti-nuclear movement must

take a clear stand against imperialism.

Frank Hanson also reminded the meeting that one section of 'Peace, jobs, freedom' — the Labour Party's new programme — opposes the Cruise missiles. Tony Benn's arguments fail to challenge the myth of the 'threat' from the Soviet Union, and to hide the real danger — the Western ruling class.

In the discussion which

followed Charlie Van Gelderen said that defence of the Soviet Union should not mean that we are uncritical of its 'exclusive nuclear club' policies and failure to mobilise the world proletariat against the bomb.

Other contributors emphasised the importance of calling for withdrawal from NATO and mobilising youth against the war drive. People left feeling confident of massive support for the campaign. A larger meeting is planned for later in the year.

Nurses pay — union conference launches campaign

By Mark Whyte, COHSE 426 branch

THE major issue facing delegates to last week's conference of the health workers' union COHSE was nurses' pay.

Despite the present 22 per cent inflation rate and the recent large increases awarded to doctors, nurses have been offered a derisory 14 per cent.

Appeals by the unions to Thatcher to increase the offer had fallen on deaf ears, so the COHSE delegates had to decide on what the union should do.

The executive proposed a ballot of branches, with a recommendation to reject the offer. But no suggestions were forthcoming from the union leadership about how the pay battle could be

won. Several emergency motions at the conference tried to fill this gap, suggesting strike action with emergency cover, and campaigns to build solidarity action by the rest of the trade union movement.

These motions were ruled out of order on the grounds of 'lack of time'. But conference did debate an emergency resolution from the Dundee branch which outlined a campaign of industrial action by nurses.

Initially the executive intended to oppose this, but when it seemed likely that conference would support the resolution, the executive asked delegates to remit it. This was carried, as was the ballot recommendation, the result of which will be known in ten days.

Some nurses may be reluctant to take strike action. They may be scared of being disciplined by the General Nursing Council, or be concerned

about patients' welfare. Yet industrial action with emergency cover is the only way the claim can be won; a victory which is necessary to stop nurses leaving the NHS.

The fear of disciplining action by the nursing council can be laid to rest if a sufficiently large number of people were involved in industrial action.

The cause of the nurses can also be advanced if they link up with other trades unionists. This would include other health service staff and unions, in particular the administrative and clerical staff whose negotiations have reached a similar stage.

Solidarity action is crucial for nurses to win their claim. In 1974 the miners came out in support of the nurses. The TUC today has a responsibility to campaign for similar expressions of solidarity.

St Benedicts — the fight goes on

IF Alison Munro, chairperson of the Meriton, Sutton, and Wandsworth Area Health Authority, has her way the patients in St Benedicts hospital, Tooting, will be out on the street by September.

The decision to close the hospital was confirmed at the 11 June meeting of the AHA.

The workers at St Benedicts have different ideas however. Their 8-month work-in still continues and the questions they raised at the AHA meeting about the reasons for the closure embarrassed Alison Munro so much that the meeting came to an abrupt close.

Shop stewards at the Bolingbroke hospital are showing their solidarity by refusing admissions from St Benedicts and are pointing out that their hospital is ill-equipped to be a geriatric hospital.

Ambulance drivers have also given a commitment not to move the patients, but in other hospitals under threat of closure — the Etwell Hospital in Derbyshire and the Princess Mary Hospital —



private transport has been used to smash work-ins.

Building support for the picket is absolutely vital to prevent a repetition of this at St Benedicts. Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Council will be supporting a mass picket outside St Benedicts on Thursday 3 July, and a public meeting has been called for 31 July at which Alan Fisher has been invited to speak.

The workers at St Benedicts will want to know, if Fisher turns up, why he has failed to campaign in support of St Benedicts and every other hospital work-in and what he intends to do about it!

Please send messages of support, donations, etc to Arthur Hautot, Chairperson, St Benedicts Occupation Committee, Church Lane, Tooting, London SW17.

MASS PICKET

at

ST BENEDICTS

HOSPITAL,

TOOTING, SW17

on

Thurs 3 July, 6-9pm,

Church Lane Gates.

Regular pickets take place every Monday evening.

Tooting Broadway or Tooting Bec Tube stations.

Police arrest black factory workers

SHORTLY after 2pm last Friday afternoon police in four Transit vans and two coaches arrived at the Main gas appliances factory in Angel Road, Edmonton, now owned by Thorn EMI.

While Home Office officials went to the personnel department to examine the records of black workers, police surrounded the factory, and cops with dogs patrolled the railway line next to the factory.

The police then moved in and arrested immigrant workers who were working in the factory.

Scuffles broke out outside the main gate as some workers resisted arrest. Others managed to escape by clambering over the outer fence. Estimates of the number of immigrants arrested vary between 54 and 72.

This is the biggest raid that has ever been made under the 1972 Immigration Act, which severely restricts the rights of immigrant workers. The Home Office revealed that the operation had been carried out with a warrant which specified the name of the factory, but not the names of any individual being sought.

John Plummer of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants described the raid as 'a mere fishing expedition in which it is necessary for people to prove they are innocent'. He went on to question whether such arbitrary arrests are lawful.

One thing is crystal clear. As long as the police have legal backing, through the existing immigration laws, for harassing immigrants who enter this country they will feel confident in persecuting the black workers in this way. These racist laws must be repealed.

THE deadline for short news articles is 10.30am Monday. Articles up to 200 words can be rung through on Sunday on 01-359 8180/9

Scottish TUC bans H Block delegation

By George Kerevan

THE Scottish TUC has banned Edinburgh Trades Council from sending a delegation to investigate conditions in the Long Kesh concentration camp in the North of Ireland.

A crowded meeting of the trades council on 18 June narrowly voted to accept the ban, rather than face disbandment by the STUC. The full-time secretary of the trades council, Des Loughney went ahead with the visit in a private capacity.

Edinburgh Trades Council has had a policy of support for political status for all Irish prisoners since 1978. Earlier this year Derry relatives of the prisoners approached the council with an offer of passes to visit trade unionists imprisoned in the H Blocks. A trades council meeting on 29 May voted unanimously to send the president Roger West and the secretary.

The STUC then sent its deputy general secretary, John Henry and Hugh Whyper, a leading official of the TGWU, to read the riot act to the trades council executive on 13 June.

They claimed that the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions did not want the visit to go ahead. Whyper, a member of the Communist Party called the H Block prisoners, 'murderers', and said that if the delegation proceeded the STUC would dissolve the trades council.

Despite the dissent of members of the Socialist Workers Party and the International Marxist Group the executive recommended to the council that the trip be abandoned.

By-election candidate is Orange thug

By Joseph Michael Brady

THE Glasgow Central by-election has an odd feature — there is a National Front candidate who has been disowned by the NF.

The thug in question is John McKenzie, a leading member of the Scottish Loyalist Association, a former leader of a street gang called the Remo, and a vice-president of the fanatical North of Ireland Loyalist organisation, the Apprentice Boys of Derry.

McKenzie has a number of convictions for assault and grievous bodily harm. He was expelled from the Orange Order for, 'bringing the institution into disrepute'.

The NF directorate in London is insisting that McKenzie is not their candidate. Perhaps they think they have had enough bad publicity, or perhaps they fear they cannot control McKenzie and the Scottish Loyalist Association boot boys.

But this should not effect the attitude of the left. McKenzie is using the election as a chance to push sectarian poison. A 'Smash the IRA' march was planned by the Glasgow NF for 21 June, but it was called off after the Anti Nazi League threatened a counter-demonstration.

The ANL is still planning public opposition to McKenzie, as is the Glasgow Troops Out Movement. All anti-fascists are urged to contact the Glasgow ANL for up to date information. The address is Trade Union Centre, Carlton Place, Glasgow.

Labour Party discovers women's liberation

By Janice McGhee

OVER 150 people met in Edinburgh last Saturday at a conference organised by the Labour Co-ordinating Committee in Scotland to discuss the labour movement's response to Tory attacks on women.

The majority of delegates were Labour Party members, but there were representatives from the trade union and women's movements. The conference showed growing interest by the Labour Party in the position of women.

The early discussion centred on Tory attacks on women, not without criticism of the last Labour government's record.

Margaret Curran, the only woman member on the LCC executive in Scotland, outlined the need for mass participation by the working class in the Labour Party 'to achieve a socialist transformation of society'.

The Labour Party was based too much on men around the political fight against de-industrialisation, she explained. The party had failed to reach women.

Jo Richardson MP emphasised the need to involve women in the party and sketched the attacks by the Tories on even the small progress

women had made. She pointed out that anti-women slogans such as 'Ditch the Bitch' reinforced existing prejudices.

She covered many important topics within her speech, including opposition to Cruise missiles and the need for an increase in social services, especially nursery facilities. Women should be able to choose whether or not they wished to work, Jo Richardson argued.

Outlining the Parliamentary fight against the Corrie Bill, she congratulated the Edinburgh MPs for their role in this fight and said she was in favour of further Parliamentary action to extend the 1967 Abortion Act.

However, she made no mention of the powerful extra-parliamentary campaign against the Bill, headed by NAC.

In the 1980s she saw women under the Tories becoming poorer, being less well educated, forced back to the kitchen sink and 'Tory Victorian morality' attempting to hide the harsh realities of capitalism.

She went on to call for better training opportunities, equality in education and for women to take a vital rôle in decision-making at all levels.

The attack on women workers was discussed during the workshop session. The topic was introduced by Mary Harrison, of the STUC women's advisory committee. She criticised the last Labour government for implementing similar policies to Thatcher's.

Much of the discussion concerned the Employment Bill as it affected women and the need not only to fight for better education but for women to organise within the trade unions to take up women's issues.

The other workshops dealt with women under capitalism and women's rights and the law. Legal changes in divorce and abortion laws were required, the speaker from Scottish Women's Charter argued, in order to allow women to look at the wider struggles.

The latter part of the conference was mainly concerned with what women in the Labour Party could do. Gay Johnson, district counsellor for Darlington, pointed out that 'policies on women's rights needed to be part of a socialist manifesto' to be implemented on the return of a Labour government.

She wanted to see legislative changes including the extension of abortion on the NHS, a policy of non-sexist education, child-care facilities, improving supplementary benefit allowances for women, and perhaps the setting up of a trade union development fund to encourage the participation and organisation of women within the labour movement.

A dominant theme was the involvement of women in the Labour Party and the relationship between the party and the women's movement.

Five places are already reserved for women on the Labour Party's national executive. LCC

speakers argued that in every constituency the list of would-be Parliamentary candidates should have at least one woman and one worker on it.

Regional meetings to discuss women's position within the Labour Party were suggested — the debate on democracy having highlighted the under-representation of women. Women were also urged to pass resolutions through their local Labour Parties calling for a special meeting of women in the Labour Party in Scotland.

A workshop on left politics and women's liberation led by Sheila Gilmore, from Edinburgh Labour Party, accused the far left groups of concentrating too much on 'the point of production' and not on women's concerns, and of putting off the struggle for women's liberation until after capitalism had been overthrown.

Women from the women's movement pointed out that the Labour Party's record was not so hot. It had ignored the women's movement and had dismissed it as 'apolitical' for the past decade.

