

Socialist Challenge

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Exclusive: BRITISH LEYLAND SCANDAL

'Who would have expected the Daily Mail to have the bloody nerve to bribe somebody fifteen thousand quid to reveal the documents — which turned out to be forged — in order to accuse the company of the perfectly respectable fact that it was bribing wogs.'

This is just one quotation from an incredible speech made by Sir Richard Dobson, Chairperson of British Leyland. Dobson is one of Wilson's knights. He was appointed to his present post by the Labour Government. It is clear from his speech that he is a racist, a sexist and holds strong anti-trades union views. He also despises Callaghan because he regards him as being too soft on the unions. In a Socialist Challenge exclusive we reveal the contents of Dobson's speech made to the 'Twenty Club' at the Dorchester Hotel on 27 September. This speech raises

much wider questions. Why was this man appointed to this job? What was the basic criteria necessary? How are our nationalised industries being run? Our revelations will hopefully lead to a debate on all these questions within the labour movement. But as a first step we demand that Dobson is immediately sacked. It is an insult to trades unionists to expect them to negotiate with him. Tom Litterick, Labour MP for Selly Oak and a number of Leyland shop-stewards have already told us that they will be demanding his immediate removal.

Turn to pages 8 & 9 for the full story.

Editorial

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THE HIJACKERS have all been killed bar one, who is seriously wounded. The tones of rejoicing in the capitalist press of Western Europe are understandable, but disgusting nevertheless. Unit 9 of the German Federal Border Protection Troops has carried out a useful operation for German imperialism. Its name should now be altered as Mogadishu, the Somali capital, is not yet on the borders of German territory.

As revolutionary marxists we have made it clear on many occasions that we are totally opposed to terrorism as a strategy for the socialist revolution. We would strongly urge readers to read the article by Günter Minnerup on Page 13 of this newspaper. In it he spells out in detail the consequences of such actions. His article, written several weeks ago, has unfortunately become prophetic. Its lessons need to be absorbed by all revolutionaries.

There can be little doubt that the West German state is the most undemocratic of the West European bourgeois-democratic states. The laws on the statute books deny democratic rights to political minorities. The conditions for political prisoners in West German prisons are atrocious. Prisoners are at the receiving end of psychological torture. Now they have also been denied the right to communicate with their lawyers. There are functioning Nazi cells inside the West German army and there are numerous state functionaries and business-people who have in the past been active Nazis. The creation of a proper bourgeois-democratic state was hindered because the 'democrats' regarded the USSR and East Germany as a more serious threat.

The appalling conditions inside the prisons led to the death of Ulrike Meinhof. Her comrades say she was raped and killed by prison guards. The German Judges, no doubt following Nazi 'legal' precedents, refused a post-mortem by independent doctors. Now her friends and collaborators Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin are reported to have committed 'suicide'. Two other political prisoners attempted 'suicide'. We refuse to call this 'suicide'. It is deliberate and cold-blooded murder. The social-democrats who hold power in West Germany today are the guilty ones. Having learned no lessons from history they are paving the way to their own removal and the victory of the most reactionary and backward political groupings in German politics.

We can understand the frustration and despair of many, many young students and intellectuals. We can understand their anger. But we must insist that their methods are wrong. They are nothing else but an extreme version of liberal pressure politics, which, in reality, betray illusions in the ruling classes. Because they believe that an act of terror can pressure the latter into making lasting concessions. This is wrong. It leaves the masses out of the picture. It panders to the absurd view that social revolutions are made by acts of individual heroism or at best by conspiracies and not by the movement of social classes. However angry supporters of the Baader-Meinhof grouping are, they must re-assess their whole operation.

Their actions have only further isolated the entire socialist left from the masses. The portrayal of those who carry out such actions as communists, Marxists and even left-social-democrats is not accidental. It is designed to keep the German working class insulated from the breezes of revolution and socialism which are blowing in France, Spain, Italy and Portugal.

On a more sinister level we have to note another fact. This is the first military operation carried out outside its borders by West German imperialism since the War. It will no doubt give joy to all those who want the West German army [considered to be the most reliable European relay of world imperialist interests] to act as the gendarme of counter-revolution in the West. Mogadishu could well turn out to be a much more significant episode than it appears to be at the moment.

North Sea no saviour Why the oil won't keep Britain afloat

North Sea oil will not save British capitalism, no matter what Jim Callaghan says. His statement to the Labour Party conference that oil will ensure 'the next 20 years will be unlike anything Britain has seen since it first became an industrial power' is pure deception.

British capitalism is in crisis because of the low profitability of British industry. And North Sea oil is no cure for this.

But can't the Government's income from oil regenerate British industry and make it more profitable by restructuring it, as is often claimed by the Labour left? We say: It can try, but it won't make much overall difference. The revenues are simply not large enough.

The value of the produced oil will represent 1.7 per cent of the Gross National Product (GNP) in 1977, and increase to 3.2 per cent by 1980. Oil is a special commodity because its present OPEC-determined price is high enough for exceptionally large profits to be made. Britain will receive a large slice of these profits (up to 65 per cent from taxes and royalties).

We can therefore assume that by 1980 the State will control as revenue around 2 per cent of GNP (£2.5 billion) as a direct result of North Sea production. This is, of course, if the companies don't find any new tax loopholes to further decrease their taxes, as they so often have done in the past.

PHENOMENAL

1980 is also the very earliest that the State will control such revenues. The tax system is rigged so that the companies get all their income immediately after production starts, while the State has to wait. This ensures that the companies will get phenomenal profits.

British Petroleum's Forties field will be completely paid for in little more than two years of full production, giving a profit rate of around 40 per cent, as compared with the current average UK rate of 6 per cent.

Taking the argument one step further, it is extremely doubtful that the whole 2 per cent would be channelled into industry. There would be great temptations (as well as pressures) for any government wishing to remain in office on a wave of North Sea oil, to decrease direct taxes or even increase government expenditure in areas like health and education. It is therefore unlikely that even the most stubborn Labour Government dedicated to the restructuring of British industry towards greater profitability would in the end be left with more than one per cent on GNP for such a purpose.

The final problem in using oil revenues for restructuring would be how to spend the money. It would have to be done selec-



tively, because historically there has never been any shortage of general funds for investment in Britain.

So the Government could, for example, use the National Enterprise Board (NEB), even if this would be ideologically difficult — it is deeply mistrusted by private industry; and the NEB hasn't even fully used its present allocation of funds. Alternatively (and this is more likely of a future Tory government) it could place the money with financial institutions in the City. But this could easily mean that most of it would go abroad where profitability generally is higher than in Britain.

But putting aside these problems, let us assume that the government in 1980 will have one per cent of the GNP at its disposal to restructure British industry.

How important is this one per cent of GNP? If what matters for a restructuring of industry is an increase in total investment, then this figure represents a mere 6 per cent increase in the annual gross investment rate (from 16 to 17 per cent of GNP).

Given that since the Second World War Britain has consistently had an investment in GNP-terms which has been more than 10 per cent lower than Japan, Germany and the Scandinavian countries, this one per cent is not going to make much difference to the overall performance of British industry.

In addition to investment brought about by the State, profits from the private oil companies may also contribute to total investment. But since over three-fifths of the companies engaged in the British sector of the North Sea are foreign, the chances are that they will repatriate their profits with no significant impact on British employment or investment. The same goes for British companies like BP which operate on a world-wide scale.

The potential increase in either State or private investment will in any case have no perceptible effect on the number of unemployed, as it is likely to be earmarked for high-technology, capital-intensive industries.

Is the whole North Sea oil story pure fantasy? Not totally.

The main tangible and short-run effect of the oil is that it will save imports. Britain will be self-sufficient in oil by 1980, and can expect a consistent balance of payments surplus. While this will make it possible to reflate the economy without immediately being faced with a balance of payments crisis, as so often happened in the past, the positive effects are by no means automatic.

A persistent balance of payments surplus may drive up the value of the pound and thus make even more UK exports uncompetitive. Alternatively if — as is happening at the moment — the State attempts to stabilise the value of the pound, then foreign reserves accumulate (they are now a staggering £20 billion) and threaten the control of the domestic money supply.

So the oil-honanza will not solve either the long or the short term crisis of British capitalism. Tough luck, Sunny Jim.

by CPS

OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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

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

NAME

ADDRESS

Send to Socialist Challenge, 328/329 Upper Street, London N1.

Official strike action now!

Re-open Hounslow Hospital

Workers at the Hounslow Hospital in West London are continuing their occupation. They have refused to turn up for work at the West Middlesex Hospital, after the commando raid by the Area Health Authority two weeks ago. Last Wednesday a lobby of 2000, mainly hospital workers, demanded that the AHA re-open Hounslow Hospital. Ten hospitals took strike action to attend the lobby, and 50 workers from the Trico factory maintained the occupation so that Hounslow workers were free to lobby.

DOMINIC COSTA, a member of the Committee of London Stewards in Health [CLASH] explains how the mass lobby came about.

David Ennals, Secretary of State for Social Services, claimed last week that the body-snatching raid on Hounslow was carried out with 'all due procedure', and that an inquiry was unnecessary. The massive outcry by the labour movement against the raid has forced the health authority to think otherwise, and an inquiry is now agreed.

A motion to re-open the hospital remains 'on the table' until the AHA's next meeting in November. Health bosses are hoping that mass action will have died down by then.

But only if mass action is stepped up will the AHA be forced to change its policy. Labour Party members on the AHA certainly can't be relied upon to wage the fight. They proved as much months ago when they failed to oppose the hospital's closure. Meanwhile, the hospital remains occupied — inquiry or not — and it must be fully supported.

Demonstrators on the lobby were determined to confront the leaders of their own unions as well as local health authorities. Geoffrey Drain, the general secretary of NALGO, and NUPE's assistant general secretary Ron Keating, were shouted down by their own members with chants of 'Make it official'.

Workers on strike at ten different hospitals, including four large teaching hospitals in London, were involved in the action. These strikes were organised by local shop stewards. Mass meetings of all unions in each hospital prepared the action. After each vote was taken, stewards from all health unions met to co-ordinate coaches to the lobby.

Stewards from other hospitals responded to the raid at Hounslow immediately. They arrived to see what support they could give, once the news of the raid was out. CLASH took the initiative in calling an emergency joint meeting with London's Hospital Worker group. At the meeting, health stewards from all over London agreed to Wednesday's action. It was the biggest meeting of its kind in the past five years. 105 rank and file shop stewards attended.

The meeting endorsed the position put by CLASH and Hospital Worker representatives for strike action, officially backed and spreading throughout London hospitals. This kind of action could free health workers to campaign — with flying pickets — for support and action by industrial workers.

This call for strike action after the lobby was to be reviewed daily by an all-London strike committee of stewards from every hospital taking action, until Hounslow is re-opened. The response to the unofficial strike call was overwhelmingly successful. But maintaining the action has proved more difficult.

Union leaders have to take the main share of responsibility. The demand to make strike action official has fallen on deaf ears. NALGO was the only health union to sanction the one-day strike action. NUPE sat on the fence and refused to call an official strike. ASTMS, COHSE, and the GMWU all failed even to consider an official call.

Union leaders' promises of support for those who took action are not serious. A majority of trade unionists will refuse to take unofficial action because of their isolation. And because hospital

workers are so badly paid, the strike pay which comes with official backing is essential if the action is to be extended. In the face of the failure of union leaders to give official status to strike action, such action proved impossible after Thursday.

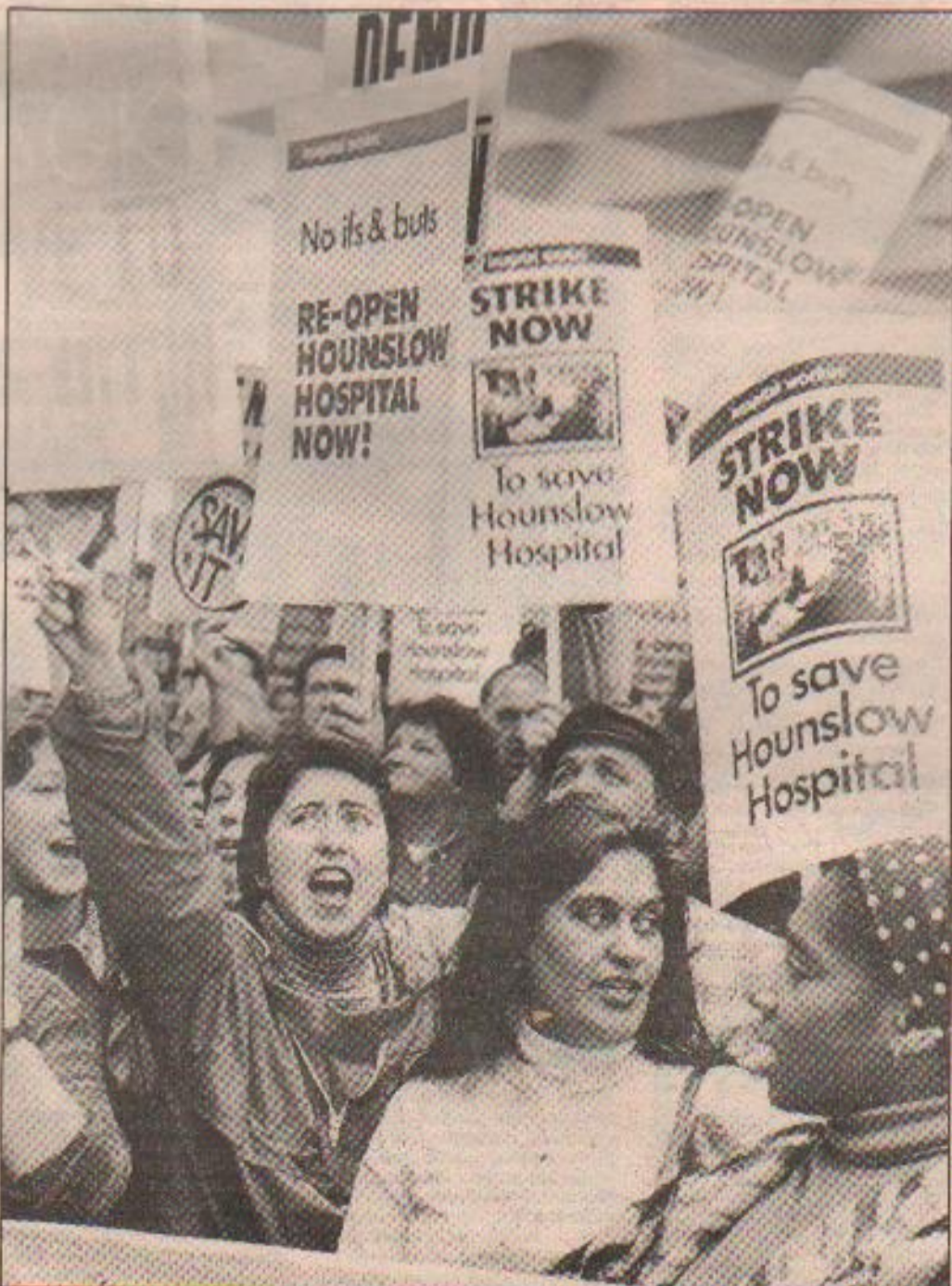
Hounslow has many lessons for militants. The Labour Government has shown it has no qualms about raiding and stampeding — with police help — at hospitals where there is resistance to the cuts. The raid — and the backing Labour Minister Ennals gave it — is unheard of in the history of struggle in the NHS. It took the occupation committee and area stewards by surprise.

The raid has also raised the warning bell for similar occupations. Preparation is now underway to prevent further raids. Coordination between shop stewards throughout London is vital if we are to move ahead in a united way. The official movement must be forced to back and call for strike action in the event of further closures. And any hospital defence committees must win similar commitments for support



Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (IFL)

BOB SINGH, a shop steward from Trico.



Part of the 2000-strong lobby of the health authority

News from nowhere

Model union

WHERE ARE women allowed to work on a building site? Where are women allowed to be full-time officials in a building workers union? And where are such officials paid an average worker's wage, and recallable by those who elected them?

Answer: in Australia's Building Labourer's Union. The building workers there are probably the most advanced in the capitalist world. Just to keep up their image they recently banned construction work for an entire hotel chain because it had introduced 'posh' bars where people in overalls could not be served! More unions like that and we'd be getting somewhere.

Keep watching this space

THIS is a News from Nowhere item with a slight difference. Just before we went to press this space was filled by a report of plans by London Weekend Television to virtually turn over a half-hour programme to members of the Nazis' new youth wing. We learned of this re-assuring exercise in press freedom from a comrade who had been rung by researcher, Steve Scott, and asked if he knew any young NFers in Tottenham who might be interviewed on matters such as school discipline and the like.

No, replied the comrade, but he knew many young anti-fascists who would be keen to explain their views and activities. Sorry, answered Scott, but they weren't interested in a debate. The programme, the London Weekend Show, would explain what the Front represents, of course, but they wanted to find out what 'motivates' the NF's young recruits, and Professor Bernard Crick (an idiotic right-wing social democrat) would draw the conclusions.

News from Nowhere rung Scott, who confirmed these details. He also volunteered the information that a number of trade unionists and community relations workers had rung in to complain about the plans. That was the original story.

Only our reporter, who happens to be a member of the Campaign Against Racism in the Media, had not so much questioned Scott as explained to him in no uncertain terms the policy of CARM and the National Union of Journalists (of which Scott is a member) against those who hold overt racist views being given the freedom of the airwaves to put over their filth. Two hours later, Scott rung back. They had decided that the programme, provisionally scheduled for 30 October, would have a different format. The young Nazis would still be on, but so would anti-fascists.

It is at least a small step in the right direction.

Undemocratic Chapple

ELECTRICIANS in Port Talbot have recently been experiencing the undemocratic methods of their union. After the 9-week strike in Port Talbot, Frank Chapple decided on re-organising the area's union branches.

The old arrangement was somewhat odd but in practice worked relatively well, especially for members in isolated districts. Branches were organised geographically so that supply workers, TV repairers, and contracting electricians were all able to draw on common experiences with steel workers. This was important in spreading support for the Port Talbot strike among the rank and file.

Chapple has recently changed things so that all TV repairers from areas as far apart as Bridgend, Neath, Port Talbot are

in the Swansea branch! Net result: isolation of workers, and members refusing to travel long distances to attend union meetings.

One of the side effects has been that well-known militant Wyn Bevan has had his branch changed. So what? Well, Wyn was elected as a delegate to the forthcoming EFTU conference where he would have opposed the Social Contract and the 12-month rule. But since he's been moved to another branch it's too late for him to be elected as a delegate. We doubt whether any capitalist paper will be defending his democratic rights.

Musty gas

FRANK ALLAUN is a veteran left social democrat MP from Manchester. For a long time his two concerns have been housing conditions and peace. However, Allaun's decision to complain to the Press Council about John Pilger's articles in the Daily Mirror on life in the Soviet Union is nothing short of scandalous.

