

Socialist Challenge

Support Gardner's occupation for jobs pp 2-3

Thatcher's gift to NATO — £7,500m of OUR money

BRITAIN OUT OF NATO



Photomontage: PETER KENNARD

MARCH AGAINST THE MISSILES

GLASGOW: Saturday 25
 October
 11.30am, Blythswood Square
 March to George Square rally

LONDON: Sunday 26 October
 11.30am, Speakers Corner
 March to Trafalgar Square rally
with 'The Specials' and 'The Pop Group'

JOBS NOT BOMBS

By Redmond O'Neill

WHEN Hawker Siddeley, the multinational corporation that bought out Gardner's in 1977, announced 590 redundancies at the plant, management claimed it was due to 'falling demand and investment'.

Yet demand for Gardner's diesel engines, each individually made by hand, always exceeded supply. A look at the figures does not indicate that Hawker Siddeley faces financial difficulty, either in its overall operation or in its engineering division.

Profits

In 1978 Hawker Siddeley's pre-tax profits were £118m; in 1979, £108m; and estimates for this year are £120m (source: Extal Index).

The firm's mechanical engineering division, which includes Gardner's, grossed the following in pre-tax profits: 1977, £41.6m; 1978, £53.2m; and 1979, £37.1m.

This year Hawker Siddeley's gross paid sales for diesel commodities alone exceeds £1 billion!

Add to this the £115m Hawker Siddeley received in compensation in 1977 when its aerospace division was nationalised and only a fool could believe Sir Arnolds Hall's statement that lack of profits and markets were the

reason for redundancies.

The reasons for the run-down of Gardner's have to be sought in other aspects of Hawker Siddeley's commercial operation.

Commercial

First, any idea that engineering as such is not a commercial priority for Hawker Siddeley can be easily refuted. The multinational has spent the past five years shifting the bulk of its industrial production away from aerospace into mechanical engineering.

There has been a major slump in aircraft markets on a world scale; the Hawk MRCA strike aircraft suffered particularly as a result of the revolution in Iran. The same is *not* true for diesel engines.

Gardner's is not the only diesel firm that Hawker Siddeley has acquired recently. It has bought three major US-based diesel firms — Fasco Industries, Westinghouse, and the Onan Corporation. There is no doubt that Hawker Siddeley is planning a major offensive in selling diesel equipment, probably mainly to the third world.

Product

So why is Gardner's being run-down? It is certainly nothing to do with the quality of the product. The *Financial Times* had this to say about Gardner's engines: 'They are the Rolls Royce of diesel engines, every part is individually made by hand.'

'Demand far outstrips supply' and

'operators swear by them, fairgrounds run on them, and they are renowned for their reliability.' The article, on 28 August, added that 'about 10,000 second hand Gardner's engines chug up and down Hong Kong harbour in local fishing boats'. Finally it pointed out 'Gardner's engines are not cheap — but they are quite simply the best there are.'

Quality

Yet Hawker Siddeley is not interested in quality, or in Gardner's.

It is planning to use its newly acquired American companies for its new drive for markets, and probably just wants Gardner's out of the way to cut down the competition.

This is a typical operation on the part of a multinational out to get as large a share of the markets as possible.

Sir Arnold Hall, Hawker Siddeley supremo, put it this way: 'When we take over a company we operate a 'post acquisitive rationalisation' policy'.

In short Gardner's will be stripped of all its useful assets and technological know-how; its engines will be removed from the markets to a considerable extent, and then the company will again be sold, probably for less than Hawker Siddeley paid.

As long as international corporations can shuffle capital from one country to another like a pack of cards, no worker's job will be safe anywhere.

'The Tories have gone too far'

THE Gardner's occupation is an example to workers all over the country of the type of action necessary to stop redundancies.

Socialist Challenge talked to Vinnie Peers, senior shop steward in the 340-strong foundry section at Gardner's, about why the workforce was the first to occupy and the role of the unions and the Labour Party nationally.

Why do you think Gardner's is the first big engineering plant to occupy in defence of jobs.

I think we were able to convince people on the shop floor that enough is enough. I mean morally I haven't the right to put up my hand for redundancies knowing that it'll be someone else that's going down the road.

This is one of the best-organised factories, with regular shop meetings and all the rest. Trade union organisation was built up through struggles.

In 1973 we had a sit-in here for 13 weeks. Before that we'd been working to rule for nine weeks against management's demand for a change to piece work. It came to a sit-in because they tried to move the engines out of the plant

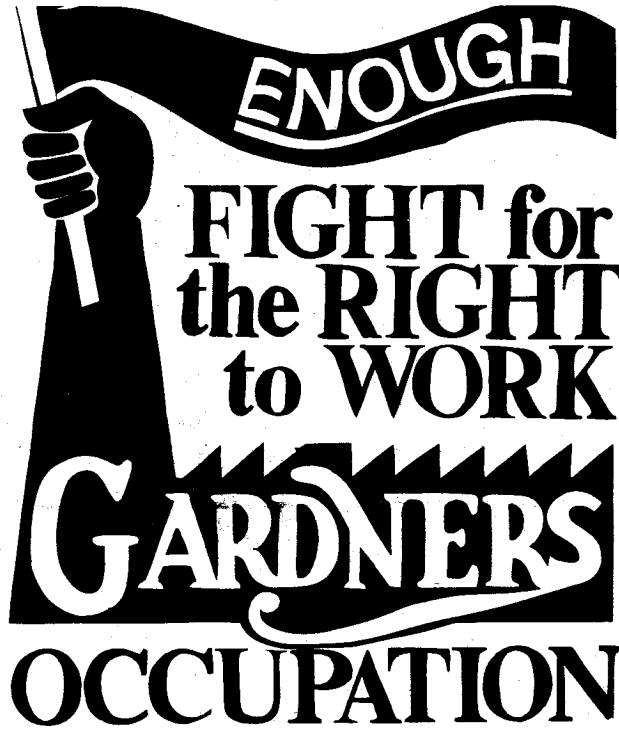
What should the Labour Party and TUC be doing?

They should be giving a lead against Thatcher. At the Labour Party and TUC conferences not one leader stood up and said 'The Tories have gone too far. They have to be stopped. We'll organise a massive movement against this government.'

That's what the mass of trade unionists are looking for — leadership from the top.

They talk about a crisis in the Labour Party, but I'll tell you out in the country we haven't got a crisis — we've got a disaster. If you look at it logically how can this country be conservative with the number of trade unionists?

But people don't trust the trade union and Labour Party leaders. For example in the past Benn's said a lot of fine



things but then when he was in government he ducked out. In the unions, as soon as they get voted in as full-timers most of them don't want to know us on the shopfloor anymore.

You wouldn't believe they're being paid to help us. In my opinion members of the union executives and the Labour MPs should be coming round the factories and seeing what the people really want.

That's the way to get through to the mass of trade unionists. That's the way they

did it in Poland — real democracy. They had the mikes outside so everyone knew what was going on and could control their leaders.

People want control of their leaders and they want to see them leading against Thatcher.

As it is the people at the top of the unions and Labour Party act like the Scarlet Pimpernel — when you need them they're not to be found. But if we're to get ordinary people involved, not just the militants, then the people at the top have to be seen to be leading.



Photo: Morning Star

Gardner's occupation is now official

'THE decision to make the strike official has had a great psychological effect. It has given us a sense of security. Our morale is fantastic!'

That was the reaction of Tom Macafee, AUEW convenor at the Gardner's plant in Manchester, to the news that the AUEW national executive had made their occupation against redundancies official.

Now in the third week of their struggle, the Gardner's workers are digging in and organising to win support for their action nationally.

Tom Macafee explained: 'We've sent correspondence to every divisional organiser and district secretary in Britain.'

Convenor

'We are asking them to distribute the information to every convenor and steward on their register. In line with our appeal we need financial backing from every possible factory.'

'We'd also like to invite Tony Benn to come up to Gardner's and give us his support.'

On Monday the *Daily Mirror* had a full-page article supporting the occupation!

In the Manchester area the Gardner's occupation is meeting with a tremendous response. Already a second major engineering plant — Ward and Goldstone in Salford — have said that if necessary they will take strike action at the end of the 90-day notice they've been given of redundancies.

Call

A meeting of the AUEW Broad Left has decided to take up the call from the last North Manchester shop stewards' quarterly meeting and campaign for the Manchester district of the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding unions to call an extraordinary meeting of all Confed stewards to mobilise against unemployment and organise support for Gardner's.

The most effective way to do this would be through an all-Manchester day of action in support of Gardner's and against unemployment.

Every morning the strikers organise a mass picket inside the factory gates. Food and entertainments are beginning to get sorted out. Last Saturday the anti-missile film *The War Game* was shown inside the factory.

Footway

We organised mass pickets to stop them. The police said we were blocking the footway and threatened to arrest the pickets. So the convenor asked what would happen if we picketed from inside the gates.

The police inspector just shrugged so we picked up the security inspector who was on duty at the gate and we all marched inside. That was the start of a 13-week occupation. At that time half of the workers were unionised. Since then we've built up to a hundred per cent.

That was in 1973. I think that now things have changed. People are taking redundancies as if they were inevitable. People are scared.

It's not far off from fascism under Margaret Thatcher's government — they rule by fear. All that's missing is the guns!



On our page 3...

It's a woman's right to work!

UNEMPLOYMENT, said the TUC earlier this year, is rising faster for women and girls than for men, and government policies are accelerating this trend.

The TUC cited a 62 per cent increase in female unemployment in the four years to January 1980, as compared with a decline of two per cent for men.

This year the number of jobless in Britain has hit a new post-war peak, climbing to almost 2.1 million.

Both men and women are hit, and vacancies are now at their lowest level since the beginning of 1977, according to the *Employment Gazette*.

Yet up to a year ago, a thousand women a month on average came into paid work in the period 1976-79. By then the boom which had brought women onto the labour market in the '60s had well and truly fizzled out. Female unemployment was rocketing, as the TUC figure shows.

Decline

The decline in jobs, as well as depriving women of their livelihood, as it does for men, also deprives them of choices they were beginning to make about how to run their lives — choices men have always been free to make.

That doesn't make male unemployment more acceptable, but it does point to the wider consequences of female unemployment.

Women do not work for pin money and if we are to fight unemployment

effectively we have to fight for jobs for all. Trade unions must therefore be careful not to fall into the Tories' trap.

Women should have an equal right to work as men. Many of the women who have taken jobs outside the home have joined trade unions, boosting the numerical strength of the movement and even forming the majority of some of the TUC's biggest unions.

The danger is that it is easier for the government to be discriminatory over employment without being blatant about it in its policies.

Unlike abortion, or even social security, it has taken extensive studies to reveal just how badly women fare at work and out of work, because discrimination is largely hidden.

This danger needs to be recognised and countered if the movement is to tackle the unemployment generated by this government. Trade unionists should be fighting to implement the TUC policy for positive action on women's rights, including for part-time workers.

Socialist Challenge is supporting a special contingent to demand action around 'A women's right to work' on the joint Labour Party/TUC demonstration against unemployment to be held in Liverpool on 29 November.

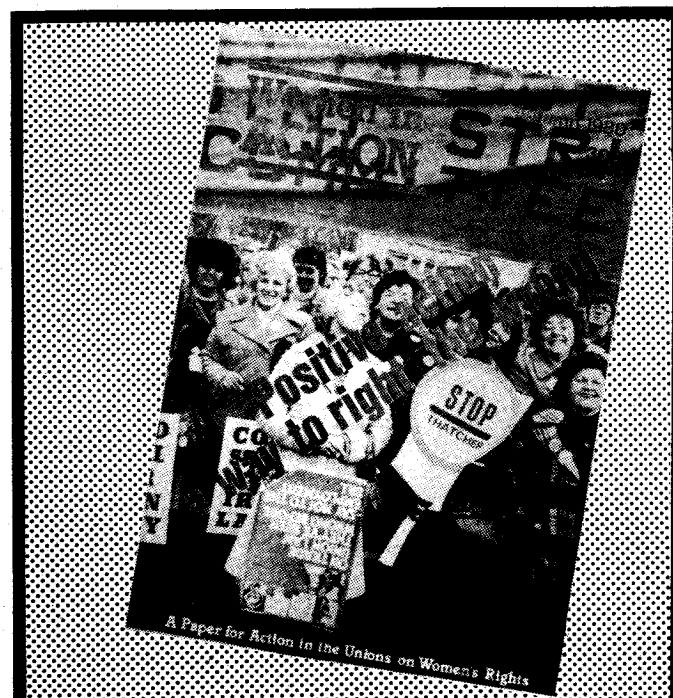
We're asking trade union branches, local Labour Party and women's groups to do this so that women can raise their voices in solidarity with men in the fight against unemployment.

Reprinted from 'Women in Action'



WOMEN'S unemployment is up 62 per cent over the past four years

Photo: John Sturrock (Report)



WOMEN IN ACTION

Women in Action is a campaigning journal for women in the Labour movement.

It reports and discusses the issues that affect women — cuts in services, increasing unemployment, and attacks on our rights. We discuss what trade unionists can do to fight for women's rights.

Women in Action is a voice for women in the labour movement.

The latest issue has articles on positive action, a woman's right to choose, and women in industry.

You can order copies, 30p each, from *Women in Action*, Box 2, Sisterwrite Books, 190 Upper Street, London N1. Bulk orders are offered to labour movement bodies.

Solidarity mounts for Gardner's

By Pete Clifford

THE Gardner's joint shop stewards committee has issued the following appeal.

'In Manchester it is clear that there is widespread support for the struggle. Gardner's workers have a fine record for supporting other struggles.

'But our struggle is also important nationally. As opinion polls published this week show, unemployment is the biggest single embarrassment to Thatcher's government. A victory for Gardner's would be an inspiration to every worker who detests this government's policies.

'The solidarity which ordinary trade unionists and unemployed workers show for us will be the single most important element in ensuring that the Gardner's struggle is successful.'

What you can do

*Send telegrams of support to the factory immediately. Get your organisation to send a delegation of support.

*Organise factory collections, or better still, a levy. Send food parcels.



*Set up labour movement support committees in your area.

*Invite Gardner's speakers to your union meeting.

Messages of support and donations to: Dave Marsden, Treasurer, CSEU Strike Committee, 187 Barton Lane, Eccles, Manchester M30 0MN. Tel 061-789 2202.

Money and support is flowing in from throughout the labour movement. Stone-Platt workers from

Oldham, who occupied earlier in the year against redundancies, donated £250.

At the Ferranti plant in Hollingwood, stewards are holding shopfloor collections for Gardner's. ASTMS members at International Computers Ltd sent £200.

ICL shop steward Rita Mitchell explained to Socialist Challenge: 'ICL workers may be faced with redundancy later this year, so this fight is our fight — it has to turn the tide against the Tory Government.'

ICL set a delegation of workers to the Gardner's plant last week.

At Shell Carrington, the TGWU stewards are taking regular collections and have produced leaflets to explain the Gardner's occupation to their members.

A support committee has been set up in Eccles, with representation from the trades council, the local Labour Party and five workers from Gardner's. The aim is to win support from the local community, and the committee is organising a social for 10 November.

Bristol Trades Council has agreed to support the occupation with a £35 donation.

Bolton Trades Council has voted to set up a sup-

port committee to organise a speaking tour of the local engineering industry. It is arranging for a speaker to attend the Rhyders plant, whose closure was announced last week.

Manchester North engineers' shop stewards quarterly passed the following resolution: 'This quarterly urgently requests the Confederation district committee to convene a shop stewards meeting during working hours to mobilise the trade union membership to fight unemployment.'