Mass action against the Tories was not discussed at the conference, neither was there a great deal of attention paid to actively organising women in the trade unions. Nevertheless, it marked a big break in the Labour Party's traditional attitude towards women and shows that the audience for feminist ideas is growing.

Abortion: an issue for every trade unionist

By Valerie Coultas

The defeat of John Corrie's restrictive abortion Bill in March was a tremendous victory for women in Britain.

It was the culmination of an alliance that had been growing for five years between the women's movement, through the National Abortion Campaign, and the organised labour movement.

NAC now intends to build on that support by calling on all trade unionists to attend a special labour movement conference in February of next year.

The conference will discuss how the law can be changed and NHS facilities improved to allow women to have the right to choose when and whether to have children.

Kate Holman, a member of the NAC/Labour Abortion Rights Campaign trade union liaison committee, considers that fertility control is an issue that is relevant to all trade unionists. 'Until women can choose when to have children they will continue to be forced into low-paid unskilled jobs,' she argues.

Kate, who is a member of the National Union of Journalists' Equality Working Party, feels that if women can plan their lives they will be able to play a much more active role within the trade union movement.

Female trade union membership has increased dramatically over the past ten years. Women have been joining trade unions at the rate of 164,000 each year, and they now comprise 28 per cent of those affiliated to the TUC.

Despite the difficulties they face in participating in a movement that is not geared to dealing with those who have domestic responsibilities, women have forced the trade union movement to take up our concerns.

'When abortion was first discussed in the trade unions,' Kate explains, 'it was frowned on or caused embarrassment.'

The impact of the women's movement and the consistent work of female and a few male trade unionists helped to change attitudes.

Not surprisingly it was the unions with a large female membership which led this fight. In 1975 the Tobacco Workers' Union got the TUC to adopt a policy of abortion on request.

In 1979 it was the National Union of Public Employees and the National Union of Journalists which put a resolution to the Women's TUC calling for the TUC to take action on their policy and call a demonstration against any restrictive legislation.

The tobacco workers successfully raised this at the Trades Union Congress last year, which meant that the TUC had a clear mandate to call the 28 October demonstration against the Corrie Bill.

However, the TUC leaders have so far confined their campaigning on abortion to a defensive stand. Despite their policy for abortion on request, and also for day-care facilities to be made available on the NHS, they have not emphasised

ed that abortion should be a woman's decision and that the law needs to be improved to allow women that choice.

This is why the National Abortion Campaign has called a conference to win active labour movement support for a campaign to get all local authorities to provide free abortion facilities. This is seen as the first step towards legislation which finally allows women to decide what they can do with their own body and their life.

If your union is committed to a pro-abortion position, make sure it is represented on the NAC/Trade Union Liaison Committee which is planning the conference.

If your trade union branch is not yet affiliated to NAC, invite a speaker and make sure it is.

If you would like speakers or further information, NAC can be contacted at: 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.



Women decide to lobby TUC

By Valerie Coultas

OVER 200 women attended the second Women's Fightback conference last weekend.

The Campaign, initially sponsored by Socialist Organiser, decided that it was vital that women 'organised and unorganised' were made aware of the effects of the Tory Employment Bill on their rights as workers, mothers and trade unionists.

Women's Fightback will be building a big lobby at the TUC this year making it clear that women want Len Murray to act now to defend a woman's right to work.

There was quite a long debate in the morning on what policies the campaign should adopt. The planning committee's draft policy, which was eventually adopted, concentrated mainly on the attacks on women at present and the need to fight in the women's movement and the labour movement for action to be taken against Tory policies.

An amendment put by the IMG stressing the need to give equal emphasis to work in the trade unions and the Labour Party was carried.

Workshops were held on the Labour Party Young Socialists, Housewives in Dialogue, and producing a regular newspaper for the Fightback campaign.

The workshop on the newspaper attracted the largest number of women and a lot of

enthusiasm was expressed for the idea of *Women in Action*, a paper that came out of the last conference of the Working Women's Charter. Campaign fusing with *Women's Fightback*, the newsletter of the Fightback campaign.

Everyone agreed that a popular, regularly produced newspaper aimed at women in the labour movement would be vital to building support for the fightback against the Tories.

The conference voted at the end of the day to bring the two journals together. It was agreed that there would be a rally in London to launch the paper on a regular basis.

Decisions were also taken that stressed that the campaign should be as open and as broad based as possible. The steering committee and the editorial board have the power to co-opt women who want to get involved, and other campaigns and organisations can affiliate.

The campaign obviously has a lot of potential to reach out to the thousands of women who have become active within the trade union movement and the Labour Party over the last decade.

The decision to elect the steering committee in a hurried manner at the end marred the conference, however. Women had to decide to elect representatives when little was known about their politics or their record in the women's and labour movements.

The result was a steering committee that was not as 'open' as it could have been. Workers Action was the only tendency at the conference which was represented on the slate.

MRS WORTHINGTON'S
MW DAUGHTERS
PRESENT

National Abortion Campaign Benefit

RUTHERFORD & SON

BY GITHA SOWERBY

2 July, 7.30pm, Manning Hall Theatre, University of London Union, Malet St, WC1. (Tickets £1.50 in advance. £1.75 on the door).



THE FIGHT TO SAVE

Why import controls won't save jobs

MANY trade unionists, particularly those who look to Tony Benn, think that import controls would protect workers from job loss. **BERNARD CONNOLLY**, crafts convenor at Rotherham British Steel Corporation (BSC), disagrees.

Why do you oppose import controls?

Those who suggest that import controls are any answer to the problems faced by steelworkers are misleading the working class. It shifts attention away from the real enemy, to our brothers and sisters overseas. It takes the heat off the steel management and their Tory backers.

What takes our jobs is not imports, but the ups and downs of the capitalist economy over which workers have no control. In 1973, projected capacity for BSC was 36m tonnes per year. Today the plan is for 15m tonnes. Yet imports have hardly risen in that period! They stand at about 7m tonnes. The massive loss of tonnage is a result of the recession, and not the use of imported steel.

We hardly got out of one recession, and now we are into another. As a result of the last one, shipbuilding was halved; car production was down by over a third; and construction was cut by a half. These and other industries needing steel are taking a nose-dive.

This is where the problem is. BSC would still be declaring redundancies if not another ounce of steel was imported.

Even if the tonnage level was maintained in the British steel industry, and if the entire national industry used only British steel, this wouldn't guarantee jobs.

The bosses are concerned about squeezing more profits from the work of each individual. We can be certain that tonnage increases would go hand in hand with changes in manning



levels, productivity deals, and so on. This involves more job losses.

Wouldn't import controls protect our industry, though?

Talking about 'our' industry is just a contrick to make workers take responsibility for the problems of the economy. The only time we hear talk about 'us' is when there are losses, not when profits are mounting.

Once you accept the need for 'our' steel to make profits, you are drawn into accepting slimline agreements, speed-ups and wage rises below inflation. Fords makes a massive profit but it has just announced redundancies. Profits and workers interests don't go together.

But wouldn't it give us just a breathing space to get the industry sorted out?

Sorted out for whom? North Sea oil was meant to be a bonus, and it could be. But who benefits just now? The oil companies with their record profits.

The only time import controls would be imposed by the government is if the bosses could get a better return that way. This would still mean attacks on workers.

The reason the Tories won't go for this policy just now is because Britain relies on exports so much. Volvo takes more British steel than Fords. A trade war might develop if the crisis gets worse. It happened in the '30s. But the great depression certainly didn't help any workers I know.

Surely accepting imports is accepting super-exploitation of other workers abroad?

British steelworkers are the lowest paid in Europe. Would it have helped us during our strike if German workers stopped British imports on the grounds that we are low paid? What we needed and what we got was solidarity. This is what Indian or South Korean workers need in order to fight their low wages.

I only wish it had been possible for more workers to have visited our brothers and sisters abroad during the strike. They would have seen that the bosses in other countries are trying to sell the same lie to workers there: that the problems they face are also due to foreign imports.

For me, it is a natural progression from organising locally to organising internationally. You can't do that with a policy of import controls.

So what is the answer?

Steelworkers have to start from the need to save jobs. If there isn't enough work, then it should be shared, with no loss of pay. Overtime should be abolished.

We need a decent wage without overtime, and a fight to force management to take on more workers — especially young workers. Train them. Give older workers time off to study. Lower the retiring age.

But this would bankrupt the industry.

So the government will have to give a subsidy to save jobs. We are in the 1980s, not the '30s. We have a right to a job. We'll have to smash through the cash limits.

But don't forget. Interest payments to the money lenders account for over half the 'loss' made by BSC. This was nearly £200m this year alone. The cancellation of these debts has to be a priority.

We can't stop there. There is a market for steel. But not under this system. Obviously we don't need less steel than we did in the '60s, let alone the '30s. We need more hospitals, more schools, more roads, more railways, and more cars.

Where some things aren't needed any longer, let's re-tool the industry. Who could argue that Africa has enough tractors or other machinery which idle factories here could produce? We couldn't produce enough steel in society based on people's needs.

We need a government that breaks from the profit system. One that sets unemployed people to work building the roads, hospitals and equipment we need. One that begins to plan the economy in the interests of the majority — the working people and their families.

Warrington - if steel dies, the town dies

By Martin Collins

IN less than a month, on 18 July, 685 jobs at Warrington Bewsey Road steel plant are due to be axed. Now that Llanwern and Port Talbot steelworkers have accepted the British Steel Corporation's terms for the first round of job losses, Warrington will be a new focus in today's national fight to save steel jobs.

The announcement of the Warrington redundancies came on 17 April, a fortnight after the end of the 13-week steel strike. This national strike was planned by the Tory government to make an example of the steelworkers and to give one sharp message to the rest of the labour movement: 'There is no point in fighting back'.

Hard

But strikers in Warrington fought hard to make sure the Tories didn't get away with their plans, and they are just as determined that their works will not close. On 9 May, unions on the site voted overwhelmingly to oppose the closure plans. Militants made it clear that the fight was not just to protest, or to hold out to get better terms for selling their jobs. Warrington workers aim to keep the plants open.

A propaganda battle is raging inside the plant. The unions produced a poster which pilloried two members of senior manage-

ment, called Skinn and I 'Don't get SKINNed aLE fight closures!'

Management responded a circular which began, 'get HERDED like sheep, Port Talbot closures'. 'Herd' in question is Colin convenor of the Iron and Trades Confederation at Warrington, and contributor Socialist Challenge par Lessons of the Steel Strike

Humorous

These humorous don't conceal the grim reality of the fight to save steel jobs. The industry is blighted by a continual crisis of over-production. Since 1967 an average of jobs have been lost each year. 1965 steel provided 317,000 jobs but last year only 180,000. British Steel intend to reduce the number to around 100,000 by the end of the year.