In a hard-hitting and useful series of articles Pilger had pointed out how the bureaucracy based itself on power by means of institutionalised repression. One of the many incidents he cited was of a KGB operative using mustard gas on a dissident.

Allaun argues that there is a general hate campaign against the USSR in the bourgeois press and TV, and maintains that this is linked to demands for increased defence expenditure by Britain. He is of course correct, as even a cursory glance at the ravings of Chalfont and Levin in The Times show.

But the Pilger articles were of a different quality, and can in no way be construed as cold war propaganda. In fact Allaun should understand that it has been the refusal of people like him and other fellow travellers to defend democratic rights in the Soviet Union and East Europe which has enabled Levin, Johnson & Co. (not to mention Robert Moss of NAFF) to pose as champions of liberty. World War Three will not be avoided by covering up the real crimes of the bureaucracy in the workers' states.

Smith's Queen Mother

TREASON is a very serious offence. And Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith is guilty of the charge on several counts. Normally we couldn't care less what 'crimes' the racist leader is guilty of, since our concern is that the Zimbabwean people bring him to justice for his crimes against them.

But the constitutional position is worth bearing in mind when you consider that Smith has friends in very high places in Britain. According to Olga Maitland, society columnist for the right-wing Rhodesian Sunday Express, Smith's most ardent defender is none other than the Queen Mother, who 'in private expresses great understanding for Mr Smith's plight.'

Maitland writes: 'She makes it quite clear that her sympathies lie with the white Rhodesians and Ian Smith, and not with the British Government.'

The Queen Mother is no ordinary Smith supporter. When the Tory Government was negotiating with Smith in 1972 she kept in close touch with the Foreign Secretary 'although it must be said', according to Maitland, 'that she took a more pro-Smith line than Lord Hume.'

So the question now is: will the Queen, acting on information from Socialist Challenge, take steps to cast this viper out of her bosom? Or do her mother's views reflect those of the family as a whole?

All out for Birmingham Answer the Church offensive

The Roman Catholic Church in Scotland has served warning that if Labour MPs back the party policy for free abortion on request it will urge Catholics not to vote Labour. Another reason — as if more were needed — why you should be on the National Abortion Campaign in Birmingham on 29 October.

The Catholic vote is the traditional mainstay of Labour in Scotland so, with the erosion of the Labour vote by the Scottish Nationalists, MPs are likely to be under extra pressure to look to their seats. Since the Labour conference came out in favour of the 'free vote' MPs will be able to vote with their 'conscience'. And a little bit of political pressure from the Catholic hierarchy will do wonders for many MPs' 'conscience' about 'unborn children'.

DEMONSTRATION

In Italy, where the Catholic Church has traditionally wielded tremendous influence over abortion and contraception, a national abortion demonstration is to be held in Rome on 19 October.

Organised by the Centre for Information on Sterilisation and Abortion and backed by the Radical Party, the demonstration will be the first major initiative on abortion since a compromise abortion bill fell in April. That bill was not supported by the

women's movement, since it left choice on abortion in the hands of the doctor and failed to make the provision of state abortion facilities mandatory. Since most hospitals are run by the Church this would have meant that there would still be no facilities.

So the central demand of this week's march is for free abortion on a national health service — *aborto, libero, gratuito, assistito!* In the United States too a woman's right to abortion is under attack. This time it is the state which is leading the offensive, with a Medicaid ban on abortions. Medicaid is the federal health insurance scheme.

An amendment to the Labour, Health, Education and Welfare appropriations has forbidden public funding of abortion for any reason — even to save the woman's life. The ban hits hardest at working class women who cannot afford private abortions.

Answering that charge Congressman Hyde said that the real

by SARAH ROELOFFS (International Marxist Group member on the NAC Steering Committee)

double standard was that the 'unborn rich are penalised', since there is a greater risk that they would be aborted!

These attacks on women's rights worldwide have more than an academic interest. For example, Italian women from Seveso are still coming to Britain to get the abortions denied to them at home. Despite the evidence that dioxin from the chemical plant produces seriously malformed babies, religious bigotry has had its way.

If restrictive legislation finds its way through Parliament, Britain's already inadequate abortion provisions will succumb to the same reactionary forces as in Italy and the United States. We have that example before us, but we also have the example of the resistance organised by women in those countries and internationally. It is to defend those women, as well as ourselves, that you should be in Birmingham on 29 October.

*NAC Steering Committee meeting. Discussion on students and the fight for abortion. Speaker: Kay Copp Brown — NUS Women's Campaign. Tuesday 25 October, 7.00pm at the LSE students' union, Houghton Street, London WC2. Room S101A.

An action picture of male chauvinism

The cover picture of this month's issue of the Engineering Union's journal is headlined 'Union Activists at Work'. The picture shows the AUEW's Belfast district committee posing for the camera (looking anything but active!); Given the number of women in the union there should be at least three women on that committee.

The fight for women's rights in the unions has to be a continual struggle. CELIA PUGH takes a look at the situation.

The Hounslow Hospital workers are among thousands of low-paid women who bear the brunt of the Government's economic and social policies. Last week the Equal Opportunities Commission reported: 'The Health Service discriminates against women both as workers and patients.'

HEALTH

They should have added the health unions to their list. The National Union of Public Employees has only two full time women officials. It should have 79! While women make up 70 per cent of the membership of the Confederation of Health Service Employees, it too has only two women fulltimers.

The National Union of Teachers, likewise, has two women fulltimers. It should have nineteen! Although teachers have had equal pay for decades, women are relegated to lower grade, lower paid jobs.

As *Socialist Challenge* reported

last week, issues like abortion are becoming important to teachers, as SPUC and LIFE attempt to whip up support among school children. The NUT executive, male-dominated and sexist, refuses to take a position on these questions.

In the June issue of the AUEW journal, Hugh Scanlon (RIP) pontificated on the problems with the equal pay legislation: 'Like many laws, their fulfilment was difficult, for example Electrolux and Trico.' Scanlon should put his own house in order. The Trico struggle dragged on for five months because the Engineering Union refused to organise solidarity on a national scale. If it had, the struggle could have been won within days.

ELECTROLUX

The Electrolux equal pay strikers were forced to go to an industrial tribunal because of union inactivity. The AUEW then refused legal and financial support. As the AUEW convenor charmingly put it: 'Probably bit of education needs to be



done. A lot of women thought they should get a man's pay for doing women's work.'

'Yes, education is certainly needed. Male chauvinist officials should be sent to the kindergarten to learn the A B C's of women's rights. With attitudes like this, it is hardly surprising that many of the Electrolux women left the AUEW.'

PIETIES

Recent figures show that three quarters of women workers earn less than £53, compared to a quarter of male workers. Pieties of support for women's equality at the TUC were a complete farce since the Congress rejected a fight for a minimum wage of £50 to protect the low paid. Earlier the women's TUC had voted for an increase in women on the General Council. Judith Hunt, women's organiser for the Engineering Union's white-collar section, explained: 'Only positive discrimination will provide adequate representation for women.'

Len Murray did not agree. He argued for the resolution to be remitted to the male-dominated General Council. Given these and the other sordid realities of trade union chauvinism, it's not surprising that women are beginning to organise within the unions to demand more participation and recognition.

That's why all women activists should support the Rally on Women in the Unions, and the Trade Union Day School organised by the Working Women's Charter.

Union news in brief

The Newton Aycliffe 30

by DAVE CARTER

THIRTY SHOP stewards leading the occupation at Eaton's Axle factory in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, have been summoned to appear at Newcastle crown court on 20 October. The management is using the court to gain repossession of the factory from the 700-strong workforce occupation.

The workers are demanding immediate implementation of a wage agreement negotiated 2½ years ago. Management is insisting that the 12-month rule is obeyed.

Whatever the outcome of the court hearing, both sides are expecting a long struggle. It is hoped that the Engineering Union executive will make the dispute official this week. Messages and donations to: AUEW Offices: 66 Duke Street, Darlington.

Communist teacher joints anti-left witch-hunt

THREE WELL-KNOWN militants in the teachers' union — Bernard Regan, Dick North, and Dave Whitely — have been charged by NUT leaders with action 'injurious to the profession'. The charges stem from nothing more than their support for requests from lobbyists to put their case against compulsory transfer to a London union council meeting in July.

Whitely and North are candidates in the union's national vice-presidential elections, and this move is a deliberate attempt to discredit them in the eyes of union members. The charges are being brought by Tony Farsky, a Communist Party member and president of the Inner London Teachers' Association, and Bob Richardson, right-wing general secretary of ILTA. The association represents 14,000 London teachers.

Farsky and Richardson made these disciplinary moves after parents and teachers from the

Ben Jonson school in East London entered the ILTA council chambers to ask for 10 minutes to put their case in support of a staff member threatened with compulsory transfer.

Many union councillors, including the three militants now charged, supported this request. Farsky seized the opportunity to warn the members of the association council against speaking, under the threat that the meeting would be closed. He feared that the 'intruders' might strengthen the hands of opponents of compulsory transfer who looked set to reverse ILTA's policy at the meeting.

Bernard Regan asked if it was in order to suspend council proceedings, and was backed by Dick North. When Farsky closed the meeting, and led a walkout by the right wing, Dave Whitely is alleged to have described their action as 'rats leaving a sinking ship'.

The case will come up on 19 November, but the three are not keeping silent. A picket has been called for that morning at 9am outside Hamilton House, Mableton Place, Euston Road, London WC1.

Darlington journalists strike on

EIGHTY TWO votes to two, that was the convincing majority by which the journalists on strike in Darlington have tossed out the as-you-were formula drawn up by the official mediator. Predictably, the mediator's proposals mean shelving a closed shop — for which the journalists have now been on strike for over four months — until the Government can guarantee the editors' and proprietors' press freedom through a Charter.

As we go to press, the national executive of the journalists' union meets to decide the next step. Unfortunately for the NUJ right wing, the mediation formula does not even cosmetically conceal the sell-out it seeks, and the union leadership is expected to call for an urgently needed extension of the strike.

Representatives of all the NUJ chapels in the Westminster Press group, of which the strike-hit *Northern Echo* is part, have already declared themselves in favour of phased escalation throughout the group's provincial papers. Westminster Press has just made the timely announcement of an 84 per cent profit increase for the first half of 1977.

Printworkers in Darlington have remained solidly on strike in support of the journalists, much to the indignation of SOGAT's Bill Keys and most of his cohorts on the TUC printing industries committee. The journalists' unanimity makes it even more difficult for bureaucrats to get the printers to scab.

by Geoff Sheridan

Wanted: More bus stopping

FIVE YORKSHIRE towns have been gripped by a series of bus strikes led by the drivers, all Transport and General Workers Union members, who are planning to further extend the action. ERICA BARNETT reports from Huddersfield.

It was Bradford that started the ball rolling. The strike started as a protest against the proposed new timetables. These would have cut down services and reduced jobs. Huddersfield was next in line and the drivers came out in solidarity with Bradford. Like the latter they too voted to stay out indefinitely. In Rotherham, Chesterfield and Hull the buses are not running either for a variety of different reasons.

David Oates, a bus driver and member of the T&G WU 9-14 in Huddersfield told *Socialist Challenge*: 'It's the first strike of this type for 22 years. Before this we've been accepting cuts in services for the last 8 years. So the strike has been building up for some time. We were all really keen. We saw it as a matter of principle to support Bradford and there was an 80 per cent vote in favour.'

Oates told us that the effect of Huddersfield's solidarity action had been to encourage and boost the strike in Bradford, whose drivers voted unanimously to stay out indefinitely. 'I feel we will have to organise this on a West Yorkshire basis and hopefully build up to a shop-stewards committee. This is vital because the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport executive has tried the divide-and-rule tactic before.'

The key remains to involve Leeds drivers in the strike. It is not an easy task, because 'each garage is a separate unit in Leeds and there's less unity and more isolation.' But a co-ordinated effort with workers going to speak to the Leeds garages could help.

Scab missiles next time?



Photo: MARK RUSHER (IFL)

UNDER THE cloak of 'national security', the Labour Government used the airforce to smash through the air traffic assistants' picket line at West Drayton, near Heathrow, last Thursday.

The RAF tankers were taking in fuel to supply the civilian and military computers at Heathrow. The Government's claim that the fuel was essential for 'Western defences' was dismissed by the

union as 'downright lies'. Civil and Public Services Association general secretary Ken Thomas revealed that his union had authorised fuel supply to the military computer, provided none of it was used for the civilian one. The Civil Aviation Authority had rejected this offer and it was then — through an order in council by the Labour Government — that the RAF

were brought in. In spite of Thomas's anger at the Government's tactics, they appear to have had some success. Within 24 hours the union revealed it was willing to drop its demand for an immediate implementation of the two-year-old pay agreement and substitute a 'phased' implementation.

TRADE UNION DAY SCHOOL

Organised by the Working Women's Charter Campaign, at Friends Meeting Place, Church Street, on 26 November. Details from: Anita Turnbull, Flat 2, 3 Coleridge Road, London N8. Tel: 01-348 1760 or 01-340 8060 ext 54.

RALLY ON WOMEN IN THE UNIONS

Organised by SE London ASTMS, at Unity House, Euston Road, NW1, on 22 October, 1—5pm. Speakers include Jayaben Desai, from Grunwick. Tickets 40p or three for £1 from: Janet Maguire, ECG Department, Guys Hospital, London SE1. Tel: 01-407 7600 ext 3162.

Protect wages against inflation

Tucked away at the end of the demands of the Ford workers, the miners, and the National Union of Public Employees are clauses which aim to automatically defend and maintain the value of wage increases against inflation. Trade unionists in the distribution trades and the post office also passed resolutions at their conferences calling for settlements to be defended in the same way. STEVE POTTER explains why these demands are worrying the Labour Government and Britain's bosses.

A total of 19 trade union conferences debated policies to automatically defend wages this year. At the Transport and General Workers Union biennial conference a motion — calling for automatic increases of one per cent for every one per cent increase in the cost of living — received over a third of the delegates' votes. This was the same conference which defeated Jack Jones's attempt to force a third round of pay restraint down the throats of the delegates.

The demand for automatic compensation for the effects of inflation on take-home pay — the sliding scale of wages — has been a permanent feature of the Trotskyist programme since the 1930s. It originated at that time as a revolutionary response to a

'The way wages are won under capitalism is simple: workers in the strongest sections win increases — then it is up to the rest of the working class to keep up by comparing their own wages with those received by the strongest and best paid.'

(Tony Cliff in *Socialist Worker*, June 1974.)

new feature of capitalism — a permanent tendency towards inflation.

The British working class has suffered the most rapid drop in its standard of living under this Labour Government than at any time since the beginning of the century. The anger of workers with incomes policy policed by their leaders has spilled over into strikes like those at British Leyland, at Heathrow, and Port Talbot. These actions have run straight into road-blocks thrown up by the union bosses in collaboration with the employers and the Government.

Although these strikes and others like them did not gain all their objectives, they have had their impact. No longer can the union leaders openly and flagrantly impose rigid limitations on wage claims. Despite the undemocratic TUC endorsement of the 12 month gap between wage settlements and their refusal to support the demand of a £50 minimum weekly wage, the way is open to begin a struggle to win back the devastating fall in real wages over the last two and a half years and to attempt to make sure that the working class never pays for the crisis in such a way again.

This is the meaning of the 'cost of living' clauses. As presently formulated these demands are inadequate. The claim of the National Union of Public Employees, for example, speaks of 'threshold clauses', so that only after a certain level of inflation has been reached compensation would begin. (Heath's 1974 threshold experiment to try to hold down workers' wages put the level at 7 per cent.)

But why should workers suffer a seven per cent cut in earnings before being compensated? Without even starting to consider the powerful theoretical arguments that wage increases cause inflation, hundreds of thousands of people have drawn the conclusion that that is not the case as they have watched pay fall as prices soar. For that reason, cost of living agreements must protect wages 100 per cent — not a penny more or less.

The second weakness of such open ended policies is that they leave the determination of the exact extent of price increases in the hands of the state and the official Retail Price Index.

Experience of this problem is not new to workers in the rest of Europe. In Italy and Belgium the Government tried to go round existing threshold agreements by steep price rises on items not included in the 'basket of goods' on which average price rises are calculated.

This means that the working class must draw up a cost of living index reflecting the real expenses of working class families. (For example, the proportion of families' incomes spent on housing is underestimated by a half in the official index.) The first step towards this would be

the trade unions themselves producing a cost of living index — a policy followed by the French trade unions.

But the opportunity can and must be taken to involve those not directly organised at the point of production — housewives and the unemployed — bringing their practical experience to bear on determining the price of life. In doing so, through the creation of price committees reaching beyond the factory gates, firm links can be made against the divide and rule tactics which have been utilised by the employers in dividing male workers from women not directly involved in the dispute.

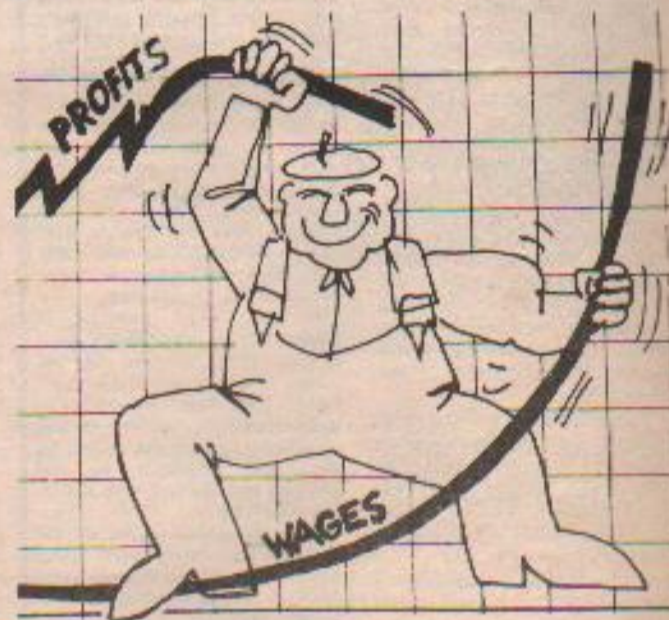
Never has the need for extending the principle of automatic compensation for inflation to spending on the social services been more vital today. The cash limits system of control over public spending makes no provision for the effects of inflation. Wages in the public sector are held down, services cut and jobs lost — automatically.

By itself the sliding scale is not adequate. It can only defend what is gained. And what needs to be gained today is full recompense for the loss in wages over the last two years. That means across-the-board wage increases. But without clauses defending such gains, the whole defensive struggle begins again without lessons being learnt.

The threshold agreements introduced by the Tory government ended in October 1974. From a base point of 113.2 at that time, the retail price index has risen to 183.5 in June 1977 — a percentage increase of 62.2 per cent, or 62 trigger points.