Tours

Manchester students have been touring the anti-nuclear film *The War Game* along with a speaker from Gardner's. The turnout has been enormous, with 400 students turning up at one college.

Last weekend the film was shown in the plant and in the evening at a Socialist Challenge 'Jobs not Bombs' meeting. Seventy people heard Gardner's Convenor Tom Macafee and Socialist Challenge supporter and Stockport Boilermakers secretary Jeff West.

They used the opportunity to build support for the 26 October CND demonstration against missiles.

A chance to fight the cuts

MARGARET Thatcher is increasing arms spending but everything else is being cut.

Pat Kane asked ALAN WALKER, vice-chairperson of Liverpool NALGO, why he is attending the 1 November Local Government in Crisis conference called by the Lambeth labour movement.

'THE Lambeth conference is a real attempt to launch a fightback against the Tory cuts. This is particularly needed when the TUC and the national unions have opted out of this fight.

'Tory minister Heseltine plans £1,000m cuts that will affect every sector — education and housing in particular. In many areas they will destroy council house building. This has already stopped in Liverpool, where the Liberal council has let out council house land for private development.

'The Heseltine Bill on local government aims to reinforce the cuts by penalising "overspending" local authorities. Last year many authorities raised the rates by up to 50 per cent to avoid cuts.

'That solution is no longer viable. To defend jobs and services would need rate rises of 75 per cent or more. Even then the councils would get their government block grant reduced drastically under Heseltine's proposals.

'The Tory cuts cannot be defeated at a local

level. National solutions are necessary. Interest-free central government grants should be provided to restore services.

'But of course the Tories won't do that. They're cutting other nationally-funded services like the housing investment programmes.

'The Lambeth people are right to call for Labour groups and local authority trade unions to unite around a programme of national industrial action. This could take different forms, such as not covering for posts that have been cut, or stopping overtime.

'Our social services department, for example, has refused to collect any increased charges for Meals on Wheels or Home Help services. The Tories hope the extra charges will lead to fewer people using them, so they can be chopped altogether.

'If we can unite all the public sector unions against the cuts we can link up with the wider fight against the Tories, especially on jobs.

'We all need shorter working and the 35-hour week, none more so than the direct works departments. So we need the support of the industrial unions.

'The Lambeth conference is the best opportunity we have had to forge that unity and to begin a national campaign of action against the Tory cuts.'



Al Walker

'Nationalise banks' — Labour council manifesto

'A LABOUR Greater London Council will demand that the next Labour government will ... nationalise the banks and at the same time annul local authority debts. This would free local authorities from the burden of debt charges and allow a State bank to grant interest-free loans to fund services and developments.'

These pledges are part of the manifesto adopted by a special delegate conference of the London Labour Party on 18 October for the GLC elections next May.

The manifesto also endorsed an appeal to the unions to take industrial action to back the council's stand against the Tories.

Local Government in Crisis

National Labour and Trade Union Conference

Camden Town Hall

1 November

For details of registration write to 'Local Government in Crisis Conference', Organising Committee, Room 103, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, London SW2 1RW.

ROUT THE RIGHT

AS Labour right-wingers try to wriggle out of the Blackpool conference decisions on the election of the party leader, DAVE HUDSON explains how the left should organise for the 24 January special Labour Party conference.

MORE than ever the battle lines being drawn over the party leader are bound up with the question of party democracy and the policies of the next Labour government.

The right-wing Gang of Three — Rodgers, Owen, and Williams — are pro-NATO, pro-Common Market and pro-big business. They are against party democracy.

Boost

For them conference policy should not be binding on the next Labour government. And they are determined to overturn the decision that the party leader should be elected by more than just the MPs.

The left's victories at the Labour Party conference boosted the confidence of workers fighting the Tories. They gave the green light to the fight for socialist policies today, linked to the prospect of a Benn government in the future.

There can be no doubt that a victory for Benn in the election for leader after the special conference would be a big victory for the left throughout the labour movement. That is why Socialist Challenge supports Benn's candidature in that election.

But the struggle for accountability of the party leader to the rank and file cannot be left to a battle within the constituencies. The fight should be taken into the trade unions.

It is the unions that determine the outcome of the Labour Party conferences. Those on the right and left calling for reducing the influence of the unions in the party miss the point entirely.

The integration of the Labour Party and the trade unions at local and national level is one of the great strengths of the workers' movement in this country. However the decisive union block votes should be brought under the control of the rank and file.

Every affiliated union should thoroughly discuss throughout the membership the method of electing the Labour leader. Special delegate conferences should be held to decide the issue. There should be resolutions to mandate the unions' delegations to the special conference.

Socialist Challenge has always argued that the election of the party leader and the content of the election manifesto should be decided by the annual conference. Our supporters will argue for this view at the special conference.

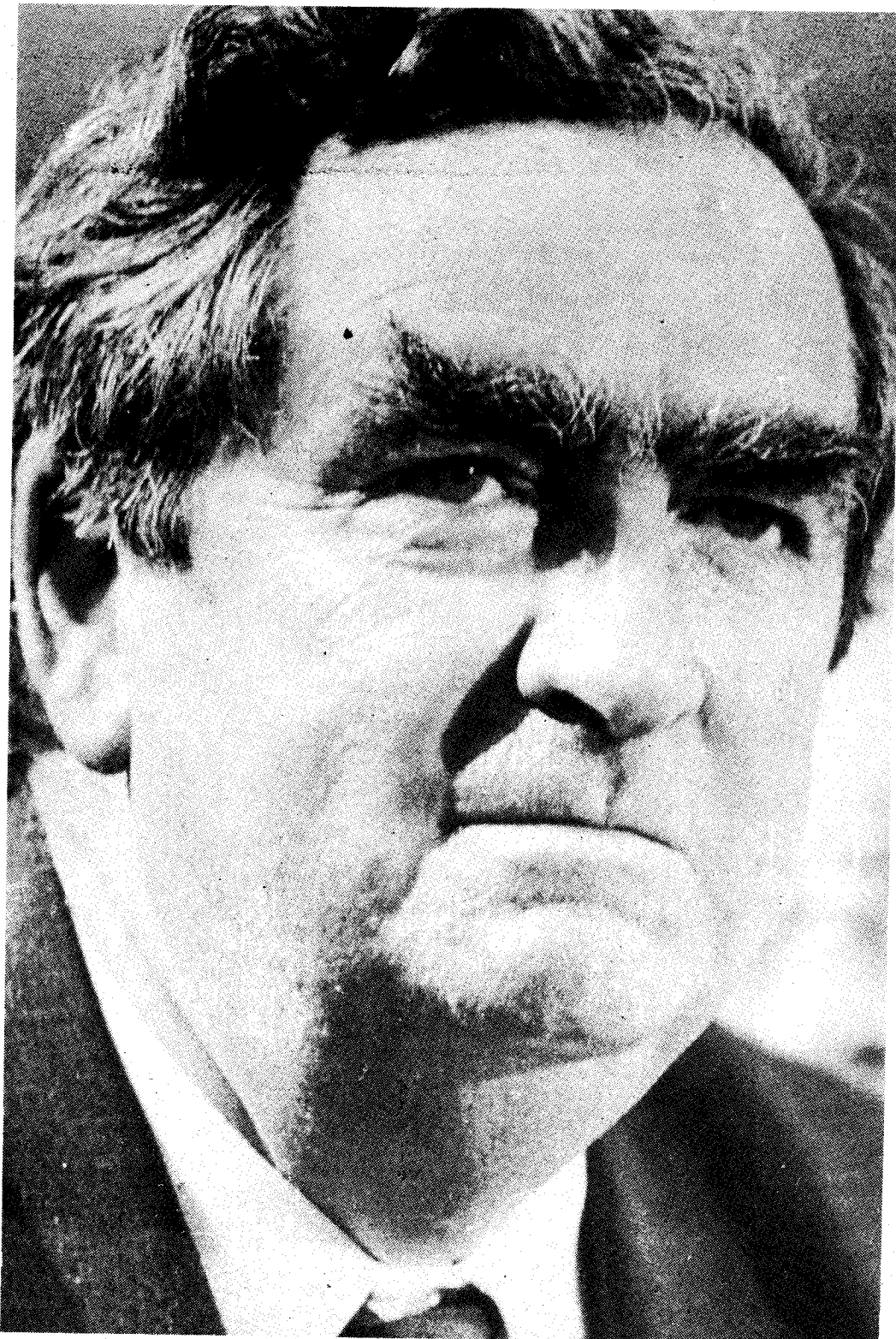
But if such a position is defeated, delegations to the special conference should support any proposal that broadens the franchise, rather than continuing the system where only MPs decide.

Conference

Engineers' leader Terry Duffy believes that MPs know what's best for the working class when it comes to electing the party leaders. We disagree.

At present MPs have no vote at party conference. That's how it should stay on all policy matters. There should be no special status or privilege for MPs, above those of any other member of the party.

Party conference should be the decision-making body on policies, the manifesto and the party leadership.



According to Shore, Denis Healey has 'splendidly thuggish qualities'



Michael Foot

Constituency attacks 'subversion' of Blackpool decisions

BELOW is the text of the resolution passed last week by the General Management Committee of Islington North Labour Party on the question of the election of the Labour leader.

It is a model of how to thwart the attempts of the right wing to overturn the decisions of the Blackpool conference.

'THIS North Islington CLP regrets the decision of the party leader to resign in advance of the special conference in January to decide on a new method of electing a leader. We note the serious and divisive moves of sections of the PLP to subvert the decisions of the special conference by seeking to elect a permanent replacement for James Callaghan now.'

'We call upon our MP to take no part in such moves and to support the temporary appointment of a caretaker until after the new election procedure to be decided in January comes into effect.'

'In the event of the PLP proceeding with an election for leader other than a caretaker, we instruct our MP to vote for no candidate other than one who gives a firm undertaking to stand for re-election under the new procedure to be decided in January.'

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES

Stop the missiles

By Paul Smith

The 26 October CND demonstration is the biggest step yet taken against the new round of missile madness. This is a useful moment to map out the future direction of the movement.

Cruise and Trident missiles are central to Tory policy. The commitments the Tories have made on 'our' behalf are staggering. One fifteenth of everything the government spends in one year will be donated to the US government for the dubious benefits of Trident. £3.80 per person per week will be spent each year for the next fifteen years solely on the missiles.

Apart from the staggering economic cost there are enormous political and military costs. Cruise missiles, stationed in Britain, tie us hand and foot to American global military strategy. These missiles, totally under US control, are designed for a 'first strike' European 'theatre' nuclear war. They make Britain the number one European target in any war.

Aggressive

Politically, Cruise has the effect of binding Britain ever closer to the new, aggressive foreign policy stand of the United States. Since the ignominious American defeat in Vietnam, a huge new wave of struggles against oppression and poverty has swept the planet.

In 1979, nine US-backed

Winning the battle against the missiles

dictators fell. In the Caribbean, the backyard of American imperialism, civil war rages in El Salvador, and Grenada has broken from the US camp. A workers' government in Nicaragua marches toward socialism. The spectre of revolt threatens US corporations in Jamaica.

All this, together with the fall of the Shah's bloody regime in Iran, and the collapse of the racist regime in Zimbabwe, is an expression of the accelerating march of revolt and revolution.

Western capitalism, staggering under the weight of increasing economic crisis, wants all this stopped. And the war drive is capitalism's answer.

The USA is gearing itself up to intervene wherever the revolution threatens; a new ring of nuclear steel is being built around the Soviet Union.

The ageing bureaucrats in the Kremlin are no supporters of world revolution. Their response to the battle of the Polish workers for social and political rights is clear testimony to that.

Nevertheless, the existence of states where,

despite bureaucratic deformities of monstrous proportions, the workers have had the effrontery to throw out capitalism is a permanent economic and political danger to imperialism.

The fact that the Kremlin is forced to extend a protective nuclear umbrella over regimes such as Cuba and Vietnam, means that stern warnings to Russia, backed up by nuclear hardware, are a vital part of the United States' offensive against revolution.

EDITORIAL

The new arms race has been launched by the United States. Those who suppose that both sides are equally responsible not only fly in the face of the facts — the US has double the number of warheads, and a massive lead in the technology involved in 'delivering' those warheads — but would also find difficulty explaining their theories to the people of Vietnam or Cuba.

Without the existence of the USSR, to use the eloquent phrase of Kissinger, they would have been 'bombed

back into the stone age'.

We stand for opposition to the war drive and for the disarmament of our own rulers. We place the blame for the present round of missile madness squarely on the shoulders of Carter and Thatcher.

Because the war drive is the most important issue of international politics and because Thatcher's government has made its military

commitments a central part of its political stand — the missiles are a vital issue in the fight to throw out this government.

Socialists should work with anyone who is committed to action to stop the missiles. In the course of the campaign, experience will show who is right on the broader issues.

But it does not finish there. Only the labour movement has the power to stop the government in its tracks. It is the fight for a commit-

ment from the Labour Party and the trade unions to end the missile build-up, and to withdraw from the Western war machine, NATO, that should be our political aim. It is only action by thousands of workers that can guarantee success for that particular goal.

We oppose the idea, very popular with some, that Bishops and other middle-class worriers are the vital components of the movement against the missiles. The leadership of the campaign must be in the hands of the labour movement.

But we are not there yet. While initiatives like the labour movement conference against the missiles, scheduled for the new year, deserve our full support, they are only small steps along the road we need to travel. The main force in the campaign is CND.

Socialists should build CND. It is the main organisation that will attract those who wish to act on the missiles. Its programme, which includes unilateral nuclear disarmament and withdrawal from NATO, makes CND a tremendously

valuable gain for the workers movement. But it would be naive at best, irresponsible at worst, to imagine that building CND alone is the answer. There are already local groups which have arisen to fight the missiles. We should back these campaigns to show the direction in which CND should go.

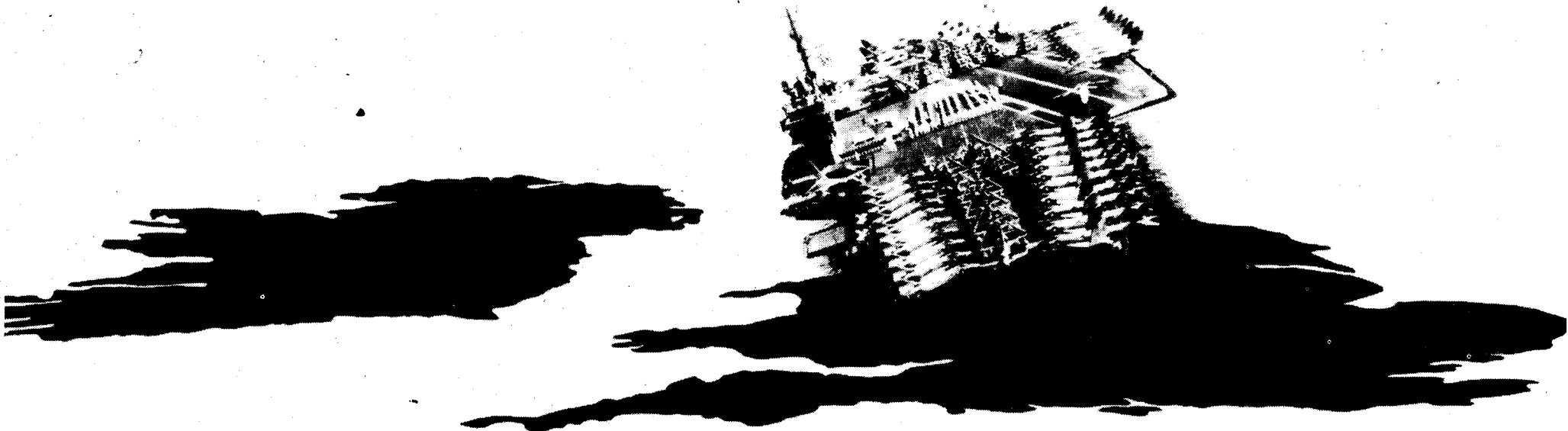
Action

There is a fight on for the soul of CND. Is it to build a mass action campaign, directed towards the labour movement, against the missiles? Or is it to follow the course, proposed by sections of the Communist party, toward a middle class protest movement for 'peace'?