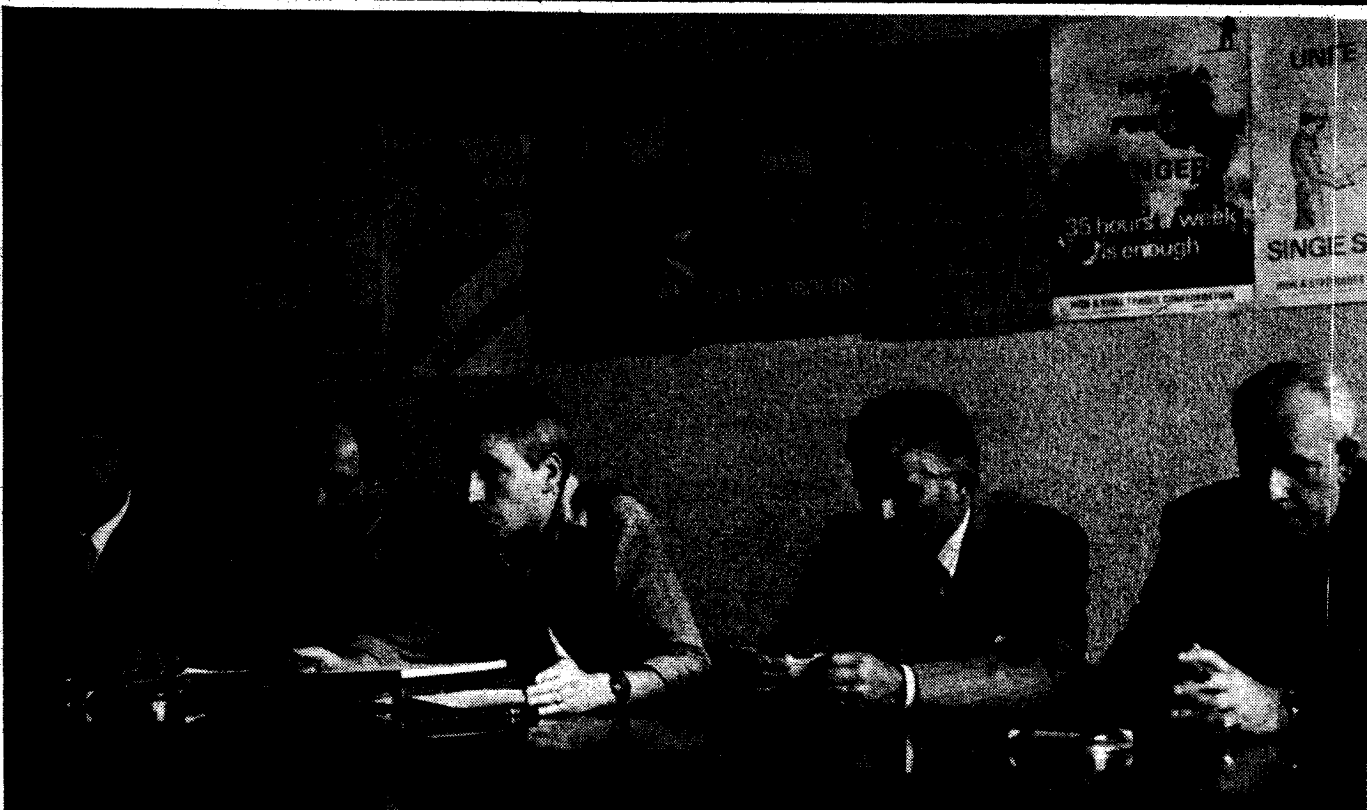
Warrington jobs will be saved with a big effort to get support from other workers in the area, and a fight to get the leadership of the unions. Bill Siers promised in April that 'the fight to save is just beginning'. He showed that he was serious when he forced to live up to that promise.

On 23 May, the ISTC voted unanimously to support the fight to save jobs in Warrington. Union officials were instructed to ensure no work was done at other plants on Warrington orders. But this paper promises to be backed by the most important action that was evident



Photo: Larry Herman

STEEL JOBS



FOUR hundred steelworkers packed the local AUEW Hall in Warrington last week to hear Bill Sirs, national secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, local trade union officials, and Labour MPs pledge support for the fight against the closure of the Warrington plant.

Local convenor Colin Herd, chairing the meeting, announced

ing the national strike. Then a united effort by rank and file steelworkers made it difficult for Sirs to bring the strike to the speedy end (and sell-out) that he wanted from day one of the strike.

Rotherham steel joint unions have voted to give Warrington 100 per cent backing and today refuse to accept any orders. But Scunthorpe presents a different picture. The convenor of the plant, in connivance with the full-time official for the area, has opposed a delegation from Warrington to address the Scunthorpe

workers. There is a crazy belief that if Warrington closes, jobs in Scunthorpe will be safe. All indications are that if Warrington closes, not only will Scunthorpe be next on the list, but it is *more likely* to be shut.

Warrington is a so-called 'new town development' area. It is the centre of the wire drawing industry, and even the local football team is known as the 'Wires'. Closure of the biggest steel works will mean the death of the town.

A recent Manpower Services

Commission report indicated that there were 49,000 unemployed in the town. In the last six months, 480 local firms announced redundancies and 180 firms closed altogether. The large wire-drawing factory, Rylands Whitecross, has declared 200 redundancies in the near future.

Bill Sirs undertook to seek similar support from Scunthorpe BSC unions.

The effect of the Bewsey Road closure won't be confined to 685 jobs in steel. Many local businesses will be affected. Warrington steelworkers can't wait until the closure date and then say it's too late to do anything.

Bill Sirs may like that to happen, but militants throughout the country need to make sure it doesn't.

Firm action is needed now to save jobs, and part and parcel of the fight must be a national plan for the steel industry. This will involve fighting for full nationalisation under a future Labour Government, and imposing on British Steel management a shorter working week. Where union leaders block the fight to save jobs, the rank and file will have to act independently of them.

A draft 'Steelworkers Charter' was adopted by a recent meeting of the Jobs Action Committee, set up by Llanwern steelworkers. Llanwern militants now plan to meet with steelworkers from other parts of the country to discuss these policies and the steps needed to campaign for united industrial action to save jobs.

Hopes are high that the current modest activities of the committee will gather support and lay the basis for a firm opposition to any attempts to close the Llanwern or Port Talbot works.

Eleven thousand jobs have been carved up by the present slimline agreement, and the closure of one of the plants could mean a further loss of between 5,000 and 10,000 jobs.

Steelworkers Charter

The following demands reflect the deeply held convictions of the steelworkers in South Wales area. We ask for the support of all organisations in the labour movement for these demands with a united approach to the task of changing the macabre destruction of the industry by the BSC.

1. The British steelworkers demand that the government of the day takes the interests of workers into consideration when planning the future of the steel industry.
2. The British steelworkers demand a market for all steel which can be produced by existing plant.
3. We will not accept plant closure and refute absolutely any redundancy.
4. We demand full implementation of a guaranteed 35-hour working week and worksharing with no loss of earnings. We demand a ban on overtime.
5. We demand the option of retirement at 55 years for men and women with at least 80 per cent of current earnings to maintain spending power.
6. We demand that the government of the day fund pensions until state retirement age is attained.
7. We demand that the government of the day makes available all financial aid that the EEC funds provide for an investment programme with no job loss.
8. We demand that nationalised industries receive interest concessions in line with other EEC countries with a view to the ending of interest payments completely.
9. We demand that Government subsidies be made available to the British Steel industry, in line with other EEC countries.
10. We demand opposition to changes in working practices which involve a deterioration in conditions, safety, and the number of jobs.
11. We demand an end to hiving off of steel production to private industry and the complete nationalisation of steel producers, processors, and stockholders.
12. We support steps towards the creation of one union inside the steel industry. As a first step, we demand a common pay claim for all steelworkers.

The twelve points in this Charter are a realistic and attainable set of aspirations. Adoption of these demands will give workers a real voice in control of the industry and protect it from decimation. We pledge our support for the maintenance of a strong industry whose wealth-creating potential must be realised without unemployment and used for the welfare of the people of this country.

AGENDA

WHAT'S LEFT

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

NATIONAL demo to defend Nasira Begum from deportation, and all those threatened by the immigration laws. Sat 19 July, 12.30pm, Whitworth Park off Moss Lane East, Manchester.

IPCS Left groups together all radical members of IPCS and works within the union for the implementation of socialist policies. For newsletter and further information write to: 36 Roundhay Crescent, Leeds 8.

AMNESTY FOR ST PAUL'S. New badge available for 20p. Special offer of 15p for order of 15 or more. Send 10p for cost of postage. All proceeds to St Paul's Defence Fund. Write to Bristol Anti Nazi League, Box 1, Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol.

LABOUR Committee on Ireland: Social 28 June. Includes showing of banned TV film *Curious Journey*, plus Irish music, plus excerpts from Arden and D'Arcy play *The Non-stop Connolly Show*. Caston House, St John's Way, London N19. Tube: Archway. Adm £1.95, £1 for wageless. Starts 7.30pm.

CO-ORDINATOR wanted for area group within Islington Community Housing. Three days a week to begin with, but possibly full-time later. £5,889 p.a. (pro rata). Job description from ICH, 41 Hornsey Rise, London N19. Written application to arrive at this address by 14 July.

'SEXISM - why men must fight it': informal meeting for interested men in South London, 8pm 1 July, Oxford Arms (upstairs), Deptford Church St, SE8.

HANDS off Ireland Defence Campaign: Demonstration; Luton. Assemble People's Park at noon, Sat 28 June. Smash Police Censorship on Ireland! Smash the H-Blocks! Defend Hands off Ireland! Donations to: HOI Defence Campaign, 49 Railton Rd, London SE24 0LN.

ROOM available in South-east London. Communal set-up. Ring Freeman, Oldham or Woods 01-858 6865.

'IRELAND - The Issues at Stake': A series of forums organised by the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, No 4 - Crisis in the Twenty Six Counties. Haughey talks nationalism to make his austerity measures more palatable - how much can he get away with? Speaker Phil Murphy. 7.30pm, Wed 2 July, University of London Union, Malet St. Tube: Goudge St.

SCEVENTS

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

AMNESTY FOR ST PAUL'S. New badge available for 20p. Special offer of 15p for order of 15 or more. Send 10p for cost of postage. All proceeds to St Paul's Defence Fund. Write to Bristol Anti Nazi League, Box 1, Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol.

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 Fullmarks, 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 newsgates, London Rd, Enfield Town.

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

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

TESSIDE SC public meeting: 'Can the Labour Party bring socialism?' Thurs 10 July, 7.30pm, Borough Hotel, Corporation Rd, Middlesbrough.

TESSIDE SC on sale every Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland centre, in Newsfare Linthorpe Rd, Middlesbrough, and in 'Greens', Spencer Market Stockton.

TOWER HAMLETS: SC supporters sell papers every Friday 5-6pm Watney Mkt, Sat 11-12.30pm Whitechapel tube, Sunday 10.30-12.00 Brick Lane.

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.

IMG NOTICES

TGWU fraction has been postponed from 6 July. New date to be arranged.

RAIL national fraction postponed due to clash with new fraction leadership meeting.

NALGO London members meeting: Fri 27 June 7.30pm national centre; national secretariat, Sat 28 June, 11am to 3pm, national centre; national fraction, Sat 13 Sept, 11am till 4pm national centre.

FRACTION LEADERSHIPS aggregate. Note change of date from 22 June to Sat 5 July, national centre. (NB the earlier change to 6 July no longer holds as there is a school for industrial comrades in S Yorks, N West etc.)