An escalator agreement concluded at that time would by now have paid 62 times the agreed amount. In 1974 both Labour Research and the *Financial Times* agreed that Heath's 40p per trigger point did not give an adequate cover for a 1 per cent rise in the cost of living. (Indeed, it was not designed to do so.) They concluded that 60p trigger would have been needed on average at the time to fully protect against the rate of inflation. 62 trigger points at 60p would have meant an increase of £37.20 to cover increases in the cost of living from October 1974 to June 1977.

(From *The Case for a Sliding Scale of Wages*)



Rank and File Conference Wages: On the offensive!

THE RANK AND FILE Co-ordinating Committee Conference on 26 November in Manchester provides an important opportunity for militants to assess the lessons drawn from struggles on wages as the basis for action. The main motor force behind the conference, the Socialist Workers Party, has, unlike the Communist Party, consistently supported the struggle against Phase 2 of the incomes policy. But the SWP is unlikely to assist the conference with policies that draw on experience.

One example is their hostility towards the demand of the sliding scale. Using examples of 'sweetheart' deals concluded by trade union bureaucrats in the USA, they contend that the principle of automatic compensation removes the will to struggle from the working class.

Their sole alternative is to try to accelerate the process by which strong sections of workers get large increases and the rest of the working class struggles to catch them up. The principle that the working class should not pay for the crisis, for that is what the policy of the sliding scale is all about, will of course meet the most bitter opposition from the employer. Workers would have to wage a permanent struggle to

defend such a gain.

But whereas the employer does not have to pull a stroke in letting inflation eat away at wages, it is quite a different matter to take away a principle that is understood and supported by the whole workforce, as the Italian employers found out to their cost last year.

The SWP has made grudging recognition of this fact with its policy that if inflation exceeds a certain point, wage negotiations would be re-opened. But then any worker is justified in asking, 'if you expect this to happen, why not settle the question now instead of going through the demoralising process of continued strike action to win minimal gains?'

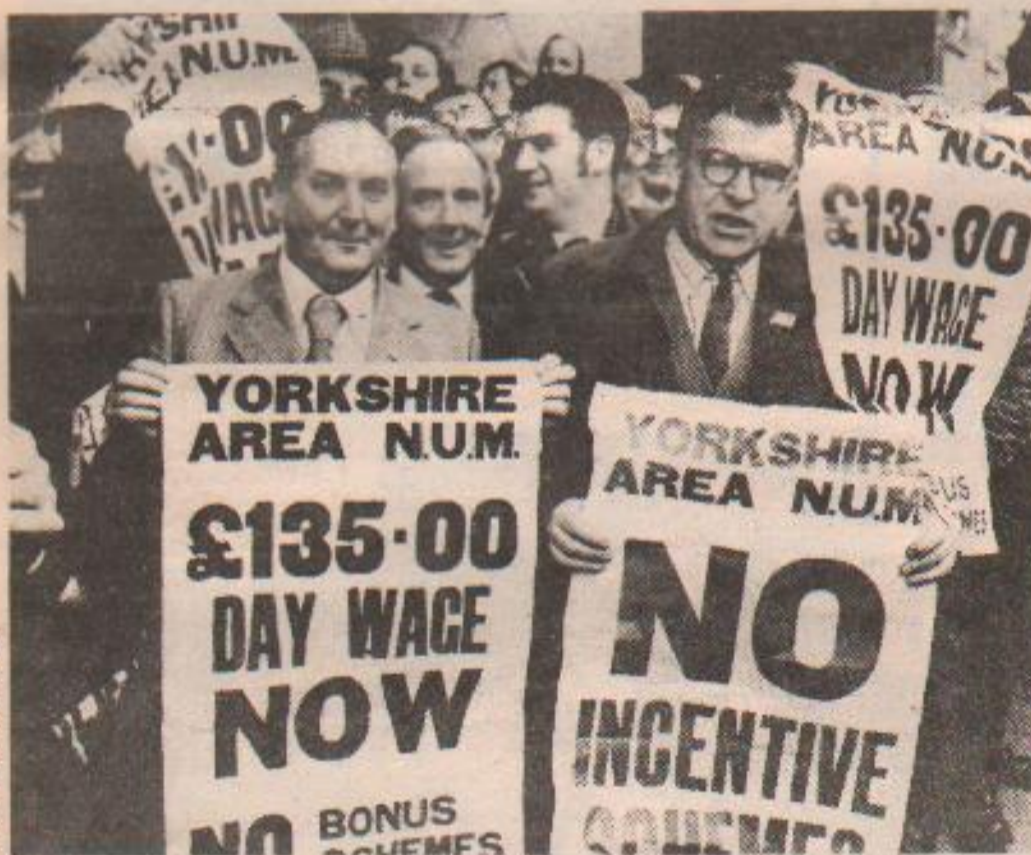
As a pamphlet recently published by the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement points out: 'What the SWP really means is not that the sliding scale removes the need to struggle, but that it changes the battleground from a struggle for workers' control.'

The CDLM recently decided to support the building of the Rank and File Conference on the basis of a fight for policies which can begin to turn the fight in the direction of workers control. They are holding their own conference on Saturday 23 October to discuss out the lessons of the new experience of fighting for such demands in the workers movement.

The need is urgent. The opportunity exists to arm thousands of militants disgusted with the reformist policies of their leaders with the weapons to turn the working class struggle from the defensive to the offensive.

CDLM CONFERENCE
Sunday 23 October
Digbeth Hall, Birmingham

Credentials (50p) from: K. Lee,
44 Devonshire Road, Handsworth,
Birmingham 20.



A productivity scheme was accepted by a close vote of 13 to 11 at the executive meeting of the miners' union last Friday, despite a picket of over 500 angry miners. The minority votes represent 134,000 miners — a majority of union members.

This scheme can do nothing other than put one pit against another, and cause delay around the £135 a week pay claim which will go before the Coal Board 'shortly'.

The voting on the scheme was tipped in favour of the executive, thanks to the Midlands area delegate who defied the mandate of his area and voted for the deal.

Date set for one day strike

OVER 150 public sector shop stewards from Birmingham voted on Saturday to organise one-day strike action on 23 November.

The decision was taken at a conference sponsored by a number of union branches, district committees, and shop stewards committees in the Birmingham area.

Delegates attended from the Transport and Public Employees Unions, the health workers' union COHSE, the General and

Municipal Workers Union and the building workers' union UCATT. Workers from the social services, the ambulance service, hospitals and refuse collection were among those present.

The conference voted for a pay claim based on a £55 minimum wage, with automatic inflation proofing, the consolidation of Phases 1 and 2, and an increase in annual leave entitlement. Thursday 23 November was chosen as the day for strike action as this is the date the National Co-ordinating Committee Against the Cuts — domi-

nated by the leaderships of the public sector unions — has chosen to lobby Parliament.

Saturday's conference also decided to have a day of action on 26 October, and a recall conference following the one-day strike. The action committee elected by the conference hope to use 23 November as a way of broadening support for their pay claim, both nationally in their own unions, and more widely within the movement. They aim to bring out on strike 40,000 public sector workers in the Birmingham area.

NATIONAL RANK AND FILE DELEGATE CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, 26 NOVEMBER
CO-OP HALL, MANCHESTER

Socialist Challenge supporters are urged to get delegated from their organisations on the basis of the fighting policies of Socialist Challenge. The most important policies include:

- * for working class unity — against racism and sexism
 - * an end to the 12-month rule, to the 10 per cent norm and to cash limits
 - * no productivity dealing to increase wages at the expense of jobs
 - * for a minimum wage of £50, equal pay with no strings attached
 - * for automatic increases in wages to compensate for rises in the cost of living; for a sliding scale of public expenditure
 - * for mass solidarity with workers in struggle; for the nationalisation of Grunwick
 - * for industry-wide shop stewards conferences on pay
 - * For local shop stewards conferences to set up local action committees on wages
- Credentials for delegates from the Rank and File Centre, 285a Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

Anti-racist Struggle

Plymouth

THE PLYMOUTH Anti-Fascist Committee organised two demonstrations on 29 September in conjunction with the visit to the town of John Tyndall, the fascist leader. The first was a picket outside the Plymouth Sound radio station where the Fuhrer was disseminating his racist filth. He was whisked away under a heavy police guard.

The second was a demonstration attended by 150 anti-fascists. Fearing trouble the fascists kept their meeting place a closely-guarded secret, but a march was organised nonetheless through the city centre ending with a meeting at the Polytechnic.

The anti-fascist activists considered that the mobilisation marked a big step forward. The AFC was formed just two weeks before Tyndall's visit and it is rapidly accumulating support.

Leicester

THE LEICESTER Trades Council and numerous local Labour Parties are circulating a letter asking all trade unions to expel members who stood as fascist candidates in the last local elections.

Mike Teague, the Trades Council Executive Committee member responsible for 'race relations' said: 'We want the unions locally to disown the Front and expel their election candidates. We also want to see anti-union bodies like the Front prevented from using unions as a platform for their views as we feel that their entire policy of stirring up racialism is designed to divide the labour movement.'

Leicester also saw a recent gathering of fascists for the NF Annual General Meeting. Fascist after fascist got up to support the creation of a youth organisation. Given the widespread racism which does exist it is likely that the Tyndall Youth will have some successes. This means that anti-racists have to step up their work in schools and colleges.

Bradford

GARY WHITING, the anti-fascist militant whose stabbing by local fascists in Bradford we reported a few weeks ago, was fortunate to escape with his life. He was stabbed six times and the knife blade punctured his lung and grazed his heart. Gary had to undergo open-heart surgery, but is now well on his way to recovery.

The local paper's report on the stabbing was a summary of the police report. The police refuse to acknowledge that Gary's as-

saliant was a fascist. The fact is well-known as he has been involved in other attacks in the area.

Local anti-fascists backed by the Bradford Trades Council have stepped up picketing in the city precinct. Last Saturday they distributed leaflets in the name of the Trades Council explaining how Gary had been stabbed by a local fascist and why more vigilance was necessary.

The Bradford police started to harass the pickets. They were denied the right to leaflet and were told to move on. As thirty policemen came to move them forcibly the pickets moved on in a group. Jean Gardiner, a well-known feminist, who was walking away, was arrested and charged with obstruction.

At the second precinct in Darley Street two more anti-fascists were arrested by the police. When an SWP comrade, Geoff Robinson, went to the police station to register a formal complaint against the arrests to the Chief Inspector, he was arrested and charged with insulting behaviour!

This outrageous action by the police is now being taken up by the Trades Council and local MPs. A formal complaint to the Home Secretary is also being considered.

Wolverhampton

WOLVERHAMPTON is a town with a well-deserved national reputation for racism. Enoch Powell was the local Tory MP until his 'defection' to the Ulster Unionists in 1974. The continuing influence of Powellite racism has meant that until very recently the Wolverhampton branch of the National Front maintained an extremely low profile, except in the periods immediately before elections.

About a year ago a group of people decided that it was necessary to build an ongoing organisation to fight racism. It was agreed that it would be wrong to follow the example of many other areas, and form our committee solely on the basis of opposing fascism. We had to situate the fight against the fascists in the context of an overall struggle against all forms of racism.

To further these campaigns, and specifically to try to carry them into the local trade unions, we decided to call a Day of Action against Racism and Fascism. One of our objects was to begin to develop an anti-fascist campaign which goes simply beyond responding to the latest initiative of the National Front. The need for such a campaign is highlighted by the increased activities of the Front locally. As well as the incidents mentioned above (their regular pickets of the local council, and paper sales in the town centre), one of the leading members of the Anti-Racist Committee's house has been daubed with NF slogans, and a brick was thrown from the shopping centre roof at far-left paper sellers.

Socialist Unity's message

'Do not lie down when they trample you'

NOBODY DISTURBS the Labour Party in Tower Hamlets. Every seat on the Council is occupied by trusty Labour stalwarts. The streets are mean and dirty. The sweat shops exploit their workers — particularly the immigrants — and the racist thugs persecute and hound the Bengalis and revive the anti-semitism of their old leader Oswald Mosley.

Well, nobody did disturb the Labour Party, until Socialist Unity arrived on the scene. Suddenly housing cuts, racism, wages, women's rights, and schools have become an issue. The wall of silence is being broken down as militants knock on doors, urge from loudspeakers and use their manifestos to show that things can be changed.

Like a breath of fresh air Socialist Unity has swept into the

Spitalfields by-election. It has uncompromisingly attacked the passivity and implicit corruption of a creaky, complacent Labour machine, that defends wage freeze, cuts back the social services and perpetuates the racism that stalks the streets. Socialist Unity has said: Do not lie down when they trample all over you. Use your strength to organise and fight back. When they threaten your jobs, when they cut your living standards, when they attack you because you're black or Asian do not rely on the councillors and the MPs

— go into the factories and onto the streets and fight back!

The by-election result in Spitalfields will not be known when we go to press. However, there is one thing we can say. The campaign of Socialist Unity candidate, Hilda Kean, has shown that people will respond to such a fight back and that despite the sordid complicity of the Callaghan crew and the Labour 'left' at the Brighton conference opposition is growing at the grass roots.

Ladywood and Spitalfields have both shown the urgent need

to raise the standard of a fighting socialist opposition. These campaigns can, and must, be built on and extended. The Socialist Unity conference of 19 November can help to pull these two campaigns together. More importantly they can extend these campaigns into far wider areas and prepare for a united intervention in the General Election, as well as in a number of selected by-elections and council elections.

In every campaign the need for working class unity around a socialist programme is brought home. By building a united conference which can by democratic debate and discussion agree on a programme that will enable revolutionaries and militants to present a united campaign to the working class in elections, Socialist Unity will be serving a real need in the class struggle. Make sure that your area and organisation is present on 19 November.

SOCIALIST UNITY NATIONAL CONFERENCE

19 November, London

Details including the draft programme — to which amendments can be submitted until 17 November — from Socialist Unity, Box 15, Rising Free, Upper Street, London N.1.



Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

Over 2000 anti-fascists marched through NF stronghold of Hoxton in East London last Sunday. But the show of force from trade unionists, Labour Party wards, women's, black and socialist organisations — including Socialist Unity — kept the fascists indoors with the exception of a few disgusting bands of

union-jack waving thugs.

Had they dared appear, the NF would have had the protection of over 1000 police, including the Special Patrol Group and mounted police, who were protecting the fascist paper-selling pitch in Brick Lane.

RACE & CLASS

Volume XIX Autumn 1977 Number 2

The latest issue of Race and Class contains a number of extremely useful articles including a fascinating review by Thomas Hodgkin of a new book on Vietnamese communism in the period 1932-37 by the French historian Daniel Hemery. The book deals with the whole question of the relations between the Vietnamese Communists and the Trotskyists led by Ta Thu Thau. Available from the Institute of Race Relations, 247-9 Pentonville Road, London N.1. Single copies: 75p [plus 15p for postage].

The first 18 issues of Socialist Challenge

We're on the road

Socialist Challenge was launched last June on the initiative of the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International. Our aim was to produce a popular, political weekly which could be utilised as a weapon of struggle by thousands of comrades who were not in any revolutionary organisation, and generate oppositional class struggle currents at the base of the trade unions.

As part of the first task we stressed the necessity for a unified revolutionary organisation, and in the 6 October issue we published a draft statement of aims as the basis for revolutionary unity. As part of the second task we have recently increased coverage of the problems facing trade unionists and how the existing rank and file bodies relate to them.

Without doubt the success of *Socialist Challenge* and its ability to project a political and journalistic formula different from that of all the existing left-wing papers is due to the wide-ranging debates the paper has initiated and conducted with virtually all currents in the workers movement.

In other words, we have rejected — in an extremely determined fashion — the sectarian notions within the far left about what a Leninist paper should be

like. The effectiveness of our approach has been demonstrated by the sharp rise in our sales and subscriptions, and also by the numbers of supporters' groups established in areas where the IMG has little or no presence.

Some comrades have an extremely narrow conception of what constitutes a political intervention. There are no doubt many shortcomings in the newspaper, which largely reflect the weakness of our political implantation in the working class and that of the far left as a whole. But these cannot be surmounted by nourishing illusions. That would lead to posturing and substitutionism. We have to be extremely realistic. We must understand whom we are speaking to at the present time.

Our audience today consists of two different kinds of people. On the one



hand, there are thousands upon thousands of former members of revolutionary organisations and of the Communist and Labour Parties: the children of 1968, who have rejected (for good and bad reasons) a link with organised revolutionary politics. Many are isolated individuals; others are in women's organisations, gay collectives, and black groups. The second group consists of those who are being

attracted to far left politics for the first time. They are, in the main, young white-collar and industrial workers, looking for solutions to the crisis.

Socialist Challenge has to try and satisfy the political needs of both kinds of militants, thus drawing them closer to organised revolutionary politics. The growth of supporters' groups is an indication that this is happening nationally. The weakest link in this respect is London; though here, too, some small steps forward are being considered.

WEAKNESS

While the impact of the newspaper has been considerable, we must guard against complacency. The weakness of the paper has been that it has not yet been able to develop a fully worked out analysis on strategy and tactics necessary to prepare a class struggle opposition within the unions. Nor have we fully explored or clarified the differences between ourselves and other sections of the left. In this area we have to strengthen the paper, and steps to do so have already been taken.

The fact that comrades in two different organisations — Big Flame and the Workers League — are considering participating on the Editorial Board means that further advances can be registered in the near future.

The tasks of the paper can be symbolised in studying the last two issues. In No. 16 we gave over four pages to the Ford Workers' Group in order to aid them in their struggle in the plants. We have a number of disagreements with the group, but we did not let that become an obstacle. In

last week's issue we had an additional four pages in which we reviewed books and assessed the state of the British intelligentsia. We would argue that both were necessary.

The breadth of debate in the paper is without precedent in the pages of a newspaper launched by a political organisation. We are proud of this fact



because we believe it aids in political clarification and fulfils a real need of socialist militants. We reject the approach which elevates sterile dogmatism and slogan mongering to an art and presents this as informed or principled political analysis. We have a long way to go, but we are on the road. How long it takes depends concretely on our readers and supporters throughout the world.

The state of our finances

THE SUCCESS of any publication must also be judged upon its sales and financial performance. *Socialist Challenge* is no exception. Political goodwill does not pay journalists' wages, typesetting bills, or design and printing costs. However in comparison to other publications, a revolutionary paper has no big capitalist backers or State support. We rely on the ability of our supporters to sell and finance the paper.

To launch a new paper at the beginning of the summer months which, with holidays and student vacations, tend to see a decline in political activity, stretched the resources of *Socialist Challenge* to near breaking point. Local sales declined and payments became erratic.

Nevertheless, during the first four months of the paper's life we met the survival targets; and in some cases we exceeded them. First on new subscriptions, an important bedrock to the paper, we aimed to win £750 worth. The final figure was £1,333. Secondly, we hoped to make a fund drive target of £1,8000 over three months. That was topped by £51. The most important aspect of this fund drive was that, as the figures show, nearly half was raised from individual supporters.