A movement which places mass action and the labour movement at the centre of its concerns will be best placed to tap the energies and enthusiasm of thousands of working class youth who can be won to the campaign. The building of Youth against the Missiles groups shows the potential.

The campaign organised by Manchester against the Missiles, affiliated to the CND, and directed decisively at labour movement action against the missiles, is the best illustration so far of the direction that CND must go in. To do that socialists must be in CND, but at the same time lose no opportunity to demonstrate, in practice, where we must go. It is these positions which Socialist Challenge supporters will be fighting for at the coming CND conference.

Photomontage: PETER KENNARD



Britain — America's aircraft carrier and a prime target

Why unilateralism has to mean withdrawal from NATO

There is increasing opposition in the labour movement to Britain's possession of nuclear weapons. The decision in favour of unilateral disarmament at the Labour Party conference was a reflection of this.

But the fact that the same conference rejected a call for Britain's withdrawal from the imperialist alliance of NATO shows that there is still some confusion on the roots of war and how to prevent it.

The idea that NATO somehow defends us against the supposed war-mongering Soviet Union leaves the movement susceptible to Tory propaganda. They argue that the West's nuclear weapons, on which NATO is based, are necessary to maintain peace.

NATO is an aggressive alliance. It was set up by the conquering powers after the Second World War, but it excluded the Soviet Union, which responded by establishing the Warsaw Pact. The Kremlin has simply reacted to the escalation which NATO has stimulated since then.

The latest development has been the agreement by all the NATO partners to a 3 per cent rise in armament spending. They also agreed to the siting of American Cruise missiles on Euro-

pean soil.

It is an operation of the 'big lie' worthy of Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda minister, to present this escalation as a defensive move against 'Russian expansionism'.

The whole argument is a sleight of hand. NATO decided to re-define the nature of the arms race by inventing the ridiculous idea that there could be a 'tactical' nuclear war limited to the 'European theatre'.

Previous calculations had been premised on the 'big bang' theory — hitting with everything in the 'first strike'. Accordingly, all non-European weapons were taken out of the equation while the Soviet Union's weapons, whether aimed at West Europe or the USA, were all included.

This is how Russia's nuclear arsenal is supposedly superior. However, no serious Western commentator has ever really put in question NATO's over-

whelming ^{strategic} dominance. This has always been the case, even though it has been NATO which has always raised the stakes.

The underlying reason is that capitalist countries are inherently expansionist. Countries with a planned economy like Russia's are not.

Imperialism is modern-day capitalism. Capitalism forever has to seek new markets and defend existing ones against revolution in order to keep up its profit rates.

It is no accident that the recent right-wing military coup in Turkey was carried out while a NATO exercise was taking place there. NATO immediately welcomed the coup. The Greek 'colonels' coup in 1967 was carried out according to a NATO plan.

Imperialism will never be satisfied until it has restored capitalism in those countries which it has lost, particularly the

Soviet Union and China.

Revolutionary developments around the world are not equivalent to Russia extending its economic base. Cuba is a big economic burden on Russia, costing it £10bn a year.

The Kremlin's aim is to stand shoulder to shoulder with im-

perialism against revolutions. That it sometimes gives bedgrudging aid is because it needs to gain diplomatic support from imperialist-dominated countries and achieve the best bargaining position in its efforts to obtain peaceful co-existence with the US.

All this is in order to keep stability in the world; stopping revolu-

Arguments for Socialism



tions is a large part of what detente is about. The despots in East Europe and elsewhere will defend from imperialist attack the state and property relations from which they draw their privileges. But their attempt to join with imperialism to preserve the status quo against revolu-

tion makes them the vehicle for transmitting imperialist pressure against the working class.

It is in this framework of trying to get the best deal with imperialism that we should understand conflicts between so-called 'socialist' countries. The tension between China and Russia does not stem from the

same urge as capitalism's defence of markets and profits.

While there are many complex intermediary factors, what is fundamentally at stake is the vying of the various ruling castes for more favourable treatment by imperialism.

This was at the root of the start of the Sino-Soviet conflict when the US wanted to isolate China and begin to reduce Cold War tensions. More recently, this process was reinforced by the pressure of imperialism on China in setting the pre-conditions for taking down the 'bamboo' curtain.

The threat of a world nuclear war comes from imperialism. To stop it we need to break up imperialism by disarming the capitalist class in Britain and ultimately in the USA.

Britain's withdrawal from NATO will be a big step in that direction.

Stop the missiles

'We've so much to learn from the local groups'

What is the essence of CND's politics? What are you agreeing to when you join?

I would see CND fundamentally as an educational instrument to awaken people to the problems of the arms race.

The four aims of CND, in the constitution, are: British unilateral nuclear disarmament; world nuclear disarmament; the dissolution of military blocs, leading to complete and general disarmament.

What we are trying to do, I believe, but other people might see it differently, is to wake people up to what is happening and act as an umbrella to get them to campaign on those four things. Our diagnoses of the causes of society's sickness will be different. That's quite clear.

CND is a democratic movement, so it's difficult for me to say exactly what particular positions are. I think it would be generally agreed in CND that the three slogans of the demonstration are the ones that can get broad support at the moment.

People might well be panicked if they were presented with the idea of withdrawing from NATO tomorrow. People in general in the country are still, unfortunately, convinced that NATO is a protective shield. But what they can understand are the particular decisions to have Cruise and Trident. So it's a matter of tactics.

After the demonstration we have to continue with the idea of the broad base.



We have to say to the public you have to be concerned; not pulling them towards some vague multi-lateral thing in the future, which is a formula for doing nothing, but for immediate action by us — governmental and in our individual organisations.

At the organising meeting for the demonstration on 8 October you were arguing that we will have, in all probability, 40,000 people marching through London, and the one thing they all have in common is agreement with the slogans of the march.

But they don't necessarily agree with unilateral disarmament, or an end to NATO. Some people, including yourself, even questioned whether CND should call people to join the campaign even though it called the march.

I wouldn't agree with your analysis of it. I think that if people oppose Trident they are actually in favour of British unilateral disarmament — but in ten years' time. So they're only a little way off.

You're probably right that if faced baldly with the question: Do you want to get out of NATO? a lot of people would say No. But if asked: Do you think the military blocs of the world should be dissolved? I think they'd say Yes.

It's not been my experience that people have supported the demands of the march, and then not the others. If the Labour Party had had before it not a resolution on getting out of NATO, but to work towards the dissolution of the military blocs, I think they'd have carried it.

THE Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was launched in 1958. Through the annual marches to the Aldermaston Atomic Research Establishment it made a national impact. Its familiar slogan, Ban the Bomb, appeared everywhere.

In the late '60s the campaign declined, but since the decision to import a new range of nuclear missiles into Britain there has been a resurgence of interest in CND.

Its decision to call its annual demonstration on the theme of stopping Cruise and Trident places it at the head of the broad movement of opposition to Thatcher's war plans.

Socialist Challenge talked to BRUCE KENT, full-time secretary of CND.



CND secretary Bruce Kent: 'We see the need for an enormous mobilised public opinion'

I'm not sure exactly how you say which is the most significant — and they are a group that we certainly want to bring on our side. Anyway we can do that we'd like to hear about.

But I don't think they are exclusive.

You've said that CND is a democratic organisation. How does it involve local activists at a national level?



There's a membership, you join, and as a result you have the right both to nominate people once a year for the council and you have a vote on resolutions. So it's democratic in that sense, but it's terribly centralised, terribly London-based.

I would very much like to see a regionalism develop with regional councils. I think most of us agree there should be more decentralisation. Also I'd be in favour of a much closer sense of partnership with affiliated bodies, however that could be worked in. Really there's nothing now; they pay their fee and that's the end of it.

The point you make about regionalism and the role of affiliated bodies is an important one. Say, for example, that the Transport and General Workers' Union affiliated to CND, representing over two million workers. Would it be given a representative on the national council?

No. The different subsections of CND, Trade Union CND, Labour CND, Christian CND — and there's talk of setting up more, such as Scientific CND, Medical CND — send their own representatives. This isn't true of the affiliates, perhaps it should be. Perhaps in fact the whole constitution of CND needs re-looking at.

CND wasn't even a membership organisation until the late '60s; as it sank out of existence it became a membership organisation. We have to change again now.

One of the people at a liaison meeting for the demonstration, from Campaign Atom in Oxford, expressed frustration that his campaign didn't have a national voice in CND.

CND needs a structure which allows the local campaigns and affiliated bodies to come together regularly to play a rôle in determining the campaign initiatives of CND.

I absolutely agree. If CND ever woke up democratically it would collapse! With the present impetus there could be two thousand people coming to the national conference in Leeds, but there are only 350 places.

This enormous enthusiasm has not got to be met by bureaucratic regulations, saying sorry you didn't pay up, or sorry you can't speak, or whatever. The people who are doing the work are the people who should make the judgments about things.

I'm absolutely for that — I hope I'm not speaking out of turn. What's happened in Oxford, York, all over the place, is absolutely marvellous. Many of these local groups are really doing things and we have so much to learn from them.



Manchester marchers against the missiles

All these groups with slightly different aims is not what we need. The question of whether a more limited campaign can build up forces for the future is something you have to judge on the ground. There is a Peace Tax Campaign — based on a highly limited issue which is drawing in a lot of people, who have a conscientious objection to paying war taxes. There's the Campaign Against the Arms Trade, which is taking up a single issue and it's been a wild success.

But what I'm trying to get at is how you would go about uniting all these groups. What would be the right basis to get maximum unity of all the different currents of opinion within the broad movement for nuclear disarmament?

Can CND just build itself? Can it be the umbrella for the broadest

forces? I do see CND as being that campaign, but respecting the autonomy of other groups and campaigns. On the ground and historically we are the biggest of these and we've got the resources.



How does CND see stopping the missiles? What's the next move after the demonstration?

I would have thought that many people in CND see it as a parliamentary process which they will achieve through a Labour government. Of course, for a whole number of historical reasons a great many people do not

have that kind of confidence in the Labour Party when in power. So apart from any parliamentary decision, I think we see the need for an enormous, mobilised public opinion behind these things, so that no government can weasel out.

To mobilise public opinion you have to explain why Cruise is more dangerous than anything else; how futile the idea of an independent deterrent is. In other words we have to plan to educate people with the facts.

I'm very concerned that there are a number of groups which don't generally get much attention but which attract a great deal of human concern in the country — the welfare groups, the overseas aid groups, the churches — all these elements should be really pressed.

And in their turn they should press Labour or any other government coming into power.

What priority does CND give to trying to win support and action from the trade union movement?

I agree that the trade unions are potentially a massive force for good in this area, and I would wish that we would be involved as closely as possible with them.

The trade unions have the ability to say Yes or No to what actually happens. So we agree on that. But unfortunately there's been natural tendencies in the trade unions to think of jobs and so on, and one can't say that over the years trade union co-operation, in boycotting or whatever, has been as effective as it might have been.

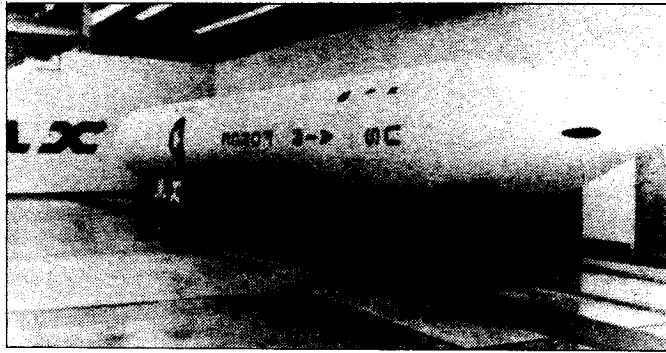
Ron Todd of the Transport Union is speaking from the platform on 26 October. It would be marvellous if the TUC came out as a block for something like the 26 October demonstration.

So I agree with you that the trade unions are among the most significant forces —

Photo: Morning Star

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

Stop the missiles



AN MX missile goes into firing position from its underground track

Youth in the front line

By Ann Henderson

'WE want Britain to re-arm with Cruise missiles, Trident and neutron bombs, which are the only way of tackling a tank advance' — Peter Young, Federation of Conservative Students.

This was Young's response to the formation of a Youth for Peace group, not to mention the widespread radicalisation among youth in opposition to the siting of Cruise missiles.

Young people have always been among the first to respond to new developments in international politics. From CND in the '50s and '60s, to the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, young people have been in the forefront of movements against war and imperialism.

In the United States, Carter's attempts to re-introduce the draft have faced an almost total defeat.

In Britain youth have been present on all the demonstrations against Cruise. From the outset, these mobilisations have included significant numbers of working class youth.

The problem is not one of militancy — youth can see quite plainly that nuclear war offers no future — but deciding the best way to organise the activity.

Although groups like Youth for Peace have been springing up all over the place, taking up a range of issues from nuclear energy to NATO, they have lacked any clear national lead.

Revolution Youth believes it is essential to organise a national and local campaign

on the broadest basis possible, in order to involve all the youth and youth organisations which are prepared to fight against Cruise and Trident.

Within that sort of campaign it would be possible for everyone to discuss their ideas, at the same time as building the biggest possible campaign against Thatcher's plans for a nuclear war.

Revolution Youth has called for the setting up of a Youth Against Missiles campaign nationally. Strong local groups already exist in areas such as Manchester, Birmingham, and Aberdeen, involving youth in various activities.

We have approached all other youth organisations for a meeting to discuss the campaign. One of our first tasks will be to build links with and affiliate to CND. We will be fighting for youth to adopt an anti-imperialist position, against the war drive of Thatcher and Carter.

The first thing to do is to build the campaign among students, schoolstudents, unemployed youth, and young workers, and to continue to involve all those who come on the CND marches in Glasgow and London.

We hope all Socialist Challenge supporters will help us with this project.



'A lot of kids will come to meetings'

DOMINIC, a 17-year-old cutter at a Manchester clothing factory, explains how he became involved in the anti-Cruise campaign.

'I went to see *The War Game*. What I saw shocked and horrified me.

'Until then I had no idea what a nuclear war would be like — also I was shocked to find out just where the war drive was coming from. So without any hesitation, I decided to do something about it.

'I was invited by a member of Revolution Youth to join a picket of the BBC about them refusing to show *The War Game*. About 60 young people were on the picket.

'About 25 people came along to a meeting after the picket, and we discussed our future plans for Youth Against the Missiles in Manchester. I also volunteered to speak at the March against the Missiles in Blackpool.

'For the first time I felt really great about being part of something which was fighting for a cause. I personally think that other young people will get a lot of satisfaction from the Youth Against Missiles campaign.

'I have told my friends at work about Revolution Youth and Youth Against Missiles, and they are coming to our next meeting.

'The older people I have talked to tell us that we have not lived long enough to know anything. We know that we don't want our future threatened by a nuclear war.