Support grows for Uhl campaign

SEVERAL hundred people at the *Morning Star's* 50th anniversary festival joined in the campaign to free Petr Uhl and the other imprisoned Charter 77 civil rights activists in Czechoslovakia.

Many new signatures were added to the petition calling for a British labour movement lawyer to have access to the prisoners and to investigate the conditions under which they are held.

The International Marxist Group is calling on every reader of Socialist Challenge to do what they can to mobilise in the unions and the Labour Party in defence of these Czech campaigners.

The Fourth International, through its vigorous campaign to free the 14 Iranian comrades, demonstrated how effective international solidarity can be. Petr Uhl's defence campaign could in many ways be easier if equal determination is shown.

Uhl is one of the most respected and well-known leaders of the dissident movement in Eastern Europe.

In the coming months militants in the workers' movement will be approached for their full support in this campaign. Not a union or Labour Party branch meeting or con-

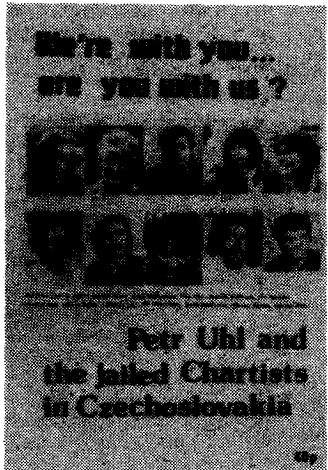
ference can go by without aid and support sought for the defence of these Czech comrades.

Below is the text of the petition which we hope readers will put as a resolution to labour movement bodies.

Copies should be sent to both the Czech Embassy, 25

Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8, and to the defence campaign itself, c/o Ruth Tosek, 14 Elgin Court, 16 Montpelier Road, London W5. (Tel: 01-998 4490).

The new pamphlet produced by Socialist Challenge can only help in winning labour movement support.



'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.

'WE are deeply concerned by the reports of the conditions of imprisonment of Petr Uhl and other supporters of Charter 77 civil rights movement.

As you know, the national executive committee of the Labour Party and the leadership of the British Communist Party strongly condemned the imprisonment of the Charter 77 leaders last October.

Yet we now hear that Petr Uhl is banned from keeping all reading material, even letters and photographs from his family, and is forced to engage in very hard labour despite acute bronchitis.

Otká Bednarova, on a disability pension before her arrest, is also made to work without consideration for her health.

We urge you to allow a British labour movement lawyer to have access to the Charter 77 prisoners and to investigate the conditions under which they are held.'

Your last chance!

ONLY a handful of places are left at the summer school organised by the International Marxist Group on 12-18 July, 1980. If you want to attend there is still a slim chance, so send in the form below without delay.

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'.

'Lessons of the steel strike and the fight to kick out the Tories'

International Marxist Group pamphlet
40p plus 10p postage from
PO Box 50, London N1 2XP
Bulk rates on request.

£3089.13 towards the £6000 emergency fund!

By Micky Boulter, deputy convenor, British Oxygen Hackney depot

IT'S great news that the emergency fund drive of the International Marxist Group has reached the half-way mark of its £6,000 target. The IMG needs every penny it can get.

At my workplace at the British Oxygen depot in Hackney we are fighting redundancies. We are not prepared to let any of the 28 jobs threatened go. They're not our jobs to sell. We've had many successful struggles in the past, so we know that what we need are the right policies and the money to get the message across.

That's why all socialists must support the IMG and Socialist Challenge. We've got to get rid of this Tory government now, and everyone has to give lots of money. We have to have a paper and organisation that can get around to all the people.

We need that in British Oxygen, and so do all the other workers fighting for their jobs.

A lucky winner!

DUNCAN Edwards from Manchester is the lucky winner of the quartz watch donated by a supporter to boost the campaign for bankers orders to the paper.

All that's needed to enter is simply to fill out a standing order to the paper's bank account. Any amount, from 50p to £10 a month will help! Regular income makes regular planning possible.

We are now opening a new

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE BANKER'S ORDER FORM

Your Bank

Name of Account to be debited

Account Number

Our Bank Lloyd's Bank, Upper St, London N1.

Account No 0179678

Sorting Code 30-94-57

Amount to be paid Monthly

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

Signed

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

THE 'Kick out the Tories' 10p postage for single badge is now available again. Cheques/postal orders to: The Week, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

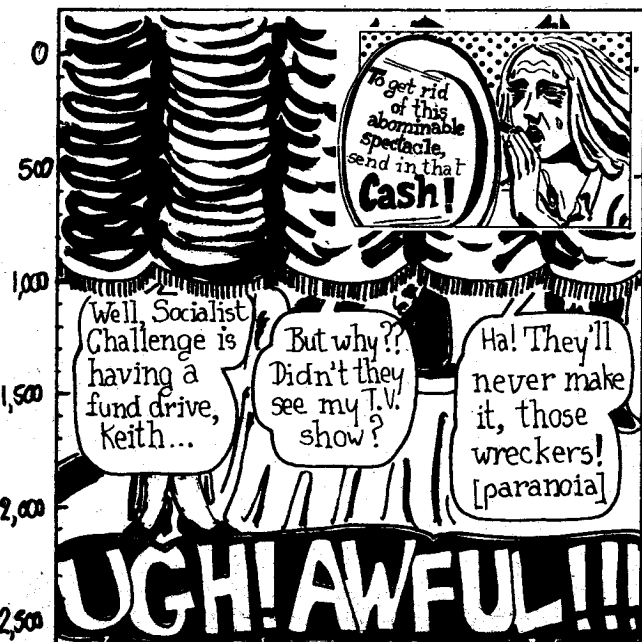
Beer, food and.... funds

BRENT IMG organised a highly successful fund-raising barbecue which has brought £80 to Socialist Challenge's coffers. Tickets sold for £1 covered a barbecue meal, entertainment, home-made beer and punch - served up in a beer tent in the garden!

Now Lambeth branch has its own spectacular social lined up for 26 July. Tickets for £1 are available from Jean or Pam, c/o PO Box 50, London N1.

In this friendly socialist competition for funds, Hackney supporters are out to top the contributions from other areas with their rapidly selling anti-Cruise missile badges.

These are the kind of collective efforts that will allow our paper to go from strength to strength. What are you doing to help?



THE six-monthly conference of the Troops Out Movement takes place in Edinburgh on Saturday 28 June. It will be a day of debate, discussion, and exchange of information. Local Labour MP Ron Brown will open the conference and there will be reports on the work being done in the labour movement, around the issue of Irish political prisoners, on anti-recruitment, and on the other activities in which the TOM is engaged.

The last session of the conference will take resolutions on the future direction and activities of TOM which now has over 40 branches scattered throughout the country.

Three issues are likely to come to the fore: a national demonstration in the autumn; Charter 80; and the establishment of a functioning headquarters.

Demonstration

The proposal for a demonstration was aired in a short paper submitted by the International Marxist Group in the run-up to the conference and in a statement produced by the Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland for the 'Voices for Withdrawal' forum held on 14 June in London which was attended by approximately 250 delegates and observers.

There is a difference of emphasis between

Three major issues facing Conference of Troops Out Movement

the IMG and the CWI. Both are agreed that one demand of the demonstration should be opposition to Tory plans for the North of Ireland, but there is a difference on additional demands.

The CWI is suggesting the slogans, 'For Irish Unity', 'End Partition', 'For a British Withdrawal'. The IMG is proposing 'Self determination for all the Irish people now'.

Alternatives

The disparity between the two alternatives is not just terminological. While the demands put forward by the CWI might appear to be concrete alternatives to the Tory proposals, they are in fact too vague on the one hand and too restrictive on the other.

The IMG believes that it would be politically incorrect to make a call for Irish unity the basis of a demonstration in Britain. Whatever political structures will be developed in Ireland after Britain has been driven out will be up to the Irish people to decide.

The IMG hopes that a united, socialist republic will be established, but it would not dream of suggesting that a solidarity movement

in Britain adopts such a position. The job of such a movement is to support the struggle of the Irish to decide for themselves how they want to be governed. The probability is that this will take the form of a united Ireland, but that is up to the Irish people to decide, not for demonstrators in this country to demand.

Sentiments

Second, the demands in support of British withdrawal and the ending of partition, while correct in themselves, become almost meaningless if they are only vague sentiments. The IMG proposal — for self-determination now — makes this much more specific.

On the Charter 80 campaign the IMG will suggest that the TOM conference gives this important initiative its full support. Charter 80 has been established on the five demands put forward by the Irish political prisoners themselves. These are: the right to wear their own clothes; free association; the right to refrain from prison work; the right to organise their own education and recreation; the right to full remission of sentences.

On this basis the expectation is that Charter

80 can attract wide support and this holds out the possibility of more effective work on the rights of Irish political prisoners than has been the case so far. At the same time it would be wrong to see support for the fight for political status for these prisoners as a formal basis for membership of TOM.

Inappropriate

Some in TOM have suggested this in the past but it is inappropriate for an organisation like TOM to insist that before anyone can join its ranks they have to fully support the Irish prisoners. This would narrow the appeal of TOM and give it the appearance of a political party with an increasing list of demands, rather than a movement based on the single issue of Irish self-determination and its practical implication, the immediate withdrawal of British troops.

Finally there is the issue of how TOM organises itself. The IMG is suggesting that TOM is put on a sound organisational footing. This means the establishment of a national office and someone who would be paid on a full-time basis to staff this office.

The experience of other campaigning organisations, such as the National Abortion Campaign, suggests that developing such a servicing centre can make all the difference when responding quickly to events and developing a co-ordinated movement.

John: To modern politicians Northern Ireland is an unfashionable subject because it is not susceptible to lazy solutions, whether they are those already tried, or those not tried so far.

SC: It is certainly unfashionable for the leaders of the Labour Party. At last year's party conference both the parliamentary leadership and the national executive fought tooth and nail to stop Ireland being debated.

It was only after a petition demanding such a debate had attracted over 400 signatures and the issue was taken to the conference floor that the NEC agreed to a half-hour debate.

As to 'lazy solutions', the last Labour government never tried any others; it never attempted to try and end the Irish war by any other means than Roy Mason's 'military solution'.

John: The difficulties will only be solved when you have induced the communities to devise an acceptable solution by which they can live in peace. That is as much, or more a matter of persuading human beings as it is of devising institutions.

That is what many in the Labour Party cannot accept. They are the ones who call for an end to bi-partisanship.

Let it be clear what bi-partisanship is in this context. It is only an agreement to share certain aims, namely the restoration of peace and a constitutional settlement to which both communities can adhere.

SC: From that statement anyone would think that the war in the North of Ireland is between two 'communities', and the only way it can be ended is when the two communities agree.

There is, of course, a third party — the British government and its army. For many in the North of Ireland the best way to restore peace would be to withdraw that army.

John: Recent speeches by Labour members seem to mean a declaration for a united Ireland. That seems to be thinking up the question to fit the answer.

Such a declaration would have — as would an outright declaration in favour of complete integration of Northern Ireland in the UK, on the other side — the effect of alienating one of the two communities.