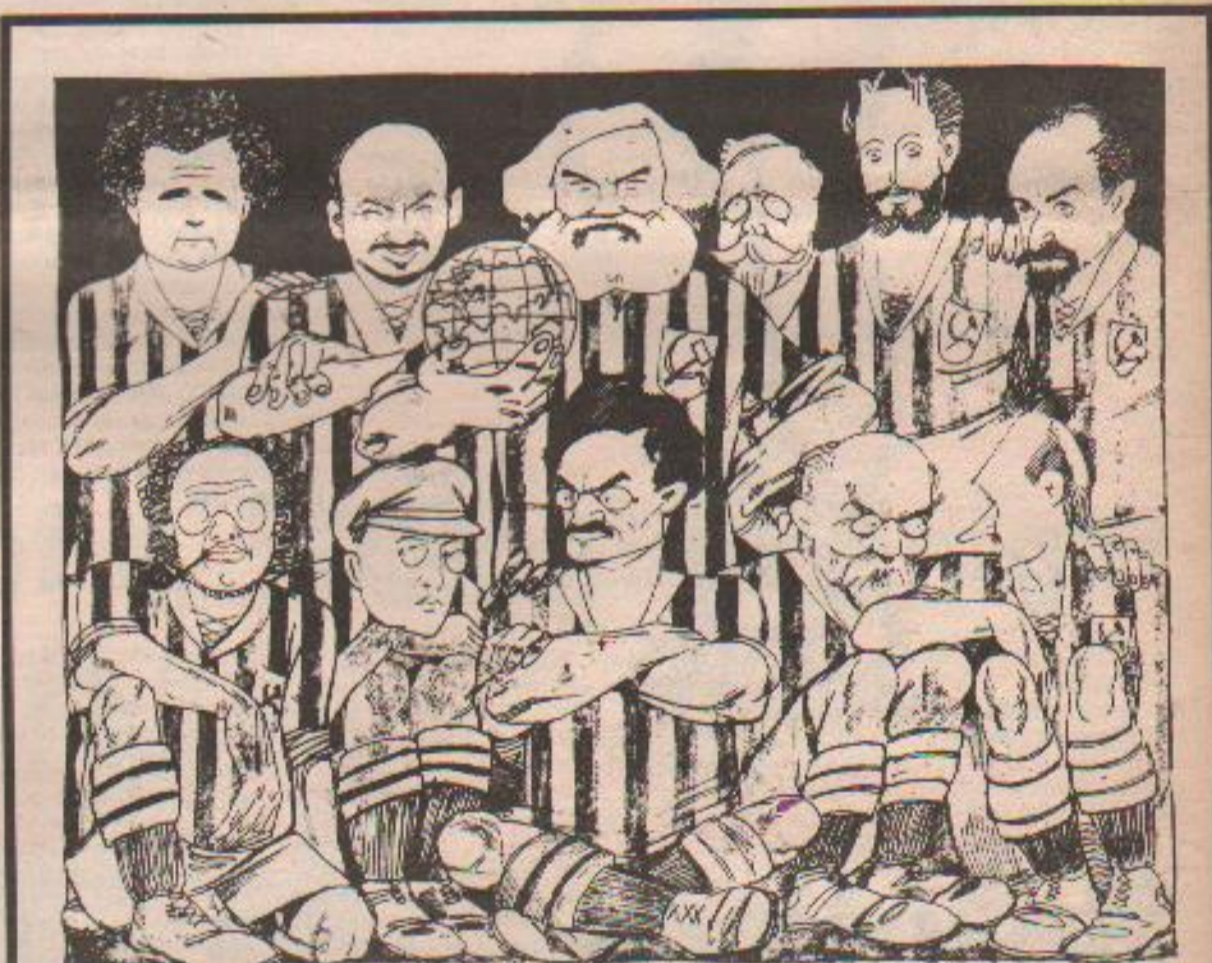
Various projects were undertaken nationally to raise funds which are now bearing fruit. The 1978 calendar has been published and sales are already underway. A special Russian Revolution anniversary souvenir copy of *Socialist Challenge*, designed by David King and with previously unpublished text by Isaac Deutscher, will be out in the next few weeks. The first film benefit performance at The Other Cinema was so successful that joint benefits are to become

regular monthly events, beginning on 29 October.

Since the summer, sales have been steadily on the increase. With the print run at 8,500 we are finding ourselves completely out of copies by the weekend. In the issue which contained 'Fraud News' the print run was 10,500. The impact of supplements such as the Ford special and the Review of Books has been to mark the paper out from the rest of the left press. Plans are afoot for further such special issues.

The greater political impact of the paper can also be seen in the sales at Collets, the Central London bookshop, where sales have averaged around 150 a week. However, it is not only bookshop sales which have been advancing. Without doubt the most encouraging aspect of the paper's circulation is the expansion of local *Socialist Challenge* groups and sellers. Excluding London, there are now supporters in over 60 towns and cities. New groups and sellers now exist in Crawley, Plymouth, Exeter, Leamington, Swindon and Wolverhampton — to name just a few locations.

Nevertheless, *Socialist Challenge* walks a financial tightrope. The cost of printing a 16 page weekly with spot colour on four pages, typesetting and design costs hundreds of pounds each week. In the next few weeks these prices, like the rest of prices in Britain are going up. Allied to the fact that to maintain the quality of the paper it is vital for another journalist to be employed it becomes inevitable that the price must be increased to 15p from 1 November. We regret that as much as our readers will, but economic reality stares us in the face.



This cartoon was first published in the revolutionary satirical magazine Red Pepper, which appeared in Moscow after the Revolution. The year was 1923. Despite the advanced views on questions such as abortion, marriage and child-raising, sexism was still dominant: hence Luxemburg and Kollontai are missing from the 'team', which consists of: [front, l to r] Radek, Soznovskiy, Trotsky [centre forward], Ryazanov, and Bukharin; [back, l to r] Zinoviev, Lenin [full-back], Marx [goal-keeper], Kamenev, Chichernin, and Lozovsky.

The magazine was especially popular among workers, and a sign that till the advent of Stalinism the revolution retained a sense of humour. This is the first time this cartoon has been reproduced. We are doing so to announce our special 16-page supplement on the Russian Revolution. The text is a compilation of the events leading up to the Revolution by the late Isaac Deutscher and has not been published before.

It is written in such a way that it can be read in public or even performed without specialist training. The design is by David King, who has unearthed pictures not published before in the socialist press. The supplement will be in two colours throughout and printed on special paper, at 50p. Bulk orders should be sent as soon as possible.

JOINT FILM BENEFIT FOR

Socialist Challenge and The Other Cinema

QUEIMADA

A film with permanent revolution as its theme, directed by Pontecorvo (*Battle of Algiers*), followed by a discussion led by Paul Sharp of the Caribbean Socialist Group, and then a social with cheap drink. All in price just £1.50. A night not to miss, on:

Saturday, 29 October, beginning 6.30pm at The Other Cinema, 25 Tottenham Street, London W1. [Goodge St. or Warren St. tubes.] Tickets at the door.

What you can do

* Send in stories from your locality, union or group, which you feel may be useful, as well as clippings from local papers.

* Try and find a newsagent in your area who is prepared to stock us on a sale or return basis. Make sure the paper is available in university and left bookshops. If it isn't please let us know.

* If you are prepared to sell

copies of the paper, we will send you a bulk order post free.

* If you can afford it, please send us a regular donation for the Fighting Fund. This can be done through a bankers order [forms available on request].

* If there is no Socialist Challenge supporters group in your area and you are keen to get one off the ground, you should contact us immediately.

Why this man must go now!

Thoughts and Profile by GEOFF BELL

The thoughts of Chairman Dobson

ON 27 SEPTEMBER this year Sir Richard Dobson, the chairperson of the British Leyland Motor Corporation, addressed the Twenty Club at the Dorchester Hotel in London.

The Twenty Club is made up of the bosses of Britain's largest family retail businesses, whose workers are among the lowest paid in the country. The

chairperson of the meeting was a Mr. R.W. Burgess, a director of British Home Stores. Dobson's theme for the evening was 'Ten Years of Change in British Society'. *Socialist Challenge* has obtained a tape recording of Dobson's speech.

We make the contents of this speech public in a week when the workers at

British Leyland are being threatened by the Labour Government, Leyland management, and the National Enterprise Board. They are being told they must accept a further cut in their living standards by abiding by the 10 per cent guideline.

They are being threatened with redundancy through the 'decentralisation' of British Leyland. They are told that they must accept all this in 'the national interest'.

Dobson's speech, made in private after dinner in a specially reserved suite in the Dorchester, makes it abundantly clear what the real interests of the Leyland bosses are.

Dobson is virulently anti-union. He is a racist, a sexist and a reactionary through and through. The ruling class's media have time and again screamed attacks at the workers in British Leyland. Let them now turn their attention to Sir Richard Dobson. He is the real Leyland scandal.

Even in his public utterances, Dobson has found it difficult to hide his hatred of working people. He has cheerfully admitted that he is a Tory and a champion of private enterprise. But what he says when talking to a group of reactionary bedfellows in the closed confines of the plush Dorchester Hotel goes way beyond that. Yet ironically one of the major themes of Dobson's speech was 'hypocrisy' which, he said, 'really had a grip over the last ten years'. Quoting examples he went on:

'Let us take crime and punishment — particularly capital punishment — race relations, foreign policy. In particular, double standards in relation to the wicked South Africans, Brazilians, Chileans and Greeks, compared to the lovable old Russians, the Cubans and the down-trodden African guerrillas and all that stuff.'

Then came the gem:
'Who would have expected the Daily Mail to have the bloody nerve to bribe somebody £15,000 to reveal the documents — which turned out to be forged — in order to accuse the company of the perfectly respectable fact that it was bribing wogs?'

LAUGHTER

This remark was followed by an outburst of laughter from the assembled audience. For them, as for Dobson, bribing was 'perfectly respectable',



especially if the bribes were directed towards 'wogs'. The 'wogs' in this case being a reference to the Arabs. Dobson was probably unaware of the fact that it is they who now own the Dorchester! Dobson's racism was not confined to this remark. Here are his thoughts on the Grunwick strike:

'You can't tell me that the ordinary British worker is passionately concerned that a number of blackish people in North London are being underpaid.'

Quoting the findings of the Scarman inquiry that George Ward was anti-union, Dobson offered this conclusion:

'Would the position of the UK in the world market be better or worse if the unions hadn't multiplied? In fact have the unions benefitted their members at all? Or have they in fact done total damage in the last decade? I think it's worth asking.'

There is little doubt which answer Sir Richard would give to that question. He has said in public that he is a Tory and although he was given the job in Leyland by a Labour Cabinet, he sees no need to return the compliment. He had this to say on Callaghan's opposition to 'In Place of Strife':

BARBARACASTLE

'By the late 1960s there was a growing feeling in the country that the trade unions were getting too bloody big for their boots. They were getting all together too powerful, not only for themselves but for their own members. Now Barbara Castle, who's not everybody's idea of a pin-up or heroine, we mustn't forget that she did lead the fight under the heading "In Place of Strife", in an attempt to curb the power of the unions.'

'Well it got a bit hot, and Mr. Callaghan turned and ran. It's not the first time in our history that it was thought that if you could run fastest you were therefore a leader — whatever direction you happened to be running in at the time.'



CALLAGHAN: 'If you could run fastest you were therefore a leader.'



This cartoon of Barbara Castle appeared in *The Red Mole* during her attempt to push through *In Place of Strife*. Dobson praises these attempts.

Reactions

This is what Tom Litterick, Labour MP for Selly Oak, Birmingham told *Socialist Challenge*

'This man is an influential and powerful public servant who obviously doesn't see it that way. This speech shows clearly that not only is he opposed to all the Labour government's policies but he is vicious with it.'

He reveals a series of prejudices which would qualify him for life membership of the Nat-

ional Front. On that score he should be investigated by the Race Relations Board.

It is also disquieting that he seems to be stupid with it insofar as he openly condones bribery and corruption and goes on to refer to the landlords of the hotel in which he made his speech as "wogs", not to mention his

references to the Grunwick workers as "blackish people".

His openly expressed contempt for trade unions and his hostile attitude towards trades-unionism must go a long way towards explaining British Leyland management's inability to handle labour relations competently. In the circumstances it's no wonder that the workers of Leyland distrust the people who've been left in control of this valuable national asset.

This man's manifest bigotry and ignorance clearly renders him unfit to hold such a position of public responsibility. It's a source of constant amazement to me that Labour Governments persist in appointing people who are dedicated to destroying them and preventing the Labour Movement from acquiring political power to positions of power in the heart of the economic system. They have a pathetic and unjustifiable faith in the honesty of Establishment people. Eric Varley should remove him immediately.'



Tom Litterick

THE LEYLAND WORKERS REPLY:

When *Socialist Challenge* showed the contents of Dobson's speech to Leyland workers over the weekend the common reaction was one of disgust and anger. The workers at Rover Solihull in Birmingham had this to say:

Ken Allen, shop steward:

'The reference to black people is blatantly racist. The man is an out and out reactionary who is completely opposed to the trade union movement. These type of remarks should only be found in a National Front publication. He should be sacked immediately.'

Jimmy Conway, TGWU shop steward:
'Dobson doesn't know what he's talking about. He talks like an outsider who knows nothing about the industry.'

Eddie Squires, Deputy Steward, TGWU:
'Dobson is against nationalisation, against the trade union and he's a racist. He should be in the job...he should be kicked out.'

'SHOCKED'

Brian Bird, TGWU shop steward and a local Labour councillor:

'I am shocked and amazed at the speech and it gives great cause for concern for the future of Leyland. This is typical of the kind of management we are suffering from at plant level. The government should launch an immediate investigation into the people. I will organise a meeting of Labour MPs in the Birmingham area and demand an enquiry into Leyland management.'

Photo: G.M. COCKSON (Socialist Challenge)

While his contempt for the Labour Government shines through Dobson's speech, he gets into a real frenzy when discussing what he obviously feels to be the extreme front of social democracy as it operates in Sweden:

'Now I don't know how many of you are familiar with the state of affairs in Sweden, but I think they have the advantage of pioneering in the social security area. In consequence they've most got to the logical conclusion of their mutual benevolence and are absolutely up the bloody creek.'

Compared to the greedy workers, Dobson sees the British middle class as too generous. He offered these arguments on the Trade Union Act of 1966, which meant unions couldn't be sued for damages inflicted during a strike; on the Beveridge social reforms of the post-war Labour Government and on British policy in Ireland:

GENEROSITY

The British middle classes are nice and hearted people. The Trade Union Act of 1966 was an act of generosity. Beveridge was generous in a way we couldn't afford. So were the events in Northern Ireland where we decided we were being rather beastly to the Catholics in Northern Ireland so we warned the police in Northern Ireland. All these were acts of generosity, and of course fallacious ones.'

Judging from these remarks, the last reason that Sir Richard could be expected to have a good opinion of would be Derek Robinson, who is the chief convenor at Leyland's Longbridge plant and a member of the Communist Party. Yet this was Dobson's judgement:

I happen to know the chief convenor at Longbridge. He's an avowed communist. I must say that I rather like him because he's fairly good at getting people to work. His idea is that he will go into the factory and use the managers and consultants. We're not much more than a picture of Sir Richard Dobson's social society is not difficult to imagine. There would be no unemployment benefit, unions would be more or less outlawed, Ireland would be treated with even greater barbarity than it is now, and 'wogs' and 'blackish people' would be left to the tender mercies of capitalist bosses and politicians.

At the very least Sir Richard Dobson must be immediately sacked from British Leyland and left to fester in the backwoods of Tory reaction where he belongs. But Leyland workers have the right to know how many more Dobsons are ruling their plants. Most of all they have the right to ask the Labour Government whether Dobson is appointed to run Leyland in spite of his opinions or because of them.

Communist Party and British Leyland

'They speak with a timid and tremulous voice'

Any militant reading the Communist Party's new pamphlet *British Leyland: Save It to discover a line of march would be sadly disappointed. There are no answers for workers at Leylands, or for those in the supply and ancillary industries, who are under attack from both management and the Labour Government.*

PAT HICKEY argues that the publication of a pamphlet on Leylands is timely. There is an urgent need for a plan to wage the fightback, but this pamphlet doesn't answer the need.

The appearance of *British Leyland: Save It* coincides with stepped up efforts to force a pay deal on Leyland workers which will cut living standards, enforce speed ups and weaken trade union organisation. The Labour Government is determined to pile drive a deal through the National Enterprise Board and British Leyland to make the workers carry the can for the effects of the capitalist crisis, compounded by years of mis-management.

The Communist Party's pamphlet argues for a five-point programme to save Leyland — including participation, investment, wages, home market, and exports.

Participation is given as much space in the pamphlet as the four other points put together. It is described as 'the most challenging area of the Ryder recommendations', because it represents 'an opportunity to kill the myth that shop stewards cannot play a part in management'.

But participation has nothing at all to do with workers running their own

industry — it is about workers participating in management's running of the industry, in a capitalist economy and according to capitalist laws. Today it involves rationalisation, speed-up and investment for profit at Leyland. Is that what workers should participate in?

PARTICIPATION

The pamphlet makes out that if workers reject participation then they are content with collective bargaining and to leave to the distant future any plans of workers running the industry. That is not the case. But the fight for workers' control over that of the Leyland bosses — imposing on management the decisions of the workers about how Leyland should be run — is quite different from sharing the same boardroom in collaboration with the bosses.

Participation has hardly given Leyland workers a major say in investment. The NEB has openly blackmailed Leyland workers by promising money for investment only if the workers give up hard won bargaining rights and maintain industrial peace. The exchange offered is at the workers' expense. 'Your say in investment comes only if you accept our demands for cuts in living standards' is the message from the NEB.

Where was the power of the workers when Land Rover and Range Rover production was re-organised? Or when the Dolomite and Lynx were moved? Workers were told what the company decisions were. Participation is simply a variation on the old theme of making

the union leaders police their members in the interests of the bosses.

The results of participation have been seen at Longbridge. Workers there are so used to seeing CP convenor Derek Robinson only when he is telling them to go back to work or increase productivity, that a strike called by the Works Committee was overturned by a small minority. That is how much participation increases confidence among the workers.

A line of march for Leyland workers is just as absent in the remaining sections of the pamphlet. There are a few harsh words against the Government tying its investment policy to threats against the unions, and against the incomes policy. On the home market the CP's demand is for reflation of the economy and for import controls — in reality a reactionary call for workers of other countries to carry the crisis rather than British workers.

With this kind of programme, it is not surprising that the shortest section of the pamphlet should be on how to save Leyland. Readers are told that the mobilisation of workers around the pamphlet's bankrupt policies is a first step. The Leyland Combine Committee will have a 'key role' to play.

