

Socialist Challenge

GRUNWICK: 7 NOVEMBER THE DAY OF RECKONING



From Tolpuddle to Tonypandy, from the Match Girls to the Miners, working people have fought for the right to organise. Trade Unionism is now under attack at GRUNWICK. A defeat for us would be a defeat for the whole working class. On October 17th, we resumed mass picketing. 5,000 Trade Unionists from all over Britain rallied to our cause.

GRUNWICK STRIKE COMMITTEE



Special feature in next week's Socialist Challenge — four pages on The British Road to Socialism, the draft programme to be debated at the Congress of the Communist Party. The Congress will be held 9-12 November.

Our price has now gone up to 15p. All out effort is urgently needed to increase our sales so we can hold the price in the face of further rising costs.

Exclusive

NAFF official admits fascist link

on pages 8 & 9

Why d'you think Socialist Unity got 20% of the vote?



Don't ask me! I'm not interested in these ultra-leftists.

I mean - they aren't supposed to be in favour of entering for elections...



They aren't?

Hmmm... Have to write to King Street for our line on their line on that....



THE LABOUR Party leaders are at the moment engaged in engendering a phoney optimism about working class living standards. They believe that if they can last it out for another year they might just be able to win. What should socialists be doing to prepare for the next General Election? Well, Socialist Unity is calling a national conference of all its supporters on 19 November in London. In the meantime, in a number of localities preparations and discussions are in full swing.

We publish two local reports this week from Yorkshire and indicate where Socialist Unity will be standing nationally. Active preparations in these areas will begin after our national conference including the selection of candidates. If you live in any of these areas and are interested in attending the conference or want more details, then write to Socialist Unity, c/o 14 Piccadilly, Manchester, for further details.



The Key Seats in a general election

- London (4)
- Birmingham (3)
- Manchester (2)
- Hull
- Nottingham
- Cardiff
- Newcastle
- Sheffield
- Oxford
- Leeds
- Liverpool (3)
- Edinburgh
- Glasgow
- Aberdeen

Hull: one candidate proposed

Should we stand in Hull?

Well, we don't think there's any special reason for not standing against any of the Labour candidates in Hull. All the seats are safe Labour seats, and only a drastic swing to the Tories would let them in. Although MacNamara claims to be left wing, and Prescott even more so, they will both, after the election, be sailing pretty close to the Party line. Neither will be arguing for a consistent fight against the reactionary policies of this — or a future — Labour Government.

The Hull Socialist Alliance was formed out of the County Council 'Socialists Against the Cuts' campaign — which got an average of 200 votes, or 2-3 per cent, in four wards. We think we should stand a Socialist Unity candidate in one of the three seats. On balance we favour Central Hull, which contains several major working class areas and is where the left has the strongest base (3 of our candidates were in Central). Kevin MacNamara is typical of the Labour MP who talks in a left

wing way but supports the Government on all major issues. His reactionary stand on abortion will enable us to campaign on the issues of women's rights.

HSA at present contains the International Marxist Group, the Working Women's Charter Group and quite a number of independent socialists. We would welcome affiliation from any other socialist, women's or trade union organisation, and individuals. We hope that groups wish-

ing to take part will attend the national Socialist Unity conference, where the programme and organisation of Socialist Unity will be decided. Contact us if you wish to go, or if you would like to receive the conference documents. After the conference we will call a local meeting to discuss our campaign, and to decide how to choose a candidate — this will be done at an open meeting of all our supporters.

Contact us at 67 Salisbury Street, Hull (phone 492733).

Leeds: socialist feminists needed

About a dozen members of the Leeds Socialist Women's Action Group who are committed to Socialist Unity began to meet independently several months ago. They continued their involvement with Leeds SWAG — a socialist feminist women's group including a majority of non-aligned women as well as members of IMG, Big Flame, SWP, CP and the Labour Party — realising it would be divisive to try to commit SWAG as a whole to Socialist Unity.

Below, the group explains why Socialist Unity needs socialist feminists.

We meet separately from the Leeds Socialist Unity group to which we send delegates. This is because we want to work out autonomously our own position as women. Several women in the group are not members of left

wing organizations and do not wish to be, but they welcome this chance to work in alliance with groups on the left, providing it does not involve compromising our autonomy.

We saw our task as ensuring

that the Socialist Unity election programme is genuinely feminist in its orientation, and that the question of how various policies affect women should be raised throughout the campaign not just added as an after thought.

We see no conflict between socialism and feminism. On the contrary, we see them as drawing strength from each other. We see women's issues as inseparable from issues that affect the working class as a whole. They must be included at every stage in the creation of a programme — and not just as a subsection on — 'Women'.

We saw the possibilities of Socialist Unity providing a much broader forum for socialist feminist politics, and as a basis for sections of the left and the women's movement to work together in a non-sectarian way. We also thought we could bring to Socialist Unity some of the perspectives and insights of the women's movement which are lacking from left politics.

We hoped that SU would offer a platform for feminist politics and preoccupations in more than just a token way, and would also offer us the possibilities of raising feminist issues in a social-

ist context in our local political work.

Traditionally some feminists have been rightly suspicious of the incursions of the left into the women's movement and its campaigns, seeing these at best as recruiting hinges, at worst, as attempts to take over the movement, in the guise of offering 'leadership'. We believe that unity between the women's movement and the left must grow out of the kind of respect that exists between equals. We hope that our involvement in SU will be the first step in this direction — with women involved at every stage and every level of its development, incorporating genuine feminist perspectives.

For these reasons, we think that it is very important that we continue to meet and organize separately as well as going along to local SU meetings. We hope that women in other groups will take up this position too, so that we can get together to work out our socialist feminist perspectives at a national level as well. Other sisters (thinking along these lines please contact — Leeds Socialist Unity Women's Committee, c/o 26 Roundhay Mt, Leeds 8.

News from nowhere

What the wood-work reveals

A BUNCH of Fleet Street's columnists and leader writers predictably sought revenge for Sir Richard ('I'd say it again') Dobson's quick-fire departure, with Socialist Challenge and in particular Peter Cooper as their target. Sample epithets 'contemptible creep' (The Sun) 'a creed inimical to all families' (Daily Telegraph), together with similarly sober thoughts from the Street of Shame's hysterical duo, Wyatt and Levin.

These well-fed hacks will no doubt be delighted at the response their scribbles evoked among some of the more stable elements in our society.

Samples from Peter's hate mail: 'We will deal with you, dirty commie rat and swine hound.' 'You fuckin dirty stinkin little bloody soddin spy... Say goodbye to everything while you live.' 'Mr. Wog Lover... If I see you around Battersen I'll smack you right on you're white livered nose, you horrible bastard. Up the National Party.' Etc.

The hacks might care to note that some of these anonymous notes were written around the edges of clippings of the hacks' own poison-pen contributions. Peter also received congratulatory letters and telegrams from numerous vermin haters.

What other left papers said

Socialist Worker: 'To their great credit, Socialist Challenge published the text of the speech....'

New Statesman: Mervyn Jones wrote in London Diary: that our 'ambush of Sir Richard Dobson, was to my mind, in the best traditions of guerrilla journalism. I hope it brings new readers to Socialist Challenge, which is shaping to be the liveliest and least doctrinaire of the radical weeklies.'

Tribune: 'Tariq Ali and Socialist Challenge, the weekly paper of the International Marxist Group, are certainly to be congratulated for publishing the text of Sir Richard Dobson's speech....'

News Line: 'The fact that Ali is now being lionised by the Financial Times is a clear indication that the IMG's politics suit the requirements of this powerful section of the employing class.'

Morning Star: In a front-page article stop-lined 'Storm over a racist speech', Bill Brooks and Martin Goswick reported: 'The tape was handed to Socialist Challenge the International Marxist Group's weekly, which carried extracts in yesterday's issue.'

Socialist Press: A half-page article, with extensive extracts from Dobson's speech, did not mention the tape or where it had first been published.

A tale of three local papers

The Haensley Journal and the Tottenham and Wood Green Weekly Herald have a circulation in the same part of North London. The Journal has campaigned against racism. The Herald has campaigned against those who campaign against racism. As a result their coverage of Peter Cooper was symbolic.

The Journal's report exposed the Tory councillor who demanded that Cooper be sacked from the Tottenham law centre, together with quotations from Peter Cooper and other supporters. The Herald simply reprinted the whole of the Tory person's absurd statement, in a front-page 'splash'.

Meanwhile, the South London Press — more subtle in its racism than most local rags — was up to its own brand of fun and games. Last Friday the Press generously published a front-page article headed: 'Dinner table spy protests about invasion of his privacy'.

Among Peter's complaints were the fact the Press had published his full address in Battersen in its previous issue. 'Whatever the intention,' Peter said in his statement, 'it amounts to "fingering" people like myself who stand in considerable physical danger from the fascists.' Obviously taking this matter seriously, the vile South London Press then repeated the full address.

Fascists attack Asian police

DILAWAR Paul Benning is a police constable stationed at Stratford Upon Avon. He is also an Asian.

Last Saturday he was the victim of a racist attack in the Queen's Bar in Bradford.

Members of the anti-fascist committee in Bradford first heard of the incident in the Queen's Bar when they were leafletting in the town's shopping precinct on Saturday afternoon. They heard Fred Harris, the district organiser of the British National Party, bragging about how he had 'done over three Pakis at the Queen's Bar'.

The anti-fascists immediately went to the pub where they met Dilawar Paul Benning. After talking to the anti-fascists Benning gave them this statement.

'I am a police constable at the Warwickshire Constabulary, presently stationed at Stratford Upon Avon. At about 2.15pm on Saturday 19 October I came to Bradford to visit my brother in law. At about 2.20pm I was walking along Bridge Street with my brother in law. I saw three youths coming towards me from the opposite direction ... one of them raised his right hand and hit me on the nose ... with my nose bleeding I followed these youths into the Queen's public house.

As I walked into the Queen's, I saw a youth standing at the counter. I shouted at the barman to call the police, I pointed my finger at the youth. As I did this the same boy ... picked up an empty beer glass from the counter and hit me on the face'.

Benning followed the youths out of the pub and later identified his attackers to the local police. Fred Harris is, as they say, 'helping police with enquiries'.

Short story competition

Socialist Challenge is announcing a short story competition for our Special Xmas issue, due out on 15 December. Readers are invited to submit short stories (maximum length 1,800 words) by 1 December. The copy should be typed triple-spaced on plain paper. Hand-written manuscripts cannot be considered. The panel of judges will include John Fowles, author of 'The French Lieutenant's Woman', 'The Collector', and the just published 'Daniel Martin'. Other judges will be announced shortly, as will the prize. Entries to: Short Story Competition, PO Box 50, London N1.

Socialist Unity National Conference
Saturday, 19 November
The Garage, University College,
London WC1.

Credentials: £1 for employed and students, 50p for unemployed and people working in the home. Conference bulletin, 20p. All from: Rising Free, Box 15, Upper Street, London N1.

Union news in brief

BRISTOL

OVER 700 parents, teachers and school kids lobbied Parliament last Wednesday in protest against education cuts in Bristol. GILL CROZIER reports.

Bristol has been hit severely by the cuts. 290 teachers and 300 ancillary workers have been condemned to the dole queue and there has been a 40 per cent cut in educational spending over the last three years.

After the lobby the demonstrators handed in a petition signed by 20,000 people. It called on Education Secretary Shirley Williams to investigate Avon's cuts and to press the government to maintain its rate support grant.

The organising committee of the Avon Campaign Against Cuts in Education — who organised the protest — saw Williams after the lobby. They were told they would have to submit written evidence before she would even consider an enquiry. The demonstrators were received with just as little encouragement when they met local MPs Ron Thomas, Tony Benn, Arthur Palmer and Terry Walker.

On the lobby were a contingent of nursery nurses who are facing the prospect of losing 350 jobs. These nurses have been particularly active in the campaign, but they have not had the support they deserve from some sections of the local trade union movement. According to one sympathetic shop steward a local branch of the Transport and General Workers Union refused to back the nurses campaign because they were 'only women'.

MIDDLESEX

STUDENTS AT Brunel University in Middlesex have been occupying the administration building for a week in opposition to racist fee increases.

The occupation marks the first step in building an all-London offensive against both the fees and the education authority's racist quota imposed on overseas students.

The students' union at City University is organising a conference for London colleges on 9 November to map out a campaign, for which the Socialist Students Alliance is calling for metropolitan-wide co-ordination of activity, and a demonstration to the ILEA headquarters on 23 November.

LIVERPOOL

A SPECIAL general meeting on 27 October the Liverpool branch of the National and Local Government Officers' Association voted in favour of a national wage claim which would include a £15 a week increase from 1 January 1978.

The resolution — which also includes the demand for a 35 hour week, is being campaigned for nationally by the NALGO Action group. It needed the support of 50 branches by 1 November for the NALGO executive to call a special conference on the claim.

NOTTINGHAM

NOTTINGHAM Trades Council last week contributed £30 to the strike at Sandersons (Forklifts) Ltd., Skegness. The strike, now in its 25th week has a background similar to the Grunwick dispute.

The workers were sacked after a majority of the workforce decided to join the Transport and General Workers' Union, and ACAS has since ruled in favour of the strikers. Unlike Grunwick the factory is situated in the heart of rural Lincolnshire, which makes practical solidarity with the strike more difficult. Nevertheless the Sandersons' workers are considering mounting a mass picket.

NEWTON AYCLIFFE

THE MANAGEMENT of the US-owned Eatons Axles factory at Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, is intensifying efforts to break the back of union organisation in the company's plants in

Britain.

They have locked out the workers at their Aycliffe factory for working to rule in pursuit of a wage demand. Similar disputes have broken out at the company's plants at Warrington and Manchester.

Last week, when management announced record profits, the executive of the Engineering Union refused to make the dispute official. The bureaucrats complain that the strikers' claim is in breach of the 12-month rule. Consequently the workers are without strike pay or unemployment benefit. Funds are desperately needed and should be sent to: D.Lishman, 131 Brinkburn Drive, Darlington.

WOMEN TEACHERS

TEACHERS MEETING in Nottingham on 8 October voiced strong opposition to their union's failure to take the fight for women's rights seriously. CAROL REGAN reports.

Since a memorandum on equal opportunities — sent out to union members in 1975 — the only step taken by union leaders has been to withdraw from the Women's TUC. This is a decision which most delegates agreed has weakened the fight of women in the union.