You cannot in a policy statement treat one or other of the communities as being of no

Labour and Ireland A reply to Brynmor John

IN A sparsely reported speech delivered on 14 June to the Gloucester Fabian Society, the Labour Party spokesperson on Northern Ireland, Brynmor John, defended the Labour and Tory bi-partisan approach to the North of Ireland.

That John felt obliged to stage this defence was an indication of the mounting criticism within the Labour Party of its leadership's attitude to Ireland. Extracts from John's speech are reprinted below, with comments from Socialist Challenge.



consequence, and then expect a Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to go out and bring the two sides together.

SC: The record of the last Labour government on the Irish war is there for all to see. Because of its policies, the Labour government secured in Parliament the co-operation of the Unionists.

They gave in, for example, to the Unionists' demand for more seats at Westminster, which in itself was a step to complete integration.

On the other hand, the Catholic community regarded Secretary of State Roy Mason with undiluted hatred, not just because of his support for the Unionists but because of his

regime of torture and the repression of the Catholic community.

The fact is that over the past ten years of increasing British involvement in Ireland, the two communities have grown further apart; the rise of Paisley is just one example.

By taking the side of the Unionists and insisting that the

THE picture on this page is taken from Ireland: Voices for Withdrawal, a new pamphlet produced by the Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland.

This excellent pamphlet, reviewed in last week's Socialist Challenge, costs 75p plus 25p p&p, or ten copies for £5 plus £1.25p p&p. Available direct from Information on Ireland, 1 North End Rd, London W14.

partition of Ireland must remain, the British have become the real 'problem' for the Irish people.

As to that problem, the answer is simple: Britain should get out now and let the Irish people decide their future. The best way to bring the communities in the North of Ireland together is to allow

Ireland as a whole to come together.

This is because the whole record of the British government's and the army's rôle is not to stand between the two communities, but to endorse the view of the Loyalist community; that the North of Ireland must stay British whatever the people of Ireland as a whole feel.

As far as 'persuading human beings' is concerned, the British government in the past ten years has adopted rather extreme methods in this regard — like internment of its opponents without trial, torturing those it interned, and 'ill-treating' suspects at the Castlereagh interrogation centre.

How is it now possible to 'persuade' the 14 people the British Army shot on Bloody Sunday in Derry in 1972?

John: The government's forthcoming initiative must, in my view, be judged by two criteria.

First, whether it is likely to secure the agreement of both communities. Secondly, will it enable the minority community to play a constructive role in the government of the area as well as the majority?

We cannot credibly dismiss them before they even appear. Let me make it clear that if it meets my criteria I will support it.

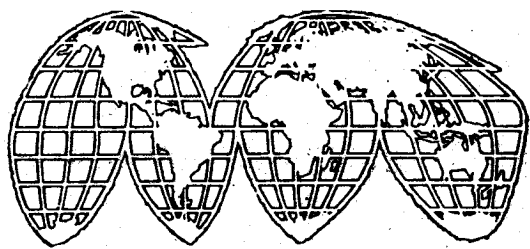
What I will not do, as the call to end bi-partisanship implies, is to reject it because of who is putting it forward rather than what is being put forward. **SC:** There is no possible initiative which can 'secure the agreement' of both Loyalists and Republicans.

They are divided on a fundamental issue — the right of the Northern Irish state to exist. No compromise is possible on this question. What those in Britain must do is to decide which side they support.

Socialists support the Republicans' cause, because they believe that all the people of Ireland, and only all the people of Ireland, have the right to decide how and in what form the country should be governed.

Tories, on the other hand, have always backed the Loyalists' view — that the unnatural partition of Ireland should be maintained; that the Irish working class should remain divided.

Whatever the details of the forthcoming Tory initiative it will continue to back the Loyalists' view. That is why it can be opposed in advance.



AROUND THE WORLD

Grenada

TWO people died and 20 were wounded when an attempt was made at a political rally on 20 June to assassinate Maurice Bishop, Prime Minister of the Caribbean island of Grenada. The attempted assassination comes in the wake of hysteria whipped up by the United States government and the bourgeoisie in the Caribbean against the government of Maurice Bishop's 'New Jewel Movement'.

The 'New Jewel Movement' came to power 15 months ago by overthrowing the corrupt and dictatorial regime of Eric Gairy. Gairy ruled the country through his notorious 'Mongoose Gang' of thugs. Since the revolution, the old regular army has been swept away, and a new 'Peoples' Revolutionary Army' and a popular militia set up in its place.

The prices of the three basic commodities — rice, sugar and cement — have been reduced with the establishment of a National Importing Board. Secondary school fees have been reduced, and a youth programme for reconstruction set up. A tremendous boost has been given by the regime to the self-organisation of the masses, through the setting up of trade unions and legislation which compels employers to recognise unions.

The popularity of the New Jewel Movement, the radical measures it has taken, and the close links that Bishop has established with Cuba, have all contributed to the hostility towards the Grenadan revolution on the part of the US and local reactionary forces. Against this background the assassination attempt on Bishop comes as no surprise.

West Germany

AN estimated £90,000 worth of damage was caused after three arson attacks on Family Planning centres in Bremen and Hamburg.

The centres are run by Pro Familia, a non-profit making organisation financed largely by Government and local subsidies, which has 135 centres throughout West Germany.

The attacks follow a campaign against abortion launched by the Catholic Church in Germany assisted by right wing doctors and politicians. Jurgen Heinrichs, head of Pro Familia, last week charged this alliance of 'preparing the ground' for the arson attacks.

Turkey

AMNESTY International has stated that torture in Turkey has now become 'widespread and systematic' and that those arrested by the police and martial law authorities were subject to torture which, in three cases, ended in death.

An Amnesty research mission visited Turkey last month and its findings have just been published. The human rights agency reported the case of a 17-year-old woman who was interrogated and tortured for two days, including being tied to a wooden cross suspended from a wall while electric shocks were administered to her fingers, head, stomach, sexual organs, lips and feet.

Algeria

TWENTY-FOUR workers, students and trade union militants are facing trial in Algeria arising out of the struggle by students to be educated in their own language and culture.

The background to the trials goes back to the start of last year when a general strike by 'arabist' students broke out in support of 'arabisation' of courses and the ending of discrimination in employment for graduates with diplomas in the Arab language.

Despite government repression the movement spread and at the end of last year in Tizi Ouzou, secondary school students went on strike over the demand for the teaching of the Berber language and culture. When, this April, the Tizi Ouzou students invited a writer-poet to hold a conference on Berber culture it was banned by the government.

The students responded with a strike which soon spread to the whole of the area and took on general strike proportions. Savage repression followed with hundreds of arrests and injuries.

Further strike action secured the release of most of those held but 24 left-wingers are now to be tried before the 'state security' court. They face up to 20 years in prison.

An international appeal has now been launched on behalf of the 24. Letters of protest should be sent to: Minister of Justice, Lahcene Soufi, Algiers, Algeria.

Marxist writer murdered in Guyana but Resistance mounts to Burnham regime

By Sheila Malone

'FORWARD with the works of Walter Rodney and the unity of the Guyanese, Indian and African workers.'

This was the message from a rally organised by the Workers Peoples' Alliance held last Saturday in London in memory of Walter Rodney.

Rodney died on the night of 13 June as he left a Working Peoples' Alliance (WPA) meeting in Georgetown, Guyana. A package he had been told was a walkie-talkie set exploded on or beneath the seat of his car. The person from whom he received the package, a former army sergeant, has since disappeared.

Marxist

Rodney, a Marxist writer and historian, became particularly well known for his works on the Rastafarian movement and on Africa, where he went to work in Tanzania. In 1974 he returned to his native Guyana, on the northern coast of South America, where he later became a leading member of the WPA, a grouping which has united opposition in the country to the corrupt ruling People's National Congress.

Rodney is now the third WPA member to die violently in Guyana in the past year, two others being shot by the police. A former member of the Peoples Progressive Party has also died suspiciously, as well as a priest who was stabbed to death by thugs from the House of Israel, a right wing pseudo-religious body similar to the notorious Jim Jones sect, and likewise backed by the government.

Police arrests and harassment of the left have become systematic, and the military, together with government paid armed thugs, are regularly used to break strikes.



Forbes Burnham

Opposition newspapers have been banned, and a Criminal Law Bill was rushed through this year, under which a number of offences are no longer tried by jury. Walter Rodney had been on trial with others last month on a frame-up charge of burning down the headquarters of the Peoples' National Congress.



Walter Rodney

There is no doubt that his murder was part of a concerted attempt by the government to silence all opposition. Behind this wave of repression is 16 years of unsavoury rule by Forbes Burnham's PNC, financed and put in power in 1964 by the CIA in order to prevent a victory of the Moscow-backed PPP, and kept in power by rigged elections in 1968 and 1973.

Despite coming to power through an alliance of foreign and local capital, from 1970 onwards the PNC was pushed to undertake large-scale nationalisations under a policy of 'co-operative socialism'. This involved nationalisation of 80 per cent of the economy, including the major industries of bauxite and sugar.

Although these measures were proclaimed as some kind of half-way stage to socialism, they were simply economic steps which have transferred property ownership from foreign interests to the local state.

They have not altered the domination of the economy by sugar, bauxite and rice, and therefore its dependence on capitalist export markets and its subjection to fluctuations on the world market.

The measures have also involved crippling amounts of compensation to former owners and were carried out with such bureaucratic inefficiency that production has actually fallen in these industries.

Instead of benefits to the Guyanese people, there is now a parasitic layer of state functionaries who maintain economic power through state patronage and privileges, and political power through increased state repression.

Despite an injection of \$135m by the United States during the lifetime of the Burnham regime, the crisis of the economy is deepening. Production is declining — real growth in the economy fell by 25 per cent between 1975 and 1977. The balance of payments deficit is worsening, prices are rising, and unemployment stands at 35 per cent.

An increasing number of strikes, notably the 19-week strike in the sugar industry, indicates the response of workers to this situation.

Since its formation in 1978, the Workers Peoples' Alliance has gained a mass following and has organised meetings of thousands. Its policies of a united anti-imperialist front of all revolutionaries and a broad-based anti-dictatorial alliance against repression have succeeded in uniting opposition to the Burnham regime.

The WPA has emerged as an alternative to the policies of the Moscow-oriented parties in the Caribbean.