But this committee exists in name only. The action it has taken — the day of action in April against the social contract — was a fiasco. Its last meeting was attended by only 120 delegates out of a possible 500, and they were unable to agree on any common strategy. This committee has not taken one step to meet the crisis.

The Communist Party ignores these problems. It dishonestly claims that

this committee can 'discuss and agree on a united strategy, explain it to every worker in Leyland...and call for specific actions'. Intoxicated with its own verbosity, the pamphlet goes on to involve 'every factory, depot and pit...trades councils and the TUC... Labour Party and Communist Party'. The fight will be taken to 'shopping centres, community organisation and housing estates'.

This is for the future. But there is not a word about the present threats to jobs, living standards and working conditions. A workforce that is weakened by defeats will be in no position to fight back later. The fight against incomes policy is reduced to a 'strategy' of wishing it away: 'Without a Government's income policy the trade unions would be able to...campaign for adequate wages for their members.'

CARROLL'SLOBSTER

The urgent need is to begin the fight now around policies which can unite the workforce and meet the crisis. On this the CP offers nothing. It is a bit like what Lewis Carroll's lobster had to say:

*When the sands are all dry he is as gay as a lark,
And will speak in contemptuous tones of the shark,
But when the tide is in, and the sharks are around,
His voice has a timid and tremulous sound.*

Pat Hickey is a member of the TGWU at the Rover plant in Solihull.

Profile of a Wilsonian Knight



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

RICHARD DOBSON is 63. He has been head of British Leyland for 18 months. The major shareholder in British Leyland is the Government, via the National Enterprise Board. Dobson was appointed by the Labour Government.

He was selected to head British Leyland when Wilson was still Prime Minister. He was also knighted by Wilson, a somewhat dubious distinction he shares with the late Sir Eric Miller and other worthies.

Dobson was educated at a public

school, Clifton College, whence he proceeded to Kings College, Cambridge. In 1935 he joined the British American Tobacco Corporation as a director. At the present time he is president of BAT, chairperson of British Leyland as well as chairperson of the Tobacco Securities Trust and the London Regional Industrial Committee for National Savings.

He is a director in Commonwealth Development Finance, the oil giants of Exxon Corporation, Davy International, Fosco Minsep, and Lloyds Bank. As boss of Leyland, he receives a

salary of £22,500. Given his other directorships his annual income must be well over £100,000. When Dobson received his Leyland appointment, he expressed surprise: 'I don't know anything about motor cars, I don't know very much about labour relations.'

He provided a demonstration of this assertion in his first address to the shareholders when he unleashed a public attack on the Leyland workers: 'In British Leyland, though relatively few industrial disputes have been directly concerned with pay, so many strikes have occurred with no benefit to either company or to the employers that one is forced to the conclusion that the underlying reason is a desire to make a protest.'

Dobson received his Wilsonian knighthood for services to industry, and while the Government bailed out the inefficient Leyland management, chairperson Dobson said on his appointment that the idea of nationalisation 'fills me with a great deal of horror'.

Dobson calls himself a Tory, and was described by The Times as 'an enthusiastic admirer and defender of multinational companies'. On one occasion he explained he supported the private enterprise system 'because the basic motivation is to make as much money as possible and some of the ways of doing that might not be

considered ethical'. [like bribes, presumably.]

On workers' conditions, Dobson has described the prospect of the working week being cut to 35 hours as 'a nightmare' — other people's working week, that is; and he generously adds that idea of an egalitarian society is based on 'envy'. In short Dobson has the two main ingredients of many bosses: ignorance and reaction.

It may appear remarkable that a Labour Government should give him a knighthood and then the chairpersonship of British Leyland, but Labour's policy towards any industry it has a stake in is the priority of profit. In this respect Dobson has a number of outstanding qualities.

As a director of an oil company he had a personal interest in producing cheap cars. His previous career in the tobacco industry — one of the highest profit makers in the world — also meant he'd had a long and successful record of exploiting workers. Dobson was also, of course, an enthusiastic supporter of multi-national companies, which have a track record second to none for making profits through ways which 'might not be considered ethical'.

All this made Dobson an appropriate choice to head Leyland. Appropriate, that is, if you put the interests of capitalism before those of working people.

'DISGRACEFUL'

Pat Hickey, TGWU Shop Steward: 'Dobson is racist scum. But the Labour Government and Wilson in particular, must have known what he was like when they appointed him. What this reveals is the need for workers control to be established forthwith in all nationalised industries. There's going to be trouble if Dobson is not sacked.'

Steve Griffiths (AUEW Shop Steward)

'From Dobson's remarks it is obvious that the guy is out of his mind. He actually thinks the American government is anti-capitalist! As for his remarks about bribes, they're shocking and disgraceful. I'd like to see all the books in British Leyland opened and made available to the workers. Then we'll see where the money is going.'

An answer to Conor Cruise O'Brain

In addition to our regular correspondent from Long Kesh, we publish this article from another prisoner on the recent utterances of Britain's favourite Irish person.

THE MAJORITY of the Irish people are now against unity. This is the latest edict from Ireland's own intellectual conscience, Dr Conor Cruise O'Brain (sic).

In his well-publicised speech to the British Irish Association conference in Oxford, the clockwork pundit dismissed with awe-inspiring finality the widespread misconception that the people of Ireland — if ever consulted on the issue of a united Ireland — would massively support it.

SCHOLARLY

For the modest sum of £9.90, Dr O'Brain had been able to purchase a sociological survey entitled 'Prejudice and Tolerance', and in this scholarly volume he came upon information which transformed the Irish Question to the significance of the Square Earth v. Round Earth debate of the 15th

Century. When asked: 'Do you hold that national unity is an essential condition for the just solution of the present Northern Problem', 57.5 per cent of the 1,000 Dublin people canvassed answered Yes.

By the simple addition of the Loyalist population of the North to the 42.5 per cent whom O'Brain presumed to be against unity he arrived at this conclusion.

My acceptance of the 'natural' order of things might have been as total as it is to most of my age group in the British Isles. I would assume that anyone who had spent many years gaining academic qualifications would have a right to succeed to the powerful positions to which they aspired. After all, had they not buried their heads in books while I enjoyed whatever pleasures I could find?

Politicians may be devious and corrupt, but then do they not have vast experience and more letters



after their names than in them, and would not our naivety and incompetence outweigh their corruption a hundred times? Is Dr O'Brain not an intellectual of world-wide repute, the sort of new-thinking person we need for this country?

Put him in a political party; let

him spellbind the local branch with his wisdom; have them spread the word of the man's genius throughout the area, and he couldn't fail to get elected.

DEMOCRACY

Yet after O'Brain has expanded so much verbal diarrhoea on every subject under the sun, has heaped repression on dissenting voices and ruined wherever department he is voted out of office and replaced by the next whizz kid with the TV smile and the big party backing.

Such is democracy in modern Europe. There is nothing wrong with the man or woman in the street, but what conceivable safeguard have they got against the O'Brains, the Ciaran McKeowns or the Margaret Thatchers when everything they are taught to admire is built around these figures? When the daily sources of

knowledge, such as the media, sell them like so many bars of chocolate — except that chocolate was never sold so well?

The people are told that government is very complex; with inflation figures, import-export indices, the cost of living index. Just leave it to those with the know-how and experience and they will look after you.

What then is the solution? The answer in one sentence is: 'All wealth to the workers'. Will Conor Cruise O'Brain or any of his equally obnoxious counterparts go on TV and simplify their political philosophy down to one sentence?

Will they say: 'We will take three quarters of the wealth and we will look after you'? They won't, but then that's why I'm in jail and they are on TV every other night. Because the answer is so simple they have to lock people up lest the truth gets around.

What's Left

Rates: 3p per word. Display: £1.50 per column inch. Deadline: 3pm Saturday before publication.

ROOM available in West London for 3 to 4 months from 1 November. Phone Charlie, 01-802 8550 between 8.30-10am, or 6.30-8.30pm.

RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA'S latest pamphlets: 'New Essays' — on Trotsky, Pao, Mao China, Hegel and Frankfurt School. £1 (inc. p&p). Also 'Sexism and Revolution in Mao's China'. 35p from 17 Hornsey Pary Road, London N8.

SOUTHAMPTON Women's Group. An introduction to the Women's Liberation Movement — a day school, Saturday 22 October. Featuring Sheria Rowbotham and local speakers, workshops, displays, etc. Disco, band, bar starts at 7.30pm. Canteen and accommodation available. Details from Chrissie, 210 Derby Road, Southampton.

BADGES Equal Pay Now, NHS cuts mean backstreet abortion, and Women's Liberation symbol. Usually 15p each — special offer! All 3 for 30p. Half price for bulk orders of Equal Pay badges, 10 badges for 75p. Orders to IMG Women's Commission, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE social against racism. Saturday 22 October. Saracen's Head, Leicester. 8pm. Admission 50p.

DURHAM Socialist Challenge meeting. Bob Pennington on 'What is Socialist Challenge?', at Dunelm House, 1pm on Thursday 20 October.

CULTURE and Revolution. Sat 22 Oct, South Bank Poly Students Union, 10.30-5.00. Communist Party Arts and Leisure Club.

KINGS LYNN Radical Discussion Group. All shades of left opinion welcome. For further information contact: Tim Webb, Kings Lynn 5786.

ISLINGTON NAC benefit disco. Hensington Arms, Offord Rd, NI. Sat 22 Oct 60p (claimants 40p).

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE Public Meeting: Woman's Right to Choose. Tues 25 Oct, 7.30, Ranelagh Tavern, Leamington.

GAY RIGHTS — National Union of Students. An open activists meeting of the NUS Gay Rights Campaign will be held on Sat, 22 Oct, 11.00 am at the University of London Union, Malet Street.

HARINGEY Troops Out Movement meeting on 'The Irish Republic and the Crisis'. Speaker: Cyril Murphy (RCT). Tues 20 Oct, 8pm at Tottenham Trades Hall, Bruce Grove N17.

CRITIQUE conference: 80th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution and the World Crisis. 21-23 Oct, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC2. Fri, 7pm: GEORGES MAUPIT on Russian Revolution and the National Question; Sat, 10.30 am: ERNEST MANDEL debates HILLEL TICKTIN on The Gains of October: The Strengths and Weaknesses of the Soviet Union; 7.00pm: ANDRE GUNDER FRANK on Soviet Dependency on the West; Sun, 10.30am: FERNANDO CLAUDIN on the Russian Revolution and its Effects on the International Communist Movement. Registration £2.50 (£2.00 for Critique subscribers), £1.00 for individual sessions. Further information and registration form: Critique, 31 Cleveland Rd, Glasgow G12 0PH. (041 336 5267) or Hillel Ticktin (0414 339 8855, ext 377).

THE STRUGGLE for a Revolutionary Propaganda Group. New pamphlet from the Revolutionary Communist Tendency. Explains issues facing revolutionaries today. 15p p&p from BM RCT, London WC1V 6XX.

PIRATE JENNY is continuing its tour with the abortion play Bouncing Back. Thurs 20 Oct: Leeds Poly SU Common Room 1pm; Leeds NAC, Trades Club, 8pm.

Fri 21 Oct: Sheffield University, Grove Cinema, SU, 1pm; Sheffield NAC, Mount Pleasant Community Centre 8pm.

Tue 25 Oct: Wolverhampton Poly SU, 1pm; Wolverhampton NAC, 8pm.

Wed 26 Oct: Coventry University, Canley College of Education, Kirby Corner Rd, 1pm.



Long Kesh Letter

The Assassination of Desmond Irvine

In a 'mark of respect' for their secretary Desmond Irvine, who was shot dead in Belfast on 7 October, the Northern Ireland Prison Officers' Association withheld visits, food parcels, letters and newspapers from prisoners in Northern Ireland from 8 to 12 October.

In doing so, they brought unique hardship and suffering on an already victimised section of the community. As if prisoners

were somehow responsible for the death of Mr. Irvine!

While it is clear that none of the prisoners could have perpetrated

this killing, there are people responsible for what happened. I am referring to Merlyn Rees, ex-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and his senior civil servants in the Northern Ireland Office. It is they who are the initiators of the irresponsible policy whereby political status was withdrawn from those convicted or alleged acts of war committed after 1 March 1976.

There are a number of avenues open to political prisoners in the fight for political status. They

can go on hunger strike — as they did in 1972, risking death or irreparable damage to their health. Relatives can arrange protest marches and meetings as the Relatives' Action Committee and others have already done. But despite massive attendance at such events, Mason has refused to budge. The third alternative is that members of the prison service, the grass roots implementers of Mason's policy can be killed or injured.

The Prison Officers' Association demonstrated in the last year that they are the greatest source of power in the prison system, and it is they who prevent further death and injury by refusing to participate in the inhuman treatment of prisoners.

Before the phasing out of special category status, prison officers were free from the threat of injury or death. Consequently life was easier for both prisoner and prison officer. This can happen again if the Prison Officers Association brings pressure to bear on Roy Mason.

OVERCROWDING

Remember that the unenviable position prison officers find themselves in is still a lot better than that of the prisoners in H Block. The prisons themselves are now facing gross overcrowding, after the customary summer recess, the present phase of non-jury Diplock court session has started again.

DERISORY

Furthermore, Armagh city where Nixon comes from has been relatively free of paramilitary activity compared to the area the Loyalists come from which has seen several murders committed within a ten-mile radius of both Loughgilly and Glenanne. I cite the following examples:

*At a bogus military checkpoint near Newtonhamilton, two Gaelic football fans were assassinated in September 1975.

*The Reavey brothers were murdered in their homes near Whitecross in January 1976 by men wearing army-type uniforms.

Yet despite this, the Loyalists got off with derisory sentences and John Nixon got 14 years. It certainly demonstrates that any member of the Northern minority stands little chance of an impartial trial or a fair sentence from these non-jury courts, operated as they are by a judiciary moulded by the old Stormont regime — the arch practitioners of bigotry and discrimination. Yours, Tiofaidh Ar La.



JUST OUT are two new journals on Ireland. Ireland Unfree is the first issue of the bulletin of the Student Movement Campaign on Ireland. It includes an eight-page special on current British repression in the North of Ireland.

The latest issue of Troops Out, the paper of the United Troops Out movement, contains articles on anti-recruitment, TV censorship on Ireland, rape, and British Army terror in the Turf Lodge area of Belfast.

Ireland Unfree costs 20p and Troops Out 10p. Both are available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1. [Add 10p for postage.]

The United Troops Out Movement itself will be holding an open conference in Sheffield on 10 and 11 December. It is intended as a 'work-orientated activists conference', and is open to all who support self-determination for the Irish people as a whole and troops out now. Details from: UTOM, c/o Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

Successful school on Ireland

by AILEAN O'Callaghan

MORE THAN 250 members, sympathisers, and visitors to the IMG's highly successful school on Ireland last weekend debated a wide range of topics including the urgent need to extend solidarity work in Britain. It was firmly established by participants that the movement required is one that can give practical aid to the struggle in Ireland itself.

Agreement was unanimous that the initiative which could best achieve this aim at the moment is the International Tribunal on Britain's Crimes Against the Irish People. Guests from Ireland: representatives of Peoples Democracies, the Independent Socialist Party and the Movement for a Socialist Republic (Irish section of the Fourth International), outlined how they would like the campaign into the resistance movement in Ireland.

They were particularly insistent that any serious solidarity work must centre on the Tribunal, and stressed the breadth and scope that had to be achieved.

These Irish militants gave explicit support to the IMG's conception of an open Tribunal and planning committee — one which, unfortunately, is not held by the planning committee itself. On the second day of the school, the plan of action to build the Tribunal was examined in detail, including sponsorship, fund-raising and evidence col-

lecting. The Tribunal is now firmly at the centre of the IMG's work on the Irish question and from the school, it will organise to make it a focus of similar importance for the whole movement.

The school voted unanimously to send a telegram of sympathy to the Irish Republican Socialist Party in tribute to Seamus Keyser's recently murdered leader.

This same spirit of sympathy was evident at a 100-strong meeting sponsored by Socialist Challenge on the eve of the IMG school. The meeting was organised to project the tasks of the British movement in light of the new situation in Ireland.

Costello's death was recognised as a big blow to the Irish Struggle for freedom, serving only the interests of British imperialism. The first casualty of his death was the non-appearance of the major speaker, Bernadette McSherry.

The broad platform of speakers included Gerry Ruddy of the Independent Socialist Party, Brendan Kelly, MSR; Fergus O'Hare, People's Democracy; Alastair Kenwick, United Troops Out Movement; Kathleen O'Connell, IMG.

The audience was pleased to hear the steps taken towards regroupment of the revolutionary socialist groups in Ireland: the MSR with PD, and that of the ISP with the Socialist Workers' Movement — a group with links with the SWP in Britain.

Seamus Costello Memorial Meeting

Speakers from Ireland a recording of Seamus Costello's speech to last year's Labour Movement Delegation to Ireland.

Friday, 21 October, 7.45pm

Small Hall, Camden Centre [formerly St Pancras Assembly Rooms], Bedford Street, London NW1.

India and Pakistan

Surprises on the subcontinent

Politics in India and Pakistan have taken a strange and unpredicted turn, demonstrating the close links between politics and the permanent social crisis which grips these countries. JAVED HUSSEIN reports.

In India the failures of the Janata Party Government to satisfy the economic needs of the masses has led to a growing disillusionment. This is becoming more pronounced since Janata's election promises were fairly wild.

Furthermore, the nasty, communalist and anti-Marxist streak within the coalition is becoming more pronounced. A number of books (including Romilla Thapar's classic works on Indian history and the brilliant works of India's most talented political economist, Bipan Chandra) are being withdrawn from university syllabuses.

LEFTISTRHETORIC

The result of all this has been the re-emergence of Indira Gandhi as a political leader. Gandhi has been using an increasingly leftist rhetoric and

conveying the impression that she is above all political parties, including her own Congress Party.

She has been drawing massive crowds and worrying the Government. Her recent arrest was farcical and Delhi's Chief Magistrate's decision to release her further damaged the Government's credibility.

INSTABILITY

Everything points to a growing rift within the Janata. The right-wing Jana Sangh component of the coalition will want more institutionalised repression. The unstable situation in neighbouring Pakistan and Bangladesh gives Indian politics a further unpleasant dimension. The temptation for any Indian government facing internal problems is to embark on external adventures. Indian socialists will have to

remain on guard. In neighbouring Pakistan the army has, as we predicted, postponed the elections indefinitely. Bhutto's growing popularity posed a threat to the cohesion of the army. It is becoming obvious that he would get a majority in the provinces of Sind and the Punjab.



General Zia: If he doesn't get Bhutto, someone will get him.

His victory would have meant a massive purge of the military and General Zia would have been the first to be retired. More to the point some of the young officers

might have refused to accept the verdict and unleashed a new coup which would have created the conditions for civil war.