Militants attended the conference from several Midlands towns, Bristol, Sheffield and London. Thirty-five delegates present were united in their determination that the fight against women's oppression in the union will not remain a dead issue.

Pat Brown from East London NUT spoke from the platform to encourage the formation of local women's groups in line with union policy. Brown explained that these groups are totally limited by the union — they can't even call meetings to attract new members — but as delegates pointed out, even they are being blocked by the right-wing. Sheffield is a case in point where teachers have been unsuccessfully fighting the right, to get a group off the ground.

Vanessa Wiseman, a Lambeth teacher, was joined on the platform by Dave Picton from Lewisham. Picton argued that the entire salary structure of the NUT reinforces women's oppression. Jean Farrell, the union's Women's Officer departed company with the rest of the platform in her vigorous defence of the union leadership.

Despite her paltry justifications, conference was united in support for a resolution to be submitted to the next national NUT conference.

The resolution includes agreement with the TUC's Charter for Women, a document that takes a positive position on abortion — the issue which has sharply divided the NUT national conference in the past three years.

DARLINGTON

THE ENORMITY for the National Union of Journalists of a defeat in the six-month strike at Darlington has at last impressed itself on the whole executive of the union, reports GEOFFREY SHERIDAN. Only one member has voted against an escalation of the journalists' strike for a closed shop, and the NUJ leadership meets again today to plan a rolling strike throughout the Westminster Press newspaper group.

But the journalists have been left to fight virtually alone. The bureaucrats of the print union NATSOPA have instructed their Darlington members to scab, and while the NGA and SLADE workers remain on the picket line, neither union is expected to support the extension of the struggle.

The Westminster Press bosses, backed by the financial resources of the Pearson Longman empire, which includes the Financial Times and Penguin Books, are now increasingly confident of retaining their 'right' to employ scab journalists. They have the support of the Financial Times NUJ chapel, which has unanimously opposed strike action.

Motor Industry Whatever happened at Fords...

Socialist Challenge interviews a Ford worker — a member of Big Flame — about the next steps following the acceptance of Fords' 12 per cent offer.

There has been an overwhelming vote in favour of Ford's latest offer. Why is this?

Apart from assembly-line workers — many of whom are very angry about the deal, most of the workers had nothing substantial left to fight for. The union was asking for very little. Even The Economist called it unusually moderate.

The unions were asking for 15 per cent plus a number of important fringe benefits. But 15 per cent — even if Ford's had given all of it — would have been our second wage cut in two years. Last year we were forced to accept a Phase 2 deal of 4½ per cent under the Social Contract. Inflation was running at 19 per cent. During the last 12 months, prices have gone up another 17 per cent, so the unions weren't even trying to make up what we'd lost over that period.

So what was Ford's final offer? Ford was very clever. With the latest offer, they broke the Government guidelines — against the expectation of most of the workers. And the offer was very divisive: the top grades — skilled workers and maintenance — were given 14 per cent, while most of the production workers were offered only 11 per cent. Although the offer was another cut in everyone's standard of

living, it meant that skilled sections were only 1 per cent short of what the union was asking — while the rest of us were 3 or 4 per cent short.

You said that many of the lineworkers are not happy with the deal

That's true. There's a strong feeling that lineworkers have been treated worse than second-class by Ford. They got the second lowest cash offer: 11 per cent and nothing on line allowance or lay-off pay. Yet they're the ones who are always first to be laid off without pay if there's a dispute. They also lost out on the shorter working week.

But in many Ford plants, lineworkers are a minority. And they're split up, section by section. Many individual sections, especially at Halewood and Langley (the truck plant), wanted a walk out. At Halewood one section did walk out. But they did it without their steward.

And overall, the line stewards refused to take a lead, refused to co-ordinate one section with another, or to co-ordinate action between plants.

Feeling among other workers who had quite literally nothing left to fight for was strongly against a strike. So most lineworkers felt isolated, and unwilling to go it alone.

Why was the original claim from the unions so small?

The 'brains' behind the claim was Sid Harraway, deputy convenor in the body plant at Dagenham — and a member of the Communist Party. Way back in February and March — when the claim was first discussed — it was already clear that a major struggle around wages could sweep away the Government. The Ford claim was crucial. It would be the first claim after the end of Phase 2 of the incomes policy.

So it was to keep Labour in office that the Communist Party put its weight behind a very moderate claim. Sid Harraway put it to the Convenors' Committee — and sold it to them as a 15 per cent minimum. It wasn't long before the word 'minimum' was dropped.

Wasn't it put to mass meetings? In April, it was put to a meeting of all Ford shop stewards. But the Standing Orders Committee allowed no amendments.

The next hurdle was mass meetings in every plant. With the exception of Ford Langley, no mass meetings were held. And at

Ford Langley, a resolution from the shop floor calling for £20 and the 35 hour week was simply ruled out of order.

How can all this be avoided next year?

Militants have to start organising now — both on the shop floor and in the union branches — to ensure that the claim is thoroughly discussed at every level before it's agreed at a national level by the unions.

We have to start building a national organisation of socialists in Ford. And we have to continue the kind of work we're doing to strengthen the confidence, power and solidarity of the shop-floor, and particularly of the lineworkers at Ford's. That's the importance of the Ford Workers' Group at Dagenham, the Ford Langley Action Committee and the Big Flame Group at Halewood.

Does the vote indicate that Ford workers are demoralised?

Not at all. In the past week there have been important struggles at Dagenham, Halewood and Langley. At Dagenham Assembly Plant one section has just won a major victory. A successful strike has removed a bullying foreman. At Langley there have been some unusually militant struggles over safety.

...and Rover?

by PAT HICKEY

AT ROVER SOLIHULL the SDI shop stewards' committee fought management's plans for their secret ballot. They called a mass meeting of their 4000 plus production workers which rejected the package overwhelmingly.

Management had refused permission for a mass meeting on the grounds that the membership should make up their minds without pressure. They did not say what they intended to do about the press and television who are blackmailing workers into acceptance by calling for closures if the deal is not accepted.

The Transport and General Workers' Union convenor for



PAT HICKEY

the Solihull site, CP member Joe Harris refused to call mass meetings to discuss the issue. This was because he was determined to secure a yes vote. Despite this, SDI stewards passed a resolution calling for a no vote in the ballot.

The resolution also called for a delegate conference of Leyland car shop stewards and recommended a claim for £15 across the board, consolidation of supplements and index linked wages. This resolution was passed by the mass meeting with only 20 or 30 votes against.

At a special Confederation meeting — which includes all the unions on the Solihull site — attended by about 500 shop stewards, the SDI resolution was

again passed. Chairman of the Confed., Joe Harris, who voted for the package in London attempted to block the resolution.

He quoted the T&G officials as saying 'the country does not need you'. If the money were invested in petrochemicals it would be returned ten fold'. He assured the Confed that this was also the opinion of the NEB and that he wanted a yes vote because he was not prepared to gamble with member's jobs. The convenor tried to say that the details of the package were still negotiable and that nothing had been agreed. If the vote went in favour the trade union negotiators would win a good deal from the company and might even put the final package to another ballot.



We went to press, the Fire Brigades Union was holding crucial talks with representatives of local authorities on its claim for a 30 per cent plus pay rise.

Already members of the union in South Wales have voted for strike action if their claim is not met. Conditions in the fire service compare very unfavourably with those in the police force — which the Tories are insisting are a 'special case'.

Unlike the police, fire brigade workers get no shift allowance; and while five members of the union were killed on duty last year, only one police officer was.

GAY WOMEN AND MEN
COME TO

on Saturday 5th November
8pm till midnight (bar extension)
at University of London Union, Malet St.
(nearest tubes: Warren St., Goodle St., Russell Sq.)
with
**Julie Bedford Band
+ DISCO**
Admission £1.00 or 60p for non-earners with cards
Organised by U.L.U. Gaysec in conjunction with The
11 London Gay Groups in Support of Gay News

Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

Hounslow Conference

How we can halt hospital closures

5 NOVEMBER sees a conference on cuts and hospital closure called by the Hounslow Hospital occupation committee. The conference organisers want to hammer out a programme to defend the hundreds of hospitals now facing Healey's bulldozer. Our correspondent RICH PALSER argues for a national campaign against hospital closure, and deals with questions now being raised by health militants.

After seeing what happened at Hounslow, should other hospitals facing closure adopt the work-in tactic?

Yes, if the objectives of the work-in are clearly understood. Its main purpose must be to stop the gradual run-down of the hospital, and this can only be achieved if the workers at the hospital exert total control over the movement of equipment, patients, and all other internal activity.

Winning support from the local labour movement to maintain the hospital in running order, persuading GPs to continue to admit patients and organising other trade unionists to maintain a defensive picket are the kind of tactics required to achieve this.

The work-in can also provide an organising centre for a campaign against hospital closure, involving all the workers in all aspects of the campaign through regular mass meetings and an elected action committee.

But if there are 30, rather than three work-ins going on around the country, is this enough to stop the closures?



PHOTO: LAURENCE SPARHAM (JFL)

Clearly not. Each work-in may be a thorn in the side of the Labour Government, but the Government will simply pull these thorns out — first Hounslow, then the EGA, and so on. The test of any work-in must be whether it prepares the ground for a mass response when a forced closure is attempted. Strike action must be won from industrial workers in private industry. After all, it is their health care which is at stake.

But such a commitment is not possible if hospital workers are not organised to demand their support. This means workers in the hospitals in the same district as the hospital facing closure

refusing to accept the transfer of patients, resources, and equipment from the threatened closure. This should be backed up by selective industrial action in those hospitals, such as working to rule and lightning stoppages.

Once a forced closure is attempted, squads of flying pickets are needed from local hospitals both to defend the threatened hospital, and to go out to the factories and win action by industrial workers. Strong district and regional shop stewards bodies are also required in the NHS. This was again shown at Hounslow, where it was the all-England stewards body — CLASH — which was vital in organising even the one-day pro-

test strike by health workers at more than 10 London hospitals.

Is organising the rank and file enough?

The pre-condition for any fight against hospital closure is that rank and file health workers organise themselves for action. But it is also necessary to make very concrete demands on the union leaders.

Demanding automatic official support, with strike pay if necessary, to any workers carrying out a work-in against hospital closure. Demanding as well that the union leaders and officials campaign among other hospital workers for further selective industrial action in the event of a closure attempt. Finally the un-

ions must be committed to approaching industrial unions, not just for verbal, but active support in fighting closures.

Does this mean that local campaigns are enough?

Ultimately, each individual hospital will only finally be saved when the cuts as a whole are withdrawn and money pumped into the health service. This means national action, and a national campaign to achieve it.

A centralised campaign against hospital closure could produce a newsletter to keep each hospital defence campaign informed of developments and the various tactics that are being adopted. It could produce joint propaganda

material to campaign for support in the labour movement and set up a national fund drive. A national campaign which democratically involved all workers involved in the fight against hospital closure could do more.

It could provide the necessary national co-ordination of the rank and file hospital workers to mount united national protest actions, wage a campaign inside the unions for action, and contribute greatly to building a campaign of mass action against all cuts. Such tactics will not be easy to implement.

However it is the only strategy which provides a realistic perspective for halting all closures and all cuts. It was only by taking this strategy as a starting point that the one-day action by London hospitals to defend Hounslow was won.

Emergency Fightback Conference

Saturday, 5 Nov.
London School of Economics,
Houghton Street, WC1.

Workers' League & Socialist Challenge

WORKERS LEAGUE members welcomed the launch of Socialist Challenge at their aggregate in Birmingham last month. Members were called on to contribute news and discussion to the paper, which 'could play a useful role in the process of regroupment' as a forum for discussion, debate and exchange of information on the left.

The welcome came as part of an extended statement of the League's position on regroupment, which the aggregate adopted by an overwhelming majority. It stressed that a process of regroupment was central to the building of a revolutionary party; but this was not simply a process of relations between existing left groups.

'Joint work with other groupings in areas of agreement can provide a basis for regroupment as long as additional forces are involved and the orientation is outward' the statement said. 'This experience is the only healthy basis for clarifying the considerable political differences that exist.'

In this context, the aggregate resolved to follow up or develop opportunities for joint work with other groups, especially the IMG, Big Flame, local ex-IS groups and Samaj, as well as to maximise any opportunities for joint work with the SWP.

There was less agreement on the question of committing WL members to selling Socialist Challenge and building readers' groups; many members feel this would identify the organisation too closely with the politics of the IMG.

The aggregate decided that the work of those comrades who are selling Socialist Challenge and working with readers groups should be centrally co-ordinated. And it was agreed that the next aggregate would centre around discussion of specific areas of joint work, so that the role of different organisations in the process of regroupment could be judged against the background of their contribution and relevance, and the extent of agreement in practice.

The meeting also decided to send delegates to the Socialist Unity conference.

Preparing for Rank & File Conference

The tasks that lie ahead

Leyland workers suffered a major blow this week after they had voted 2-1 in a secret ballot to accept a document taking wage negotiations out of the hands of shop stewards into those of national officials.

At the same time, miners were expected to accept a productivity deal by a small majority in another secret ballot. The object of that deal was to split the unity that miners built up in their great strikes of 1972 and 1974 and to take the steam out of their wage claim.

The Rank and File Conference meeting in November has valuable lessons to learn from these set-backs in determining its own way forward. STEVE POTTER says how.

The results of these two ballots should sound the alarm bells throughout the labour movement. The Leyland result virtually commits the workforce to accepting 10 per cent increase in wages this year and next year — despite the massive votes for substantial pay increases in plant after plant in the last year.

The fact that the miners ballot took place at all was a defeat for the left and for the democracy of the union given the vote against such a scheme at the NUM Conference in Tynmouth this summer.

Nor can these results be written off as an exception to the rule. Since the decision of the TUC Congress to back the 12 month rule there have been a number of important set-backs in the fight for a decent wage.

One of the first was the acceptance by Southampton dockers of a Phase 2 deal. All the major ports were lined up behind a secret date for strike action for a claim which evaded the Government's provisions. That vote defused the rest of the ports who also accepted Phase 2.

In Southampton Jack Jones' personal intervention secured a defeat. No such intervention was

even threatened at Leyland's Longbridge plant when the Communist Party convenor, Derek Robinson, attempted to spring strike action on his membership. Even though Robinson got his majority for such action, it took only 400 right wingers to demonstrate and Robinson backed down, reversing the decision of thousands of workers who had voted the other way.