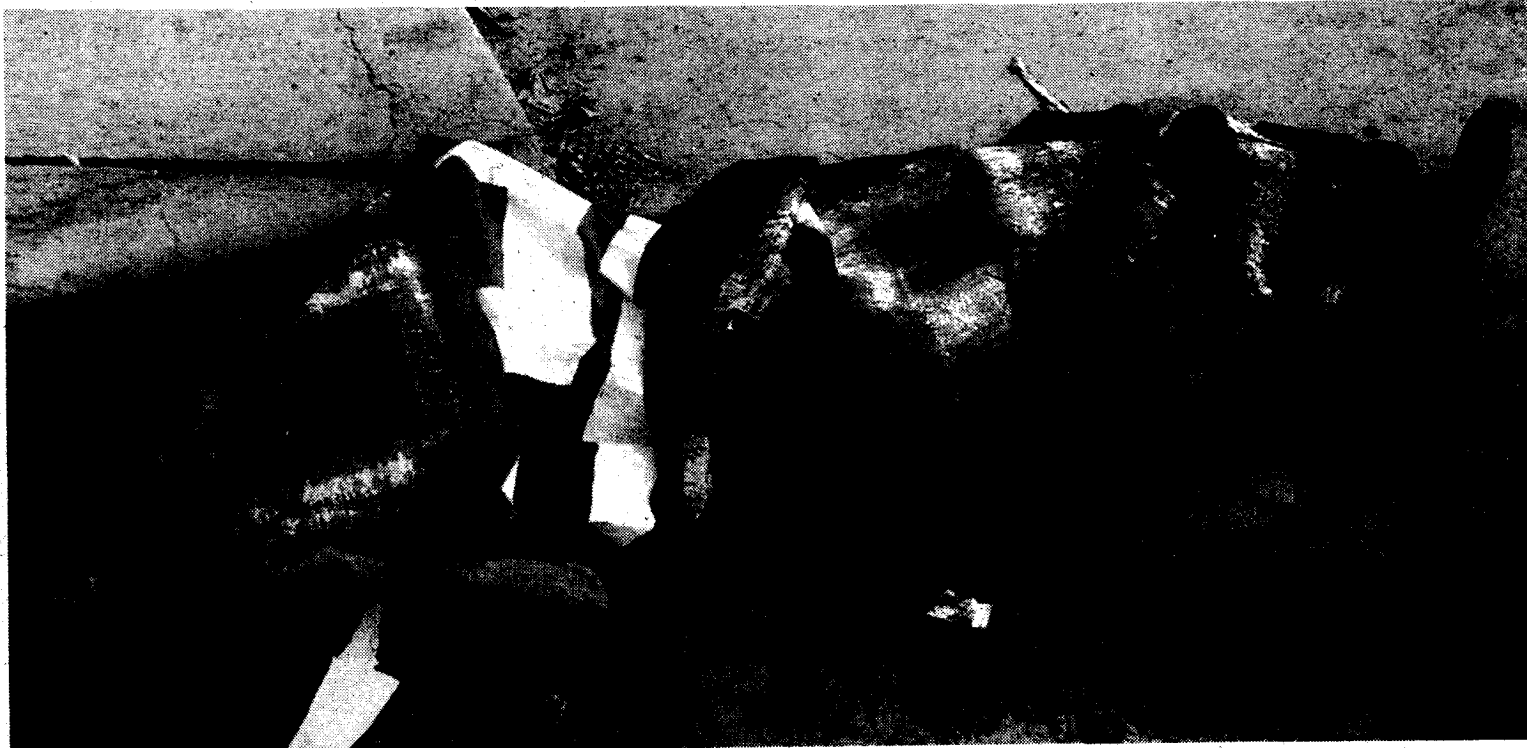
It is the rapid growth of the WPA in Guyana which has caused the regime to resort to its present brutal methods of repression to try to destroy it. Maximum support and solidarity is needed against these attempts and to ensure that the struggle continues.

Intercontinental Press
combined with **INPRECOR**

SOUTHERN African and Latin America feature in this week's issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*. A special feature is the document which is the basis for the recently-achieved unity of Guatemalan revolutionaries.

Of equal interest is the publication of a statement by the Peruvian PRT, assessing the results of the recent election campaign in which Hugo Blanco became a member of parliament.

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.



El Salvador leaders tour Europe

By Dodie Wepler

ASSASSINATIONS, gang murders, beatings and torture are daily events faced by El Salvadoran workers and peasants. Whatever Carter might say about human rights, it doesn't tally with the vast US support for one of the most barbaric regimes in Central America.

In a film shown at a meeting in London last week with leaders of the Revolutionary Democratic Front currently on a European tour, one scene strikingly depicted this grim reality.

'I am learning to read,' says an El Salvadoran peasant, 'because sooner or later I will be jailed and I will need legal help. But this will involve paper work. If I can't read, something could be done against my wishes.'

This scene in the film *Who is for liberation?* shows not only how imprisonment is a fact of daily life for growing numbers of El Salvadorans, but it also indicates the enormous social tasks in store for the people when their revolution is finally victorious.

The message put forward at the meeting by the main speaker from the Front, Rafael Menjiver, was the need for a vigorous solidarity movement of all people 'to support our historic struggle for freedom.'

'Our struggle is not a matter for the El Salvadoran people alone, because the crisis created in our zone is one which affects the



world as a whole. None of the countries of the area, through defending their own interests, will be able to remain outside the struggle in Central America,' Menjiver told the 100-strong meeting.

His sentiment was echoed by the Nicaraguan chargé d'affaires in London, Tomas Chamorro, who paid his tribute to the fallen in El Salvador. He repeated the statement made by the Sandinista leadership which has had so much impact in El Salvador and internationally: 'Any direct US intervention in El Salvador against the peasants and workers will not be tolerated by Nicaragua.'

Whether the Revolutionary Democratic Front will take the Nicaraguan road remains to be seen. This new coalition unites all the major opposition groups in El Salvador, from the Revolutionary Co-ordinating Committee of the Mass (a united front of the principal organisa-

tions of the workers and peasants), to the social democratic MNR, and the recent split from the bourgeois party, Christian Democracy. There is also a unified military command.

The roots of the war being fought by the El Salvadoran masses today are not difficult to find. With its population of 4.7m, it is the most densely populated country in the world. El Salvador has other telling statistics. For instance, its people have the lowest calorie intake per person in Latin America. Three quarters of El Salvadoran children aged under five suffer from malnutrition.

In a country where three out of five are peasants, the overwhelming majority don't own any of the land they work on. Ninety-two per cent of the population owns just 10 per cent of the land.

The price of food has trebled in the past

four years, while wages have remained static. But, as the commentator in the film noted, someone is making money. El Salvador is the third largest producer of coffee in the Americas.

Any opposition to these depressed conditions has been met by severe repression by the regime. But this won't be enough to hold back the struggles of the El Salvadoran masses.

The US government recognises what it is up against and the consequences for the region at a time when the Nicaraguan revolutionary process is deepening. Carter has just sent a further 36 military advisors and 100 marines. Thirty-five helicopter gunships — used in Vietnam — have been recently added to the regime's arsenal.

Finally, four new American military bases have been established.

Determination

According to Rafael Menjiver, the determination of the masses and the new-found unity of the opposition forces will make US efforts to prop up the regime difficult, while the government's military forces have their own problems. Menjiver estimated that the army has been losing 600 soldiers a month in desertions.

As Hector Ogueli, another speaker on tour, explained, the disintegration of the El Salvadoran state forces arises because of the nature of the army. 'Although workers and students are liable for conscription into the army, the regime doesn't want them. Instead, the army takes trucks into the countryside and rounds up peasants.'

Ogueli explained that the assassination of Archbishop Romero occurred after his sermon where, after many queries by peasants as to whether they should obey their command, he appealed to them to refuse to obey.

The fate of the El Salvadoran struggle depends not only on the continuing resistance of the masses. It will also be determined by the ability of the international workers' movement to mount solidarity against US threats to the entire region.

Rolled back

Time after time the platform speakers at the El Salvadoran Solidarity Campaign meeting compared the way the struggle in their country is unfolding to the war in Vietnam, rather than Nicaraguan events. This process of 'Vietnamisation' is what needs to be rolled back, and solidarity work can again play the vital role it did in defeating US imperialism in Indochina.

One immediate event that British socialists can support is the rally being organised jointly by the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign and the Nicaraguan Embassy on 19 July to celebrate the first anniversary of the victorious Nicaraguan insurrection.

The evening rally will be at the Logan Hall, Bedford Way, London WC1. Speakers invited include: Cuban chargé d'affair, Vietnam ambassador, Grenadian High Commissioner, plus leaders of the British labour movement.

Ford workers plan fightback

THE second international meeting of the European Ford Workers Combine took place in Copenhagen from 6-8 June. Representatives attended from Ford plants in Denmark, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Holland, and Britain. These ranged from official shop stewards committees' delegates to members of 'unofficial' rank and file groups. From the UK Ford Workers Group, delegates attended from Dagenham, Langley, and Halewood, including members of Big Flame, the International Marxist Group and the Socialist Workers Party.

Discussion centred on new technology, the fight for the shorter working week and Ford's plans to introduce 'Japanese' methods of production into Europe — all against a background of slumping markets, short-time working and redundancies.

The discussion on the shorter working week highlighted the disparities which exist across Europe and the consequent difficulties in launching an international campaign for the 35-hour week. For example, in Portugal workers have a basic 45-hour week and the unions are demanding this be reduced to 40 hours but only on night shifts. In Spain, Ford workers fought all last year to reduce the basic work week from 44 to 40 hours by striking every Saturday morning.

Some progress has been made in Holland where the retiring age is now 62. Industrial contracts are negotiated collectively in Holland and 35 hours was a major demand of the trade unions this year. Despite this only workers for the Mobil oil company made the breakthrough. They will get 35 hours by 1983 and a new shift system which will give them an extra 26 days a year holiday!

One immediate success of the Combine has been to push the European Metalworkers Federation into calling an official conference for Ford convenors and officials in Spain in the autumn. When it happens, the bureaucrats from Britain and Germany will be in for a rude surprise because the European Ford Workers Combine will have supporters at it.

They will be fighting for a policy of no transfer of production between Ford's European plants without the permission of the plant losing the work; no overtime working while others making the same product are on short time, and a Europe-wide campaign for the 35-hour week.

Death of a high-flyer

By Tom Marlowe

THE death of Sanjay Gandhi, in a flying accident on Monday, is bad news for imperialism.

At the age of 33 he seemed destined to be the next Prime Minister of India, and the most right-wing Prime Minister since Indian independence.

His rise to power had two explanations: the good fortune of being born into the Nehru/Gandhi dynasty; the new politics with which he became associated, and which imperialism and its servants in India felt was necessary to save India from communism.

What these politics amounted to was evident during his mother's previous term in office. Sanjay was directly responsible for the 'emergency' legislation and the forced sterilisation campaign which curtailed many democratic rights.

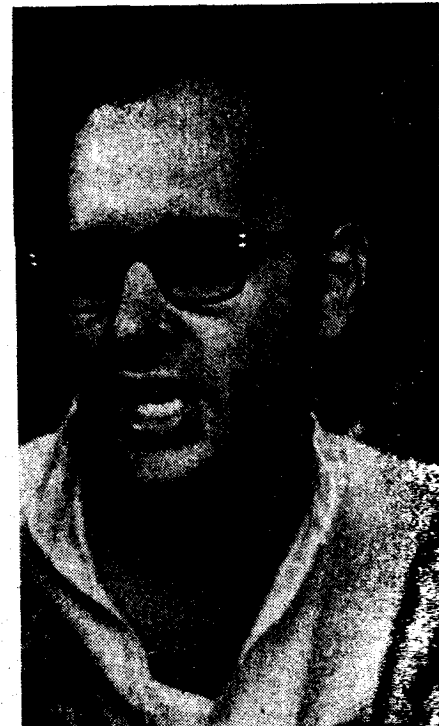
These policies, more than any others, were responsible for Gandhi's defeat in the 1977 election. Yet Sanjay not only survived, but went from strength to strength.