Since the military coup the number of tenants evicted has increased tenfold. The military Government has ordered various denationalisations and strikes are banned.

DASTARDLYBHUTTO

The common reaction to this has been: 'Bhutto was a bastard, but he was our bastard'. This is obviously wrong but it reflects the state of mass consciousness in the country today.

In desperation the military rulers are threatening to punish Bhutto if he is found guilty. Some opposition politicians are openly demanding that he be hanged. The fact that Bhutto's regime committed the most appalling atrocities is indisputable. The point is that the army's credentials are even worse!

Bhutto has charged the CIA with engineering his removal. That may or may not be true, but what is indisputable is the fact that the Saudi Arabian ambassador to Pakistan has played an important role within the army.



Gandhi: rejected by her own party but drawing big crowds.

The Saudis are happy that Bhutto has been ousted because of their own narrow rivalry with the Shah of Iran and Gaddafi, both of whom backed Bhutto.

In 1970 the military action against Bengal was the first step in the destruction of the religious state. Ironically enough, the overthrow of Bhutto and the postponement of the elections could lead to further disintegration. A new and more right-wing coup would accelerate the process still further. The remaining question would then be: who will pick up which pieces?

In Brief

OGADEN: Somali-backed guerrillas of the West Somali Liberation Front are reported to be driving towards the key Ethiopian town of Dire Dawa. The capture of the town of Jijiga apparently followed a mutiny by Ethiopian troops defending the town. The 'battle' of the crucial Gare Marda pass never took place, as WSLF forces captured it without a fight. It seems that the 'revolutionary' morale of the Ethiopian troops does not quite match up to the quantity of military hardware the military regime is getting from the Soviet Union.

IRAN: Ashraf Pahlavi, the Shah's twin sister, who narrowly escaped an assassination attempt in France last month, has been forced to give up gambling. According to gossip columnists the Shah has been extremely worried about his sister's 'excesses'. Of course, we are not suggesting that this has any connection with the attempt on her life, but it is a little surprising that the hue and cry died down so quickly and that there has been no repression against the oppositionists. Does the Shah know something we don't?

SOVIET UNION: The Kremlin has repeatedly refused requests to rehabilitate Nikolai Bukharin, one of the central leaders of the Communist Party executed by Stalin in 1938. The information comes from a document recently smuggled out of the USSR. But to rehabilitate Bukharin would be to admit the political and bureaucratic character of the 1930s purges.

PUERTO RICO: Andres Figueroa Cordero, a Puerto Rican political prisoner held for 23 years in the United States, has been unconditionally released. The Puerto Rican independence movement has greeted this as a victory, but Figueroa is suffering from cancer and has only a few months to live. Amnesty International, the Nobel Peace Prize winners, have consistently refused to take up the case of the Puerto Rican political prisoners, although they are the longest standing in the world.

ICELAND: 8,000 state employees, including police and doctors, went on strike last week for the first time ever. The civil service union, which only won the right to strike two years ago, has put in a 35 per cent pay claim to keep pace with 35 per cent inflation.

Government-opposition pact

Historic Compromise Spanish-style

The press has rolled out the familiar vocabulary of Eurocommunism to describe the Moncloa pact between the Spanish Government and opposition parties. It was gleefully presented as a 'common programme' or a 'historic compromise Spanish-style', writes JUAN AGUIRRE.

Unlike the French Common Programme, the new Spanish pact is a deal between the major workers' parties and the Government. And unlike the Italian historic compromise it is more than just wishful thinking... it is a horrible reality.

Horrible because the Communist and Socialist parties have put their name to the 'social pact' they promised would only come over their dead bodies. The most important points are the agreement to limit pay rises to 22 per cent (with estimated 40 per cent inflation for 1977) and a further relaxation of job protection legislation.

'ANTI-TERRORIST' LAW

This economic agreement comes straight after the working class parties had accepted a stringent 'anti-terrorist' law proposed by the Government in reaction to the killing of the governor of Vizcaya. The demand for the release of Basque political prisoners — for that is why the governor was killed — is obviously less important than repression of the 'ultra-left'.

The compromise (or betrayal) is indeed historic. It is not just the viciously anti-working class content of the agreement, but the very fact of a programmatic accord including the workers' parties, the bourgeois nationalists, the governing Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD) and the far right Popular Alliance which gives the event its significance.

The Communist Party (PCE) has long been pushing for a 'government of national concentration' which would include all parties from the UCD leftwards. The rationale was the need to guard against a Spanish Pinochet by uniting all 'democratic forces'. Manuel Fraga of the Popular Alliance and his Francoist cavemen were explicitly excluded from this category.

But the strange logic of paranoid Pinochet-watching is that you end up concluding a deal with Pinochet to try to buy him off. So the PCE signs the same piece of paper as Fraga, trusting that Fraga is such a 'gentleman' that he will keep his side of the bargain.

The Socialist Party (PSOE) has studiously resisted the PCE's attempts to push it into government. General secretary Felipe Gonzalez is reluctant to take on any direct responsibility for administering the economic crisis until he can command a parliamentary majority — a wise move from his point of view. But the Moncloa austerity is a neat way out. Gonzalez can stay out of government, but still convince Spanish capitalism of his seriousness and responsibility.

For the ruling class the deal is indispensable. It has a choice of economic strategy. The need to revitalise the Spanish economy demands either a continuation of the present inflationary strategy or austerity measures designed to put the cost of the crisis onto the working class.

VERYLATE

The problem with the former is that it comes thirty years too late. The inflationary strategy belongs to a period of economic boom, when capitalism can afford high working class living standards, not at a time of recession, retrenchment, or the most cautious of economic recoveries.

The problem with the alternative strategy — an attack on working class living standards — is that the Spanish workers movement has shown its readiness to defend its position inch by inch. It has probably been more successful than the working class of any other European country in resisting recent attempts at austerity.

So the only chance of success for an austerity policy is the co-

operation of the majority parties of the working class: the Communist and Socialist Parties. And this is just what the Moncloa pact does.

The reception from the trade unions has been mixed. Marcelino Camacho, a PCE leader and general secretary of the Workers Commissions, gave the pact an unqualified welcome. He pointed out that he had always supported 'the need for negotiation' between the Government, political parties and trade unions to arrive at a solution to our economic, political and social problems... He promised his union's support in implementing the agreement.

The attitude of the other unions, including the Socialist UGT, was lukewarm. But their main objection was not the content of the accord but the fact that they had not been consulted. Jesus Prieto of the UGT explained that: 'We are not going to respect a pact that we didn't negotiate'.

Since the UGT is politically tied to the PSOE (and it has recently banned opposition tendencies within the union), it can be safely assumed that these aggressive noises are just for show. But the union leaderships will nevertheless find themselves in a quandary. The rank and file is in no mood to accept such an attack on its living standards, regardless of what its political leaders say.

Two weeks ago 800,000 Madrid workers demonstrated against austerity. The protest was called by all the main union federations apart from the anarcho-sindicalist CNT — a rather cynical move considering that Camacho and company must have known that the pact was in the offing. Although the stated aim of the march was a limited one, thousands of workers quickly took up the slogans of 'Down with the Government' and 'For a Workers Government'.

Since there is a highly competitive race for mass union recruitment all the union leaderships have been anxious to show their economic militancy and intransigent opposition to austerity. As the major unions — the UGT and Workers Commissions — strongly reflect the lines of their political paymasters, they have

big problems.

Already the right-wing policies and bureaucratic stranglehold of the PCE in the Workers Commissions have driven many of its best militants to join another union. Camacho's unequivocal position on the pact is likely to create another hemorrhage.

The UGT will want to be in a position to take advantage of Camacho's discomfiture, but it can only do that by opposing the pact — and that would bring it

into conflict with the PSOE. So the most likely conclusion is that, after their initial protests, all three major unions will be prepared to negotiate away their members' living standards.

The PCE and PSOE will argue that austerity is necessary to defend democracy. Millions of workers will begin to think that they did not wage the long fight for democratic rights just so that the bosses could cut their pay and lay them off.



80,000 Madrid workers answered the call by the trade unions for an anti-austerity demonstration. Now the union leaders stand poised to support the Government's economic policy.



THE SPLIT in the French Union of the Left is analysed in depth by Daniel Bensaid in the latest issue of Inprecor, No. 14 (New Series). The article explains the emphasis placed by the French Trotskyists of the LCR on workers unity around a series of concrete tasks, and also prints extracts from the positions taken by the different far left organisations in France.

Other articles in this issue of Inprecor cover the right turn of the Socialist Party Government in Portugal; the US ruling class offensive; the struggle in the Sahara; and the continuing crisis of the ruling party in Japan.

Price 30p. Inprecor is available from The Other Bookshop, almost all IMG branches, or by post from Inprecor, P.O. Box 50, London N1 2XP [add 10p for p&p].

Ferment in East Germany

Bahro against the bureaucrats

The arrest of Rudolf Bahro in August of this year attests to a deepening ferment of East German society and politics. Fresh evidence of this was provided last Friday when a seemingly minor incident — the ending of a jazz concert at 9.00pm — led to 1,000 people demonstrating in the centre of East Berlin and bloody battles with the police, writes S. WALKER.

The political tensions exploded on the international arena last November, when the popular singer Wolf Biermann was deprived of his citizenship whilst touring West Germany at the invitation of the metalworkers union. Within 24 hours 13 prominent authors signed a protest, followed the same week by over a hundred well-known artists. Students disrupted lectures demanding discussion of the whole affair, and hundreds of workers signed petitions in his support.

In the early summer months, hardly a week passed without news of fresh repressive measures and expulsions of protesters from the country.

THE ALTERNATIVE

It is immediately apparent from Rudolf Bahro's book *The Alternative* that he writes not as an anti-communist, but as a committed communist attempting to develop, with the classical tools of Marxist economics, a deep and thoroughgoing critique of the existing regime in East Germany and to put forward a real alternative to it. And of course, this is the really difficult problem which the regime cannot answer except by putting him in jail.

THE FORUM

From 1957 he was employed at the Berlin Rubber Works, deal-

ing with questions of work rationalisation and organisation. He had already started questioning the party's allegiance to Marxism when he was editor of *The Forum* paper, but his doubts increased in 1968, when the Warsaw Pact troops invaded Czechoslovakia. He considered this event the biggest political crime of the Soviet leadership since the Second World War.

RECONSTRUCTION

But Bahro did not leave the party then, thinking it more correct to begin to develop a theoretical critique of the regime while remaining a member of the party. Unlike the leaders of the Prague spring however he does not think the party can be regenerated from the inside.

He considers now that the communist movement has to be wholly reconstructed and that the Communist Party is bureaucratically fossilised and unreformable.

AGREEMENTS

Bahro's critique of the policies and structures of the East German regime must be seriously considered by all socialists. Clearly there will be many points on which Trotskyists will disagree fundamentally with him. Some of these are indicated in Ernest Mandel's review of the

book in the last edition of *Inprecor*.

There can be no doubt, however, that Bahro's work is but sign and one product of a deep and wide-spread process of Marxist elaboration in East Germany. Bahro will not be the last major theoretician to appear suddenly from underground after years of maturing.

But this first contribution despite its fears and deficiencies is a work of tremendous vitality and

honesty — as well as one of great courage. It is essential that the growing East German opposition should not be isolated from socialists in other parts of the world.

It is essential, too, that the international workers movement should force the agencies of bureaucratic repression in East Berlin to halt their campaign against the opposition, and to free Rudolf Bahro and others like him from jail.

* For information on the GDR and Eastern Europe read *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, No. 1 contains an analysis of the Biermann case; No. 2 an original document by Marxists in the GDR and the next issue, No. 5, coming out soon, will contain a detailed analysis by G. Minnerup of the Bahro case, and a translation from the chapter in his book *The Alternative dealing with the phenomenon of bureaucratisation in the GDR*.



Bakke vs Black rights

Last week saw the first stages of the review of the case of Alan Bakke in the US Supreme Court. Bakke, a 37-year-old white space engineer, claims that he was discriminated against by a medical school, writes TUNDE ANTHONY.

Bakke's case is that he was not admitted to the school as a result of the minority admissions programme operated by the University of California in its professional schools. In September



BAKKE: a threat to black rights.

the California Supreme Court found the University of California Board of Regents guilty of 'reverse discrimination' for operating a minority admission programme (which incorporates

not only national minorities but also women).

This decision has given delight and strength to those forces who have been seeking the eradication of all constitutional advances made by the black minority. Recent years have seen a massive attack on black rights by both the state and other anti-black forces: the Supreme Court decisions on school segregation, open housing and affirmative action on employment, for instance.

The seniority principle has been used to lay off blacks in many jobs including teaching: 'last hired, first fired'. The Bakke case is one of vital importance for black people, other national minorities and women. Most reactionary forces are squarely behind Bakke in this attempt to put black rights back into the pre-war era.

The case for affirmative action, such as the quota system, is quite simple. Given the historical experience of blacks, present living conditions — high unemployment and slum housing — and increasing discrimination, blacks



Demonstration against the Bakke ruling in the California Supreme Court.

cannot make any significant advance without the institution of quota systems in areas like employment and education. The quota system is not a long-term solution to the problems of national oppression, but without it the situation of blacks can only get worse.

Black poverty has been on the increase, rather than improving. Of particular relevance to the Bakke case is the fact that the rising cost of medical care and medical education in America has reduced the already inadequate facilities available to blacks. According to a report by the National Urban League, there is one physician for every 700 people nationally. In the black community it is only one for every 3,000. There are only 6,048 black doctors, 3,000 black dentists, and 60,000 registered

black nurses. Blacks continue to live shorter lives and die from heart diseases twice as often as whites. Black mothers die in childbirth three times as often. Black children suffer twice as much from iron deficiency and malnutrition and receive almost no dental care.

If the Supreme Court upholds the California Supreme Court decision on Bakke, there can be no doubt that present conditions will worsen. It is also certain that it would give a boost to anti-black forces and violence against blacks would increase.

Whichever way the decision goes, there are major lessons to learn on the value of constitutional methods as a final solution to racist oppression and the super-exploitation of blacks in America. Such lessons are just as relevant for blacks in Britain.

Soweto and after

Black consciousness and socialist strategy

Southern Africa After Soweto, by Alex Callinicos and John Rogers, is one of the best of a range of books which try to explain the significance of the latest rise of black struggles in southern Africa. The book 'discusses the strategies pursued by the black liberation movements in southern Africa', claims the blurb, but, JOHN BLAIR argues, that is just where the book's central weakness lies.

There is a central paradox involved in tackling this question. On the one hand South Africa is the area of sub-Saharan Africa with the longest and richest history of class struggle and revolutionary theory. This extends back to the earliest development of capitalism and incorporates, as the comrades briefly outline, (chapter 2), all the central experiences of the international working class movement. As an illustration it is sufficient to note that there was a regular monthly Trotskyist paper in South Africa from 1935 to 1939.

On the other hand, the very success of the repressive white regime, especially since the late 1950s, has meant the effective suppression of any real work by revolutionary Marxists inside the country. As a result the new generation of rebels against apartheid, personified by the Soweto student exiles, have no real political formation. The existence of Marxism as a force capable of explaining their situation and assisting in charting a way forward for their struggles

has, as many of them frequently say, only come to their attention in exile.

WEAKNESSES

Such people are only the most politically developed of the mass of the non-white population in South Africa. This means that the central criterion by which we should judge a book by revolutionaries is how far it can serve to raise the level of Marxist political understanding of the vanguard of this new generation of South African blacks. Unfortunately the book does not measure up to this standard. This is not because of any fundamental errors of analysis.

Its location of the South African economy within the imperialist framework and its characterisation of the productive relations as overwhelmingly capitalist are a foundation for looking at that state.

But the problems come with the very meagre treatment of more

recent developments, particularly the various elements of the black consciousness movement. Of course it is extremely difficult to construct an accurate history of the opposition in the 1970s or to get hold of many of its publications.

But it is a serious error to believe that you can establish the validity of a socialist programme for the black masses solely by a critique of movements like the African National Congress, which are now almost exclusively in exile and have played very little part in recent events.

The vanguard of the South African working class is now found in movements that have generally found inspiration not so much in the history of their own country as from such diverse figures as Malcolm X, Fanon and Che Guevara. They are thus subject to quite different influences from those that moulded their predecessors. So it is not enough to repeat, as the comrades tend to do, time honoured truths about the primacy of the working class and the need to organise at factory and not township level.

Such a project must begin by recognising that in its insistence on the need to smash the racist state, its commitment to practical non-white unity, and its re-establishment of a tradition of mass struggle after the passivity of the late sixties and early seventies, the new movement, albeit politically heterogeneous

and unstructured, contains the seed of the leadership of the coming South African revolution.

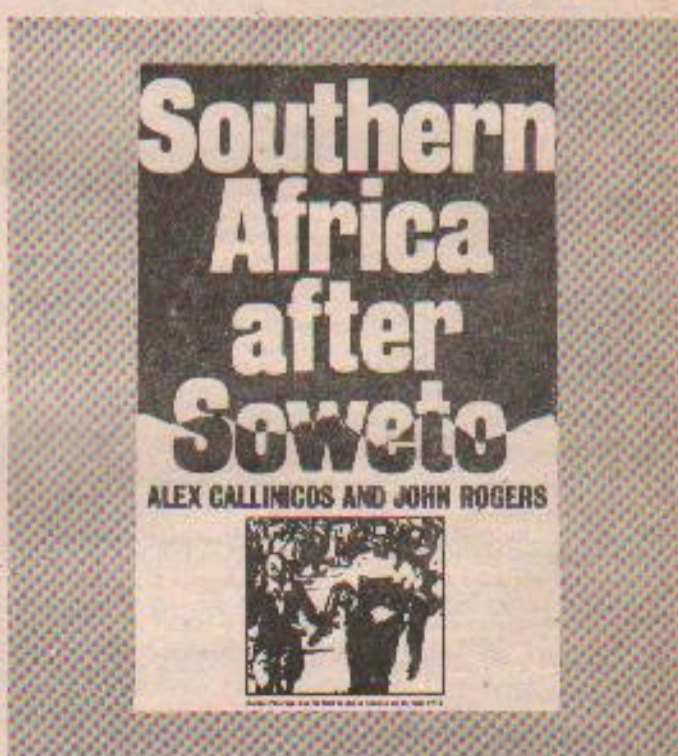
It is notable that the comrades fail to suggest any potential lines of action for the South African proletariat beyond the economic struggle. They hope that victories in this area will provide the class with the self confidence necessary to take on the state.

But the possibility of the South African working class winning substantial economic victories is circumscribed by two things: the enormous repressive apparatus at the disposal of the state; and the economic downturn from which the economy is showing few signs of recovery. The comrades themselves stress that every economic struggle in South Africa immediately assumes the character of a political confrontation.