In a similar way, the Ford claim (analysed on p.6) was not discussed by mass meetings, with one small exception. Neither was any plan of action developed by the union leaderships concerned. In the absence of any such plan of action coming from the plant leaderships, let alone Moss Evans, workers accepted the best of a bad job by voting for the deal.

But this is only one side of the story. Substantial minorities have voted against these deals. Strike statistics show the simmering anger at the fall in living standards in cold figures. Some deals, the Scottish lorry drivers being the latest example, have settled for figures substantially above the 10 per cent norm.

Above all, the fact remains

that shop stewards and plant leaderships will not accept that the refusal of their national leaders to organise action means that wages struggles are off for another year.

And it is those rank and file leaderships who are the main target for Government and bosses with the collusion of the trade union bureaucrats.

With productivity dealing a major component of virtually every wage deal, their objective is getting clearer every day. The employing class and the government are stepping up their offensive to use the trade union bureaucracy as a wedge between the most militant and experienced workers and the rest of the working class, both by undermining the basis of shop stewards organisation and strangling the mass democracy which keeps that base firm.

The need for a centralised fight back against this offensive has never been more urgent. This demands alternative policies which can start to come to grips with the depth of the economic crisis in Britain, policies which start to make the case for the tactics of workers control.

But bureaucratic manoeuvres can sabotage the best of policies. Those mass meetings which were allowed to take place on Leyland's corporate bargaining package overwhelmingly rejected the deal. The secret ballot does not even permit the opposing case to be put at the time when workers are making up their minds.

The defence of the sovereignty of mass meetings must be the number one point on a programme to defend workers democracy. This must be accompanied by the election and accountability of all strike commit-



PHOTO: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

tees; for all negotiations to be open to and controlled by decisions of the rank and file from start to finish; for the election and right of recall of full time officials.

For these policies to have any meaning at all, an organisation which fights for them must be on-going, capable of swinging its forces behind these localised struggles on wages which will be the most prominent feature of the industrial scene over the next six months.

That's why an organisation which wants to start the fight-back itself must be a model of workers democracy itself. It is therefore extremely unfortunate that the Rank and File Coordinating Committee have not taken this lesson to heart in the preparation of the upcoming Conference on 26 November in Manchester.

Last week Socialist Worker, the chosen vehicle for the policies of the R&F, announced that Michael Fenn had been elected

secretary of the Committee by a meeting of sponsors for the conference. No public appeal was ever made for sponsors. Neither was the meeting of sponsors publicly announced. No indication was given of how many sponsors of the hundred or so listed in Socialist Worker attended the meeting. There is still no provision for the election of a committee for the Rank and File with only four weeks to go to the conference.

If the Rank and File Conference is going to be capable of taking decisions both now and in the future on action, its supporters must be convinced that this is a completely different kettle of fish than the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, only brought out from under wraps by the Communist Party as and when it suits their sectarian purpose.

Defence of workers democracy, given the events of the last two months, is not a luxury for any genuine rank and file tendency: it is its life-blood.

Correction: We omitted to mention that it was Jonathan Silberman who interviewed Arthur Scargill in last week's issue. Apologies also to Arthur Scargill for attributing to him, part of a question posed by the interviewer. (The first two paragraphs of Scargill's reply to the penultimate question were in fact part of the question).



Healey's mini-budget Behind the tax cuts

THE MINI-BUDGET Denis Healey revealed last week has been dubbed an 'election package' by the media. But it is also a strenuous effort by the Labour Government to put money into working class pockets in a way that is designed to dampen militancy in the struggle around wage claims.

Below we examine what lies behind Denis Healey's attempt to juggle tax figures and conclude that the only thing Healey has given us is equality of sacrifice — but the working class is a bit more 'equal'.

Are people in Britain more highly taxed than in other countries? And do people in Britain pay more tax than they used to? Popular wisdom suggests that the answer to both these questions is a resounding 'yes'. Indeed, the Tories will probably base much of their propaganda in the next general election campaign to show how they will reverse these self-evident trends.

But it is by no means obvious that popular wisdom is correct. So what has been going on?

Broadly speaking, there are two main categories of tax. First, there are taxes which are levied directly on incomes — for example, on people, income tax, and on firms, corporation tax. These taxes are called 'direct taxes'.

Secondly, there are taxes which are levied not on incomes but on expenditure. Examples are Value Added Tax (VAT), taxes on oil, tobacco, alcohol, gambling and cars, vehicle excise duty, and agricultural levies. These taxes are called 'indirect taxes'.

REGRESSIVE

The main economic difference between direct and indirect taxes is that indirect taxes are 'regressive'. This means that, for any given purchase, a poor person will pay as much as a rich person. Further, more tax will be collected if more people buy the commodity in question.

So to maximise tax revenue, it makes sense to levy taxes on those goods which most people

buy. If we consider two people, one of whom earns twice as much as the other, it is obvious that the richer person will not purchase twice as much food, or twice as much tobacco or alcohol as the poorer person. So the poorer person will pay a much greater percentage of indirect tax as a proportion of their income than will the richer person. Thus indirect taxes are regressive.

DRAMATIC

Contrast this situation with direct taxes, which are potentially 'progressive'. This means that taxes can be levied on incomes according to ability to pay. Richer people not only can pay more tax than poorer people — they can also pay a greater percentage of their income in tax than can poorer people. Thus direct taxes can be used as a redistributing incomes in an egalitarian manner in a way that indirect taxes cannot.

Now let us look at the situation today. First of all, how does the total tax burden (direct plus indirect taxes) as a percentage of gross national product in Britain compare with other countries?

Table A shows that it cannot at all be claimed that the burden of taxation in Britain is heavier than in comparable industrial countries.

However, what has happened over the last few years is that the components of the tax burden in Britain have altered dramatically. This can be seen from Table B.

TABLE A
Tax burden as a percentage of GNP at factor cost, 1974

	Including social security contributions	Excluding social security contributions
Denmark	53.4	52.4
Sweden	49.1	35.4
France	41.1	24.9
UK	38.7	32.0
USA	32.0	24.3
II		
W. Germany	42.5	29.0
UK	38.0	31.4
Japan	24.6	20.0

Source: Economic Trends, November 1976

TABLE B
Composition of the tax burden [excluding taxes on capital]

	1969-70 [%]	1976-77*
Direct central government taxes on income	39	44
Indirect central government taxes on expenditure	39	27
Rates	8	10
National insurance contributions:		
— employers	7	11
— employees	7	8
Total taxation	100	100

* These figures are provisional.

Sources: Annual Abstract of Statistics, Financial Statement and Budget Report 1977-78.

This change in the composition of the tax burden has occurred because of inflation. As money incomes rise, and tax rates and allowances remain the same, many more people find themselves paying income tax. Thus 2,000,000 pay income tax today who paid none in 1973-74.

FISCAL DRAG

Furthermore, as money incomes rise, those who do pay tax find that an increasing proportion of their income is taxed and at increasingly high rates. Thus in 1972-73, between 300,000 and 400,000 people paid surtax; by 1975-76 well over 1,500,000 people were paying higher rates of tax. But because prices were rising rapidly, this picture of increasing incomes does not mean that people were becoming better off in real terms — they were just being taxed more. This effect of inflation is known as 'fiscal drag'.

Turning to indirect taxes, many taxes are levied at a fixed sum per quantity of the commodity purchased (taxes on tobacco and alcohol for example). As prices rise, the fixed sum decreases as a proportion of the price of the commodity in question. This process of erosion of fixed sum indirect tax revenues is called 'fiscal boost'.

Now despite increases in personal allowances, in tax thresholds, and in rates of duty, these increases have not been sufficient to offset the effects of inflation. So the emphasis in Britain has been shifting strongly towards direct taxation, and away from indirect taxation.

Because direct taxation is progressive and indirect taxation is regressive, this tendency — if it continues — would eventually lead to a structure of taxation which narrowed the differences in real incomes. That is, we would have a more equitable distribution of income — something a lot of us might think would be a good thing.

But capitalist economies do not run on equity. It is necessary in order to revive the economy to create a climate in which investment is seen as worthwhile. One of the ways of doing this is to make it clear that capitalists will get richer if they invest, that the return they get will not just be taxed away. In this way, the class nature of Britain will continue to be reflected in huge differences in incomes and standards of living.

MORIBUND

That is why Healey's budget last week increased personal allowances rather than reduced VAT. That is why the clamour in the Tory press and Party has focussed on our 'ruinously' high rate of income tax, why the increasing burden of direct taxation is deplored as a 'disincentive' to effort. And as long as the Labour Government is committed to the attempt to revive a moribund capitalism, we can expect similar 'incentives' in next April's budget.

The feeble social democracy of the Labour Party is thus abandoning its rather mild commitment to greater equality. The only thing Healey has given us is equality of sacrifice — but the poor are more equal than the rest.

CPS

Teachers' union election A real alternative

Members of the National Union of Teachers will be voting in the next two weeks for the posts of senior and junior vice-presidents, positions from which the national presidency automatically follows. BERNARD REGAN of the East London Teachers Association reports.



DAVE WHITELEY

There are three right-wing candidates, whose central policy is the continuation of the status quo: 'Firm, responsible leadership and sound policies, and whenever necessary, firm responsible action', to quote one of the candidates.

Of the other candidates, Jim Murphy is a leading contender and has the support of Communist Party teachers. His platform in no way differs from that of the right-wing contenders.

At a time when the left needs to unite to fight for an alternative to the NUT leadership's inaction over the cuts, its abject betrayal of 50,000 unemployed teachers, and its acceptance of the Social Contract, Murphy places all the blame for this on some vague 'cynical attempts to divert attention from the cuts in education spending'.

This comes as no surprise, since Murphy is one of the central architects of the NUT's scandalous policies. As the leader of the union's team on Burnham, the body which determines teachers' wages, he has been responsible for persuading the NUT at

all its recent annual conferences to accept wage restraint.

'We must seek to improve living standards after the deterioration of the last three years', Murphy has the audacity to suggest in his election programme. It's like asking a condemned person to support the executioner in a campaign for the abolition of the death penalty.

There are, however, two candidates who do stand for a fightback against the wretched record of the NUT leaders, and one of them — Dave Whiteley — has a clear alternative strategy to that of Murphy and Co.

Whiteley, who is supported by the Socialist Teachers' Alliance

is calling for a £20 a week flat rate increase, the protection of salaries against inflation by automatic cost of living increases, and a special salaries conference to decide the best method of fighting for these objectives.

Whiteley's platform provides a clear line of advance for teacher militants, and is a model for the kind of fight which should be taken up in every other union.

He has also consistently campaigned for unity on the left, and is calling for a number two vote for Dick North, a Socialist Worker Party member supported by Rank and File teachers. One positive development is that North has recently reciprocated this call.

The weakness of North's platform is that he presented the fight against education cuts solely in terms of NUT action and fails to outline concrete steps to organise the fight. In contrast, Whiteley makes a clear call for open and democratic organisation of all struggles, and for 'united action between the NUT and other public sector unions as a step to united action by the labour movement against cash limits, and in defence of the social services'.

While Whiteley has consistently called for a vote for North in all his election material, it was clearly an error that this call did not appear in the abbreviated version of his election address which appeared in the union's journal, *The Teacher*, last week. Hopefully this can be corrected through letters Whiteley has already sent *The Teacher*, the *Times Education Supplement* and the left press, including *Socialist Worker*.

Charter trade union school 'Expose these myths' these myths'

by the National Secretariat of the Working Women's Charter Campaign

When the question of women in the trade unions is raised, a whole lot of nonsense usually accompanies it: 'They won't come to meetings'; 'They won't stand for any positions'; 'They're inconsistent in their attendance even when they do come ... and so on.'

In other words, most men and quite a few women fail to see the real reasons why women are under-represented inside the unions, and why women rarely take any active — let alone leading — part in their union.

The Working Women's Charter Campaign seeks to expose the basis of these myths. From childhood women are steered away from active and aggressive activities into a passive, more home-centred way of life. Women are trained to shop, to cook, to rear children — to support the domestic needs of men. Our first responsibility, we are told, is the family.

STEREOTYPES

And it is our own family which is the strongest force in our training. Adverts pump stereotypes into us daily, and a 'mum' definitely is not a woman campaigning for her rights through the trade unions.

The Working Women's Charter Campaign links women's position in the family with their position at work. The campaign recognises that the working woman performs two jobs: one at work and another in the home. We call for union meetings to be

held during lunch times, though even then most women have to do their shopping, so union meetings in working hours should be our main demand.

HOW ELSE?

The WWCC campaigns for the unions to take up the call for free, safe, and legal contraception and abortion fully available on demand from the NHS. How else can women play an active and continuous part in their union? We campaign for equal pay to become a reality: let us abolish the second-class position of women which still exists despite the equality legislation. We demand a national minimum wage of £60 to protect low paid workers. And to combat rising prices, the WWCC recognises the need to ensure that wages also rise at the same time. These rises must be calculated by committees of trade unionists and housewives. We campaign for equal access to jobs, and no discrimination in education and training.

We want maternity leave provision to become a realistic facility for women, by the provision of State nurseries. Our children must be well cared for while we return to work. To this end, we must also win paternity leave.

Unemployment is rising faster for women than men. Women are being laid off at a faster rate than men, and many men (and women) condone this, believing their right to a job is greater than that of their sisters. Yet why should the working class blame

itself for the crisis of capitalism, finding 'answers' to the crisis which actually divide it? Strength can only come from a united trade union movement. This means women as well.

Many trade unionists and socialists would argue that these struggles are already being taken up by the unions. We have the TUC's 'Charter of Aims for Women Workers'. Many of our unions have a progressive policy on women. They argue that we must therefore abolish all elements of 'positive discrimination', and go on to call for the abolition of women's sections and of the Women's TUC. This is based on a fallacy.

The Charter campaign seeks to help organise women to co-ordinate and direct the fight for women's equality at a rank and file level. We do not demand women's sections in the unions simply to have talking shops. We campaign for all women and militant male trade unionists to form their own organisations inside their unions to campaign around the demands of the Charter.

In Reading on 26 November the campaign is holding a day school on these issues. Speakers have been invited from Grunwick, Yardley, from Trico and the Plattow Hospital Action Committee. Workshops on the specific problems of women in dispute are planned. The main aim of the school is to boost the organisation and campaign of women and men trade unionists around the demands of the Charter.