Being Gandhi's son, and therefore someone who by virtue of a family name had a chance of 'stabilising' Indian politics, was a great help in this regard, but Sanjay was also evolving new politics which made him the candidate of the Indian ruling class.

These included attacks on trade union rights, fierce opposition to nationalisation, a contempt for bourgeois democracy and the advocacy of monetarist-type policies.

Sanjay epitomised the transformation from a Congress party with an anti-imperialist heritage and social democratic history to a Congress Party openly siding with big business.

The fact that he was young, was Gandhi's son, had control of the youth wing of the Congress Party and had built up a powerful system of patronage enabled Sanjay to enact such a transformation. No other politician in India today can be as useful for imperialism as Sanjay promised to be. This death is a blow for imperialism, but not for the peasantry or the Indian working class.



SANJAY Gandhi who, before his death, was spoken of as the next Prime Minister of India. As leader of the Youth Congress, Sanjay Gandhi was enthusiastically committed to the repressive policies of his mother, Indira Gandhi.

South Korea's growth — is it so unexpected?

AS A regular reader of Socialist Challenge, I haven't been aware of a 'new line' on Third World issues (David Booth, 12 June). But leaving that question aside, what, I wonder, is the significance of David Booth's own line?

His view is that rapid economic growth has been taking place in a number of less developed capitalist countries and that this growth has benefited the living standards of the working class and the poor. But what then?

The capitalist economy is always highly paradoxical. In certain areas of the UK and the USA during the worst years of the '30s, there was a good deal of growth which, incidentally, benefited the working class in those areas.

As international capitalism moves into a deep crisis there are, and no doubt will continue to be, many such paradoxes where growth in particular areas of a country, or in particular countries, may be extraordinarily rapid.

But will this be such as to redress the overall tendency? Or will it represent the working of forces which lie outside the scope of the Marxist view of economics?

Writing without specialist knowledge, I would have thought that cheap labour and the absence of independent working class organisations were sufficient to explain why so much US capital has been invested in South Korea (it is interesting that a recent issue of *Fortune* was devoted almost entirely to the charms of this region of the world as a source of profits).

Unless some novel economic factor is involved which will give capitalism generally a new lease of life, I do not understand how David Booth's reading of the South Korean miracle makes a lot of difference to the political tasks of socialists in the West, nor, indeed, to those of the socialists in South Korea.

On the contrary, recent events in South Korea seem to confirm that the capitalist development of poor countries — even an 'extraordinary' rate of development — merely brings the well-known political tasks into sharper focus.

A NORWEGIAN READER

Import controls don't defend jobs

MARTIN Stevens (Letters, 12 June) says that import controls will not hit foreign workers because 'as British industries collapse, their products are often not replaced with those of foreign workers, but the country just gets poorer and de-industrialisation advances'. We shouldn't 'rob workers of an important tool in defending jobs and industry'.

His first argument isn't true because his second isn't true either. Import controls don't defend jobs.

They don't take control of investment out of private hands. When British workers are forced to buy goods from British capitalists, at higher prices than on the world market, what they do is fork out extra cash to keep these capitalists afloat.

It is, in effect, a disguised subsidy. Fair enough — but isn't this OK if the capitalists then use this money to keep their industries going? The answer is that they don't!

Britain's private shipbuilders were subsidised up to their eyeballs right throughout this century but they never ploughed back a penny of it.

The cash was used to prop up ailing profits, pay back money-lenders and shareholders (at competitive rates of interest), and — if there was any left over — invest abroad, where rates of profit are much higher because of the slave-labour conditions of economic dependency.

But doesn't this benefit foreign workers? Absolutely not. Ask the South African workers! The reason for the misery and

dependency prevailing in the Third World is because investment does not take place under the control of the peoples of these countries.

Our capitalists invest abroad in limited areas — in industries which are profitable to Britain, instead of producing to satisfy the needs of the Third World peoples who are not given the money to pay for these goods. The resources of the Third World remain permanently underexploited to satisfy the greed of a few rich investors.

The root of this is not the movement of goods: a socialist Britain would enter immediate discussions with Third World peoples (particularly countries like Cuba and Nicaragua where popular revolutions have expropriated, or are trying to expropriate, private capital) to expand trade in a planned way — planned by both sides, not unilaterally imposed by Britain which is what the Labour lefts propose.

But this can only be done if control over investment is taken out of private hands and if the profit motive ceases to dictate how production is organised.

We need a planned, socialist economy under workers' control first. Then we can discuss the planning of trade in a meaningful way.

ALAN FREEMAN, London

Import controls maximise profits not employment

MARTIN Stevens claimed (12 June) that when 'British industries collapse their products are often not replaced with those of foreign workers'. This is probably the case but how import controls would help these particular industries is a total mystery — alleviating competition when there isn't any?

To see import controls (à la Tony Benn and Ken Gill) as the beginnings of socialist planning shows, to say the least, dangerous naivety. Martin should realise that Benn's strategy is based on planning agreements with the captains of private industry!

The last thing that company directors and shareholders have in mind is the building of a planned socialist economy. In times of economic recession 'agreements' with capitalists have only one purpose — the saving of capitalism.

As Paul Highfield pointed out in his article on unemployment in South Wales (5 June), import controls will not be used to protect jobs but to maximise profits.

In this light, Benn's strategy is more similar to fascist corporatism than socialism! It's obvious that by polarising national competition in trade the road is prepared for the advocacy of national competition in labour (immigration controls) and even markets (international war).

Surely Martin wouldn't advocate war on the basis that it cures unemployment?

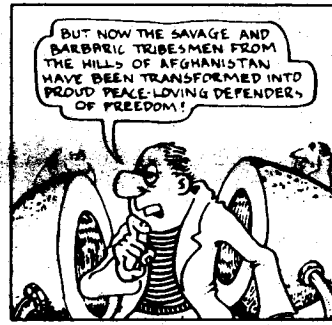
LES HARTOP, Coventry

Coal subsidy no answer

PAUL Highfield's article 'The Wounded Dragon' (5 June) was just the sort of feature in which Socialist Challenge is usually lacking. It was thus a great pity that Paul marred his article by raising the demand for a subsidy for Welsh coal.

This demand originates from the reformist leadership of the South Wales Miners' Union and the Welsh Labour Party. It is part of an interlocking policy of import controls on coking coal, opposition to closure of pits with workable reserves, and a government subsidy for coal.

While arguing against import controls, Paul does not see any similarity to the question of subsidy. Yet the way the reformists use this demand is quite explicit: they aim to counter the effects of the rationalisation of the coal industry through the state writing off a loss in order to better compete with other states. It is a natural complement to import controls.



The comparison Paul makes on subsidy of coal is the same comparison the reformists use, that is with Germany and Australia. A more important comparison would be with Poland or one of the other workers' states.

In the latter countries the coal industry is part of a planned economy, albeit a deformed plan. The coal industry, its supply industries, processing and subsidiaries, have long been seized from private owners.

As a consequence, the Polish coal industry is not the servant of capitalist enterprise in the way that our nationalised NCB still remains. A comparison in subsidy proves rather startling as Polish coal could be said to be 100 per cent subsidised.

The struggle now beginning against coal closures has been weakened by the redundancies in steel. Miners have been led to believe that this is because of the fact that the BSC is a large consumer of coal.

Actually it is because pit closures require a class-wide fight, as Paul indicates, and the acceptance of steel redundancies has weakened the working class.

Revolutionaries must try and organise with the minority of miners who are critical of the NUM leadership. We must win these miners to the policies Paul raises.

But we require a fuller programme, with, for example, demands for an end to debt repayment; (especially to former owners), for the nationalisation of all mining and associated industries under workers' control, opposition to nuclear power, for an integrated energy policy, and for the occupation of pits facing closure.

As we work against the closures many issues will become clearer. But it should be clear now that asking for a subsidy is asking for the noose of profitability to be loosened a little. With further inflation we'll end up asking for another subsidy while more miners join the dole queue.

STEPHEN BELL, Cardiff

Educational class collaboration of Communist teachers

KATHY Underwood's article on the National Union of Teachers (12 June) doesn't get to the root of why the Communist Party is not interested in organising a Broad Left.

Professionalism ('we are the experts, leave it to us'), with all that entails in terms of a relationship to the working class, is a consequence, not the cause of the CP's position. The CP has a thoroughgoing strategy of class collaboration in education which flows from two sources.

The first is the general position of the CP on the trade union bureaucracy which is shifted further to the right in the NUT because of the political backwardness of the majority of teachers.

But secondly the CP are class collaborationist as educators as well as trade unionists. Since for them school almost entirely reflects the interests of the working class, the class struggle in education is seen as largely about access and conditions.

Because the bourgeois state has shown itself capable of allowing, and the ruling class of introducing, substantial reforms (from the beginning of elementary education for all to comprehensive schools), a strategy based on the working class continuing to pressure the government for more such reforms seem to be quite logical. The present Tory govern-

ment's cuts are seen as dogmatic blindness to national as well as working class interests.

For the CP, political division in the NUT weakens it as an instrument for applying pressure which the CP sees as its principal task and which justifies the characterisation of the executive as 'progressive', and to which even alliance with the Labour Party is sacrificed if it risks the opposition of Tory teachers.

There is a more serious criticism to be made of Kathy's article. Like her co-thinker Hilda Kean whose report on the Easter NUT conference ignored Rank and File Teacher, Kathy's article does not reflect the position of the International Marxist Group on the importance of building a united left teachers' organisation.

For her, 'ideally broader unity would be desirable, although it is unlikely at present'. In the meantime there should be joint work where possible. This is the position of R&F, but it isn't the one that IMG teachers argued for and won inside the Socialist Teachers Alliance.

We regard the unity of these two organisations as important enough to be one of our main campaigns now, not postponed to some ideal future.

RICHARD HATCHER, Birmingham

Children and socialism

IT IS alarming and highly symptomatic of the problem that Mary Carter so movingly described (15 May) that there have been no published replies to her letter about the seeming impossibility of meeting the demands of being a revolutionary and a parent.

There are many of us in the revolutionary left who are struggling with this problem, and many of us find it to be as important as all the other issues which fill the pages of the left press.

We recently held a well-attended day school on the theme of 'Children and Socialism' where, among other things, Mary's letter was discussed. I was asked to write to Socialist Challenge on behalf of the day school mentioning some of the things which were said.

This turns out to be an impossible task so instead I would like to use your letters column to advertise the imminent publication of the record of the school discussions.

As a comrade from the Socialist Charter group said at the school, there is an urgent need to generalise the discussion about this thorny issue, and we hope that our short, duplicated pamphlet will be of some use to all the others in the movement who are grappling with it.

Perhaps I can be rash enough to offer one of the conclusions many of us are coming to. The conflict of demands of revolutionary practice and relating to children might well recede if we were to re-define our idea of what it means to be a revolutionary.

We should dispense with the Leninist notion that revolutionary practice consists mainly of meetings, demos, pickets, and 'organising'. We should emphasise that revolutionary practice does consist of these things but not to the exclusion of all else, and certainly not as a 'professional' activity, occupying all our waking hours.