'I now see it as my aim to bring to light the horrors of a nuclear war to as many young people as possible. I think a lot of kids in our area will come to our meetings and demonstrations, and will fight against the missiles.'

Organising in the Unions

Build the Labour Movement Conference against the Missiles

By Dick Withecombe, Oldham East CLP

A CRUCIAL part of stopping the Tories' plan to allow Cruise to be sited in Britain will be to gather the strength of the labour movement behind the anti-missile campaign.

Manchester against the Missiles, after organising a successful lobby of the Labour Party conference, has taken the initiative in building a national labour movement conference against the missiles to be held in the new year.

discuss how we can extend decisions like that by the southern region of the building workers' union UCATT to refuse to move any material connected with the missiles. We need to win Labour Party support for such positions.

The conference will discuss how members of the TGWU and dock workers can organise to boycott material con-

Weld

There has been a ready response. Support has come from MPs and leading trade unionists, as well as constituency parties and local trade union organisations.

This reflects the successes at labour movement conferences this year, with the Labour Party and a number of trade unions voting against Cruise.

The aim of the conference against the missiles is to help weld this opposition into action. We also need to be better prepared to stop a repeat of the TUC Congress, where an ambiguous resolution was passed that even supporters of Cruise missiles like Duffy and Boyd of the Engineering Union could support.

Labour Party and trade union banners will be present on CND's march this Sunday. We are setting ourselves the target of getting the Labour Party and the TUC to the forefront in every future march not simply with their banners on the day, but in the weeks beforehand in building support among the members and working closely with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

It would be an enormous boost if every national trade union were to urge its branches to join with local Labour parties in building local anti-missile groups and CND. They should also help to set up and build groups such as Engineers against the Missiles, and Busworkers against the Missiles.

Bases

We have just three years to stop Cruise. We can't wait for the return of a Labour government; we need to start organising ourselves now.

Stopping the missiles will require trade union action such as refusing to do any work connected with mega-death weapons and their bases.

The conference should

'We have three years to stop Cruise. We need to start organising ourselves now'

nected with the bases. The Tories already have their international links; so do our right-wing opponents in the labour movement like Duffy and Chapple, courtesy of NATO. We have to develop international links to counter the missiles.

Factory

In Manchester, the convener of the occupied Gardner's factory has connected the fight of the redundant workers here with the millions spent on nuclear weapons. This is a valuable way of linking two aspects of Tory anti-working class policies.

The only factories in the Manchester area taking on workers at the present time are those linked to the defence industry. The billions being spent on a holocaust could provide a living wage for all those on the dole. Instead of 2.1m unemployed, we could use the money to pay for sharing out the work with no loss of pay — then we'd all have a job.

We want to discuss at the conference how workers currently employed in the business of making death technology could instead be used for making socially useful goods.

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THE SOVIET UNION, THE

THE siting of Cruise and Trident missiles in West Europe and the setting up of the Soviet SS20 missiles show that a new arms race is underway. This is obviously in part caused by the dramatic deterioration of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Why has this deterioration occurred?

You can start that question by debating when these relations broke down. One conventional view is that detente broke down with the advent of the Carter administration in January '77. Democratic presidents — as we saw with Truman and Kennedy — tend to be less secure in their handling of international affairs. Although the crude theory advocating this is simplistic, it has some merit.

Parties

The Republican Party is a more solidly-based ruling class party with a clear hegemonic ideology. But the Democrats are an alliance of different interests, although of course a bourgeois party, they need to cement their alliance with an alternative ideology, and it tends to be anti-communism. By launching various moral and political crusades on a world scale, Democratic presidents tend to exacerbate relations with the Soviet Union. This applies to Eisenhower and Nixon. It cannot however explain the difference between Carter and Reagan.

This theory has some merit which should be registered, but I don't think that it is the main reason — there are two much more important reasons. The first is the upsurge of revolutionary struggle in the Third World, and the second is the revival of a new rightist militancy in the United States.

The first of these factors relates to the way the Americans understood detente. In American eyes it covered not just arms limitation and the post-1945 division of Europe, but also a moratorium on revolutionary advances in the Third World. The 'rules of detente' included a counter-revolutionary stability thesis. Yet what we've seen since the mid '70s series of revolutions or at least radical social upheavals in countries which were thought to be stable elements in the world system.

Status quo

The most spectacular was the Iranian revolution of 1978-9; but there was also the fall of the US's oldest ally, the Ethiopian regime, which fell in 1974; the nationalist victories in the Portuguese colonies and Zimbabwe; the attempted revolution — I wouldn't say it was successful — in Afghanistan in 1978. And then there have been the developments in Nicaragua, El Salvador and the Caribbean — Grenada, Jamaica, etc. There have therefore been a number of countries where the USA has felt that the status quo has broken down; or where the influence of the Soviet Union has dramatically increased, or where the US's influence has declined, even without a Soviet advance.

If one looks at the record more closely in each of the countries where the Soviet Union has gained ground or where the US has lost out, it was the United States which took the initiative.



Nixon and Brezhnev sign arms treaty

In Angola the CIA decision to back the UNITA forces of Holden Roberto led to the Cubans going in, with Soviet backing.

In Ethiopia, where the Russians didn't support the new military junta until the end of 1977, the Americans and the reactionary Arab states encouraged the Somali invasion — which brought in the Cubans and the Russians.

Iran

In Iran the USSR wasn't involved in the revolution, but the US had been for 25 years. And in Afghanistan, the reason that the old regime was overthrown in 1978 was because the Shah of Iran, backed by the Americans, was trying to overthrow the regime and crush the left. The left replied by itself seizing power, with results that we all know. All these things backfired on the Americans.

These events have given the impression that there is a massive Soviet assault in the Third World. After Angola in 1975-6 and the Soviet intervention in the Horn of Africa in 1977, Brzezinski started to talk about 'linkage'.

The irony of the situation is that at the height of the Vietnam war, when the Russians and the Chinese were actively supporting the Vietnamese in a direct confrontation with US imperialism, the Russians and the Americans were quite capable of negotiating — probably because the spheres of Soviet influence were clear, and partly I think because there was a Republican administration.

Shift

The developments that I've outlined have caused an ideological shift to the right in the United States which is given a special twist by the fact that the United States is today dependent on the import of oil in a way in which it never was before.

Thus although they had to accept 'losing' Russia, China, Cuba, they are not prepared to

'lose' — in the sense that they have it — Saudi Arabia. Their sense of imperialist confidence has been undermined.

The atmosphere of xenophobia and chauvinism in the United States has been greatly increased by the Iranian hostages affair. The 'Moral Majority' campaigners supporting Reaganite candidates are an index of this.

On the basis of the factors that you've outlined it would seem rational for the US to reorganise its interventionist, counter-revolutionary forces aimed at the Third World. The Rapid Deployment Force is a case in point.

But it's not so clear why this has led to a new nuclear arms race. Is the siting of Cruise missiles and the construction of the MX system a rational response to the rise of the colonial revolution?

It depends what you mean by 'rational'. It's not rational in the sense that they're designed to meet an alleged Soviet threat on what they call the 'central front' — that is Germany — which in my view is not in fact there. The Soviet Union does not have an offensive deployment in Central Europe; and I don't think an offensive intention, although it obviously has an offensive capacity, otherwise it wouldn't be able to defend itself. Given the switch in China's stance, the Soviet Union is in a weaker conventional position than in the first cold war.

But it is rational in other respects. It is an essential part of the American ideological system that they have superiority — not parity with the Soviet Union. The sense that 'we are number one' is an essential part of America's popular ideology — not just in the arms race but in anything. 'We're the biggest and the best' — also militarily, politically and internationally.

What the Americans regard as satisfactory vis-à-vis Europe and the Soviet Union is that they are number one and the others fit into place.

Interview with Fred Halliday

FRED HALLIDAY, a member of the New Left Review editorial board, is the author of *Arabia without Sultans* and the Penguin book *Iran*. He has written extensively about Afghanistan,

which he has written about many times.

Socialist Challenge asks him about the Soviet Union and the response to it.



Plane takes off to bomb Vietnam from American aircraft carrier

The second rational aspect is the economic pressure that it brings to bear on the Soviet Union. By forcing the Russians to spend much more on weapons they put immense pressure on, for example, Soviet consumer goods availability — they are scarce enough at the best of times.

There is another aspect in which it's rational and that is the extent to which it holds together the ideological consensus in the United States and the Western alliance and Japan as a whole.

Then there's also the economic benefit. In a recession the arms companies benefit from a new arms race. Whereas in the Soviet Union the arms race will have negative effects on the economy and on the availability of consumer goods, it would appear that in the United States and some West European countries the new arms race will have positive counter-recessional economic effects.

But it is irrational in one final respect. The Russians will not be intimidated or terrorised by a new arms race into changing their policy in the Third World, whether in Afghanistan or

anywhere else. Neither will they refuse to compete in a new arms race because of the effects on the living standards of their own people. This is not only because the Soviet leadership is stubborn, but because they calculate that their own people will blame the new consumer restrictions on the Americans, as they did the Olympic boycott.

I want to ask you a question about the threatened use of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union. Many on the left believe that this is wrong either from a moral point of view — this is the point made by many of the supporters of the European Nuclear Disarmament campaign — or from the point of view of revolutionary politics.

For example, the supporters of the Militant tendency argue that the Soviet Union should give up the use of nuclear weapons and rely on a combination of a workers' militia and the class consciousness of the Western proletariat.

Is unilateral nuclear disarmament a feasible option for the Soviet Union?

I think that the only feasible argument against the possession by the Soviet Union of nuclear weapons is the moral one — any practical grounds, unfortunately, the Soviet Union has its own best interests has to do with nuclear weapons. I say this from a historical point of view.

When the Soviet Union did not have nuclear weapons the United States did threaten covertly with the use of them. And indeed the very dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki has been shown to have been partly motivated, not by a desire to end the war quickly, but by a desire to intimidate the Soviet Union in the negotiations over the post-war division of the world, and to keep the Soviet Union out of the main area of US imperial interest at that time — the Pacific Rim.

I cannot believe that the Soviet Union has now become more benevolent towards the system in the Soviet Union

WEST AND WAR

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which is perfectly obvious to any historical materialist. And in that situation they're not going to become more benevolent if the Soviet Union abandons nuclear weapons.

We can expect major confrontations not along the East-West divide in Europe but in the third world, where there are no lines of demarcation and where a series of upheavals over the past five years has increased the sense of competition between the two systems, and where the conflict is an active and in some places a hot one.

Why did the Americans not invade Vietnam? They could have held down much of the territory, destroyed Hanoi, killed a couple of million people. Why didn't they do it?

Vietnam

The main reason was not their fear of the Vietnamese resistance, nor their fear of the massed Chinese crossing the border — which in the later stages of the war was very doubtful anyway. The fundamental reason is that such actions could have led to a confrontation with the USSR, which could have had very major consequences for the USA.

I'd just like to say one more word about the revolutionary instincts of the Western European working class.

Quite frankly, I don't think that at this moment in time they are that strong, especially on international issues. Hostility to the Soviet Union is very deep. The attachment to the cause of socialism, however watered down, is not too well established and in such a situation this is no defence whatsoever against a determined imperialist onslaught. I may be wrong, but I would not bet on it.

Do you think that defending the right of the Soviet Union to possess nuclear weapons and to threaten to use them in the event of a nuclear attack means that we should defend every aspect of Soviet weaponry? What about germ warfare, chemical weapons, nerve gasses and similar weapons?

All the things that you mention are ones which are in themselves immoral and cannot be condoned in any circumstances and for which no absolute need can be demonstrated. I know this is an old debate. But unless you take a pacifist position, you have to support some right to combat while at the same time trying to establish some rules. The use of such weapons should be abjured in principle by socialist countries. It is positive to see, for example, that the Soviet Union has recently agreed to discuss with the United States the banning of napalm. I think that this is a step forward.

The demand has been raised by the European Nuclear Disarmament campaign for a nuclear-free Europe, as they put it 'from Poland to Portugal', and at first sight this might appear to be a demand which attacks both sides equally.

But wouldn't European disarmament be very much in the interests of the Soviet Union? Despite the neutralist

and pacifist rhetoric of the new nuclear disarmament campaign, don't you think that it will have an anti-imperialist dynamic? Isn't it immensely positive?

I think that this campaign will have an anti-imperialist dynamic. It is positive, not simply because it is progressive in itself, but because for 20 years the left has ignored a question which is of no trivial significance — whether the world is going to be destroyed. Whatever the class character of that question, it is clearly not a secondary one.

As for the demand for European nuclear disarmament, I think that it is a positive one, but that the future depends on what the Russians do. The USSR could play a positive rôle in encouraging this process by showing more willingness to disarm vis-à-vis the US, if the US is willing to do the same. Then I think we would be in a much better position to push for European nuclear disarmament.

One has to criticise the Russians for the fact that they don't assist those in the West who are trying to encourage disarmament. First of all they don't provide any information about their own military forces — the Americans must have it, so there's no reason why they shouldn't supply other people with it.



Detente in trouble

This information would enable an intelligent discussion to go on. At the moment, it's all shadow boxing — that's what enables the right wing to get away with so much of their exaggeration about the level of Soviet armaments.

Secondly, the Russians show no willingness to allow greater political autonomy, particularly in military matters, in East Europe. The room for manoeuvre of an independent movement is very limited, not just by American policy but by what the Russians themselves do — and thus this movement is a challenge to them.

Such actions as the deportation of Sukharnov in January and the insulting declarations by Eric Honecker about Poland indicate dangerous reflexes among these leaders. The way they handled the SS-20 decision was a gift to the right in the West. The Russians are justified in saying that the Americans have undermined detente in Europe; but the Soviets themselves have played into the Americans' hands.

European nuclear disarmament would benefit the Russians as it would other European countries and remove some Soviet fears. In a more general sense it would result in a lessening of American presence and control

in Europe which would make international disarmament more possible. But in discussing the possibilities of this movement I think one should be clear that it's not just a question of convincing those on the right — it's a question of convincing the Soviet Union that a rôle in such a campaign and encouragement of it is necessary.

Part of the solution lies in the provision of information about their own capabilities, which given the nature of their society and the role of secrecy within it, they are extremely reluctant to yield up.

Don't the events in Poland show that even if the Soviet Union carries out some actions in the third world which are objectively progressive, the régimes in Eastern Europe, of which the Soviet Union is the leader — and incidentally the guarantor of the continued existence of the others — are not socialist and that the working class doesn't directly exercise political power?

Aren't we dealing here with a régime which rests on a privileged bureaucracy?

I think that's mainly correct. The Soviet Union's international rôle in the Third World is different from its rôle in East Europe.

In the Third World it has given assistance to revolutionary movements and governments which have issued from revolutionary movements, albeit with many negative consequences. In Eastern Europe it is assisting the party bureaucracies to remain in power.

What underlines the difference between the events in Poland and some other parts of the world is that events in Poland present a direct threat to the Soviet leadership itself — much more so than the developments in Iran or Afghanistan. The example of workers striking, either for political rights or improved living standards, is an example that could have very serious consequences inside the Soviet Union.

I doubt whether the Russian working class is as political as the Polish working class, because it doesn't share its national aspirations nor does it have the history of the Polish working class.

Poland

But it certainly shares its concern for living standards and a sense of deprivation and feeling of failure of the economic system.

We've seen this year the strike at Togliattigrad, where a member of the Central Committee had to arrive with two trainloads of consumer goods to placate the workers. The Polish events, coming in a country on the borders of the Soviet Union and with which the Soviet Union has a traditional relationship, illumine the nature of the Soviet system itself.