For more details contact Anita Turnbull, Flat 2, 3 Coleridge Road, London N.8. Tel: 01-348 1760.

Crossman diaries reveal Labour's Irish policy 'On the side of reactionaries'

The latest volume of the diaries of Richard Crossman strikingly confirm the reactionary thinking behind Labour's policy in the North of Ireland.

The diaries cover the period 1968-70 when the civil rights movement was at its height and Britain sent in the troops.

The picture that emerges is a Labour cabinet basing its decisions on ignorance, opportunism and determination not to alienate the Loyalist majority in the Six Countries. GEOFF BELL examines the record.

The thinking of Harold Wilson's crew is best summed up when Crossman quotes the views of Jim Callaghan, then Home Secretary and responsible for the North of Ireland, and of Denis Healey in August 1969:

'Callaghan and Healey both reminded us that our whole interest was to work through the Protestant Government. The Protestants are the majority and we can't afford to alienate them'.

Such attitudes ruled out the suggestion then being put forward by Wilson that the Labour Government should abolish Stormont and set up direct rule — a policy that was eventually implemented by the Tories in 1972.

CRAZY

Healey was one of the main opponents of such intervention. He told Crossman in April 1969: 'The Prime Minister was always demanding active intervention early on, with this crazy desire to go there and take things over; that we should side with the Roman Catholics and the civil rights movement against the Government and the Royal Ulster Constabulary'.

Wilson had always been rather less reactionary in his views on Ireland than the rest of the Labour cabinet, but his opinions appear to have had little influence.

When it came to sending in the troops in August 1969, the cabinet was under no illusions as to what their role was. As early as July 1969 the chief whip, Bob Mellish, had wondered: 'Won't we find ourselves with British troops fighting on the side of reactionaries?'

And when the troops were eventually sent in there was no suggestion that they were there to defend the Catholics or 'keep the peace' between the two communities. Crossman notes:

EXHAUSTED

'Jim (Callaghan) told me he had been down to Cornwall today to see Harold and they had thought carefully about the situation. It was obvious that the troops would have to go in because the RUC were too exhausted to move'.

The RUC at the time were trying to contain the rising in the Bogside area of Derry — there was no sectarian violence involved and it was a straight clash between the police and the minority. In coming to the aid of the RUC the Labour cabinet was fully aware what type of 'law and order' they were helping to preserve.

In April 1969 Crossman had asked: 'What does law and order mean?' And he noted in his diary: 'Does it mean whatever the Royal Ulster Constabulary, who are Protestant Orangemen, define law and order?'

Crossman also reveals that the possibility of appealing for assistance from the United Nations was raised. It was ruled out because, says Crossman: 'I don't think we could admit that the United Nations has the right to intervene in an internal affair.'

CYNICAL

Combined with all this was a cynical attitude towards the whole question. When the troops went in Catholics were being shot dead on the streets of Belfast.



Callaghan and Healey: 'our whole interest was to work through the Protestant Government. The protestants are the majority and we can't afford to alienate.'

Crossman observed: Nevertheless, from the point of view of the Government, it has its advantages. It has deflected attention from our own deficiencies and the mess of the pound.'

For his part, Jim Callaghan saw the events of August 1969 as an occasion for personal celebration. Callaghan said: 'By God, it is enjoyable being a Minister. It's much more fun being Home Secretary than Chancellor. This is what I like doing, taking decisions, and I had to take the decision to put

the troops in while I was in a plane on the way back from Cornwall.'

The extent of the information on which Callaghan based such decisions is also revealed by Crossman. In the entire Home Office there were only two civil servants involved in working out a policy for the North of Ireland. When the problem of the lack of information was raised, Callaghan brushed them aside, saying: 'I am seeing Chichester-Clark every day.'

Chichester-Clark was the Unionist Prime Minister at the time.

But when it was suggested in the British cabinet that a less partial source of information was needed, Crossman notes that Callaghan 'resisted the idea, saying it was absurd and that the Northern Ireland Government would dislike our behaving in this way'.

Crossman fully shared this ignorance and partiality. He gets a date wrong in his diary mixing up St Patrick's day with the Orangeman's day of 'celebration' on 12 July. He also suggested that one answer to the

whole question would be to 'stimulate the emigration of Catholics'.

To the contrary. The sanest conclusion to be drawn from the information Crossman gives on Labour's policy on Ireland would be the pursuance of a policy which would 'stimulate the emigration' of Britain, the British Army, and Her Majesty's ministers from Ireland.

The Crossman Diaries, 1968-70 is published this week by Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape at £12.50.

Prison struggle

7 DAYS in the 32 COUNTIES

by JOHN MAGEE

'A terrorist university' was how Airey Neave, Tory spokesperson on Northern Ireland, reacted to the recent This Week documentary on life in Long Kesh. Neave and the pundits of the capitalist media were outraged at the determination of republican prisoners to organise resistance even behind the wire.

Their outrage was shared by Roy Mason, Labour's Minister for Northern Ireland, who is busily attempting to brand these same republican prisoners as criminal gangsters, Belfast's answer to the Mafia.

Such myths have always played a key part in Britain's treatment of political prisoners, in particular Irish political prisoners. Engels writing to Marx in 1867 about the execution of three Irish republicans in Manchester complained: 'Every thing is being done to transform a political attempt into a common crime.'

In an article for the Belgian weekly *L'Internationale* in February 1870, Marx described how every law 'except that of brute force' had been suspended to facilitate the British repression in Ireland. He wrote: 'Not content with depriving them of their liberty, the English Government has had them tortured in the most savage way imaginable.'

A new pamphlet, *Prison Struggle*, written by republican prisoners in Long Kesh, shows that 107 years later little has changed. Frankie Dodds, beaten to death

by British soldiers, Paddy Crawford, driven to suicide; Jimmy Moyne and Patrick Teer, died after being refused medical attention. Hugh Cooney, shot dead without warning by British soldiers. That's Long Kesh's roll of death; one for every year it has existed.

TORMENT

The republican prisoners detail the daily grind of prison life, the inedible food, the constant Army searches and accompanying brutal assaults on the inmates, the absence of medical facilities, the degradation of relatives and friends who visit them. One brief passage sums up the living torment of being a prisoner of a British Labour Government: 'They call a hut a hospital; they call tablets treatment! They call a caravan a surgery; they call a screw with a white overall a medical officer; they call this bloody concentration camp a prison! And they call themselves human!'

They also call themselves in-

partial, particularly when they are talking about 'the rule of law' and the 'independence' of the courts. But the pamphlet reveals the farce which passes as a judicial trial in the North of Ireland. Of the 17 judges some 14 are loyalists and members of the Orange Order, six are former officers in the British Army, one of them ex-SAS. And their courts; 'confessions' obtained under duress — that is to say, — torture are admissible as evidence; the judge sits alone and refuses to hear any evidence that contradicts the carefully fabricated stories of Army and police witnesses. The 'rule of law' and an 'impartial court' means simply an old loyalist back for a judge, no jury, and unwavering defence of perhaps the most discredited police force in Europe, the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

A gap in the pamphlet is the absence of any reference to the condition of the women republican prisoners in Armagh gaol, who themselves are actively opposing the removal of political status. One hopes that this

omission will shortly be rectified, perhaps with a pamphlet from the Armagh prisoners themselves. A further gap which will not so easily be rectified is the absence of any strategy to advance the struggle outside the prisons in defence of political status.

Of particular concern to workers' organisations in Britain is the final appeal made by the prisoners on behalf of the republican prisoners held in British gaols: 'Please support them. They are Ireland's conscience and they are worthy of your support?' Readers of *Socialist Challenge* should be discussing how they can respond to this appeal, and in particular how the proposed International Tribunal on British War Crimes against the Irish People can contribute to the defence of Irish prisoners in British gaols.

Prison Struggle: The Story of Continuing Resistance Behind the Wire, published by Belfast Republican Press Centre, price 60p. Available from left bookshops, and the Republican Press Centre, 107a Falls Road, Belfast 12.

Rapist judge rejects appeal



Only those who have any faith in British justice towards Irish people would be surprised at last week's decision in the Old Bailey to reject applications for leave to appeal made by the four people convicted of the bombings in Guildford and Woolwich in 1974.

The application was made on the basis that new evidence had emerged on the bombings. The Balcombe Street Three and another Irish political prisoner — Brendan Dowd — had admitted that they were responsible for the bombings. They had denied that those convicted — Patrick Armstrong, Paul Hill, Gerard Conlon and Carole Richardson — had played any part in the bombings.

Even at the original trial the evidence used to convict the four was farcical. The sole basis was 'confessions' which the four were alleged to have made, but which they withdrew

in court. One of those convicted, Carole Richardson, had the alibi of a photograph taken at a dance at South London Polytechnic just one hour before the Guildford bomb exploded.

The reason offered for turning down the appeal by Lord Justice Roskill was inconsistencies in the evidence given by Brendan Dowd. But it is hardly surprising if Dowd had difficulties remembering precise details. He has been in solitary confinement for well over a year, and has suffered countless beatings by police and prison warders.

Justice Roskill was the judge who released the rapist Guardsman Holdsworth so the latter's army career could be pursued.

A full analysis of the Guildford and Woolwich appeal will appear in the next issue of *Irish Prisoner* available soon from 182 Upper Street, London N1.

United Troops Out Movement
Open Conference 10/11 December in Sheffield
Open to all who support self determination for the Irish people as a whole and troops out now. Details: UTOM c/o Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1.

Introducing Michael Edwards Esq

Their new man at Leyland



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MICHAEL EDWARDES, the new chairperson of British Leyland, lists in his entry in *Who's Who* his membership of the Rand Club in Johannesburg, South Africa. Edwards was not Dobson's choice, but his record shows that he might as well have been. **GEOFF BELL** examines Edwards sordid past.

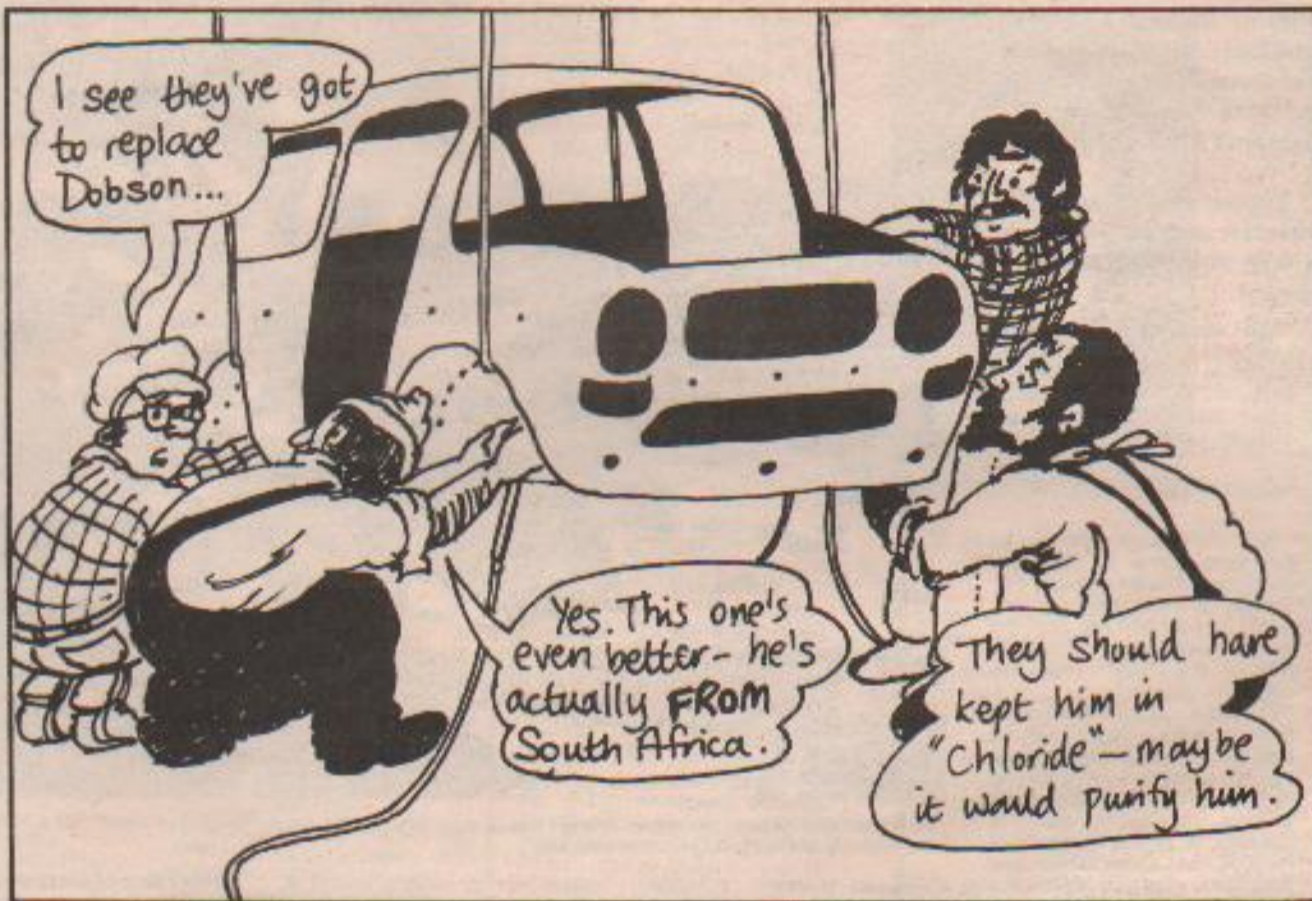
Michael Edwards was educated in South Africa and spent his formative years there. His membership of the Rand Club is a fitting symbol of his years serving apartheid. It is described in a glossy magazine currently on display in the South African Embassy in London as 'very rich, very exclusive...for those who move in the right social circles'.

So not only is it an all-white club, it is the drinking hole for the very dregs of the South African establishment. Founded nearly a hundred years ago by a number of leading colonialists, including Cecil Rhodes, it was the club where British royalty stayed whenever they visited the land of racism incorporated. The Prince of Wales, later to be Edward VIII was just one of the guests at the Rand.