We have dealt almost exclusively with the one half of the book that deals with South Africa itself. The project the authors set themselves of integrating this into the southern African context as a whole is certainly an important one.

Unfortunately the half of the book that tries to do this by dealing with developments in Zambia, Angola and Zimbabwe gets nowhere near fulfilling its aim. Most of it is simple reportage of events that are well enough known. There is no serious theoretical analysis.

The chapter on Zambia con-



tains at least six identifiable factual errors. Two of these (Chapter 5, notes 14 and 22) involve additions to the quoted source, (IMG pamphlet on Zambia 1975).

Overall these sections are carelessly structured and one is left

wishing that the authors had left them out so as to make a more developed analysis of events in South Africa.

**Southern Africa After Soweto* by Alex Callinicos and John Rogers. Pluto Press £2.00.

The Strong State: The West German Example

by
GÜNTER MINNERUP

Whatever the final outcome of the kidnapping of West German employers' federation leader Hans-Martin Schleyer by members of the RAF (Red Army Faction) terrorist group, one thing is already clear: who the losers will be. It will not be German capitalism, not even the Bonn Government, but the socialist movement and all those opposed to the further erosion of democratic rights in the Federal Republic.

In the fastest parliamentary passage a bill has ever seen, the *Bundestag* has already reacted with a new law banning all communication between political prisoners and the outside world, and further demands — for the re-introduction of capital punishment, the use of specialised 'anti-terrorist' police units in 'preventive strikes', the tightening up of censorship and greater restrictions on the rights of free assembly and demonstration — are being raised, not only by the right wing of the Christian Democratic opposition.

The right wing press is having a feast of unrestrained red-baiting: lists are being published of so-called 'terrorist sympathisers', giving the names and addresses of prominent progressive writers and artists such as Volker Schlöndorff (director of *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*), Heinrich Böll (the film's author and Nobel Prize winner) and the director of Stuttgart's municipal theatre, Claus Peymann. No wonder that even the *Guardian's* Bonn correspondent feels that 'McCarthy is alive and well and lives in Germany'.

Some foreign observers have gone even further. The spectre of neo-fascism is raised. 'Everything is still possible in the Germany of 1977', comments the French *Quotidien de Paris*, 'it could all start all over again'. 'The great danger threatening in West Germany is neo-fascism, emanating from the authorities, the judiciary and the police, the military and frightened citizens', found the Dutch radio station VPRO recently, and even the *New York Times* muttered about a 'revival of Nazi practices'.

This is, of course, the one point where some liberal commentators and the RAF propaganda meet: the argument put forward by the latter on why it is necessary to abandon political legality and resort to armed underground struggle is precisely the alleged neo-fascist nature of the West German state, and when the Baader-Meinhof defence lawyer Klaus Croissant, seeking political asylum in France, appeared on French television last week, he referred to the terrorists as 'anti-fascist freedom fighters'. But is West Germany on the road to another fascist dictatorship, or even in the grip of neo-fascism already?

The answer to this question is, of course, no. The Federal Republic is still a parliamentary democracy, with legally existing reformist and revolutionary socialist organisations and trade unions. There is not even a fascist movement on anything like a mass scale, despite the recent publicity for the small, and apparently well-organised, neo-fascist groups involved in the abduction of Nazi war criminal Kappler from an Italian hospital.

But it is not only obviously wrong to speak of a neo-fascist danger in West Germany at the present time, it is dangerously misleading: the preoccupation with the danger of a Nazi revival can only suggest that the problem is a specifically 'German' one and blind us to the international nature of the tendency towards strong, repressive bourgeois states, and sow confusion amongst socialists about the tasks we are facing in combatting the increasingly repressive evolution of all Western capitalist democracies.

Among the relatively small group of parliamentary democracies in the industrially developed capitalist world, West Germany is certainly setting the pace in the development of a 'strong state'. All basic democratic rights and civil liberties are to a greater or lesser extent qualified. Over 1.3 million civil servants, including, in West Germany, postal workers, railwayworkers and teachers, do not have a right to strike by law, and they, with hundreds of thousands of other public employees, are the main victims of the notorious *Berufsverbot* which prevents them from joining a party of the extreme left or even supporting Marxist policies. Over a million applicants for public jobs have been screened by the *Verfassungsschutz* ('Constitutional Protection'), the West German Special Branch since the 'Radicals Decree' was passed in



Photo montage: PETER KENNARD

1972.

Even within the trade unions, a kind of *Berufsverbot* is in operation with all the major unions officially excluding supporters of organisations to the left of the Communist Party from union membership (although the government's decree does apply to the CP, too). Although the trade unions are, of course, legal they are subject to a number of restrictions: the legality of political strikes, for instance, is at the very least doubtful.

All political parties and groups to the left of social democracy are still threatened by the 1956 Constitutional Court decision outlawing the German Communist Party, KPD, which has never been rescinded even though a newly formed DKP and the various Maoist and Trotskyist organisations were tolerated since 1968. The notorious 'Paragraph 88a' against 'the unconstitutional advocacy of violence' is already being used to confiscate left-wing literature and publications. Defence lawyers in political trials have their conversations with clients monitored and can be excluded from the court proceedings if suspected of 'involvement in the crime'.

As far as the most obvious agencies of state repression are concerned — the police and the military — the para-military nature of the West German police cannot escape a visitor to any major German city these days, where armoured cars in the streets and road blocks operated by steel-helmeted police equipped with sub-machine guns have become part of daily life. Special units such as the MEK (Mobile Intervention Squads), the heavily-armed BOS

(Border Police) and certain units of the professional sector of an otherwise largely conscript army are at the government's disposal for dealing with any sort of disturbance of public order. And there is, of course, the *Notstandsgesetze* (Emergency Laws), passed in 1968, which, if invoked, can suspend all democratic rights including the right to strike altogether and quite legally establish an authoritarian dictatorship of the executive and the military.

This list cannot be exhaustive: in the seven years since 1969 the Federal Parliament passed no fewer than 52 new laws directly relating to 'internal security'. More important, however, than listing all the many existing and planned restrictions of even bourgeois democracy in West Germany is an understanding of what it all means. What are the lessons to be learned from the German example for socialists elsewhere, and what does the 'strong state' represent in terms of Marxist theory?

One of the most striking features of the West German example is the role played by the social-democratic SPD in strengthening the hand of the state. Although the *Bundesrepublik* under Adenauer was not exactly everyone's idea of a liberal democracy, the passing of the Emergency Laws and the subsequent boom in repressive legislation, the strengthening and centralisation of the police apparatus, the *Berufsverbot* and so on fall into the period of SPD government (from 1966 to 1969 in a 'Grand Coalition' with the CDU, ever since in a coalition with the much smaller liberal FDP).

But they also coincide with the end of the long post-war 'economic miracle', the re-entry of the entire capitalist world including Germany into a period of deep economic, social and political instability, and the emergence of new political forces to the left of social democracy, with a marked increase in working class militancy. The coincidence is not accidental: in West Germany (as in Britain and a number of minor European countries) both the masses and sectors of the ruling class entrusted social democracy with the task of carrying out long-overdue economic, infrastructural and political reforms. Only the SPD could be expected to push through an incomes policy and the Emergency Laws without provoking militant trade union action; only the SPD could successfully neutralise the extra-parliamentary opposition by selling technocratic reform of the education sector, the taxation system and other problem areas as democratic or even anti-capitalist reforms.

But above all else the social democracy, as the classical exponent of 'Keynesian' economic policies and strongest opponent of federalist decentralisation, was a much better governmental instrument for the bourgeoisie in crisis than a neo-liberal, federalist Christian Democracy worn out by two decades of uninterrupted government office. For the modern 'strong state' is more than just the increasing erosion of democratic rights. It is the unity of the qualitative strengthening of the state's role in the economic, social and political life of late capitalist society.

The liberal, non-interventionist, *laissez-faire* bourgeois state belongs to the past of an ascendant, vigorous market economy — a fact forgotten by many socialists and liberals during the post-war boom with its apparent economic and social stability and consequent temporary revival of the ideals of liberal democracy. But capitalism's second great international crisis after the Great Depression of the 1930s means the end of such illusions: as students of Oswald Moseley's political biography will know, the 'leftist' Keynesian and the fascist variety of state intervention into the crisis of capitalist society have many important common denominators, both being but different varieties of the bourgeois response to the death agony of liberalism.

Naturally the role of social democracy in promoting the establishment of the strong state can only be limited. The contradictions inherent in a bourgeois workers party, the conflict between its capitalist masters and proletarian clientele, will finally tear social democracy apart and, long before that happens, it will have been dismissed from office and succeeded by openly reactionary forces who can make much more ruthless use of the repressive arsenal social democracy helped provide — even against social democracy itself.

But for the present the SPD's role in government and the continued support of the vast majority of workers for that SPD poses a terrible problem to the West German left: that of having to fight the might of the bourgeois state apparatus in virtual isolation from the organised labour movement. The ultra-leftist politics of despair so dominant on the German left — not just the terrorist RAF and its sympathisers but also most of the Maoist and some of the Trotskyist organisations — are explicable in that light, but not excusable.

And despite the pitfalls in drawing too mechanistic parallels between West Germany and other West European countries in which the class struggle is more developed, the examples of the struggle against the Prevention of Terrorism Act and of campaigns on the Irish struggle in general in Britain face similar problems, as in France and Italy an electoral victory of the Union of the Left or a finally consummated 'historic compromise' would pose related ones.

On the most general theoretical level is raised the question of the revolutionary left's attitude to bourgeois democracy and the defence of democratic rights. In the euphoria following May '68 and the historic victory of the Indochinese revolution, world revolution appeared to be just around the corner, and the struggle in defence of bourgeois democratic rights tended to be lightly dismissed and left to the left reformists and liberal progressives.

The German example, but also some of the practical problems raised by the Portuguese and Spanish revolutions (where a 'democratic struggle' was suddenly discovered by some of the more rightist Maoist groups as a distinct stage through which the proletariat has to pass before the socialist revolution can possibly be on the agenda), demand a thorough break with that tradition.

National oppression in the USSR

BARBARA BROWN knows as well as I do that there is a mountain of evidence to show that there was growing unrest in the Ukraine in the Brezhnev period. I refer readers to the *Chronicle of Current Events, Ferment in the Ukraine*, the writings of Leonid Plyushch, *The Ukraine in the 1970s*, *Uncensored Russia*, and so on for the details.

With unconsciously grim humour Barbara adds that the movement was 'strictly limited'. This is a euphemism for 'brutally crushed'. What she means to say is that the movement was insignificant. This betrays a complete misunderstanding of politics in Eastern Europe. A few hundred activists in the West means very little; in the East it means an enormous potential threat — the Ukrainian opposition was no bigger than Charter 77 or the activists of the Polish Workers Defence Committee. Such numbers may seem 'strictly limited' to Barbara; the bureaucracy is not so naive.

But the argument in my articles was not about numbers of oppositionists: it was about systematic national oppression in the Ukraine. Barbara simply ignores the evidence for this by claiming that the existence of a workers' state gives the national question a 'new significance'. She should be frank and say what she means.

But the implication is clear enough: after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie the national question withers away as nations 'gradually grow closer together'. This is dangerous nonsense. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie does not automatically solve the oppression of nations any more than it automatically solves the oppression of women, racial minorities, gay people or religious persecution. Anyone who argues that such problems attain a 'new significance... in the context of a workers' state — even a deformed one' is peddling a very dangerous piece of the wishful

thinking Barbara says we must avoid. And when such ideas are applied to the reality of Soviet history they turn from wishful thinking into wilful shrinking from mountain ranges of evidence.

Barbara engages in blatant apologetics when she does try to take up one piece of the historical evidence in my articles: economic pillage in the Ukraine. She states as fact that much of this economic surplus is 'used to relieve poverty and develop industry in the backward central Asian republics'. What is the evidence for this touching picture of the bureaucracy taking from the rich to help the poor?

The priority regions for industrial development are not in the Central Asian republics at all. They are in the Russian Federation. Furthermore, the destination of the roubles does not in the slightest alter the fact that this surplus is extracted from the Ukraine by a privileged Russian-dominated bureaucracy: that is what we mean by 'economic pillage'.

Finally Barbara uses a favourite argument of Western apologists for the Soviet bureaucracy, by saying 'nobody knows' — we don't know what the Ukrainian people want, so we can't say that they feel nationally oppressed. This is utter philistinism; an attempt to throw out of the window the entire historical experience of the Marxist movement. Who knew what the Basques or Catalans might want when they were silent? Who knew what the Hungarian masses might want in the early 1950s when they were silent? Who knew what the Czechs and Slovaks might want in the early 1960s when they were silent? And who, on the basis of historical analysis and historical experience, may know what the Ukrainian masses may want today when they are silent? Or, to put it another way: what is Marxism for?

OLIVER MACDONALD [London]

I am not a left social-democrat

IN LAST week's issue, *Review of Books*, Paul Bellis referred to me as a 'left social-democrat'. While I am glad that the adjective is 'left' and not 'right', as Geoff Roberts was described by Ernest Mandel at the recent Marxist Symposium, I must make it clear that I do not accept the designation. I hold views traditionally incompatible with social democracy.

For example, I believe that the State is not neutral, that Parliament on its own has little power to change society in a fundamental way, that the armed forces of the capitalist State have to be smashed, and that eventually the working class will have to be mobilised and armed in order to accomplish revolutionary change.

I do not accept the 'Euro-communist' strategy as a package, neither do I accept all the views in Anderson's 1966 essay in *Towards Socialism*, which Perry himself has later described

as 'left social-democratic'. Where I may differ with some readers of *Socialist Challenge* is that I do not advocate the smashing of Parliament in advanced capitalist democracies, and I assert that a precondition of socialist and revolutionary change in the West is a socialist majority in Parliament. These views are made clear in my forthcoming book *Socialism and Parliamentary Democracy*.

Unfortunately, despite the outstanding verity of my strategic position [quite similar to that of Milliband and Poulantzas], it gets attacked from the left as 'social democratic' and from the right as 'Trotskyist'. I suggest *Socialist Challenge* call a conference with the right of the Labour Party to sort out terminology. Meanwhile, my congratulations on a lively paper.

GEOFF HODGSON (Manchester)

The Colquhoun affair

YOUR correspondents Connor and Turner (*Socialist Challenge*, 6 October) urge us to avoid taking part in confused witch hunts and to lay off Maureen Colquhoun. There is no doubt that anti-gay prejudice has played a part in the attempts to remove her as an MP. However, this does not change the fact that she did support 'Powell's racist outburst'.

On 21 January, Powell launched his most overtly racist speech. He prophesied a race war and challenged the Attorney General to prosecute him under the Race Relations Act. Immigrant organisations demanded prosecution, but Sam Silkin refused to act.

The following day Colquhoun announced that she was rapidly coming to the conclusion that

Powell 'is not a racist'. She continued: 'All my life I have worked for a multi-racial society, but I am now living in one and my attitude has shifted.'

In September, six months later, she claimed that she was misunderstood. The 'misunderstanding' was shared by all sections of the political spectrum. Martin Webster wrote an article entitled 'My Attitude Has Shifted'. He stated: 'Even more important and valuable than the speech which Enoch Powell made on 21 January on the subject of the coming 'racial civil war' in Britain, was the reaction to it from Ms Maureen Colquhoun, Trinlabour MP for Northampton North.'

Webster praised her 'intellectual integrity' for changing her attitude on immigrants and for her 'moral courage' in publicly admitting the fact in the wake of Powell's 'particularly dramatic'

speech. The effect would be to make racism more respectable and 'assist the ordinary folk of Britain to feel less guilty about their "racialist" instincts, less ready to lower their voices and look furtive when they are in their local pub discussing immigration and a stranger comes in, more ready to defy the psychological intimidation of the press, the TV and the Race Relations Act.'

Webster is correct as to the effect of Colquhoun's speech. With that speech she removed herself from the ranks of the labour movement. Whether she did it because she is a fool or a 'knave' is immaterial, and the damage cannot be undone by sob-stuff interviews in *The Guardian* or threatened ones in *Socialist Challenge*.

ANDREW JENKINS (Nottingham)



A clarification

I WOULD LIKE to clarify an ambiguity which occurred in Peter Fuller's review of my exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in *Socialist Challenge*. Peter Fuller concentrates exclusively on the photomontage work that I did for *Workers Press* between September 1973 and May 1974, when I was working full time on the paper. I am not arguing with his aesthetic judgement, but I would like to make clear that the nature of my involvement with *Workers Press* during that period.

I was at that time a member of the Workers Revolutionary Party and would dispute his statement

that 'History made it easier for Heartfield than for Kennard struggling with the constraints of *Workers Press* in 1973/74' as inaccurate. The work that I produced while in the WRP was made possible through being an integral part of the production process of the party press and working as a member of the editorial board.

I was helped in particular by the work of P.J. Arke and Martin Meyer, the photographers on *Workers Press*. I left the paper in May 1974 because of political differences with the WRP.

PETER KENNARD [NW London]

SSA speak-out

FOR THE last ten years the National Union of Students has been dominated by a coalition of Communist Party, Labour Party (Clause 4) and 'independent' students known as the Broad Left. This alliance has been dominated politically by the CP and is now becoming increasingly irrelevant to the issues facing students as the CP pushes a more and more right-wing political line. They now talk about a 'democratic alliance' which extends to the Federation of Conservative Students but excludes the 'ultra-left'.

So as to win influential friends in the FCS and in college administrations, the Broad Left has increasingly refused to countenance support for mass campaigns in the colleges. Two years ago, over 100 colleges of Education and Polytechnic teacher training departments were occupied by students demanding action over teacher unemployment. The Broad Left called for the ending of the occupations and negotiations with the Department of Education as the way to make gains. Last year's occupations over tuition fee increases of up to 300 per cent got a similar response from the 'leadership'.

There is a clear need for an alternative to the rightward drifting Broad Left. That alternative cannot be effectively provided by a socialist left which is fragmented into squabbling groups and sects, each claiming to be 'the alternative'. Although it may be possible to pose an effective alternative to the Broad Left in single colleges on this basis, there has to be a national framework within which the battle is taken up. Failing this, the Broad Left will always be able to isolate and ignore the few militant colleges.

There is of course a need for socialists on the revolutionary left to debate their differences, but this debate should, in our view, be carried out within a framework which recognises the need for united action — where there is agreement about what needs to be done — in opposition to the attacks which students face. So as to provide a structure which would encourage this sort of action on a national and local basis, the Socialist Students Alliance was set up last year in the aftermath of the tuition fees campaign, which exposed the weakness of the left in NUS all too clearly.

The battle cannot, of course, be confined to NUS. Students are part of society and in no sense isolated from the class struggle outside the walls of their colleges. The links between student struggles for better grants, against college closures, in opposition to the cuts, etc. need to be linked to parallel struggles within the labour movement through both propaganda and practical activity.