That underlines one of the most negative features of the rôle of the Soviet Union in the Third World, namely its tendency to reproduce in those countries where it has influence a system analogous to that in the Soviet Union itself. The repressive solution to the national question in Eritrea and the building of a monolithic party are two such features.



Revolution rocks Central America

By Paul Lawson

ON 1 January 1959 the Cuban revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara marched into Havana, the capital, toppling the American-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. A new era had opened in the Caribbean and Central America.

The movement of the revolutionaries, the July 26th movement, was radical and democratic. It sought land reform and justice: a new deal for the impoverished Cubans masses — the agricultural labourers and the urban dispossessed.

Fidel and his comrades were not Marxists, but in their struggle for democracy and justice they came up against a problem. To even begin to transform the country they had to break the stranglehold on the economy of both local capitalism and American imperialism.

In his second declaration of Havana, in 1961, Fidel announced the only way forward — the road to socialism.

For twenty years the United States has tried to prevent a repeat of what took place in Cuba. But the Cuban example, and its eradication of poverty and illiteracy, and stood out as a beacon in the whole of Latin America.

The grip of the American ruling class on the area received two savage blows in 1979. First in the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada the local dictator, Eric Gairy, was overthrown by the radical New Jewel Movement. The movement and its leader, Maurice Bishop, have subsequently evolved in a socialist direction.

Nicaragua

Much more serious, in July 1979, the US-backed dictatorship in Nicaragua was overthrown by the insurrectionary Sandinista Front (FSLN).

Nicaragua is a strategically vital country. Stretching from the Pacific to the Atlantic, it cuts the Americas in two. The evolution of the FSLN government since that time has been in a rapidly leftward-moving direction.

Before the Sandinista victory huge sectors of the country were run by Somoza and his family. During the insurrection immense damage was wrought to the country. Sections of the ruling class fled Nicaragua with their suitcases stuffed with money.

Since the victory of the FSLN a massive literacy campaign has begun — adult illiteracy is on the verge of being abolished. An immense effort at national economic reconstruction and land reform has begun. A people's militia has been created. Nicaragua is following the Cuban road.

For the United States the position is made worse by the insurrectionary situation in El Salvador, a country ruled by a tiny oligarchy of 14 families. They face a united alliance of three revolutionary groups, the Peoples' Revolutionary Bloc, which is supported by millions.

Castro

The assassination last March of one of the regime's moderate opponents, the archbishop Oscar Romero, gave the signal for open civil war.

The military junta has replied with savage repression. Thousands of political assassinations by the right-wing death squads and the army have been carried out. The rulers of El Salvador are trying to drown the revolution in blood.

In Central America nothing has been settled. Imperialism will not surrender El Salvador without a fight. Neither will it accept a socialist revolution in Grenada or Nicaragua.

But the millions of poor and dispossessed have heard the words of Fidel Castro: 'Bombs can kill the hungry, the poor, the ill and the illiterate, but they can't kill hunger, illness and ignorance. The fight against hunger and poverty will not be won without social justice.'

The people of Central America and the Caribbean need our maximum solidarity in that fight.

Socialist Challenge News

SC Sales

ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside C&As — for more info ring Collin, 574060.

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 4.30-5.40, Sat 10-4. For more info phone 643-0669.

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

BRIGHTON: SC sales regularly every Sat outside Open Market, London Road, from 11am-1pm.

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 Newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.

HACKNEY: supporters sell SC every Saturday morning at Ridley Road market E8.

HAMILTON: SC on sale 8-11 every Sat, outside County Bar Almada Street, every Sat outside Safeway 1.30-5. For more info contact Paul, 17 Clyde View or John at 54 Eliot St, Hamilton.

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

KILBURN: SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square.

LAMBETH: SC available from Village Books, Streatham; Tethric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk. Also sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.

MANCHESTER: SC supporters sell 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER outside the central reference library in St Peter's Square and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.

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 Way. Can be delivered weekly; phone 483 8909 (evening), 236 4905 (day).

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

TEESIDE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newsfare, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.

Is your town or city mentioned above? If not, why not send in details to the Socialist Challenge sales column.

Socialist Challenge Events

BRENT Socialist Challenge/Revolution celebrate the anniversary of the Russian Revolution and Bonfire Night with a fundraising social Sat 8 Nov, 5 St Mary's Rd, London NW10. Food, bonfire, fireworks, games, and other surprises. Adm £1 + 1 firecracker.

What's Left

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

SOCIALISTS seek self-contained flat for two. Tel Nick 01-359 8371 (day).

REVOLUTION

FOR A UNITED REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH ORGANISATION

Tory Future — No Thanks
ISSUE number 13, 10p. Missiles, Poland, Women's Liberation, NUSS, Asian Youth, and much more!
Rush your orders to: Revolution Youth, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

IRISH SUBCOMMITTEE: Sunday 26 October, 7pm at national centre. All members of Irish subcommittee and any other RY members involved in Irish work to attend.

BLACK LIBERATION FRACTION: Sunday 2 November, 2-6pm in Highfields Community Centre, Leicester. All RY comrades interested in working on black liberation invited to attend. Write to Alix, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP for details.

NATIONAL STUDENT FRACTION: Sun 30 Nov in the North West

GLASGOW: El Salvador campaign public rally and film show. With a militant from El Salvador. Thur 30 Oct, 7.30pm, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall St, Glasgow.

FESTIVAL for Women's rights against Tory attacks. Planning meetings every Monday, 374 Gray's Inn Rd, 6.30pm. New members welcome.

WOMEN against the Tories: North and East London Women's Voice Day School, Sat 25 Oct, 10.30am-6pm. Trade union centre, 2a Brabant Rd, Wood Green, London N22 (Near Wood Green tube). Workshops, film, refreshments, creche. Registration 75p. Women only. Evening disco £1 (50p for day school attenders) — all welcome.

EDINBURGH: Right to Work campaign conference on Sat 5 Nov, 11am-4pm. Edinburgh Trades Council, Picardy Pl. 'A fight against unemployment — a fight against the Tories'. Speakers: Dennis Skinner MP; Stuart Thompson, Convenor Parsons Peebles JSSC; and Des Loughney, trades council sec. All personal capacity.

NO NUKES music: continues 'Operation Cruise Endo' with their middlegame at Old Queen's Head, Stockwell Rd, London SW9. Fri 17 Oct — Thompson Twins, Normal Hawaiians; 24 Oct — Realists, Suttel Approach; 31 Oct — Plain Characters. Adm £1 per night.

THE LABOUR PARTY is in turmoil. Major debate is taking place on the party programme and democracy. What significance does this have? Where will Benn and the left take the struggle? What significance does this have for Marxists and how can they intervene in the process? These are the questions to be discussed at the Socialist Action Public Forum, 8pm, Fri 24 Oct, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London WC1.

NEIL WILLIAMSON. Killed in a car crash, Oct 1978, aged 26. Much missed by friends and comrades in Scotland. George.

NAMIBIA: Activists' meeting to discuss present campaigns (including Namibian uranium contract) and mobilise for action. Sat 25 Oct, 2-5pm. London University Students Union, Malet St, WC1. Organised by Namibia Support Committee.

WOMEN IN ACTION: Editorial collective meetings are open to all women who would like to participate. Next meeting on Sat 25 Oct at Lucas Arms pub, Grays Inn Rd, London WC1 at 2pm. Arrive early for a drink.

International Marxist Group notices

NALGO FRACTION Sun 16 Nov 12-5pm, National Centre. Agenda: the turn; perspectives; Cruise; women's liberation.

POEU FRACTION: Sat and Sun 15/16 Nov. Leeds. Agenda: perspectives; Labour Party; women's liberation. Details of venue later.

CPSA FRACTION Sat 22 Nov, 12.30-5pm National Centre. Agenda: the turn; perspectives; Cruise; women's liberation.

RAIL FRACTION: Sat 13 Dec, 1-5pm at national centre.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION FRACTION: 22/23 Nov — venue to be announced. Also a 'Women and the Turn' day school the same weekend. Cdes involved in the work and from the TU fractions to attend.

SOCIALIST FEMINIST CONFERENCE CAUCUS: Fri 24 Oct at national centre. Open to all cdes and sympathisers attending the conference.

IMG WOMEN'S LIBERATION NOTES: Is your branch receiving them every week? If not write to women's organiser at the centre. And why not send in a report for inclusion in the bulletin? All contributions in by Monday each week. Ring Judith on 01-359 8371 to discuss a visit from the IMG women's organiser this autumn.

OFFICE EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Both IMG and Socialist Challenge offices need all types of office equipment and furniture. Particularly needed are metal waste paper bins and 30 stacking chairs. Can collect if necessary. Contact Penny on 01-359 8371.

— exact venue to be decided. For all student comrades.

COLLEGE MEETINGS: Cruise missiles and Charter '80 meetings should be arranged as soon as possible. Speakers and dates arranged by Ann (01-359 8371) or Stephen (021-359 5921).

LONDON AGGREGATE: 9 Nov, 12-5pm at UCL Students Union. Agenda: Building 15 Nov Irish demo. Very important meeting for all London cdes.



FOURTH INTERNATIONAL on the march

Join the world army of revolution

By John Leadbetter

WE LIVE on a shrinking planet. A few hours' flying-time separates the capital cities of the world. New technology has made possible instant communication across the continents.

A brief journey by a few nuclear missiles could shrink all this to nothing in minutes — and the world's population with it.

For Carter and Thatcher the new generation of nuclear missiles — Cruise and Trident — are vital instruments to enforce their rule throughout the world.

They face a workers' revolt at home against the effects of the recession, and revolution by the oppressed people of Third World countries like Nicaragua and Iran. In this shrinking world, national solutions don't exist. We are fighting international military alliances and multinational companies.

Workers of the world need their own instrument to defeat imperialism — an international revolutionary party. Socialist Challenge is sponsored by the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International.

Socialist Challenge has been in the forefront of building the campaign against the missiles. Our co-thinkers throughout the world are deeply involved in campaigns to defeat the imperialist war-mongers.

In United States the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance are leading the campaign to stop Carter enrolling the youth into the army. In the '60s and '70s they helped build the mass demonstrations against the Vietnam war.

Throughout Europe the sections of the Fourth International support the movements against the missiles and nuclear power. They champion the cause of all the oppressed. The FI built the International Campaign for Abortion Rights, for example.

In Latin America, Hugo Blanco, the most famous leader of peasant

The International Marxist Group and the Fourth International stand for the revolutionary overthrow of imperialism. The image of socialism presented by Russia, China, and the Eastern bloc is not our model.

We stand for a system of socialist democracy where the workers have the real decision-making powers, and production is organised to benefit the

mass of the population. If you agree with what you've read in Socialist Challenge, join the world army of socialism. Join the IMG

and the Fourth International. Or if you want to find out more about our ideas take out a special new reader's subscription.

Join the International Marxist Group

I would like to join the IMG

Name

Address

Subscribe

I would like a special new readers' sub to Socialist Challenge (£1 for 10 copies)

Name

Address

For a one-year subscription for £12.50 you receive a free copy of *Trotsky for Beginners* by Tariq Ali and Phil Evans

Complete the form above and send money to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



SOCIALIST CHALLENGE at the gates of the Kremlin

Money not Missiles

SOCIALIST Challenge is committed to building the broadest possible movement against the missiles. We will unite with all those prepared to fight on this issue irrespective of political differences we may have.

But in the end, we believe the way to stop nuclear weapons altogether will only be by overthrowing the imperialist system which gives rise to them.

In our special supplement this week we have explained why we call for withdrawal from NATO and for solidarity with all those fighting imperialism in the Third World.

Socialist Challenge will continue to campaign vigorously to build a mass movement against the missiles and to explain why the campaign should adopt an anti-imperialist stand. To do this effectively we need your support.

In the next month, Socialist Challenge will be organising meetings up and down the country on the theme 'Jobs not Bombs'. We plan to produce posters, leaflets and other literature to build the anti-Cruise campaign. We will continue to devote space to the campaign in the paper.

All of this will cost a great deal of money. We have no

hesitation in asking you to spare us some of your hard-earned cash. It will be money well spent. Indeed it may prove to be the best investment you've ever made: an investment for all our futures.

This Week's Fund Drive	
J. Bell	£2.50
NALGO member	6.00
Free the Press	10.00
OWL IMG	0.80
RG Tisdell	5.00
PA Peach	2.50
J Appleton	20.00

TOTAL: £45.80
Cumulative Total: £190.49

Stop the missiles

Cruise missiles and chips?

By Tom Marlowe

EVERY minute the world spends one million dollars on military activities.

We'll repeat that, just in case you didn't get it the first time: every minute the world spends one million dollars on military activities.

Some people think that this is insufficient — the government of the United States, for example. Within

the next five years Washington plans to double its military spending.

The story goes that this is necessary to protect the free world from the evils of communism, socialism and the like, and that the US and other Western powers are making a great sacrifice in order to defend freedom, democracy and equality, not just in the developed countries but in the third world too.

That argument is about as reliable as the promise that the First World War was the war to stop all wars.

The evidence is that military spending, especially military spending by the US, increases the exploitation of the third world. It increases poverty there and increases the security of despotic régimes.

Africa, and considerably more than South Asia.

Now it is sometimes argued that third world countries benefit from all this: that, for instance, the 600,000 tonnes of aluminium which the US

processed them and exported the finished products.

Instead, the tendency is for these third world countries to buy back the processed products from the developed world, made of

third world countries. The availability of the weapons in question — often highly sophisticated ones — allows the military elite in these countries to demand them from their governments as the price to be paid for their loyalty to the existing régime.

The growth of military-dominated régimes in the third world is not, therefore, a product of some peculiar inability of the citizens of those countries to manage their affairs in a more democratic mould; it is a consequence of the arms market presided over by the developed countries.

Then there is the question of development aid given to the third world.

This aid in itself is often

a huge con trick, given to third world régimes by countries which then expect them to use the money to buy back commodities from the donor's industries.

But leaving that aside, the United Nations stressed in a recent report, *Economic and Social Consequences of the Arms Race and Military Expenditure*, that in most industrialised countries when the military budget rises the development aid falls. Translated into figures, it means that the United States spends 25 times as much on its military machine as on development aid.

And that just about sums up the priorities of the USA and its allies. The people in India can't eat Cruise missiles.

The Insane Society

A specific example is oil which, we are often told, is a precious commodity, not to be wasted, much needed by countries everywhere, something which should be preserved.

Try telling that to the US military, which every year consumes two-thirds as much oil as the whole of

military uses each year means a healthy export balance for those third world countries producing it.

But as any budget-balancer would confirm, it would be far more beneficial to the economies of those countries if they kept their raw materials,

materials which were originally theirs.

What sort of finished goods does this involve? Well, for a start there's, yes you've guessed it, armaments.

American arms sales in 1980 are expected to top \$14,500m. Most of these weapons are acquired by

The anti-bomb best seller

Protest and Survive, edited by EP Thompson and Dan Smith
Penguin Special, £1.50

DURING the winter of 1979 and the spring of 1980 a series of significant decisions were taken by NATO and the Tory government which made the danger of a nuclear holocaust more imminent.

It was announced that by 1983, 160 Cruise missiles would be located in Britain at two American air bases.

Polaris was to be replaced in the 1990s by Trident at a cost of £5,000 billion, while in the meantime £1,000 million was being spent on modernising the present warheads.

True to their manifesto the Tories were cutting every aspect of state expenditure except defence and law and order.