Revolutionary practice should also involve building loving, socialist relationships with our comrades, and with our own and other people's children — the kind of relationships which we intend to see throughout the post-revolutionary society.

If this became a priority now, helping our children become revolutionaries would not become an alternative to being a revolutionary outside the home — it

would be part of being a revolutionary.

There would be no rupture between 'home' politics and 'outside' politics. And the strain which most of us who have responsibility for children is where with Mary Carter would begin to disappear.

PAUL HOLT, Big Flame

Children and Socialism is available, price 30p, from Big Flame, 217 Wavertree Road, Liverpool 7

Football: What about the Italian police?

WHILE it was a welcome change to see football discussed in Under Review, Geoff Bell's article (19 June) was totally inadequate even as a commentary on the events at the England v Belgium match in Italy.

Yes, English football — and European football generally — is at a low ebb and is, as Geoff writes, boring to watch. Yes, the waning of Union Jack helps to promote chauvinism and reactionary politics.

But surely when cops — Italian, British, or whatever — wade into football fans lashing out with batons and using tear gas, it might just be worth pointing out the police's role.

The impression from Geoff's article (however unintentional) is that we are not too bothered about cops beating up 'this drunken, Union Jack-waving, chauvinistic rabble'. Even the bourgeois media agreed that only a few fans were actually fighting and that the police attacked indiscriminately.

It might not be Geoff's idea of a fun summer's holiday watching the English team in Italy, but to some people it is. Don't we think they should be able to do that without being attacked by the police?

And why no mention of the arrogance and hypocrisy of the powers that be in football, such as Bobby Charlton's comment that 'the game is all about the players — not the fans'. Who paid his wages for years? They go on about the effects of alcohol when people in football such as Lawrie McMenemy are up to their neck in advertising drink.

The Tory Press and How To Fight It

'Despite the deplorable national coverage of the TUC's Day of Action many people in this country still fail to understand the common interests between the Tory government and the capitalist-run media. Appropriately drawing on the experience of 14 May, this pamphlet succinctly analyses this relationship and also outlines the ways workers can gain a voice.'

KATE HOLMAN, NUJ Equality Working Party and chairperson of the *East End News*

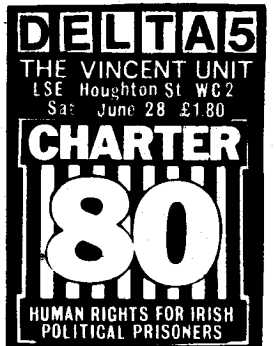
'This pamphlet is a welcome addition to the growing literature exposing the true monopoly nature of our so-called free press. We must now step up the fight to maintain and extend the existing left media, build new local and national alternatives, and win the right of reply.'

MIKE POWER, NGA activist, *Daily Mail*

'A useful pamphlet from Socialist Challenge. It sets out clearly and simply the criticism of our existing press. It argues that workers need to fight for the right of reply by direct action...that seems far more doubtful as a strategy.'

HAROLD FRAYMAN, deputy editor, *Labour Weekly*

* *'The Tory Press and How To Fight It'* — buy it, read it, sell it, and implement it! From Socialist Challenge, 328 Upper St, London N1. Single copies 10p plus 10p p&p. Multiple orders, 8p pre-paid sale or return, post free. Cheques to 'The Media Group'.





'My name is Vittoria, I'm a comrade from Messina. At 16 I'm already tired of struggle, resigned, especially now when I see how they kill us, taking away our right to demonstrate... Comrades, it's sad to admit it, but it's how it is: they're smashing us, we're not going to win.'

Vittoria, Messina school student

'So what do we say to our workmates who now more than ever see us as the only people capable of opposing the Christian Democrat/Communist Party government, the only people capable of giving a lead... It's convenient to dissolve the party into the movement, but it doesn't help the movement to grow, it becomes suffocated. I believe we should look to the movement to try and develop a political project which would return to the movement and be tested there.'

Claudio C, Turin factory worker

By Jude Woodward and Phil Hearse

THESE two remarks, taken from letters that appear in *Dear Comrades*, are not just the individual responses of two comrades. They reflect the crisis that confronted the whole Italian far left in 1976 and 1977.

The general election of June 1976 resulted in the right-wing Christian Democrats, the ruling party since 1947, holding on to power. The strategy of the far left had been based on the expectation of a victory for the left and a government of the Socialist Party, the Radical Party, and the Communists. The far left organisations had formed Democrazia Proletaria (Proletarian Democracy), a joint electoral bloc, with the aim of holding enough sway in the new government to push it farther to the left.

The revolutionary left won nine seats, but that was no compensation for the overall defeat. The militants were disoriented and demoralised.

After the Chilean coup of 1973 the Italian Communist Party (PCI) pursued a policy of seeking collaboration with the Christian Democrats: the 'historic compromise'. After the 1976 elections Italy was ruled by a cabinet composed entirely of Christian Democrats but with the tacit support ('non-opposition') of the Communist Party.

The bicycle

On Saturday 14 March, while I was following the demonstration along via Torino on my push bike, a comrade marching behind the LC banner asked to borrow my bike to get up to the front quickly. I lent it to him, but I haven't seen it since.

I hope it's all a mix-up — so I ask this comrade to return the bike to me at the central branch office as soon as possible. Otherwise I'll have to think I'm the biggest fool in town.

Marco

The total bankruptcy of the Communist Party's approach encouraged many militants to take an ultra-left attitude to the PCI and other established workers' organisations, including the trade unions. Hence the rise of terrorist groups like the Red Brigades and spontaneist groups like those calling themselves the Metropolitan Indians. The mood was also reflected in Lotta Continua.

At the Rimini conference, when Lotta Continua dissolved, a leading comrade called the CP an 'instrument for the promotion of Italian imperialism'. Sofri, the

**Letters from the Italian far left
Voices in a wilderness**

IN 1976 Lotta Continua, the Italian revolutionary organisation, had a membership of 10,000, and its newspaper of the same name had a circulation of 30,000. It seemed set to go from strength to strength.

But in that same year a lively discussion inside the organisation turned into unresolvable conflict at its conference in Rimini. The conference ended with the

destruction of Lotta Continua as an organisation, although its paper continued to appear and retained its popularity.

Dear Comrades, recently published by Pluto Press, is a collection of readers' letters taken from *Lotta Continua* in the year after the Rimini fiasco. Here we reprint some of the letters and poems and examine the background to the book.



secretary of Lotta Continua, called the trade unions 'articulations of the capitalist state'.

The economic crisis that appeared across the capitalist world in the early 1970s struck Italy badly. Unemployment rose steeply and inflation galloped. The Christian Democrat government, with PCI support, imposed austerity. The workers responded with a wave of strikes and demonstrations, but none of these reached critical proportions, the PCI and trade union leaderships were not seriously challenged, and the government was by and large able to impose its policies.

The new situation required of the revolutionary left a new perspective, and a lively pre-conference discussion opened in Lotta Continua. Documents reflecting the discussions held in national assemblies of the various sectors of the organisation

were produced. But the Rimini conference began on 31 October with no clear positions for voting.

This situation threatened to leave Lotta Continua with no political line with which to face the huge political and economic crisis. But then there burst upon the conference another explosive issue.

The far left in Europe faced a common problem: how to meet the challenge of feminism both in general politics and within their organisations. In the Italian far left this problem exploded with particular intensity.

Italian culture and the repressive divorce and abortion laws, produce a more repressed sexuality, greater machismo, and stronger female stereotypes of madonna or whore. Sexism pervades the revolutionary movements of Catholic countries in an even more pronounced

way than in the Protestant countries of Northern Europe.

Lotta Continua had not met the challenge of the new women's movement. A struggle erupted at the conference between feminists and workerists.

The confrontation expressed itself as 'workers centrality vs feminist centrality'. The leading group that had called the conference disappeared altogether and played no role in the debate. No one reaffirmed that revolutionary strategy must take up the problems posed by the women's movement, or that the mass movement of women must have a specific independence.

The idea that the overthrow of capitalism will not automatically eliminate all forms of women's oppression was used as an argument against overthrowing capitalism at all. Stress was

laid on changing consciousness, habits and behaviour as an alternative to anti-capitalist struggle.

Workerist comrades repented badly to this, aggressively exhibiting their male chauvinism, or indulging in lengthy self-criticism on the conference floor. The upshot was confusion — no votes were taken, except to elect a national committee, and the conference ended on the note 'The conference continues'. (Lotta Continua means 'the struggle continues')

As an organisation Lotta Continua was finished; but the letters page of its newspaper became the arena for debating the problems that had raised their heads at the Congress. Comrades described their confusion and demoralisation, discussed personal problems, wrote poetry, expressed their discontent.

Meanwhile, the crisis in Italy deepened. A new student radicalisation led to violent clashes on the streets. But the militants grew more confused. Without perspectives, in despair, they poured out their hearts in the letters page of *Lotta Continua*.

When students were killed by the police, friends and comrades wrote to the paper in moving words. The workerists and feminists continued their debate. Later, under pressure from groups like the Red Brigades and Autonomia Operaia (Workers' Autonomy), more and more militants wrote about the problem of violence. Young people wrote of their hopes, their families, their schools. Prisoners wrote about life in jail, the screws, the psychological effects of solitary confinement. Everyone wrote to the paper: the letters page of *Lotta Continua* reflected the ferment of the Italian far left.

Two generations

I'm a pensioner from the heart of Genoa.

Comrades, I'm tired and disgusted, but I have faith in you young people who are carrying on our struggle. I'm sure that if we are all united, like so many years ago, we'll manage to crush them. As for us old comrades, we'll make an effort to be with you in the front lines, and it must be a great joy to have fighting with you so many comrades who have been in the struggle for over thirty years.

**Greetings with a clenched fist from your comrade,
Pina Marozzelli**

The letters collected in *Dear Comrades* make a fascinating document, at times moving, humorous, stimulating. The will to struggle, to seek a better life, is rarely absent from the letters.

But *Dear Comrades* is also a profoundly tragic document, expressing the disorientation of the Italian far left. Despite the huge numbers of people — workers, students, women, youth — who were in or around the revolutionary organisations, these organisations could not rise to the challenge.

Pete Anderson, a militant of Big Flame, distorts the failure of Lotta Continua in his introduction to the collection. He would have us believe that since 1976 the Italian far left has been through a period of 'reassessment'. It would be more honest to say that thousands of comrades have been lost to the revolutionary movement. Many have drifted back to the PCI, despite its role in supporting the government: the far left presented them with no alternative. Others turned to terrorism and the Red Brigades.

Today the Italian far left is immeasurably weaker than it was in 1976. There is nothing positive in that. It is a greater tragedy than all the little tragedies described in the letters.

The letters page of *Lotta Continua* was more lively and reflected a fuller relationship to the people than anything we find on the British revolutionary left. But however important that may be, political answers are necessary. Otherwise the letters are simply voices in the wilderness. It was political answers that the spontaneism of Lotta Continua consistently failed to provide.

Dear Comrades: Readers' letters to 'Lotta Continua' has just been published by Pluto Press, £1.95 paperback.