It is possible that Edwards' patronage of the Rand played some part in forming his prejudices, which he has frequently displayed in his career in Britain. He is on record as opposing any price control on the basis that 'industry will not be able to improve its profitability'. He has criticised the level of taxation of the rich because it 'stifles entrepreneurial flair', and described workers' control as 'nonsense'.

Such attitudes characterised his time as head of Chloride Batteries. In May this year Edwards attempted to sack one in ten of the workers at Chloride, despite the fact that this workforce made a profit for the company of nearly £20 million the previous year. The company was also breaking an agreement with the unions by which Edwards and Co. had agreed to limit imports from Chloride subsidiaries throughout the world. Included in the countries with which Edwards was secretly dealing was, of course, sunny South Africa.

The workers at Chloride occupied the plants over Edwards' arbitrary decisions. After nine weeks Edwards backed down. But the dispute received little publicity at the time in the national press. The official strike circular offered this explanation for



the lack of press interest:

Michael Edwards, while being managing director of the Chloride Group, is also a member of the National Enterprise Board and as such is using his influence in order to stop the press from advertising our situation.'

Edwards' position on the NEB — a government agency — did not prevent him from personally breaking Phase I of the Social Contract. At a time when the norm for wage increases was meant to be £6 a week, Edwards awarded himself a rise of approximately £10,000 a year — over three hundred times the £6 limit.

Edwards has been a member of the NEB since its inception by the Labour Government in 1975. No doubt he got on well there with the recent chairperson of the board, Lord Ryder. For he is also a leading apologist for South Africa. Ryder is a member of the UK-South African Trade Association, which describes its objective as 'to

promote trade and investment between the UK and South Africa'. When we contacted the organisation earlier this week, we were told by its secretary F.J. Rump that 'we work behind the scenes. We make sure that people who are anti-South Africa don't interfere with trade'.

Such sentiments would no doubt go down very well at the Rand Club, and indeed at British Leyland whose management has a long history of association with the apartheid regime. J.H. Plane, a chairperson of Leyland when it was still in private hands, is on record in 1970 as saying that South Africa was 'one of the most promising countries in the world'. Leyland's heavy investment in South Africa has reflected such optimism.

Edwards' whole history — his links with the leaders of apartheid, his anti-union practices at Chloride, and his public attacks on any marginally

progressive aspect of the Labour Government's policy — make him a worthy successor to Sir Richard Dobson. Once again the Labour Government, through the NEB has selected someone with a reactionary record. They have made the appointment without any consultation with the workers or unions at Leyland, and although the precise details of Edwards' salary have yet to be fixed, Leyland workers will be expected to pay over £50,000 a year for the privilege of being bossed by Edwards.

There is one small comfort. When Edwards was appointed he said: 'I do not know much about their (Leyland's) industrial relations'. Compare that with 'I don't know anything about motor cars; I don't know very much about labour relations.' That remark was made by Dobson, on his appointment as chairperson of Leyland. An omen for Michael Edwards?

The National Association for Freedom capital 'F' — for the b two documents the CHRISO'BRIEN rep sympathisers in his b Fourth International'

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BRUSSELS: GE
Widespread recruiting b
ROB

What is the NAFF?

The National Association for Freedom is very reluctant to be labelled as right-wing, so it was something of a journalistic coup when Robert Moss, the writ-happy director of NAFF, told Socialist Challenge we could describe him as a right-winger.

This 'revelation' will not be so surprising to those who have had the misfortune to come up against the kind of freedom NAFF revels in: the Grunwick strikers, the postal workers who called a boycott of South Africa, the Oxford hotel strikers, or the parents of Tameside who put equality in education above 'freedom of choice'.

The significance of NAFF is that it is not part of the lunatic fringe. It prefers the safe terrain of the bourgeois courts to the bluster and bravado of the private army. For the first time in Britain it has succeeded in bringing together a number of fringe right groups — Aims for Freedom and Enterprise, the Income

Tax Payers' Society, the National Federation of the Self-Employed and the Voice of the Independent Centre — and built a bridge between them and the Tory party.

NAFF's council includes seven Tory MPs, two of them front-benchers, while director Robert Moss is well-known as the author of Margaret Thatcher's 'Iron Maiden' speech. What is disturbing is that the association represents an increasingly important current of thought among the capitalist class. Top business representatives on the NAFF council include Sir Frank Taylor of Taylor Woodrow, who is also an Alms council member, Lord De L'Isle of Phoenix Assurance, Ian H. Gilbert of Wilkinson Match, Lord Brookes of GKN and Ernest Smith, president of the National Federation of Building Trades Employers.

It is no accident that NAFF should have chosen the recent hotels' dispute in Oxford for one of its first battles. One of the hotels involved was the Randolph, owned by Trust Houses Forte. THE director the Hon Hugh Astor also happens to be a NAFF council member. Robert Moss himself also has business connections. He is a director of Sproat Communications Ltd, a security

consultancy specialising in electronic and thermopathic security techniques. This is rather appropriate, since the Sproat of the title is none other than Iain Sproat MP, the man who launched the campaign against social security 'scroungers'.

If his extreme paranoia is shared by his clients we can assume that he is not short of a quid or two. Moss himself has a highly developed sense of freedom. Even before NAFF's court action over South African mail, he had distinguished himself as an ardent defender of racism in southern Africa. Moss has written a seemingly interminable series in the *Sunday Telegraph* which serves to justify the South African invasion of Angola on the grounds of the Communist threat. He denies reports that the *Economist*'s 'Foreign Report', which he edits, has reprinted broadcasts from Radio Voice of Free Africa in Umtali, Rhodesia. But he admitted to *Socialist Challenge* that it was possible that the radio station, which broadcasts mainly in Portuguese to Mozambique, could have relayed some 'Foreign Report' material.

This admission is interesting since the station is run by Antonio Batlica, a former

member of the fascist National Assembly in Portugal, and linked to the Free Africa Organisation which has strong links with the European fascist international. Most probably knows nothing of these people's background, but they obviously feel an affinity with the contents of his magazine.

Moss's record on Chile is just as glorious. His book on *Chile's Marxist Experiment*, commissioned by Forum World Features, was bought up in bulk by the Chilean embassy in London. In its 20 March 1973 issue, *SEPA*, a Chilean magazine aimed at the military, carried this front page headline: 'Robert Moss. An English Recipe for Chile — Military Control'. Curiously, the National Library of Congress in Washington, which has a full set of *SEPA*, is missing just one issue: 20 March 1973.

If all this gives the impression of an incestuous little group on the far right, this is not so far from the truth. Prominent among the counter-insurgency experts is Brian Crozier, director of the Institute for the Study of Conflict. Crozier is a predecessor of Moss at 'Foreign Report' and former chairperson of Forum World Features. Moss has contributed a number of articles to Crozier's *Conflict Studies* series. Crozier says: 'I re-read NAFF's Charter of Rights and Liberties at least once a week. I shall not rest content until they are enshrined in a Bill of Rights enforceable at law.'

He, too, has to explain how this support freedom of speech and all the other platitudes squares with NAFF's backing South Africa: 'To insist on majority rule is a certain recipe for tyranny in South Africa...South Africa is a society with a press and an independent judiciary', commented *The Free Nation*.

The Marxist and radical academics named in the Institute for the Study of Conflict Gould Report might also feel that th



ROBERT MOSS

One day we might need the National Front....'

THE LETTER WHICH NAFF OPPOSED

For Freedom, as every militant knows, is big on freedom with a capital F. The kind of liberty NAFF loves becomes strikingly clear in a letter from a NAFF organiser admitting there are fascist links; and on an article by NAFF director Robert Moss on the supposed 'terrorist' links.

A document now in the possession of Socialist Challenge indicates that the National Association for Freedom, the force behind George Ward at Grunwick, is facing a fight-back from among its own members over NAFF's stated opposition to the National Front. Socialist Challenge has received a copy of a letter from Michael Daniels, secretary of NAFF's Epping Forest branch, addressed to the editor of The Free Nation [sic], NAFF's paper, protesting at the organisation's dissociation from the National Front.

The letter claims that a number of NAFF members are sympathetic to aspects of NF policy, particularly its role in 'saving' Britain from Communism. Last weekend, Michael Daniels admitted to Socialist Challenge that he had written the letter, and repeated a phrase in the letter about using the Nazi Front as a way 'to save ourselves from the real evil, Communism'.

The letter to *The Free Nation* continues: 'Do you honestly feel this abusive altercation will confirm to the wider public that we are not right wing, or for some extreme right wing and that we are not as one with the National Front?... Our organisation must give better thought to such matters in the future. Certainly the hierarchy must start to appreciate that members may not be hanging on every word and statement emitted from HQ. 'One day we might need the National Front element to save us from a Communist takeover. We might be glad of an organised force to counter revolutionaries in places where NAFF is now, and is likely to remain, virtually non-existent.'

Daniels would not elaborate on what was meant by the last sentence. He claims that a number of his members in Essex would have joined the Front if NAFF had not been set up, and that NF members had attended a NAFF meeting: 'We had no complaints at their conduct.'

The mutual friendliness of NAFF and NF members is hardly surprising. Recently two Socialist Workers Party comrades in Cambridge identified two *Free Nation* sellers as NF members. The reason they were so certain is that the two fascists had assaulted them some months earlier. Perhaps this is what Daniels meant by 'an organised force to counter revolutionaries.' However, it seems that there is little love lost between Daniels and the NAFF leadership.

Daniels wrote in his letter that the statement attacking the National Front 'smacks of left-wing journalism of *Militant* standard. Perhaps it would be beneficial for some of the *Free Nation* hierarchy to depart their havens of rural bliss, in which I can only imagine they reside, for the environs of

Bradford, Smethwick, Tottenham or better still Stetchford...'

Since these are all areas with a substantial black population, the implication is clear. Robert Moss, NAFF's director, told *Socialist Challenge* that he had not seen Daniels' letter. He said that if the letter were genuine he 'would begin to seriously question Mr Daniels' membership of the association. If we were to discover that someone had dual membership of the NAFF and the NF he would be expelled.

'We have frequently condemned racialism and the National Front.' He denied that NF sympathies were widespread in NAFF, claiming that the NF probably had more support inside the Tory party. On the fact that NF members had been seen selling *The Free Nation*, Moss said: 'I would be surprised if they would be so illiterate as to sell it.' But he refused to comment on any possible steps taken to root out fascist sympathisers among the 'freedom' lovers of NAFF. And on the evidence of Daniels, the pro-Nazis are likely to be numerous.

Yours faithfully,
Michael Daniels

Neither do Moss's protestations that NAFF is anti-racist cut any ice. The predominantly black Grunwick strikers take another view, as do the postal workers whom NAFF prevented from boycotting South African mail. This is not to suggest that NAFF is fascist. But there can be little doubt that NAFF's strike-breaking role at Grunwick and in the recent Oxford hotel strikes makes it attractive to fascists and would-be fascists — 'Worried British citizens', as Daniels appealingly describes them.

scribes. Stephen Eyres, a member of the editorial staff of *The Free Nation*, has written a pamphlet called 'National Front is a Socialist Front'. You might be excused for thinking that it was hardly about the NF at all. Rather than labelling the Nazi Front as socialist, its main intention seems to be to smear the Socialist Workers Party as fascist. At any rate the two parties, according to Eyres's astute analysis, are the same. Starting with the astounding fact that the SWP opposes capitalism, he examines NF rhetoric and proves that it too opposes capitalism.

Despite frequent references to Nazi Germany, Eyres blithely ignores the massive financial support for the Nazis from German big business, and he certainly has a problem explaining how capitalism was abolished in 1933. All he ends up proving is that British capitalism does not support the fascist solution in 1977 — hardly a startling discovery.

By a combination of lies and innuendo Eyres contrives to tar the SWP with the fascist brush. Since the facts don't support his case he has to make them up. For example, the SWP 'wants a severe clamp-down on imports of foreign goods' — a position it has never taken. From this lie he manages to draw all sorts of unpleasant innuendo. He describes the Soviet Union as racist and adds that: 'The SWP, the Tribune Group and others on the far left may not expound these issues (yet), but the policy proposals which follow from them all fit neatly into a strong and coherent statist philosophy.'

And when we discover — assertion disguised as fact — that 'if it ever came to power, an SWP administration would be as nationalist as a National Front one.' Coming from a member of an organisation that has conducted the most ferocious campaign against black workers at Grunwick, and time and again defended British investment in racist South Africa, this libel is pretty rich.

It would be easy to dismiss these documents as the ranting of lunatics, were it not for the fact that the European capitalist States are increasingly willing to clamp down on the activities of the far left. Just look at West Germany. The authors may or may not believe what they write. It doesn't matter. For these scrappy polemics could prefigure more sinister developments.

Robert Moss wrote about us

Socialist Challenge has obtained a photo-copy of an article written by Robert Moss in his pre-NAFF days which claims to 'expose' the activities of the Trotskyist Fourth International, of which the International Marxist Group is the British section. Entitled 'Brussels: Centre of Subversion', Moss's diatribe purports to reveal a 'spider's web' of 'terrorists', of which the FI's Brussels office forms the centre.

The article, syndicated by a now defunct news agency called Forum World Features in April 1974, makes great play of the fusion between the LCR (Spanish sympathisers of the Fourth International) and the ETA (VI Assembly). Moss talks of the 'Trotskyite colonisation of part of the Basque terrorist movement in Spain', which 'is further proof of the support that the Trotskyite left... is providing for violent revolutionaries.'

The clear implication is that Trotskyists are providing material aid to 'terrorists' and therefore should be proscribed: 'While there is no hard evidence that the Trotskyite International has supplied such facilities (safehouses, cars, money and often arms) for the Palestinian commandos', Moss gener-

ously observes, 'its openly-expressed support for other terrorist groups that have links with them must raise the suspicion that it could one day cast itself in that role.'

It was that kind of suspicion that led the German authorities to veto the offer of a professorial chair to Ernest Mandel at the Free University in Berlin. The British take a rather more tolerant line: they raised no objection when it was learned he was due to speak at the Camden Town Hall on London on January 23.

The reader is meant to get the impression that the refusal (so far) of the British authorities to ban a Belgian economist is being 'soft' on terrorism. The stated position of the Fourth International on most 'terrorist' actions by sections of the oppressed is one of political solidarity combined with severe criticism of the tactics involved.

If Moss has a suspicion that the Fourth International's real position is otherwise he should prove it or keep his mouth shut. Moss is no fool. He knows, for example, that the fusion of the LCR and ETA (VI) followed the rejection of guerrilla struggle by ETA (VI). So why keep it from his readers?