Protest

Since then a broad movement of opposition has begun to emerge. CND has grown dramatically. Many trade unions have come out against nuclear weapons. The Labour Party conference voted for unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Thousands of people have taken to the streets in protest. E P Thompson must be well pleased that the call to action he made in his pamphlet, *Protest and Survive*, has met such a stunning response.

That pamphlet, published jointly by CND and Spokesman, sold tens of thousands of copies — even finding its way on to the news stalls of WH Smiths.

Now we have the book. The editors and Penguin have to be congratulated on the speed with which this collection of essays has been published.

The book's strengths lie in its countering of the usual media statements: the necessity of nuclear weapons; and that the West is lagging behind the 'Soviet menace'. It also supplies accurate factual material which will be essential for any campaigner against nuclear weapons.

Horror

It also provides the starting point for a discussion of the attitude socialists should take to the Soviet nuclear arsenal — the 'workers' bomb'.

Why does the USSR allocate such huge resources to nuclear weapons? Why do



Photomontage: PETER KENNARD

Constable against the missiles

CRUMBLING walls and corrugated iron — that's the usual place to find campaigning posters. But Peter Kennard's photomontage based on Constable's famous *Haywain* has been so effective that it has already graced the pages of the *Daily Mirror*.

Now Kennard, photographer Mike Abrahams, and writer Ric Sissons have come together to produce *No Nuclear Weapons*, an exhibition combining montage, photographs, and text to explain the reality of nuclear power. Several of the montages from the exhibition appear in this week's *Socialist Challenge*.

No Nuclear Weapons can be seen at the Half Moon Photography Workshop, 119 Roman Road, London E2 from Tuesday 21 October until Friday 28 November. Open-

ing times are from noon to 6.00pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

Local CND groups should note that the exhibition is available for hire — for details contact the Half Moon on 01-980 8798.

Nuclear Postcards

To coincide with the opening of *No Nuclear Power* the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is publishing four postcards based on Kennard's photomontages. These include the *Haywain*, and 'Nuclear (weapons/energy)' which is shown on page 12. The postcards cost 50p for a set, and are available from Leeds Postcards, 13 Claremont Road, Leeds 3.

they continue to develop even more deadly weapons? Why in 1979 did they make more nuclear test explosions than any other country? What do they hope to gain from the charade of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks? What use can a workers' state have for a nuclear bomb?

The first 61 pages of the book encompass a revised edition of Thompson's pam-

phlet.

In less polemical style he tackles the same themes: that civil defence offers no hope for survival against nuclear weapons and is actually aimed at suppressing political opposition; that this is part of the continual erosion of civil liberties in this country; that missiles are to be sited here outside any framework of democratic decision making;

that the horrors of nuclear war have been hidden from the people; and that allied to this latter point the media uses a language that fakes reality.

The second chapter illustrates the last point vividly. The bombs which devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki were called 'Little boy' and 'Fat man'. Weapons belong

to 'families'. The neutron bomb, which kills people and leaves property alone, is called a 'radiation enhancement weapon'.

However, the book does have omissions. The collection does not really lay much responsibility at the door of the Labour government. After all, it was the Atlee Labour government which in 1947 secretly gave the go-

ahead for the British atomic bomb. The expenditure was hidden under an item of expenditure called 'Public Buildings'.

Every Labour government since then has backed and developed the British nuclear weapons programme and retained a firm commitment to NATO.

The book also fails to draw any link between nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are now within the grasp of several states due to imperialist export of the technology for the construction of nuclear reactors and reprocessing plants.

But the weakest section of the book pertains to action.

While the final chapter contains a roll call for various sorts of action and appeals to a diversity of people it fails to offer any perspective for the organised working class movement or explain how trade union action can help halt the menace of nuclear weapons.

RIC SISSONS

Stop the missiles

The power behind the bomb

By Simon May

'THIRTY seconds after the explosion came, first, the air blast... to be followed almost immediately by the strong, sustained, awesome roar which warned of doomsday ...

'Words are inadequate tools for the job of acquainting those not present with the physical, mental, and psychological effects. It had to be witnessed to be realised.'

The place was Alamogordo in the New Mexico desert, the date 16 July 1945, and the stunned eye-witness was standing five miles away from the first atomic test.

Linked

That bomb, and the one which killed 40,000 people in a few seconds at Nagasaki a month later, were made from plutonium produced in the world's first nuclear reactors.

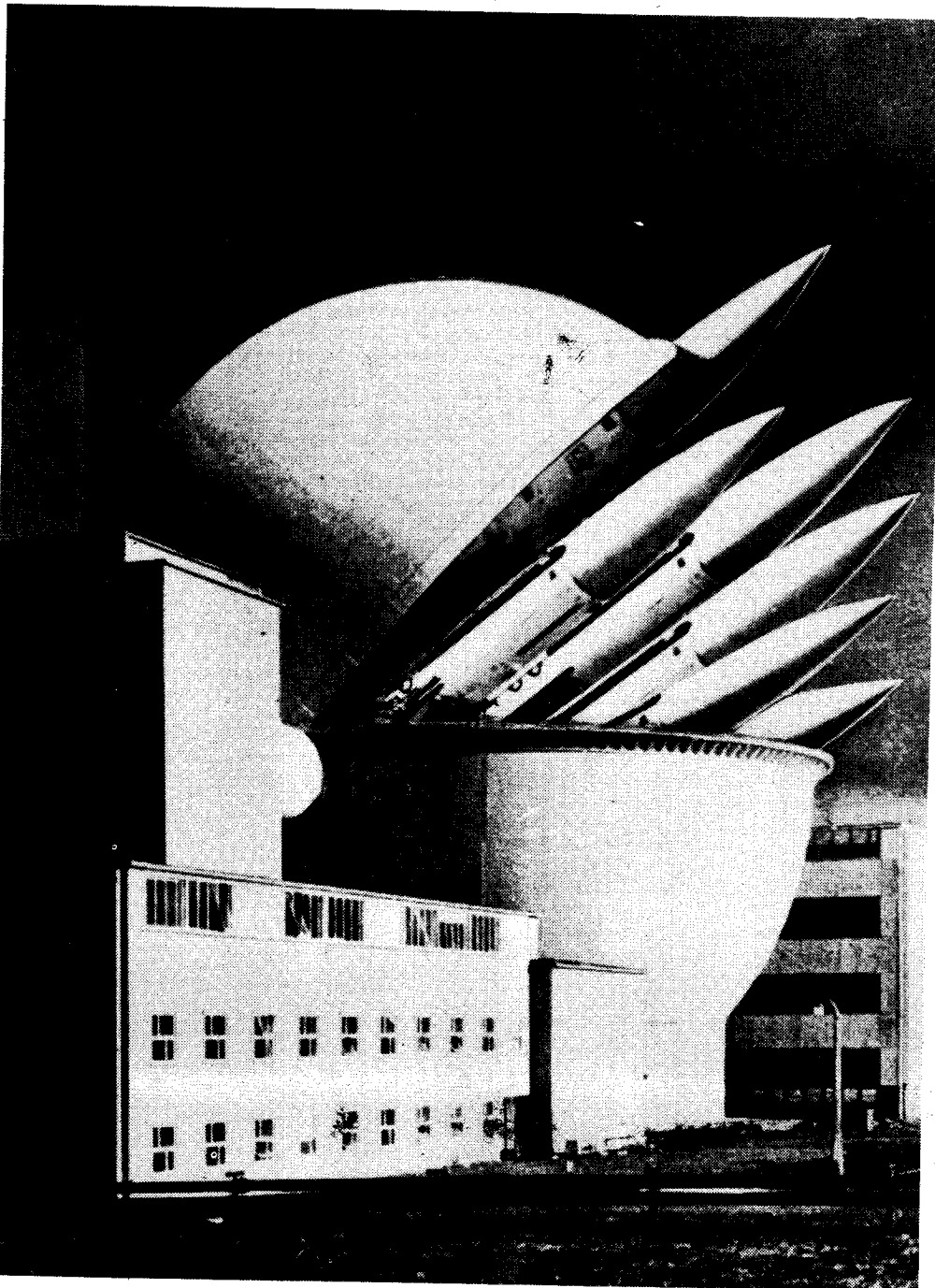
Thirty years later India exploded its first atomic bomb using plutonium developed from the 'peaceful' application of nuclear energy. Both events and everything that has occurred since demonstrate one thing: that the development of nuclear weapons and of nuclear power are inextricably linked.

In Britain all the nuclear factories — the Windscale processing plant, the Capenhurst enrichment plant, and the Calder Hall and Chapelcross reactors — were originally built to make nuclear bombs. The Calder Hall and Chapelcross reactors are still operated primarily for the production of plutonium and tritium for the H-bomb, although they also pump electricity into the national grid.

Function

The Windscale reprocessing plant still performs the military function of reprocessing the plutonium in Britain's nuclear warheads every ten years. This was recently completed as part of the

Photomontage: PETER KENNARD



Chevaline programme to upgrade the Polaris warheads.

The early commercial edge that the Westinghouse Pressurised Water Reactor gained over the General Electric Boiling Water Reactor was the result of its adoption for the first generation of American Polaris and Poseidon nuclear submarines. Now the Westinghouse PWR is to be introduced into Britain as a commercial reactor. The Central Electricity Generating Board have recently chosen Sizewell in Suffolk as the first site.

Repressive

Nuclear power and atom bombs are also linked through the proliferation of nuclear technology under the guise of supplying electricity. This technology is in fact used for bomb production.

While socialists oppose the racist sentiment that proliferation should be stopped because 'we cannot trust these crazy Third World states' we are against the worldwide increase in nuclear weaponry.

Among the countries with the greatest demand for nuclear technology are those with the most repressive regimes — Chile, South Korea, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, and Pakistan — and those with expansionist designs on their neighbours — Israel and Iraq.

Profits

The drive for profits by the nuclear multinationals feeds the proliferation of nuclear technology. The competition for export among these companies leads them to go around the existing non-proliferation controls in an effort to win orders.

While this is good for business it presents problems for imperialism which has no interest in nuclear weapons that it does not control. The use of nuclear weapons in the prosecution of a local dispute would completely destabilise imperialist domination in the capitalist world.

Easier

The recent conclusion of the International Fuel Cycle Evaluation, initiated by President Carter, was aimed at allowing nuclear export but removing the threat of proliferation. It recommends that semi-colonial countries be excluded from reprocessing, enrichment, and fast breeder technology — all of which give easier access to nuclear weapon material — but would be sold thermal reactors.

There is a tendency in the anti-nuclear movement to say 'get rid of nuclear power and you'll get rid of nuclear weapons'. While the military users of nuclear technology do depend upon civil facilities, it would be a mistake to think that a successful struggle against nuclear power would result in a defeat for the nuclear weapons programme.

Militant

In fact the state would simply appropriate what it needed and Windscale, Capenhurst, Chapelcross, and Calder Hall would again become military installations as they were from 1945 to 1953. What is needed is a mass, militant campaign against these weapons, that unites the anti-nuclear and labour movements.

Stalin to Truman: 'Make good use of the bomb!'

By Bob Pennington

WHEN US president Harry Truman ordered the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, he gave notice that America was not going to allow any spread of communism. The Cold War had started with the hottest blast in military history.

The Russian leaders were slow to get the message. Truman said that when he told Stalin that the US was going to drop the atom bomb on the Japanese, the Soviet leader expressed his delight and the hope that the Americans would 'make good use of it...'

Identified

Even as late as 1946 the British Communist Party was saying: 'All intelligent people know that the atomic bomb helped to shorten the war and thus saved millions of lives.'

The reason the Communist parties did not oppose the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was because they wanted to carry the war-time alliance between Soviet Russia and the capitalist West into the post-war world. So attached were they to the

idea of such an alliance that they openly and enthusiastically identified themselves with the interests of their own ruling class.

In France leading CP members served in De Gaulle's first government. Thorez, the general secretary of the French CP, was one of the three French vice-presidents who countersigned the government order to start bombing Haiphong in Vietnam.

The French CP daily, *L'Humanité* wrote plaintively on 26 July 1946: 'Are we, after losing Syria and the Lebanon yesterday, to lose Indo-China tomorrow, and North Africa the day after?'

Exploit

In Britain, the national secretary of the CP, Harry Pollitt, was urging British workers to fight for a government

that included the most 'progressive people from all parties' — this included Tories like Churchill! Fortunately the workers took no notice of Mr Pollitt and returned a Labour government with a large majority.

The policy of trying to win the capitalist nations to an alliance with the USSR meant that the Communist parties finished up agreeing to capitalist armaments — conventional or nuclear — and also accepted the rights of the capitalists to exploit their colonies.

The capitalists were not so generous minded. In Italy and France, once the CP ministers had served their purpose — making sure there was no socialist revolution in those countries — they were kicked out of the governments.

Despite the advice of Stalin, the peoples of China decided to make a revolution to get rid of their exploiters. In Vietnam the masses took up arms to win their freedom. In Korea the people of the North waged revolutionary war to smash the semi-fascist regime in the South.

Stalin's dream of a new alliance with Western capitalism was destroyed, by the colonial revolution on the one side and the need of imperialism to retain and expand its economic and political influence on the other.

Summit

The US adopted the role of the counter-revolutionary cop, heading the holy crusade against communism.

Having been kicked in the teeth by their erstwhile allies the Communist parties began to oppose them having nuclear weapons. Previously the CPs had

argued that world peace would be secured because America and Russia were going to work together.

Now they found a new hope for peace. Peaceful co-existence could be achieved, they claimed, if only public opinion could be mobilised to force reluctant capitalist nations to stop being warmongers. The new cry was the call for an international summit.

This was spelled out by John Gollan, Pollitt's successor as CP national secretary, who wrote: 'The basic fact remains that the way to remove the causes of international tension and avert war is honest international negotiations at top level...'

Ranks

This policy did not leave the CP short of allies. As Bill Wainwright, author of *Close all US bases*, boasted: 'This movement (the CP) supports the demand for a ban on the test, manufacture and use of nuclear weapons by international agreement. That is the policy as adopted by the last Labour Party conference.'

Wainwright was correct. It was the policy of the Labour Party. It was the policy of Hugh Gaitskell and Nye Bevan, who had deserted his former friends on the left to help the right wing defeat a unilateralist resolution from Norwood Labour Party.

The Norwood resolution had called for '...the next Labour government to take the lead by itself refusing to test, manufacture or use nuclear weapons...'

The CP-controlled Electrical Trades Union, the Fire Brigades Union, and the CP-led Scottish Miners' delegation all voted with Gaitskell against unilateralism.

Meanwhile the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament continued

to grow, despite being boycotted by the CP. The party's *Daily Worker* denounced CND's call for unilateralism, arguing: 'It is a proposal that would divide those who are today united in demanding that the tests should be stopped.' (12.10.57.)

In 1959 when the unilateralist campaign was gaining support within the unions and the Labour Party, the Communist Party held its Congress in London. Outside the Congress the CND demonstration was making its way to Trafalgar Square, growing by the hour as more and more Labour parties and trade union branches joined its ranks.



Gollan claimed: 'The weakness has been that some leaders of the CND have held themselves aloof from the organised labour movement.' Even at that late hour all he could call for was 'a readiness to discuss seriously the Soviet proposals on Berlin and on a German Peace Treaty'.

The British CP was not out of step with its European counter-

parts. *L'Unita*, the Italian CP paper, declared: 'We Communists of Rome salute Dwight Eisenhower and in the name of 250,000 electors in the capital of the Roman Republic, express our confidence and our determination that the great hopes for peace which were aroused in the hearts of all peoples, hopes created by the meeting between the president of the USA and the prime minister, shall not end in disappointment.'