At its founding conference, the SSA adopted a series of policies around which it was felt that unity in action was possible. Amongst the issues covered

were: opposition to the cuts (but rejecting the argument that education was a 'special case'), opposition to all forms of racism (including all immigration controls), support for the policy of 'No Platform' for fascists and racists, for the abolition of tuition fees, which discriminates against many overseas students, for free abortion on demand, support for all anti-imperialist struggles (South Africa and Ireland were specifically mentioned), and so on. This list of policies was not seen as fixed for all time; the SSA holds two conferences every year at which all aspects of its policies can be debated and modified as the membership sees fit.

The SSA now has supporters in 68 colleges throughout the country and is organised on an open and democratic basis. If you want to set up a branch of the SSA in your college or university then get in touch with us.

Lewis Davies is a member of the Steering Committee of the Socialist Students' Alliance. Further information about the SSA from Mick Archer, President of Birmingham Polytechnic Students' Union.

JOURNALIST WANTED FOR SOCIALIST CHALLENGE

Socialist Challenge requires an additional journalist, to work mainly on sub-editing and editorial management. While training can be given, we would prefer a comrade with some writing experience.

Applications to: Appointments, Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N.1.

Socialist Challenge EVENTS

EAST ANGLIA

NORWICH: For details of Socialist Challenge support group contact: C. Scott, 7 Clarendon Road, Norwich.

COLCHESTER: Socialist Challenge supporters group meets fortnightly on Tuesdays, 8pm. Room 3.322 University of Essex. For further information contact Mike at 11 Anglesoe Road, Wivenhoe.

SCOTLAND

For information on Socialist Challenge contact Scottish Socialist/Socialist Challenge bookshop, 84 Queen Street, Glasgow (Tel: 041-221 7481). Open weekdays 10-4. Late closing Thursday 6.00pm. Wide range of FI publications.

DUNDEE: Information about Socialist Challenge activities from 84 Queen Street, Glasgow. Join in SC sales outside Boots (corner of Reform Street) each Saturday, 11am-2pm.

SOUTH/WEST

PORTSMOUTH: Socialist Challenge readers group every Monday, 7.30pm at Willshire pub (upstairs), Hampshire Terrace.

BRISTOL: Socialist Challenge Forum every fourth Tuesday of the month, Tuesday 25 October: 'The October Revolution — 90 years on. Focus on Eastern Europe'. Baptist Mills Centre, Horely Road, Bristol 2. 7.30pm.

SOUTHAMPTON: Socialist Challenge group supporters meeting, 27 October. 'Russia: Is it socialist?' Anchor pub, East St., 8pm.

HOME COUNTIES

BASINGSTOKE: readers' meeting every Tuesday at Chute House, Church Street, 8pm.

BRIGHTON: Socialist Challenge group meeting, Geoffrey Sheridan on 'The Struggle for Press Freedom', Thursday 20 October, 8pm at Springfield pub, Springfield Road (by London Road station).

NORTH WEST

For details of activities in the NW write or ring the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre, Third Floor, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1. 061-236 2352.

Open Tuesday 8-8pm, Thursday 6-8pm, Saturday 10-1pm. Room available for meetings. Duplicating services.

LIVERPOOL: Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Wednesdays at Stanley House, Upper Parliament Street.

BURY: Socialist Challenge group meets at the Royal Hotel, Silver St., every Wednesday at 5pm.

WARRINGTON: Socialist Challenge discussion and action group meets every Tuesday, 8pm at Bowling Green, Liverpool Road, Warrington.

LONDON

SOUTHALL: Supporters group meets fortnightly. For details phone 01-573 5085.

BRENT: Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Mondays at Willesden Junction Hotel, Station Road NW10. 7.30pm.

YORKSHIRE

SHEFFIELD: readers meet fortnightly, 7.30pm, the Lion Hotel, 3 Nursery Street (off the Wicker), Sheffield.

HULL: Socialist Challenge meeting, Friday 26 October. Tania Ali, 'Socialist Challenge and left unity', 1.15pm at University Union, Evening meeting, 7.30pm, YPI, George St., 1. All. 'The Government and building a socialist opposition'.

MIDLANDS

For details of activities of local supporters contact Socialist Challenge Centre, 75a Digbeth High Street, Birmingham. (Tel: 021-643 9209).

LEICESTER: Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly at Highfields Community Centre. On Wednesdays, 8pm.

NORTHAMPTON: Socialist Challenge Forum, Geoff Bell on 'Britain's Campaign of Repression against the Irish people', Wednesday 26 October, 7.30pm, the Fish, Fish Street, Northampton.

Exhibition: British Painting 1952-1977 Painters who've waved goodbye to the world

by PETER FULLER

This exhibition of 402 pictures by 197 artists is a shop window for the professional painting of the Welfare State. It is often said that the Russian State imposes stultifying constraints on artists, and suppresses most imaginative and radical attempts to represent the world in a new way by enforcing a uniform 'socialist realism'.

This is perfectly true. But what kind of painting has the post-war British state produced? Are 'free' painters here imaginatively and critically representing their world? If not, why not? This major exhibition can help us to answer these questions.

Peter Phillips's contribution is called *Mosaikbild No 1*; the style is a cloying 'hyper-realism'. Images of Elvis Presley, a woman 'sex symbol', motor car and animal parts, and precision mechanical components are fractured and presented, as if on a split screen, within a grid which divides the canvas surface into uniform squares.

Mosaikbild No 1 exudes uncritical optimism about the values of post-war British culture. It seems to belong unmistakably to the 'affluent society' of 1958 to 1964 and Wilson's 'white heat of the technological revolution', when Elvis was King, and politicians talked about never-ending full employment and rising living standards.

It looks like something washed up by the High Tide of Keynesianism: the technological processes of production are there but neither a worker nor a manager appears. Phillips paints as Keynes thought, by conjuring away any question of the relationship between the forces and the relations of production. There is not so much as a visual whisper of the crisis those values faced in the late 1960s, or of their collapse in the 1970s.

But it comes as a shock when we realise that this picture was in fact made in 1974; thus, not only does it perpetrate false ideological illusions which shut out perception of the truth in their own day, but it does so at a time when they have been manifestly discredited by history.

Now both production and standards of living are falling; the arteries of popular culture have stiffened; unemployment has soared; even capitalism's protagonists agree that it is in crisis. Keynesianism is in ruins; Elvis is in his grave. Yet Phillips paints as if he did not know.

Of course, there are works in very different styles from Phillip's shallow Pop in this show. One can identify 'lyrical' and formal abstraction, academic 'realism', and a fair splattering of eccentrics who do not fit into any category. Even so, Phillip's painting is typical of post-war British art in a sense which transcends style.

Most of the paintings share a common rejection of the necessity for visual truthfulness in relation to the material world, a complete isolation from and denial of history, and an indifference to the lives and experiences of the working class.

Since this show has been organised by the Royal Academy, it contains several examples of academic 'realism', and paintings in related styles. Although these include plenty of portraits of the middle classes and their environment, very, very few pictures refer to the working class at all. Even fewer 'mention' industry. (Eunich's paintings of a factory town bring you up with a jolt. It is so unexpected.)

But it would be wrong to object to academic 'realism' on the grounds of its exclusive subject matter alone. The very pictorial conventions of which it makes use are those which arose to

express the literal point of view of the bourgeoisie at a particular, and now superseded, moment of its development.

Although it was claimed that these conventions could represent, objectively, 'The Truth', the development of photography was just one factor which gradually helped to expose how historically specific they were. That is why those who are presently seeking to revive them for proletarian themes are so misguided.

Some painters — most conspicuously Francis Bacon — have tried to modify these conventions through distortion; but no one has yet adequately explained why the visual equivalent of neurotic angst which is thus produced is of greater significance than the effects produced within the Hall of Mirrors at Southend.

In the catalogue, Frederick Gore writes: 'The story of art in this country during the last 25

British modernist and avant-garde traditions have atrophied. They now contribute nothing either to the way in which we see the world, or to women's and men's consciousness of their historical potential.

For example, this show contains paintings by Law, Scully, Green, Joseph, Turnbull and others who either are, or are all but, blank monochromes signifying nothing except themselves. Since several of them are grey or black, they lack even the sensuous hedonism of some American field painting. Produced without polemical intent, these monochromes reveal the literal wall at the end of the modernist cul-de-sac.

This tradition has increasingly detached itself from involvement with the material conditions of life, and has pursued its own development to the point at which it has nothing to say, and no way of saying it: a grey monochrome. The style of these paintings may be the antithesis of Phillip's: their content is much the same.

Despite its stylistic spectrum, British painting thus reveals itself as no less limited than contemporary Russian 'socialist realism': it certainly has discovered no more effective way of representing the visible world and much of it has fled from that world altogether.

One reason is that the private market in modernist painting here has now collapsed alto-



Duncan Grant: *Sharuku Scarf* 1972.

gether. Those who produce them hope they will be as meaningful, or as unmeaningful, to collectors from Texas, Saudi Arabia, or Hong Kong.

The only serious domestic buyers left in the British market are the institutions, like the Tate and the Arts Council. But they operate on the assumption that the artist must be absolutely 'free' to produce anything that he or she wants to, and is therefore not to be commissioned by the State or its agencies.

This 'freedom', so much vaunted in contrast to what happens under a 'socialist realist' system, in fact emerges as an appalling constraint. The artist becomes 'free' to do anything — anything at all — except to work meaningfully and socially. There is now no substantial sector of British society which has any social need for painters, except those institutions, firms and individual businessmen, who buy commissioned portraits from some Academicians.

And yet the painter remains doomed to continued but contingent existence through the effect of the indirect patronage of the State, whose own institutions, while refusing to commission themselves, continue to buy up the culturally marginal products produced by the redundant artists, simply because they have been produced by artists.

Hence monochromes, folded blankets, and piles of bricks in the national museums.

Another change in style alone is unlikely to radically affect the British painter's situation. To survive, now that the bourgeoisie no longer needs her or him to represent the world for them, the painter must find a way of becoming necessary to the working class in their historical struggle.

'British Painting 1952-1977' is at the Royal Academy, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1 until 20 November. Admission 80p, half price for students, groups and pensioners.



Bridget Riley: *Crest* 1964

gether. Many such painters are thus producing exclusively for wealthy overseas collectors. This, combined with post-war American cultural hegemony, is one reason why the Royal Academy



Peter Phillips: *Mosaikbild No. 1*, 1974



by CAROL MACHELL

RODOLFO WALSH, an Argentine journalist, is almost certainly dead. He was kidnapped months ago by the 'Christian' regime of General Jorge Rafael Videla, after sending him a letter of protest. The letter was an analysis of one year of military rule — a list of disappearances, tortures, murders, decrees banning all forms of popular expression.

'These events', it said near the end, 'are not the greatest sufferings undergone by the Argentine people, nor the worst violations of human rights for which you are responsible. In the economic policies of the Government one finds not only the explanation for its repressive crimes, but also a greater atrocity which punishes millions of human beings with carefully planned misery...'

Talking about cultural resistance and repression in the military dictatorships of the 'southern cone' of Latin America is talking about the class struggle. And these are the themes of the Latin America Festival to be held in London in the last week of this month, organised by the solidarity committees for Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, and Paraguay.

The importance of culture in the struggle is revealed by the extent to which the dictatorships have repressed all cultural workers. Victor Jara in Chile was killed for a reason. So were many others throughout Latin America. Repression covers many fields, as the Argentine generals do not hesitate to inform us.

This is probably why they arrested the Divinsky's, who wrote a children's book called *Cinco Dedos* [Five Fingers]. According to the military, it was 'aimed at infants, with a view to indoctrinating them in preparation for giving them ideological training which would lead to subversive acts.'

Facing the massive repression of popular culture, the working class and the left are finding new

ways of fighting back. One example came recently, when Uruguayan print workers inserted a phrase insulting the military in the small columns of a paper representing bourgeois liberal opposition to the regime. As a result the paper was closed for ten days, and its editor — a man with connections with international capital — was deported to Argentina, complaining a 'crime' had been committed against him.

Eduardo Galeano, the exiled Uruguayan author of *The Open Veins of Latin America*, recently wrote of a new Latin American literature of resistance 'which does not set out to bury our own dead, but to perpetuate them; which refuses to clear up the ashes and on the contrary tries to light the fire.'

Galeano will be one of the participants in the Latin America Festival, which we hope will contribute to the growing consciousness that the Latin American struggle is a continental one. We hope that *Socialist Challenge* readers will participate and contribute. The week-long series of events on cultural repression and resistance, from 23-30 October include:

An opening concert (Sunday 23 October, 7pm, Collegate Theatre, Gordon Street 1), with singers from seven countries, some of whom have only recently come out of jail. Theatre of resistance from Brazil, Chile and Uruguay (Oval House, 54 Kennington Oval, SE11, 24-25 October). Exhibitions and handicrafts all week at the New Latin American Centre, 11 Hoxton Square, N1.

Poetry, street theatre, and most importantly a weekend of workshops and discussions on subjects such as: Cultural Imperialism and the Mass Media; Cultural Workers and Resistance; Education; and a final summing up with participation of all the committees and Chris Roper speaking on the Continental Perspective in Latin America. University College of London, Saturday 29-Sunday 30. See you there!

For further information, programmes, tickets, etc. call Latin America Festival Co-ordinating Committee, 56 Brompton Square, London SW3. Tel: 01-739 2910 or 0-340 3527.



THE OTHER CINEMA

25 Tottenham Street, London W1. Tel: 637 9308

RIDDLES OF THE SPHINX, by Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen, 1977. A further chance to see this rich British feminist feature, with music score by Mike Rillege (ex-Soft Machine). Fri. 21 Oct. to Thurs. 27 Oct., each night at 7pm.

Followed by a discussion programme: Fri. 21 Oct. with Laura Mulvey, the film's co-director. Sat. 22 Oct. with Claire Johnston, author of 'Notes on Women's Cinema': on avant-garde and independent cinema. Sun. 23 Oct.: Sheila Rowbotham, on feminism and motherhood. Thurs. 27 Oct.: 'Representation and the unconscious', introduced by a group of women working on psychoanalysis and feminism.

SHADOWS OF OUR FORGOTTEN ANCESTORS, a beautiful Soviet film from director Pardojano, now imprisoned in a labour camp in the Ukraine for homosexuality. Sun. 23 Oct., at 5pm.

Socialist Challenge

After the mass picket

Strike on and strike anew!

THE GRUNWICK strike was not won on Monday. There was never any chance that it would be. Even if the 3,000 strong picket had managed to prevent the scab's bus from entering George Ward's work camp it would only have been a temporary and moral victory for the strikers.

What Monday did show, however, was that the strikers are now on the road to recovery after the damages inflicted on them by the various legal proceedings and enquiries which the Labour Government, APEX and TUC used to divert the struggle.

It was entirely characteristic of the role of the APEX general secretary, Roy Grantham that he should chose the eve of the mass picket to launch an attack on the Grunwick strike committee. He criticised mass picketing and on a television programme advised the strikers to rely on the House of Lords who will some day be hearing the appeal on the legality of the ACAS judgement on Grunwick.

It is unlikely that even Grant-ham really believes, that salvation lies in the hands of the Law Lords. His increasing willingness to make public displays of washing his hands of the Grunwick strikers is now becoming one of the most nauseating sights in the trade union movement.

For its part the TUC maintains

its cynical apathy towards the Grunwick situation. It has done absolutely nothing to implement the decision taken at the Congress to step up support.

Only the maximum amount of pressure from below will force these 'leaders' to act. When the TUC meets on Wednesday 26 October they should be met with a determined demonstration of trade unionists' attitude towards the role they have played in letting George Ward off the hook.

The TUC lobby planned for that day should not be of the polite 'please help us' variety, but one that shows both the solidarity that exists for the Grunwick strike and the bitterness militants feel towards the do-nothing TUC. It needs to be a large and an angry lobby.

Both for the lobby and for the new dates for mass picketing the strike committee will be naming, effective country wide organisation is essential. This means building support committees in towns and cities throughout the country. It also means effective co-ordination of the tens of thousands of strike supporters. A national solidarity conference needs to be immediately organised — a conference which can plan action on mass picketing, supplies and services.

This way the mass picket on 17 October rather than marking the end of the struggle, can be seen as the start of a new one.



Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (IFL)

Leyland workers on the Grunwick mass picket. For the view of their boss on Grunwick turn to pages 8 & 9

We need your bribes

SO WHAT do you think of *Socialist Challenge*? Now is your chance to let other readers and the Editorial Board know about your criticisms and how the paper can be improved. Over the coming weeks we will be publishing letters (400 words maximum) from supporters. So put pen to paper. Organise discussions in local *Socialist Challenge* groups.

However, improving the paper also needs (you guessed) money. Goodwill and good ideas are not enough. To cheer up Lenin (and us) we need £1800 by the New Year. If we fail to get this £1800 then serious problems will ensue.

We have to finance an additional journalist, as our present editorial staff of five are stretched beyond the limit. As we explain in the financial balance sheet on page 7, we face increases in our typesetting, design, and printing bills. And not least, the kind of world exclusives that are now being sent into the newspaper, together with our research features, necessitate first-rate

library facilities.

To date, in two weeks, just over £100 has been sent in. That is just not good enough, comrades. It should have been £277. We are already £177 short.

This week we received £67.90, nearly double the previous week, but only half what was needed. So double it again and we will make the weekly target of £138. To individual supporters we urge you to dig deep into your pockets. To our 60 supporters groups nation wide we ask you to begin organising social and political events to raise funds.

One reader from the South-east sent us a donation and enclosed the following letter: 'The inland revenue have just been kind enough to give me a small tax rebate, so I'm glad to be able to pass some of it on to you for your fighting fund. *Socialist Challenge* continues [with occasional lapses!] to maintain and improve its standard. I know many people with our aims, read it for the

quality of the reporting, reviews, and debate.'

Also among the contributors are two veteran Polish Marxists in exile. One of them, Stefan Lamed, was at the founding conference of the Fourth International in 1938, and as it happened opposed the formation of the International at that moment in history. Anyway that is water under the bridge. We are grateful for their support to *Socialist Challenge*.

Our thanks to all the contributors this week.

Stefan Lamed	£10.00
E.S.	£10.00
Anon	£3.40
M.S.	£1.25
P. Tobin	£1.00
P. Devenport	£5.00
Oxford supporters	£11.75
F. Woolcock	£1.00
Southampton readers	£2.50
Nick	£2.00
TOTAL	£67.90

Scargill an apology

We apologise to readers for not printing the interview with Arthur Scargill in this issue. The reason for this was the Leyland story. We will be publishing the interview next week.



Socialist Challenge

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National NAC demonstration

Saturday, 29 October
Assemble: 1.30 Victoria Square, Birmingham
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THE BATTLE OF GRUNWICK



view from the left
By Geoff Bell, Mick Gosling, Jonathan Silberman, and Teresa van Gelderen

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