But the most libellous part of a scoundrelous article concerns FI member Peter Graham,

who was killed in Dublin in 1971. His 'mysterious activities... have never been satisfactorily explained. It was widely alleged that he had been engaged in gun-running for the IRA, and the story was partly borne out by the presence of four known Provisionals at his funeral.'

'Widely alleged' by whom? What was widely alleged was that he was murdered by the Irish Special Branch. Yet Moss is not interested in that. Representatives of the IMG have attended the funerals of Provisional political prisoners. Does this bear out the theory that the Provisionals are gunning for the IMG? When *The Guardian* ran an article last year alleging CIA backing for Forum World Features, the agency that syndicated Moss's article, NAFF's paper *The Free Nation* carried three pages on the supposed smear campaign against it, organised by the KGB and involving, among others, Bernard Nossiter of the *Washington Post*.

The article contains an enlightening little section on how to carry out a good smear which applies perfectly to *The Free Nation's* paranoid effort, as well as to Moss's article on the Fourth International. The good smear, it says, should include some unchallengeable facts, a good deal of invention, inaccuracies here and there (to confuse the 'smearer') and a talent for drawing unfounded inferences from the facts.

Another piece which fits the bill is that latest offering from Aims for Freedom and Enterprise, one of NAFF's black sub-



Centre of Subversion

Trotskyite Fourth International

Robert Moss

people's idea of freedom is a trifle one-sided. As Thatcher & Co. seek to move the British State closer to the West German model of restricting opposition activity and the trade union movement, it is the Mosses and Croziers, not the fascists, who will provide the ideological ammunition. That is why it is from political foresight — not paranoia — that socialists must draw attention to their activities and frustrate them. This will not be done through the courts.

The union bureaucrats have given NAFF and their friends every bit of help over Grunwick. Nine times out of ten NAFF will win on the legal technicalities. The tenth time — such as the Scarman Tribunal — these great respecters of law and order will happily ignore the courts' findings. The best way to fight NAFF is to be on the Grunwick picket line on 7 November.

*A final note on the unpleasant coterie around the NAFF. Nepotism, it seems, extends even to the arts coverage of *The Free Nation*. Earlier this year the paper carried a review by Brian Crozier of a thriller written by Kenneth Benton.

This was the same Kenneth Benton who worked in the research centre shared by the Institute for the Study of Conflict and Forum World Features. According to a letter from the ISC files he had previously 'served in the Foreign Office, you can guess which part'. Crozier's review forgot to mention that



Germany: the cover-up

Police have handed out millions of photographs of the alleged killers of Hans Martin Schleyer, with descriptions in seven languages. Every newspaper carries a page or two of details a day to help track down the 'terrorists'. It is hardly surprising that none of them could find much space for the testimony of Irmgard Moeller. RICHARD CARVER reports.

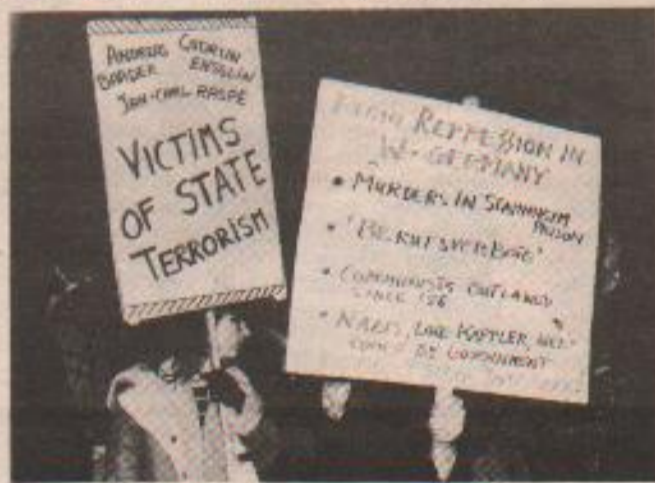
Everyone, Government or opposition, realised that the statement of the 'suicide who failed' could well be crucial. If Moeller, who is meant to have slit her throat with a bread knife, had confirmed the official story, the already difficult task facing the defenders of democratic rights would have become near impossible.

But Moeller said the exact opposite — and that wasn't news. She said that, despite the soundproofing, she had been able to shout to Jan Carl Raspe at 4am on the night of the Mogadishu raid. A little later she lost consciousness, and woke up to find herself covered in blood. It took five days before she could see her lawyer, and, despite her serious condition, the authorities have insisted on moving her. Could it be that they want her to go the same way as her comrades?

There has been no let up in the police presence on the streets. Police with machine pistols staff road blocks on every major highway, ostensibly to search for arms. In fact it provides a convenient way of tracking the movement of left wingers, or

'terrorist sympathisers' as they are now known.

Spying on your neighbour is licenced by confidential telephone lines to police headquarters. The impeccable logic of the witch-hunt demands that you denounce them before they do the same to you.



Picket of Helmut Schmidt's Institute of Strategic Studies meeting in London last week.

The West German police force is hardly underdeveloped. The 'border guards' operate far beyond their borders in the heart of Africa. But the Interior Minister has seized the opportunity to float the idea of a Federal anti-terrorist force, which is only the most recent way of bypassing restrictions on the size and powers of the police.

Despite anti-French murmurs from German Government circles, the inhabitants of the region around Mulhouse, where Schleyer's body was found, and Strasbourg can have little doubt of the closeness of international police co-operation.



Press conference launches the Bertrand Russell Tribunal on Germany.

Klaus Croissant, the dead prisoners' lawyer, is still being held in Paris and faces extradition proceedings. As he points out: 'The Government which asks for my extradition is responsible for the death of my clients. I cannot defend myself against a Government of assassins.'

For the West German Government this is its finest hour. Helmut Schmidt, at a meeting of the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London last week, was able to pose as the vanguard of the civilised world defending its peace against 'terrorism' from all quarters. Germany's real concern for world peace was better illustrated by the arrival in Mogadishu of a plane with painted out German markings, delivering arms for the

Somali Government for its war with Ethiopia.

The need to fight this brazen resurgence of German imperialism is particularly urgent in Britain. Schmidt has been careful to make sure that none of his implied criticisms of the French handling of the Schleyer affair should rub off on his social democratic colleagues here. And with good reason.

TRIBUNAL

As we reported last week, it is largely British expertise, laboratory tested in the Six Counties of Ireland, which sustains the growing international 'anti-subversive' operation. Wherever a capitalist state feels the need to

throw its weight around — from Assen in the Netherlands to Mogadishu — it is the British Special Air Service which is called in.

Full support should be given to the Third Bertrand Russell Tribunal, which was formally constituted last week to investigate allegations of German human rights violations. Former Chancellor Willy Brandt has judged the Tribunal's conclusions by calling on social democrats not to co-operate. He should know whether there is anything to hide. British members of the Tribunal include playwrights Howard Brenton and Trevor Griffiths, Steven Lakes of Balliol College, Oxford, Lord Gifford and Jo Richardson MP.

Australia: clampdown on opposition

Government boosts anti-union powers

'The day of the political street march is over. Anybody who holds a street march, spontaneous or otherwise, will know they are acting illegally. Don't bother to apply for a permit. You won't get one. That's Government policy now.' Not Vorster, but Queensland Premier John Bjilke-Petersen. SYLVIA INNES looks at the most repressive state in an increasingly repressive country.

On 22 September a Brisbane demonstration of more than 2000 opposing this ban was met by more than 800 police — Special Branch and uniformed — drafted in from all over South-East Queensland. 32 were arrested. On 12 October there were more arrests when police outnumbered a further march of 500.

Petersen was saving his big show of strength for 22 October when 416 were arrested from a 3,500 strong march calling for a nationwide moratorium on uranium mining. There were yet more arrests when the 416 appeared in court while solidarity marches in Melbourne and Sydney passed without incident.

This dramatic increase in repression by the Queensland Government — a traditional bunker of racism and reaction in Australia — comes in the context of a growing response from the labour movement to rising unemployment and a drop in real wages.

The power workers' strike in Victoria was met by a state of emergency, while violence has confronted the growing movement against uranium mining. It is crucial to current investment that uranium be exported quickly, and the Queensland Government in particular is backed by mining interests.

Union action on this directly political issue has led to stepped-up attacks on the right to organise. New 'right to work' legislation in Queensland outlaws

the closed shop while Federal laws, backed by Petersen, enable the Government to deregister a union.

Both Petersen and Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser have called elections — on 12 November and 10 December respectively — on the familiar terrain of 'who-rules-the-country?'. Coming only two years after the coup by Governor-General Kerr put the right wing back in power, the Federal elections are designed to consolidate the Government's power before the labour movement makes any further advances in a worsening economic situation.

The Queensland Government is ideally placed to lead the current offensive. A gerrymandered electoral system ensures Petersen's return on 12 November. From this impregnable position, Petersen has built up his model of the strong 'state-within-a-state'. In 1976 he sacked the Police Commissioner who called for an inquiry into corruption and malpractice in the force, instead increasing police powers of detention without arrest and abolishing the right to silence.

The dependence of the Queensland economy on mining — and of Petersen himself on mining capital — means that he will stop at nothing to smash the anti-uranium lobby, which has increasingly dovetailed into the issue of the right to organise.

A demonstration has been called for 11 November, supported by militant workers, black, wo-

men, and student activists, the Queensland Trades and Labour Council, sections of the Labour Party and conservationists. The demonstration, which will be accompanied by solidarity marches in Sydney and Melbourne, and a picket outside Queensland House in the Strand in London from 12-2pm, will be a key event in the development of the Australian class struggle, and in the defence of the democratic rights of the Australian working class. It deserves your support.

Anti-Apartheid agrees Zimbabwe campaign

Boycott racist goods

by JOHN HYSLOP

THE Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) saw some welcome decisions at its annual general meeting on 23 October, among them the proposal to work with local labour movement bodies to boycott South African goods during a week of action next March.

Equally positively, and acting on a suggestion from the International Marxist Group, the AAM will be launching a campaign in the labour movement to explain the meaning of the Owen-Young proposals, whereby British and US imperialism hope to set up a pro-Western, right-wing nationalist regime in Zimbabwe.

But the AGM also showed up the AAM's weaknesses, particularly its failure to back up general resolutions with specific proposals for action. AAM campaigns traditionally take up issues ranging from the boycott of South African fruit imports to the defence of Namibian political prisoners, but tend to rely on a small core of activists to lobby



the role of other sections of the recently emerged mass movement.

IMG members argued for unconditional defence of the right of the Zimbabwean, Namibian and South African peoples to determine their own future, free from imperialist intervention — a position interpreted by the AAM as a criticism of the Patriotic Front in Zimbabwe. This refusal to face the question of self-determination for the peoples of southern Africa is dangerous because it leaves the door open to suggestions that British imperialism might have some 'progressive' role to play there.

The AAM nevertheless groups together the overwhelming majority of militants active on southern Africa. That is why the Socialist Workers Party's Southern Africa Solidarity Campaign, while educating people in Britain about the situation in southern Africa, has failed to draw support beyond the ranks of the SWP itself. Joint AAM-SASC

activities are clearly desirable, but the most effective way of building solidarity is still by joining local AAM groups, and fighting to build the trade union week of action in March, to expose the Owen-Young proposals, and to defend the victims of Vorster's repression — thus preparing the ground for a mass campaign in solidarity with all the struggles of the southern African peoples, and against any imperialist intervention.

*The National Union of Students is organising a solidarity rally at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School at 7.30 on 5 November. Speakers include Tebello Mosepanane, general secretary of the South African Student Movement, Jack Dromey, Mac Maharaj (African National Congress) and Mike Terry of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. It will be followed by a torchlight procession to Downing Street. The rally will be calling for a national student day of action on South Africa on 11 November.

'Arms embargo' announced How South Africa got the bomb

Jimmy Carter's stated support for a mandatory arms embargo on South Africa has been greeted with hostility in business and Government circles in all the NATO powers. But, on the evidence of South African nuclear cooperation with the Western powers, the embargo will be nothing much to worry about. As JOHN DOHERTY explains, Carter's call for an embargo is every bit as ironic as West Germany's criticism of the South African Government's human rights record.

The big NATO powers have been holding up their hands in horror over the past few weeks at the prospect of South Africa developing and testing a nuclear device. Yet at least four of the countries, Britain included, have actively collaborated with the racist regime in expanding its nuclear capability. This has been going on quite openly since 1961 when South Africa bought a small research reactor from the US firm of Allis-Chalmers.

Since then both West Germany and France have entered into agreements for the sale of plant and technology. But it is only recently that the full extent of that collaboration has become known. It is now widely acknowledged that South Africa — like Israel — is capable of carrying out an experimental nuclear explosion.

PLUTONIUM

'South Africa's path to the bomb began twenty years ago when the United States and other Western nuclear powers co-operated in the training of nuclear physicists from the South African Atomic Energy Board. The 1961 reactor, Safari I, built at the National Nuclear Research Centre at Pelindaba near Johannesburg, came on stream in 1965. Fuelled by highly enriched uranium, some of which came from Britain, the reactor produces plutonium, but according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, all of this has been returned.

Although plutonium can be used as a secondary explosive in H-bombs, it is the uranium route which is the most important. For the past two years the US has been withholding further supplies of uranium for Safari-I because South Africa has refused to allow an inspection of its own pilot uranium enrichment plant which started production in 1975.

The Valindaba enrichment plant in the Northern Transvaal is based on a process developed by Dr. Erwin Becker of Karlsruhe, for the partly-state owned company STEAG. Although STEAG officially withdrew its financial participation in the construction in 1973, secret documents released, taken from the African National Congress' haul from the South African embassy in Bonn two months ago show that West German collaboration has continued. Under the cover of academic scientific research West German and South African scientists have exchanged visits to nuclear and military establishments and weapons factories.

In addition the documents show that West German firms have continued to supply nuclear equipment, contrary to official West German Government policy and a plethora of UN Security Council resolutions on the arms embargo of the past 14 years. In particular the West German company MAN has supplied the Valindaba enrichment plant with turbo compressors and the stores department of the German armed forces furnished the supplies with NATO code numbers.