Loyal

By early 1960 the CP began to change its line and managed to scramble on the bandwagon in time for the 1960 Labour Party conference.

At that conference a resolution for unilateralism was carried. This did cause a deep split in the movement, as the *Daily Worker* had so unhappily forecast three years earlier. It was a split between those who loyally served the interests of their own ruling class and those who were beginning to take positions against the imperialist war drive.

Today the CP calls for unilateralism, but it attempts to win this aim by the same kind of politics which aligned it with imperialism in 1945 and with the Labour right wing in the 1950s.

The politics of peaceful co-existence means placing your reliance on pacts between the capitalist nations and the USSR. It involves building an alliance with capitalist politicians and priests at the expense of developing the class struggle.

The fight against nuclear war means the disarming of our own ruling class, not hopelessly trying to persuade it to recognise the errors of its ways.

SOLIDARNOSC

NEXT WEEK: News reports and interviews direct from Poland

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE is planning a major 'interference' in Polish internal affairs next week.

Our reporter, Kay Carter, has just returned from Poland with an interview with strike leader, Lech Walesa, and other Polish militants.

She has also brought back fascinating new pictures from inside the Lenin shipyards. Don't miss this special coverage in Socialist Challenge next week.



Lech Walesa with Socialist Challenge reporter, Kay Carter

Polish unions clash with rulers

By Davy Jones

FOUR million workers organised by the Solidarnosc free trade union are being denied legal registration by the Polish authorities.

While 12 other independent unions have already been sanctioned the authorities have now admitted that political difficulties stand in the way of registering the largest of all the independent unions, Solidarnosc.

They object to the failure of the statutes to refer to the 'leading role of the Communist Party in Poland'. Lech Walesa responded by warning the authorities that Solidarnosc would operate forthwith as if it were officially registered: 'If we cannot be registered, we do not care about bureaucracy.'

The Polish rulers are terrified by the growth of the independent unions. Even the official party newspaper, *Trybuna Ludu*, has admitted that the Communist Party-controlled unions have been forced out of existence by the rush to set up independent unions.

The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has complained bitterly to Western diplomats over their press coverage of Polish events, described as 'interfering in internal Polish affairs.' Solidarity with the people of Poland against the ruling bureaucrats is more vital than ever.

By Davy Jones

AS THE Iranian Parliament meets to discuss Carter's offer on the hostages, 60 Western warships are now stationed in the Indian Ocean 'to protect the Hormuz Strait oil routes.'

Last week the Royal Navy frigate, *Alacrity*, joined the British guided-missile destroyer, *Coventry*, in the area. The fleet, mainly from the United States, France and Britain, includes three aircraft carriers, half a dozen destroyers and a number of guided-missile frigates.

The imperialist powers deny any plans for an international task force in the Gulf region. The Iranians have already pledged that despite the war with Iraq the Hormuz Strait will be kept open, so the naval build-up clearly has more sinister goals.

Imperialism fears the spread of the revolutionary dynamic unleashed by the overthrow of the Shah in Iran.

Since the Iran/Iraq conflict began the United States government have hoped that the result would be the overthrow of the Khomeini regime and its replacement by a pro-Western government headed by former prime minister, Shahpour Bakhtiar.

A motley group of right-wing organisations heads a new alliance of opposition forces in exile. They involve the Iran party, the Pan-Transit party and the National Front. General Oveissi, the former military governor of Tehran, claims the support of many exiled former army officers.

Alliance

Oveissi and Bakhtiar are trying to link up with another former premier, Dr. Ali Amidi, to form an anti-Khomeini alliance. Despite their wild threats to launch a civil uprising their real hope lies with a military thrashing of the Iranians by the Iraqis. They could then 'pick up the pieces'.

But imperialism and Bakhtiar's rag tag and bobtail alliance look set for disappointment. Iranian resistance at the key city of Abadan has exceeded all observers' expectations. As we went to press it seemed an outside chance that the Iraqis might hold out until the seasonal rains, expected in 4 weeks time, halt the Iraqis' advance through the sticky mire of the former desert.

Further it appears that the Iraqis may soon launch an invasion of northern Iraq, some 600 miles away from the Shatt al-Arab waterway. Reports are rife of an Iranian military build-up in the Urumia region, in north west Iran near Iraqi Kurdistan.

Iraqi Kurdish leaders visited Tehran last week for talks with Iranian officials. As we reported last week Kurds in Iraq have begun hostilities against the Baathist regime since the war with Iran began. It is possible that an Iranian offensive into northern Iraq could be linked to a Kurdish uprising there.

It may still be the despotic Iraqi regime and the imperialists that come off worst in the Gulf war. Certainly socialists in every country should demand an end to all imperialist military interference in the region.

CARTER OFFERS CARROT... AND HOLDS BIG STICK READY



Armed Iranian mullah in Khorramshahr: the Iraqi regime may yet lose out in the Gulf War

Repression in Iraq

By the Campaign Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq (CARDRI)

THE Baathist clique of Saddam Hussein is ruling Iraq by the gun, the gallows, and the torture chamber. The secret police, headed by Hussein's brother, ruthlessly round up people suspected of disloyalty to the regime.

Already this year there have been 500 political executions, with sentences being handed down by government officials not judges. Over 50,000 men, women, and children have been forcibly deported since April 1980 on the grounds that they are 'not really Iraqis'.

According to Amnesty International political suspects, held in detention without charge or trial, are tortured 'as a matter of course'. Women prisoners are sexually assaulted and children of 'politically suspect' parents are taken hostage and tortured in front of their parents.

The Baathist regime has been buying helicopters, armoured cars, and machine guns for use in Kurdistan and is preparing for a full-scale genocidal war against the Kurdish people. Already the regime has made deals with France, Spain, and Italy for \$3,500m worth of arms for street and mountain fighting, as well as naval equipment to enable Iraq to fulfill the role of the 'policeman of the Gulf'.

Opposition to the regime is spreading. Working class resistance takes the form of go-slows — strikes carry the death penalty — and the for-

mation of underground committees inside the state-run unions. Despite the repression of academics and students, opposition leaflets are still being distributed within the universities.

In late August Aziz Rashid Akrawi, a State Minister, deserted the regime saying he was going to join the armed Kurdish movement.

CARDRI calls for an end to mass executions in Iraq, an end to torture and poisoning, for the release of political prisoners, an end to the war against the people of Iraqi Kurdistan, and an end to terrorist activities from Iraqi embassies.

Democrats in Britain are urged to support CARDRI's campaign against repression and for democratic rights in Iraq.

The Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq can be contacted via PO Box 210, London N16 5AP.

Forums on Poland

Wed 29 Oct

York. 1pm University Soc/soc meeting and 7.30pm in Labour and Co-op rooms, 57 Micklegate. Both with Richard Rozanski.

Fri 31 Oct

Plymouth. Polytechnic meeting with Richard Rozanski.



Iranian socialist arrested

NEMATOLLAH Jazayeri, a leader of the Iranian Trotskyists of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), was arrested on 8 September at the Ray-Q-Vac factory in Tehran. No charges had been levelled against him at the time of writing. His fellow-workers are circulating a petition demanding his release.

We urge all supporters of the Iranian revolution to send the following telegram to the Iranian Prosecutor General Ali Ghodosi, Office of the Revolutionary Courts, Tehran, Iran:

I am a supporter of the Iranian revolution and an opponent of the US government's threats and the Iraqi regime's criminal military aggression aimed against your revolution.

I am deeply concerned about the arrest of Ray-Q-Vac worker Nemat Jazayeri, a staunch anti-imperialist fighter who is being detained without any charges.

I strongly urge you to disclose his whereabouts to his family and friends and call on you to secure his immediate release.

The case for the H Block

IRISH Republican prisoners in the H Blocks of Long Kesh are due to go on hunger strike from 27 October.

The view of the British government is that these prisoners are 'ordinary criminals' and that any suffer-

ing they endure is 'self-inflicted'.

Is this the case, and if not what really lies behind the hunger strike? GEOFF BELL explains, and argues why the hunger strike deserve our unconditional support.

1. Are the prisoners 'ordinary criminals'?

THE most obvious question that springs to mind concerning the declaration of the hunger strike by the 'blanket' prisoners of Long Kesh is what horrendous circumstances could possibly force nearly 400 people to declare their willingness to take such action?

One version, that favoured by the British media, is that the hunger strike was an 'order' from the leadership of the Provisional Republican movement. This is far from being the case.

Discourage

As the *Irish Times* reported on 11 October, the Provisionals were 'opposed to the idea of a hunger strike'. A spokesperson for Provisional Sinn Fein was quoted:

'We have tried with some success to discourage the idea of a hunger strike... We feel totally inadequate in regard to influencing the men and we have tried everything possible to stop them.'

'But after what they have gone through they have been left with no alternative but to use the last weapon — a hunger strike to the death.'

The important phrase here is 'what they have gone

through'. The story begins in 1972.

This was when the then Conservative government recognised the peculiar circumstances of those in prison for crimes connected with the political situation in the north of Ireland and granted these prisoners 'special category status'. This meant that the prisoners were allowed to wear their own clothes, mix freely, and organise their own recreation and education.

Why did the Tories agree to 'special category'? First the concessions were made at the time of another hunger strike by the Republican prisoners in Belfast's Crumlin Road prison.

This hunger strike was accompanied by wide-scale street rioting which emphasised the popular support, and the intense feeling behind that support, for the prisoners' demands. But the granting of 'special category' — given to both Republican and Loyalist prisoners — was also logical.

Survey

For whatever reason they were in prison — be it military activity, street rioting, or because their Republican sympathies led to their being framed for crimes they did not commit — those 'crimes' arose out of the political conflict which first came to the fore during the civil rights campaign in the

north of Ireland in 1968.

A survey taken in 1975 and published in *New Society* (6/5/76) stressed the exceptional nature of the convicted 'terrorists'. It referred to the then emerging government view that those convicted of 'special category' crimes 'can be treated in prison like ordinary criminals'.

New Society commented: 'But a study of the background and records of the 467 defendants who came before the courts on terrorist charges in the first half of 1975 certainly casts doubt on this official view.'

Troubles

The survey went on to detail that a majority of the Catholics so convicted had no previous criminal record; that a majority of all those convicted were in employment; and that 83 per cent of Catholics convicted were under 25, compared to 50 per cent of those convicted for ordinary crimes in England and Wales during the same period.

In other words not only were the crimes of those afforded special category status substantially different, but so too were the type of people who were convicted. As a social worker quoted in *New Society* said: 'But for the troubles these young men would not have been in court.'

It was the acceptance of the validity of such opinions, backed as they were by statistical evidence, and substantiated as they were by existing political conditions, which gave the granting of special category status a sound basis in rationality.

2. Did they commit 'ordinary crimes'?

In 1975 the Labour government announced that special category status was to end the following year; that all those convicted of 'terrorist', or as the prisoners would argue 'political', offences, were from 1 March to be treated as ordinary criminals.

Thus a rioting teenager who threw a brick at a soldier on 29 February 1976 would, if convicted, be granted special category status, but if the brick were thrown on the following day she or he would be judged an 'ordinary criminal'.

The reasons for the change in policy need not be outlined here. Sufficient to say that the new rules were part of an overall shift in government policy which sought to de-politicise the Irish question.

The aim was to suggest that the only 'problem' with Northern Ireland was 'gunmen and terrorists'; that Britain had no political responsibility but to defeat those terrorists; that the same people were not engaged in politically motivated acts but were mere criminals and ought to be treated as such.

This period co-incided with the ending by the British government of any attempt to negotiate a political solution, with all

the various contending parties.

What the government was attempting to say that the 'terrorists' were an Irish problem rather than a symptom. But to maintain that the former special category crimes were in fact 'ordinary' crimes, the argument had to be sustained all along the line.

The opposite was and remains the case. Throughout the 1970s special laws were passed by the British government which treated suspected 'terrorist' or 'political' offenders differently from those who normally come under the scrutiny of the legal system.

The most notable legislation was contained in the Emergency Provisions Act (1973 and updated in 1978) and the Prevention of Terrorism Act (1974 and 1976).

The Emergency Provisions Act was specifically designed for what it termed 'terrorist offences'. What is meant by this phrase?

The PTA gives the the answer, defining 'terrorism' as 'violence for political ends'. Thus even the government's own legislation agrees that the 'terrorists' are involved in 'political' offences.

The details of the EPA and the PTA further emphasise this fact. Under the EPA a

number of restrictions are placed on the rights of the suspect which do not apply in criminal cases.

In practice anyone arrested under section 11 of the Act can be held completely incommunicado for 72 hours. There is no right, as is normally the case, to see a doctor or solicitor. An arrested person is not entitled to make a phone call or receive clothing or cigarettes.

If the police want to keep someone longer than 72 hours then he or she will be arrested under section 12 of the EPA and after 48 hours in custody a five-day extension.

Conditions

Further, if a person is charged with any of the 'terrorist offences' outlined in the EPA, he or she can only apply for bail before a High Court judge and must meet very stringent conditions.

The Crown may tell the judge that, for example, the police believe the accused is a member of the IRA. No reasons have to be given to the judge as to the basis of this

belief and there have been many instances where people have been held in remand for up to 18 months and then all charges against them are dropped.

Internment

What is operating here is, in effect, a form of internment without trial.

If the accused is eventually brought to trial an extraordinary set of procedures again apply. For example, trials are conducted without a jury and by one judge sitting alone. Also in cases where possession of weapons or explosives is alleged, the accused is obliged to prove his or her innocence rather than as is normally the case the Crown being obliged to prove guilt.

Thirdly in cases where the Crown relies wholly or partly on an alleged confession such a confession has to be shown to have been obtained by torture to be ruled inadmissible. Under normal law a confession ruled inadmissible if it is shown that the accused has been subject to the slightest

Hunger strikers

3. Are their conditions 'self-inflicted'?

WHEN, on 1 March 1976, the British government arbitrarily changed the rules by abolishing the special category status for political prisoners, many of those who were subject to the new rules refused to accept the change.



Cardinal O'Fiaich

The first was Ciaran Nugent. When he arrived at Long Kesh (Maze) Prison he refused to wear the prison uniform offered to him. Nugent had been sentenced for hijacking a van, and he vowed 'that they would have to nail the clothes to my back' if any attempt were made to criminalise him.

By 1 August 1978 over three hundred prisoners had joined Nugent in his protest. Here is how Cardinal Tomas O Fiaich, the primate of Ireland, described the conditions in which the prisoners survived in the H-shaped compounds of Long Kesh:

'Having spent the whole of Sunday in the prison I was shocked by the inhuman conditions prevailing in H Block 3, 4, and 5, where over 300 prisoners are incarcerated. One would hardly allow an animal to remain in such conditions, let alone a human being.'

'The nearest approach to it I have seen was the spectacle of hundreds of homeless people living in the slums of Calcutta. The stench and filth in some of the cells, with the remains of rotten food and human excreta scattered around the walls, was almost unbearable. In two of them I was unable to speak for the fear of vomiting.'

Blanket

'The prisoners' cells are without beds, chairs, or tables. They sleep on mattresses on the floor and in some cases I have noticed that these were quite wet. They have no covering except a towel or blanket, no books, newspapers or reading material except the Bible, no pens or writing materials, no TV or radio, no hobbies or handicrafts, no exercise or recreation.'