MAN, together with AEG and Siemens have also supplied components for the German-designed Advocaat radar installation. This is ostensibly used for civilian

purposes to maintain the safety of shipping round the Cape. But the installation is now described in the Bonn embassy's official publication as the navy's new headquarters. The ANC documents reveal that three years ago a team of South African officials from the Armaments Board visited West Germany in connection with 'certain manuals' for Advocaat.

MISSILE

It is clear that Advocaat is being used basically for military purposes and its primary role in any nuclear development would be for missile guidance.

South Africa has a simple missile system called Cactus, based on the French Crotaie ground to air rocket and Israel has supplied missile-carrying motor torpedo boats. Since 1968 there has been a missile testing site at St Lucia, 40 miles from the Mozambique border, about which very little is known.

The result of these open agreements, clandestine exchanges and illegal arms sales is that South Africa is now building a full scale commercial plant for the enrichment of uranium.

Its supplies of the raw low grade uranium are plentiful, with 17 per cent of the world's reserves. In the past most of it was exported to the US and the UK as uranium oxide. But it is now impossible to assess how much is being stockpiled for enrichment, because South Africa refuses to reveal the production figures from the giant Rossing mine in Namibia, part owned by the British company RTZ.

EXPORTING

A mission from the UN Council for Namibia alleged in April that South Africa is illegally exploiting uranium from Rossing for the building of nuclear weapons. The Vorster Government has refused inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Authority permission to enter Namibia. In retaliation South Africa was expelled from the governing board of IAEA on the initiative of Nigeria.

Given such close co-operation with the Western nuclear club — two French reactors have been ordered for the 1980's — it is remarkable that it was the Russians who first alerted the world in August to the construction of a nuclear testing site in the Kalahari desert. Protestations from the US, Britain, France and West Germany are claimed to have prevented the underground test. But the facility, according to latest intelligence reports, has not been dismantled.

Having bolstered the military and economic sinews of apartheid for so many years, the recent protests from the NATO collaborators are little more than an absurd charade. South Africa has been handed its nuclear capability on a plate. And whatever Foreign Minister Pik Botha says about 'peaceful purposes' it is certain that South Africa's determination to resist outside pressures for change will be immeasurably strengthened. The British, French and German companies with massive investments there will not be too disturbed about this additional protection for their bloodstained profits.



Photo montage: PETER KENNARD

The repression that won't work

The decision of the South African Government to impose an almost total ban on all independent expressions of black political views represented a break with previous policies and a course leading towards deepening resistance and repression. The lukewarm threats of a mandatory arms embargo will do nothing to dissuade the racist regime, since years of Western arms supplies have put it in a position where it can now export arms! ROY ALEXANDER reports.

In the past week the South African press has been taking stock of this change of course. The political debate reflects a growing division within the South African ruling class that can be expected to widen as the implications of the Government's turn unfold in the coming months.

What is troubling the Government's ruling class critics is the fact that its recent actions amount to a virtual admission of the bankruptcy of its 'separate development' policies, the centre of its political strategy for three decades.

As the English-language weekly *The Sunday Express* put it last week: 'Wednesday's ferocious actions were not those of a self-assured, confident Government. They were the actions of a jittery and uncertain one ... of people who, after 30 years, of power and promises, had finally to confess: "We have nothing else to offer ... We don't know what else to do".'

Their other concern is that a regime forced to create a siege mentality among whites as a result of its repressive policies, will not long be able to afford the

luxury of bourgeois democracy within the white fortress, any more than it can within South African society as a whole.

The inclusion of liberal white newspaper editor Donald Woods in the list of banned individuals, and rumours that the white *Rand Daily Mail* (which broke Government-suppressed details on the autopsy on Steve Biko) would be next on the chopping block, gives a solid foundation to these worries.

FERMENT

But what troubles the ruling class critics the most is that the Government has committed the most unpardonable sin of all — it has embarked on a policy that will not work. As the *Sunday Express* remarked, 'The Government has virtually ensured that township dissent will be driven into an underground darkness where it will ferment unseen. Silent perforce. But not dead. Certainly not dead.'

A feature article elsewhere in the same issue gathers the views of a number of prominent social

scientists and historians to bear out these fears.

Attacking the view (propounded among others by Prime Minister Vorster) that the Government is simply replaying the successful operations of the early 60's, they comment: '... economic conditions here and abroad are vastly changed, while international attitudes to South Africa have hardened immeasurably. The Black movements today, according to some experts, also have a "broader base support" than those of the fifties, making it "inconceivable" that their activities will cease, except perhaps in the very short run term.'

It remains to be seen whether this debate will percolate through to the forthcoming elections. These will be insulated from the full force of this argument by the fact that these strategic differences actually cut across party lines, existing within the ruling Nationalist Party as well as between it and the feeble Parliamentary opposition.

In any event, it is worth recalling Lenin's famous formula for a 'revolutionary situation': 1. 'the suffering and the want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual' 2. 'a considerable increase in the activity of the masses', and 3. 'a crisis in the policy of the ruling class leading to a fissure through which the indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth'. The first two conditions have been developing apace throughout the past few years; it now appears as if the third is starting to assemble itself.

In Brief

PALESTINE: 2000 demonstrated in London last week in solidarity with the Palestinian people. The march from Hyde Park to the Israeli embassy was supported by the General Union of Palestinian Students, the International Marxist Group, the Socialist Workers Party, Workers Revolutionary Party and Israeli Socialist organisations. It is hoped to use the demonstration to set up a Palestine Solidarity Committee, whose first task will be to organise opposition to the impending visit to Israeli Premier Begin to Britain.

ZIMBABWE: The Rhodesian Government is to prosecute estate agents for selling houses and land in white-reserved areas to blacks.

SAHARA: French Foreign Legion paratroopers have been put on standby for intervention against the Polisario Front, the Saharan liberation organisation.

YUGOSLAVIA: A senior Party official has announced an amnesty for most political prisoners. He said 'We will pardon the big mouths, but we will not pardon criminals and terrorists'.

AUSTRALIA: The British Minister of State for Energy, Dickson Mabon, has announced his support for Australian mining and export of uranium. The Australian Labour Party has condemned his statement as an interference in domestic politics.

SAN SALVADOR: Police killed at least two people when they opened fire on a demonstration of coffee-pickers demanding higher wages last week.

ICELAND: The public sector strike is over. It is expected that the Government will give in to pay demands for 30-35 per cent rises with index-linking.

APOLOGY: Last week we reported that the General Union of Palestinian Students had declared its opposition to the 'No Platform for Zionists'. In fact the GUPS has not yet taken any position on this question.

Imprecor



'In the present economic and political situation, reformist politics lead to betrayal even of the most elementary interests of the workers and to renunciation in practice even of the "minimum programme".' This is the conclusion drawn by Miguel Romero in the latest issue of *Imprecor* through an analysis of the recent Maastricht pact between the Spanish Government and the reformist workers parties.

Other articles in this issue, No. 15 (New Series), cover further developments in the split in the French Union of the Left (including a declaration by the French Trotskyists), a report on the first 100 days of the Begin Government in Israel, an analysis of the bourgeois political project in Latin America, and the second part of articles on the US ruling class offensive and the struggle in the Sahara.

Price 30p, *Imprecor* is available from The Other Bookshop, almost all IMG branches, or by post from Imprecor, P.O. Box 50, London N1 2XP (add 10p for p&p). Subscriptions £7 p.a. [25 issues] or £3.75 for six months from the same address.

What's Left

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

JOBS for the girls? The Problems of Women and Employment. A one day conference to be held on Sat 19 November in the University Lecture Theatre Block (LTB2), University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester. **PIRATE JENNY** Theatre Team 11 weeks Irish actors/actresses with good musical ability for spring show on Ireland. Equity rates. Write to 76 (basement), Oxford Gdns, London W10.

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

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

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS in the Caribbean. Gordon Lewis, Professor of Political Science at the University of Puerto Rico and author of books on the Caribbean, will lead discussion at The Institute of Race Relations, 247/9 Pentonville Rd., London N1.

THE £10 MILLION construction bribe: Exclusive inside story of British capital's corruption in the Gulf. Plus: Black Youth and the White Left; Judges; Chalmers; Tom Robinson interview and lots more in November *Left*. 35p from left bookshops or direct from 155a, Drummond St, London NW1.

KINGS LYNN Radical Discussion Group. All shades of left opinion welcome. For further information contact: Tim Webb, Kings Lynn 5766.

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.

RED WEEKEND. 2nd Communist University of Manchester. 4.5.8, Nov. Students Union, Oxford Rd. Two plenaries: Marxist Methodology, the Role of the Intellectual, nine specialist courses, 27 speakers. Social with Henry Cow and Frankie Armstrong. Registration £2. Details from 63 Clyde Rd, Manchester 20. Phone 061 445 3756.

OXFORD Socialist Unity public meeting: Thru 17 November. Speakers Bob Pennington and Hilda Kaan. Venue to be announced. For more information about Oxford Socialist Unity contact 38 Hurst St, Oxford.

FREE ANDY Klymchuk campaign pickets of the British-Soviet friendship society concerts: 3 Nov. Lancaster Poly; 5 Nov. Manchester Free Trades Hall; 6 Nov. Shaftesbury Theatre, London. All at 6.15pm.

DROP THE OFFICIAL Secrets Charges. Picket the committal proceedings against Aubrey, Barry and Campbell. Assemble Seven Sisters Tube 8.45am, 8 November. March to Tottenham Magistrates Court. Daily picketing of the court from 9.30 onwards on following days. For details contact: ABC Defence Campaign, c/o Time Out, 374 Gray's Inn Road, WC1. 01-278 2377.

SPARTACIST Public meeting: 'Women and the Russian Revolution'. Speaker Judith Hunter. Fri 11 November, 7.30pm. The Roebuck, 108a Tottenham Court Road.

WHAT IS Revolutionary Unity? Public meeting of the Revolutionary Tendency. Fri 14 Nov, 7.30. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

WORKERS POWER No 5 Out Now! Articles include: Fascism and Anti-Fascism. The Workers Government. Socialist Challenge — a Statement. Euro Stalinism, Marx, Engels and German Social Democracy. From all left bookshops or from 1a Camberwell Grove, London SE5 6JA. 57p inc. postage.

CACTL NATIONAL CONFERENCE Saturday and Sunday, 26 & 27 November Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham

Plenary session on Saturday to include speakers from: squatting movement, and industrial, hospital and student occupations. Various workshops on both days.

Registration: £2.50 (claimants £1.50). Creche and transport available.

For full details and briefing documents, contact CACTL, c/o 35 Wellington Street, WC2. Tel: 289-3877.

*Conference organising meetings are now held every Thursday at 8pm, at the Market House pub, Russell Street, near Covent Garden.

THE OPPOSITION in Rumania. IMG meeting. Speaker: Anca Mihailescu. 7.30, 5 November, room 5066, LESE, Houghton St, London.

ROCK AGAINST RACISM Bonfire. 4 November at The Squal, Oxford Rd. 8.00pm. 70p (40 p claimants with card). Steel band & The Insiders & disco. Tracie Toffee, potatoes and effigy of Martin Webster.

SWANSEA IMG is holding a day school on the National Question with Richard Carver and Alan Freeman on Sunday, 6 Nov. Socialist Challenge readers interested in attending telephone Swansea 480068 for details.

LEWISHAM and Deptford Trade Council: Stand Together. This is a colour film made by the Newsworld Collective (ACTT/TGWU) of the mass demonstration at Grunwick on 11 July 1977. We are showing it not only as a record of a historic working class struggle but also to generate maximum support for the mass picket on 7 November. To be held on Thurs 3 Nov at Union Hall, Goldsmiths College, Lewisham Way. Branches, delegates, members, friends, come and see the film and mobilise support for our comrades at Grunwick.

DEFENCE Fund for those arrested on the 8 Oct anti-Nazi demo. 28 arrested. £1000 target for defence fund. Fund secretary Liz Barber, c/o Cavendish House, Cavendish St, All Saints, Manchester. Collections sheets available from this address. Raise money through collections and resolutions in your workplace, union branch, students union etc. Anyone who witnessed any of the arrests please contact Cherry, Manchester Law Centre, 595 Stockport Rd, Manchester 13. 061-225 5111.

SCOTTISH Conference of Socialist Economists. Weekend School, Edinburgh 12-13 Nov. Sat 10-4. Alan Freeman on The Nation in the Transitional Epoch; Jim Lewis on Accumulation, the Regional Problem and Nationalism. Discussion on future CSE work in Scotland. Sun 10.30-4. Mike Hughes on Finance Capital and the Scottish Ruling Class; Hugo Radice on the Scottish Development Agency. Edinburgh Trades Council Hall, 12-14 Picardy Place. Creche. Papers by Jim Lewis available in advance. Mike Hughes will be developing his work in Red Papers on Scotland (EUSPB 1975) Registration: Hugo Radice, Glenesk, Perth Road, Dunblane, FK15 0HA. 0786-823246.

SEMINAR on Zionism and How to Fight It. Newcastle, Sat 19 Nov. Subjects include Arab boycott of Israel, Zionist oppression of Oriental Jews, Israel-South Africa co-operation, the Law of 'Return' and Aliyah, Admission by ticket only. Organised by the British Anti-Zionist Organisation (in association with the Arab Students Union). Contact George Mitchell, m 90 John St, Glasgow G1.

NO RETURN TO THE THIRTIES

A benefit for the completion of a film about the Right to Work march 1977, to be held at The Other Cinema on: **Saturday, 12 November, at 6.30pm.**

UNION MAIDS By Julia Reichert and James Klein (USA). A documentary about women organising in the 1930s (45 mins). Plus:

LAND WITHOUT BREAD by Luis Bunuel, 1932 (29 mins approx).

Also extracts from the Right to Work film, and a speaker.

Tickets £1.50, £1 to unemployed. Please support this benefit, organised by Rank and File films. Bar and food will be available.

Short film on *Socialist Challenge* will be shown also.

Zionism & racism - debate in the NUS

Fists flew and Pakistani students were told to 'go home' at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London last week. Half a dozen Zionist thugs tried to break up a meeting called by left-wing students to discuss 'Zionism and Racism'. The speaker, Moshe Machover, had to be escorted home as the attackers hung around after the meeting.

REDMOND O'NEILL and M. JAFAR look at the developments in the National Union of Students and try to dispel some of the confusion generated by the popular press.