'They are locked in their threat or inducement. The effect of these various procedures has been a much higher rate of conviction than is normal, and a much higher reliance on 'confessions'. Official figures show that 94 per cent of all charges brought before the special 'Diplock Courts' result in conviction, and 90 per cent of convictions are based on confessions.'

Different

Thus from the moment they are picked up to the moment they are convicted these suspects are treated entirely differently from 'ordinary criminals'.

As was stated by the 1978 Amnesty International report into police brutality in the North of Ireland, such procedures have 'eroded the rights of suspects held in connection with terrorist offences'.

Amnesty also severely criticised the means by which many of the alleged 'confessions' were obtained. Its conclusion was that 'maltreatment of suspected terrorists by the RUC has taken place with

What happened was that in 1978 the prison regime introduced a new rule whereby the prisoners were prevented from going to the toilet unless they wore a prison uniform.

Then, once these new rules were introduced, Loyalist orderlies were given the work of emptying the toilet vessels the prisoners were now forced to use. The orderlies began to deliberately topple the pots over the cells. Faced with such provocation, the H Block prisoners withdrew their former previous cooperation.

Finally, we come to the one aspect of the H Block regime which no one could argue is self-inflicted: the beatings suffered by the prisoners.

It is true that the evidence of these beatings comes from the prisoners themselves, but such is bound to be the case in view of the refusal of the authorities to allow a regular inspection of the H Blocks.

Beaten

Here is just one of the many stories that are told by the prisoners. It was smuggled out of the H Blocks in September 1979:

'One man at a time was taken from a cell and the warders ran him from the B wing to the circle (the administration centre of H Block). Each man was pulled about by the beard and hair and then a thorough search made of his mouth and ears using a flash lamp.'

'The victim was then forcibly spreadeagled over the usual mirror, placed on the ground, and beaten by six baton-wielding warders until he fell.'

'Each victim was then subjected to the latest obscene search and while a flash lamp was shone up his back passage a thin metal detector or another probe was inserted into his back passage. The various probes were a pen, plus gloved and ungloved warders' fingers.'

'When the search procedure was finished each man was run into C wing through a gauntlet of 12 warders who punched him on his head and beat him on his back and shoulders with batons. Anyone who fell was kicked and dragged by the hair, ankles, and testicles to his new cell. Everybody involved in the wing shift was beaten.'

On 10 October 1980 the prisoners decided they could take no more. They announced their intention to start a hunger strike.

sufficient frequency to warrant the establishment of a public inquiry to investigate it.'

Although such a public inquiry was rejected by the then Labour government an internal inquiry was held, albeit in secret and with a very restricted brief. Again the report of this inquiry (the Bennett Report) indicted the police.

Evidence

Its general conclusion was: 'Injuries sustained during the period of detention in the police office were inflicted by someone other than the prisoner(s).'

There has of course been evidence that ordinary criminal suspects in Britain can be subject to such 'maltreatment'. But on nothing like the same scale as reported by Bennett and Amnesty.

The fact is that from 1976 onwards the only time the 'terrorist' suspects in Northern Ireland were treated as 'normal' criminals was when they were finally thrown into prison.

Birmetal dispute in 28th week

By Grant Keir

JIM Robertson, a member of the Birmetal disputes committee in Birmingham, summed up the discontent felt by many of those who last Friday marched through the city in support of the Birmetal workers:

'I think what we have to do is force our district officials to fight on the question of job loss and stop pissing about with dole claims.'

The march was sup-

ported by members of the four unions involved in the dispute - TGWU, GMWU, EPTU and AUEW - which is now in its 28th week and involves the sacking of 700 workers.

But instead of fighting for the right to work, union officials have tended to concentrate on getting the sacked workers unemployment benefits. It is this dole question which is the purpose of a mass picket planned for this Friday, 24 October, outside the Birmetal factory.

Jim Robertson and others involved feel the picket would be better employed asking for support from other workers in the Birmetal Qualcast

parent company in the fight to save jobs.

The support for such an emphasis was evident at last Friday's meeting when the speaker who received the biggest applause was from the occupied Gardner's factory in Manchester.

After 28 weeks the union officials have proved that they are unwilling to give a similar lead at Birmetal. Workers there will need to organise themselves.

They will also have to organise support from other workers in Birmetal Qualcast. As the slogan shouted on the march put it: 'It is us today, you tomorrow.'



ANGELA PHILLIPS (IFL)

WOMEN at the 1978 socialist feminist conference - many left confident that something new had been established

Socialist feminists: a critical re-examination needed

By Valerie Coultas

IN January 1978 approximately a thousand women flocked to a socialist feminist conference. With the setting up of a 'network', its own newsletter, *Scarlet Woman*, and local groups, many left the conference feeling they were part of something new and exciting.

This weekend socialist feminists will have their first opportunity since then to meet together nationally.

Everyone who attends this conference, to be held in London on the theme of women and imperialism, will be able to assess the impact of socialist feminism in the past two years.

Unfortunately, while concrete actions of international solidarity from a thriving and growing movement point to success, abstract and theoretical discussions about anti-imperialism indicate an insularity.

Failure

Groups that closely identified with the socialist feminist current, such as Women Against Racism and Fascism have collapsed. *Scarlet Woman* is suffering from lack of funds and involvement. The conference has been continually postponed.

Yet it is not the case that the ideas of women's liberation are less popular.

The massive shift in public opinion in favour of a woman's right to choose whether or not to have a child, evident during the anti-Corrie campaign, is just one indication of the widespread acceptance of feminist ideas.

The apparent failure of socialist feminism to key into such an acceptance was illustrated during the anti-Corrie campaign.

While many socialist feminists participated, others were critical: the campaign was too orientated towards the unions; the left groups were too dominant; it was not 'feminist' because it wasn't women only; it was too 'parliamentarian'.

Yet the success of the campaign, focused as it was against a parliamentary attack on women's fertility rights, was that it galvanised women, and even men, in all spheres of society.

Priorities

The National Abortion Campaign has always argued that choice over childbirth should lie with women alone. At the same time there was an openness and a commitment to action against Corrie which brought results, particularly within the unions and the Labour Party, but also in the medical profession, the educational institutions, and the media.

If socialist feminism has taken its distance from the National Abortion Campaign, and local groups and newsletters have tended to avoid assessing the popular impact of the women's movement, many tended instead to concentrate on 'raising consciousness' within the movement.

The conference this weekend needs to critically re-examine such priorities and to look instead to the successes that have been achieved by broad-based, open campaigns such as NAC and Women's Aid.

If the conference could begin to make this kind of assessment of the popular impact of feminism, it would be a big step forward.

*The conference is on Sat and Sun 25 and 26 Oct at Sir Williams Collins school, Charrington St, London NW1. Starts 9am Tel 01-388 0182.

Socialist Challenge

Labour leadership fight: It's a fraud

By Dave Hudson
THE Labour right have declared war on the decisions of the Blackpool conference on party democracy.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE IRISH HUNGER STRIKERS

THIS Monday political prisoners in the H Blocks of Long Kesh prison camp on the outskirts of Belfast will start a hunger strike.

That strike, say the prisoners, will 'carry us through to the bitter climax of death, if necessary'.

Return

Over the coming weeks these prisoners, already in a weakened state because of the atrocious conditions forced on them, will slowly and painfully die.

Their only chance of life is that mass pressure in Ireland, Britain and throughout the world will force the British government to agree to the demands of the hunger strikers.

These demands call for a return to the political status — or special category status as it was then known — given to political prisoners in the North of Ireland in 1972, but arbitrarily abolished four years later.

Patience

The prisoners are calling for:

- *The right to wear their own clothes;
- *The right to abstain from prison work;
- *The right to free association with other prisoners;
- *The right to organise their own education and recreation;
- *The right to full remission of sentences.

They have been pressing these demands for four years; now their patience is exhausted.

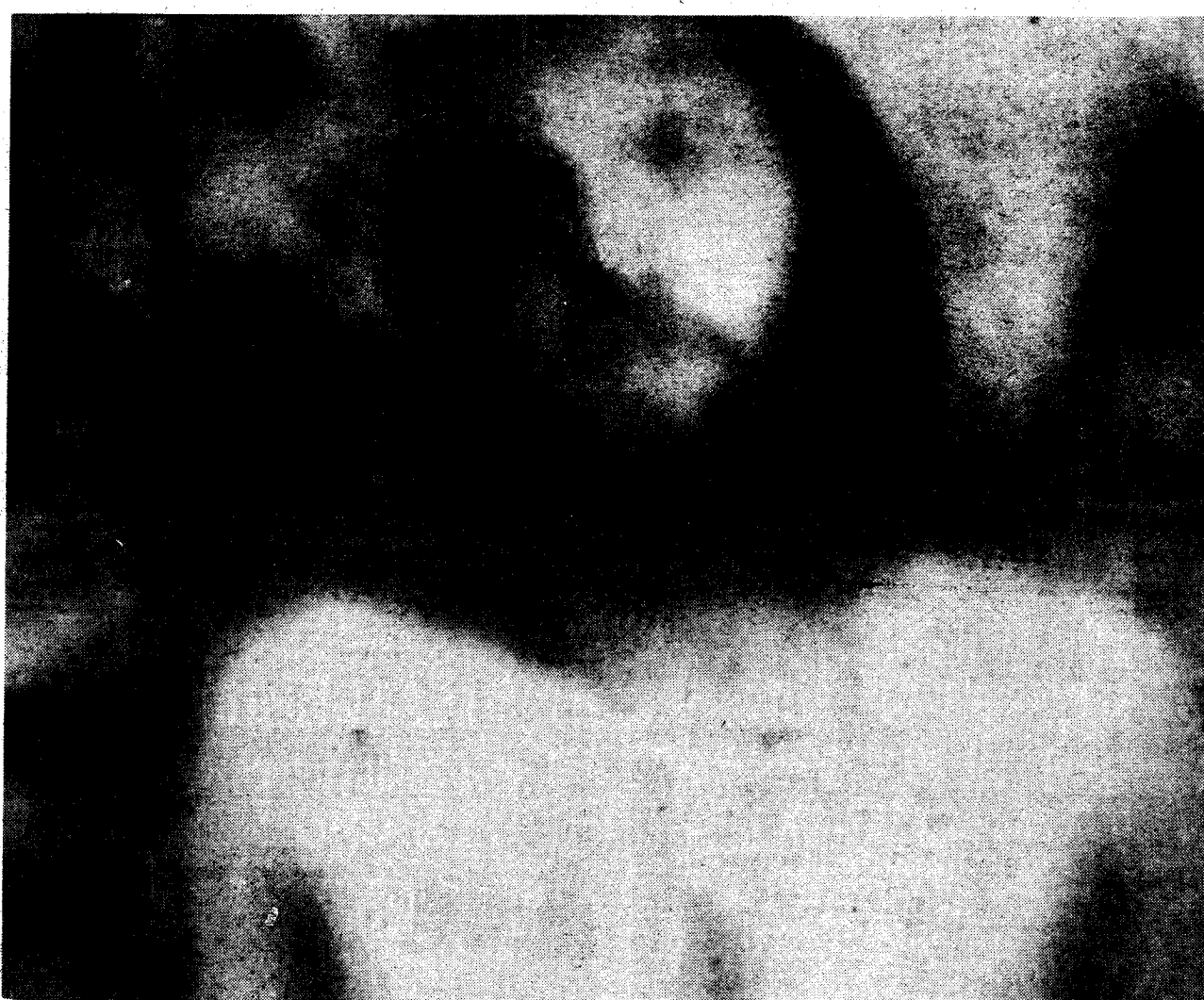
Successive British governments have peddled the fiction that these prisoners are 'ordinary criminals' — despite the fact that they are tried in special courts, interrogated under special rules and charged under special 'emergency' legislation.

Claims

Now there is the added rebuttal of the government's claims — 'ordinary criminals' are not inclined to go on hunger strike.

Supporters of Britain's role in the north of Ireland last week delivered their own message of death when they shot dead Ronnie Bunting and Noel Lyttle in Belfast. Both were active H Block campaigners and members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

The killers were presumed to be Loyalists acting with the assistance of the Royal Ulster Constabulary or the British Army.



SECRETLY taken picture of an H Block prisoner



NOEL LYTTLE



RONNIE BUNTING

Activities:

25 October: day of local actions.

26 October: 'blanket protest', Birmingham.

10 to 14 November: local public meetings.

15 November: national demonstration 'For a British

Withdrawal from Ireland'.

Assume Embankment 1pm. March in 'Troops Out Now' contingent.

7 December: national demonstration 'Don't let the prisoners die'. Details to be announced.

For further information tel. 01-267 2004.

LCC Rank and File Trade Unionists Conference

Leeds University Saturday 1 November 10.30am.

Agenda:

11.00am, Unemployment and the Right to Work. Speakers include Bernard Connolly, Roger Griffiths, and Stuart Holland.

2.00pm, Demands and Policies. Speakers include Eddie Loyden and Audrey Wise.

4.00pm, How do we organise in the movement? Speakers include Tony Banks, Peter Hain, and Anne Ceseck.

For credentials write to LCC, 9 Poland St, London W1, enclosing £1.25 per person.

That is the meaning of Jim Callaghan's decision to resign the leadership of the party at this time. As the main architect of the anti-working class policies of the last Labour government, Callaghan has once again offered his services to the bosses.

His early resignation can have only one effect — to strengthen the position of Denis Healey, the candidate of the right, in the parliamentary election. Healey is the most acceptable candidate for the ruling class and is widely recognised as the IMF's voice in Callaghan's last cabinet.

★★★★★★

Callaghan's resignation opens the door for the parliamentary party (PLP) to flout the conference decisions on the election of the party leader. They hope to establish a 'sitting tenant' who will be difficult to remove after the 24 January special party conference.

The Times cynically noted on 16 October that Callaghan's resignation allowed the PLP to 'assert its determination not to accept a leader it does not want.'

★★★★★★

However, the situation is complicated by the fact that the majority of the trade union leaderships are under pressure from below to dissociate themselves from the worst aspects of the Callaghan administration. This makes Healey an unacceptable candidate for them — MPs cannot ignore the attitude of the trade union bosses. This is why there has been so much pressure on Foot to stand.

As a man of the centre his candidature is far more acceptable. At the same time Foot is seen by many MPs as a candidate who can head off the tide of the left.

★★★★★★

His formerly 'left' credentials make him the ideal candidate to pit against Benn when the new system of electing the leader is decided. As Bevan's first lieutenant, the man who led the fight against the wage freeze at the 1966 Labour conference, and a leading spokesperson of CND in the '50s and '60s, Foot was always the champion of the left in the constituencies.

★★★★★★

But Foot, who in the '70s was Leader of the House of Commons, and Lord President of the Privy Council, might well turn out to be the last line of defence against Benn. There is no way in which he is a candidate of the left.

The first response of some left-wing members of Labour's national executive was to call on the PLP to suspend standing orders and await the new formula being decided by the special conference.

★★★★★★

But this is not enough. A campaign should be launched, led by the candidate of the left, Tony Benn, to mandate sitting MPs through emergency general management committee meetings not to participate in this fraudulent PLP election. Already a TV poll has shown that over 60 per cent of constituency chairpersons feel that MPs should not elect a leader before the special conference in January.

Any MPs who fail to implement such mandates and who participate in the election should be removed at their next reselection meeting.

★★★★★★

Already Islington North Labour Party general management committee has voted to instruct Michael O'Halloran MP to boycott the election.

The decisions of the Labour conference on party democracy were a big step forward. It is in the interests of every single worker to stop these right-wing manoeuvres to overturn these gains.

Don't let them get away with it!

Photo: REPUBLICAN NEWS