Student leaders attack unions

by REDMOND O'NEILL

ANYONE reading last Sunday's papers could be forgiven for thinking that the far left in the NUS had gone mad. Here were the Tories and the Broad Left marching into battle to defend the rights of Jewish students against the anti-semitic 'red fascists' of the revolutionary left.

The reality is a little different. Over the past year, the Israeli Embassy has launched a very expensive propaganda campaign in the colleges. This has involved changing the constitutions of Jewish societies to include explicit support for the state of Israel and exhibitions, leaflets and meetings aimed at labelling all Arabs as anti-semites and thereby justifying Israel's policy of imperialist expansion.

In their response to this provocation some of the left have gone overboard and sought to deny a platform to Zionist speakers and cut off funds to societies which support the state of Israel.

SUSPEND

At the same time as making no attempt to open up a broad debate on the question of Zionism, the NUS Executive has answered the press witch-hunts in a thoroughly bureaucratic way. It has decided to seek powers to suspend unions which 'infringe the democratic rights of their members'. This could easily re-

sult in the suspension of unions who deny a platform to fascists, or support closed women's group meetings — the Tories and many of the Broad Left leaders say that this discriminates against men!

CLAMPDOWN

This is the most serious attack on the sovereignty of individual student unions since before the left won leadership of the NUS in the late 1960s. If it is not stopped at the coming NUS conference this could open the door to the sort of clampdown we've seen recently in unions like the teachers', when the membership has gone beyond the bureaucracy's advice in taking action against the cuts.

The Executive's attack on democracy also aims to divert discussion away from the thorny and, within the Broad Left, divisive problem of Zionism. It aims to win Jewish support for its crusade to defend fascists' speaking rights at the conference and to railroad any discussion on Zionism into a debate on democracy. Unfortunately the comrades of the Socialist Workers Party, with their position of denying Zionists a platform, have helped the Executive to do this.

OPEN DEBATE

Our answer to the Executive must be both to launch a campaign to defend union democracy and to fight to win NUS to full solidarity with the Palestinian struggle through the clearest open debate.

Birmingham Polytechnic Students' Union has organised a national conference on 10 November to launch such a campaign. Left organisations, overseas students and women's groups should be approached for support and delegations for the conference.

*Speakers to debate pro-Zionists or for public meetings can be booked through the Socialist Students' Alliance. Phone Colin Talbot at 01-960 4113, or write to Redmond O'Neill, P.O. Box 50, London N1.

What is Zionism?

by M. JAFAR

Revolutionary socialists struggle against the Zionist state of Israel because it is a settler colonial project in the service of imperialism, whose establishment and continued existence is based on a denial of the national and democratic rights of the Arab/Palestinian masses.

Zionist ideology rests on two false premises. The first is that world Jewry constitutes a nation. In other words that Jewish workers in Morocco, for example, have more in common, socially, politically and culturally, with other Jews in New York and Poland than they have with their fellow Moroccan workers. This is despite the fact that Moroccan Jewry could not communicate with American or Polish Jewry, much less be part of the same social fabric.

The second premise is that anti-semitism is an all-pervasive phenomenon that is, so to speak, 'biologically ingrained' in genes. This is ostensibly proven by

two millennia of history stretching from Babylonian times to Nazi Germany. So the Zionist political project is gathering this nation of world Jewry into a territory in which it forms a majority, and the formation of a state that is exclusively Jewish.

The notorious 'Law of Return' is thus the hallmark of the Zionist constitution. It grants citizenship to an American Jew stepping into the airport at Tel Aviv, while taking it away from the original Arab inhabitants of Palestine.

This project would have remained a pipe-dream, had it not been for the social contradictions of late nineteenth century Eastern Europe. The rise of capitalism in the Russian and Austrian empires uprooted millions of Jews from their traditional occupations, forcing them to flee to Western Europe.

DECADENCE

The decadence of Western capitalism in the first half of the twentieth century only exacerbated the problem. The plight of Jewish refugees from fascist Europe was sharpened by the barriers to immigration into Britain and the United States.

Zionism and racism share a common premise — though they look at it from different sides. A consistent Zionist is forced to be a defeatist in the struggle against anti-semitism on its home ground. The answer is emigration to Palestine.

On many occasions Zionist thinkers and agents have collaborated with notorious anti-semites both in Tsarist Russia and Nazi Germany. The Zionist movement is even known to have fostered anti-semitism in an attempt to speed up the emigration of Jews to Israel. This happened in Iraq in the early 1950s, when Zionist agents planted bombs in the synagogues. Zionism is certainly a form of racialism.

VENOM

But Zionists are not fascists. The Zionist movement was never constituted as an implacable organised enemy of all forms of independent working class organisation and expression. That is why, in the imperialist countries, many confused socialists started off, or remain, left Zionists.

The question of union democracy is only secondary in our opposition to the denial of a platform to Zionists. Socialists support taking away from fascists their democratic right to spread their venom because their very presence is a direct threat to the future of the working class and racial minorities. The question is whether we support the extension or restriction of union democracy to student societies that adopt Zionist positions.

The Zionists have fed and flourished on drawing an equals sign between anti-Zionism and anti-semitism. We must guard against any action that fosters the illusion that consistent anti-Zionism is related to anti-semitism. So we must oppose a blanket ban on the right of Zionists in the student movement to express themselves.

In the interests of the struggle against Zionism itself we should always be willing to debate with the Zionists — and the left Zionists in particular — to expose the crimes of Zionism and the Israeli state.

The NUS should adopt a position that clearly condemns Israel and Zionism. Once such a position is taken the student movement must insist that its funds are not abused and channelled to support Israel directly.



MOSHE MACHOVER

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Chilean miners' leader held at Dover

by DAVID RAWLS

MARIO Munoz Salas, a Chilean miners' leader in exile in France, was detained by immigration officials at Dover for 13 hours on 24 October before being denied entry and sent back across the channel. He had been trying to enter Britain to visit friends and address the Wolverhampton and District Latin America Solidarity Committee (WDLASC), an invitation which had been outstanding for nearly two months.

Instead he was held for thirteen hours, photocopies were taken of all documents, letters, and addresses (including addresses in Argentina and Chile, potentially sensitive in the wrong hands).

Munoz was the founder and leader of the Interprovincial Workers' Union of 'Piriquineros' (miners in the smaller mines who are paid by what they can sell to marketing agencies, which in turn were in US hands). Under the 1964-70 Christian Democratic Government, he led the crucial mobilisations which led to the workers' taking over several

of these mines, and subsequently turning them into cooperatives.

The Allende Government of Popular Unity (UP) put obstacles in the way of further takeovers, until the famous 1971 march on Valparaiso of the miners led by Munoz. The central slogans of the march were nationalisation without compensation, under workers' control, and, contrary to press reports at the time, for the vigorous defence — armed if need be — of the UP Government from the attacks of imperialism and its allies.

The Government tried to head off these mobilisations by setting up an organisation called the Regional Councils of Miners. Munoz got the so-called 'Councils' under way by organising the occupation of a mine owned by the president of the state mining corporation, the millionaire Eduardo Matta. The inaugural congress of the Councils, four days later, unanimously elected Munoz their president.

After the coup, the junta sent out an order that Munoz was to be shot on sight. His brother,

also a miner, was beaten to death by troops in front of his family. He escaped across the mountains into Argentina to continue his work, but after the coup there in March last year, and the Videla junta's offer to carry out what their Chilean counterparts had failed to do, Munoz managed to get out of Argentina helped by a world-wide solidarity campaign.

It is scandalous that one of the most distinguished leaders of the Chilean labour movement should be denied access to Britain, a country moreover, where the Labour Party is in power. In a statement sent to several Labour MPs including Tony Benn, Michael Foot and Eric Heffer, and to the NUM and TGWU, the WDLASC underlines that 'to deny freedom of movement to political exiles in this manner is to add insult to injury. No political exile should be restricted by the Home Office or any other body, in the solidarity work they are involved in.' The restriction on Munoz must be lifted and the photocopies of the documents taken from him returned.

Read any socialist paper, including this one, and you will find lots of accounts of the struggles of working people, up and down the country. Read them closely and you will realise they are all very much along the same lines, whether the struggles concerned are in London or Aberdeen, Sheffield or Southampton. This is not just because socialist journalism can be boring and stereotyped (although it can), but because most struggles are based on the workplace, and most industries and services, whether run by private corporations or by the state, are centrally organised on at least a national basis. The problems encountered by workers will be the same from one end of the country to the other — and even beyond, internationally — and workers in the same industry, but in different towns, will often have more in common than workers in different industries, but side by side in the same city.

Now think about the way left-wing groups are organised. Despite some brave attempts at work-place and industry-based organisation, they are still largely centred on localities. This can be put down partly to the weakness and marginality of the left — many of our activists are not themselves involved in the work-place, and there are few industries and services where any socialist organisation is strong enough to have a really viable set-up. But it is also because there are real ties between people in localities. Outside work, people's lives revolve around connections which are mainly local — family and friends, pubs and clubs, sports and voluntary activities. Reflecting this, many activists see the local ties as the important ones — through the Trades Council or the Labour Party, rather than the national union machine.

Now go one step further. Ask what does socialist theory have to say about all this? Marxists have always had a great deal to say about the general, national and international realities. Our theories have reflected the centralisation in the way industries and governments are organised. We have had a lot of ideas about capitalism, imperialism, the state, the ruling class, the trade union bureaucracy — all these general realities.

We have even, in recent years, had quite a bit to say about 'the family' in general terms, even though it is not centrally organised in quite the same way. But we have produced little to explain the local. One could almost conclude that Marxists regard the places in which people live as irrelevant, and any particular attachments to them, whether socially or politically, or through support for the local team, as romantic nonsense, the products of ideological duping.

Problems have arisen in recent years for these sorts of Marxist perspective. In the first place, there was a phase, in the 1960s, when industrial struggles were often spontaneous, short-lived, impatient of the central union bureaucracies — and hence highly localised. This phase was, to some extent, superceded at the beginning of the 1970s, when strikes became longer, more difficult, more national and more often political. But it still left a more lively grass-roots, shop-floor organisation in the localities.

Some groups on the left saw the end of this phase as indication of the need not just for more centralised organisation by socialists, but ultimately for a highly one-sided caricature of a centralised command structure. What they ignored were a number of other trends which were quite central to the modern class struggle. Firstly there were the contradictions of a period of more centralised and politicised industrial struggle. On the one hand, a successful generalisation of the industrial struggle requires a widening of that struggle, a broad politicisation of the struggle at its roots, which brings in all the other social issues to rein-

force the narrowly economic ones. On the other hand, the lack of success in generalised, national struggles — which is what we have been faced with since 1974 — forces workers back to more limited, sectional initiatives. In either case the local dimension of the industrial struggle remains very important.

Secondly, however, there are new forms of struggle which are inherently more local in nature. On the one hand, many of the struggles of the women's movement are necessarily decentralised. The struggle over personal relations in the family is, directly, so fragmented that it is not even automatically generalised in a locality. Indirectly, of course, it does involve a whole series of issues, economic, social and political, which can be generalised locally and nationally. Then the fact that many women do not work, but are concerned with consumption facilities and services, means that their struggles do not fit a centralised pattern. And finally, even women workers, because they are often relatively marginal to the industrial structures, tend to be less involved in centralised union activities than men, and relate their interests more to other women's struggles at a local level.

Apart from struggles which are specifically women's there are however class struggles over such things as housing, education, social services and transport facilities, recreational amenities, etc., which tend to be localised in nature. They are local struggles partly because they concern all, or many, of the working people in a given locality as 'consumers' or users of the same 'product' or facility. They are local too, because, despite the fact that national policy usually dictates 90 per cent of what a local council can do, the immense size of the local authorities and the range of activities they control give them a new importance as the immediate enemy in many struggles.

'THE URBAN QUESTION'

What we need now is an understanding of the trends which I have just described: an explanation of the importance of local struggles, which ties them up with our understanding of capitalism and class struggle as a whole. So far, as I have said, Marxist theory has produced little reflection on this subject.

Marxist theory has indeed spent much of the last thirty years trying to catch up, so to speak, with the changes in capitalism — identifying and explaining the new features since the second world war. But most writing has been concerned with the processes of capitalist accumulation, and with the trends towards even greater centralisation which have been involved. Attention has been focussed on concentration of capital in larger and larger units — the multi-national corporation for example — and the crucial role of states in vastly expanding their spending and in 'planning' whole national economies. In terms of this analysis, any interest in the 'local' seems an utter anachronism.

The women's movement was vitally important in pinpointing what it was, in theoretical terms, which was missing. This is not to say that other issues — the welfare state, the nature of higher education (which was posed by the student movement) — had not begun to suggest the question. But what the women's movement did, by forcing Marxists to look at the family and what women did in the home, was to bring to the fore the missing dimension. This was the importance of the way in which the workforce is developed and maintained for the system's use. In Marxist terms, this was the issue of the reproduction of labour power.

Women's 'domestic labour' is in fact the oldest, most basic and most neglected component of the processes by which labour power

A missing dimension



Politics and Class Struggle in the localities

by Martin Shaw

is reproduced. It had been taken for granted for generations. But in modern capitalism, it was increasingly complemented by, combined with and to some extent replaced by other processes — indeed it is highly arguable that the new uncertainty in the status of domestic labour was responsible for making it problematic.

The reproduction of labour power in modern capitalism is increasingly not just a question of isolated women in individual families, but a collective matter. 'Reproduction' is socialised — partly by being taken on by capitalist firms, but mainly by becoming the business of the state, on behalf of the system as a whole.

But what has this got to do with the role of localities in modern capitalism and its class struggle? This is where a very interesting book by a French Marxist, *The Urban Question* by Manuel Castells (Arnold £5.95), comes in. Castells started out from within the tradition of the 'urban social sciences', the large body of academic work which assumes that there is a separate 'urban' social reality which can be analysed by special concepts. Castells agreed that there were important problems — the 'urban crisis' for example — but he did not accept either 'the moralistic or integrationist pre-occupations of the old urban sociology or the technocratic perspective of the new urban

political science'. Instead he looked in the Marxist tradition for what explained the realities described as 'urban', and decided that cities or urban areas were above all defined as units based on 'collective consumption'. They were 'residential units of labour power'. Castells is obviously dealing with modern urban areas, and is not, for example, trying to explain cities in ancient or medieval societies which were based on administrative-political and commercial activities. This classical 'city', he argues, was actually disintegrated by industrial capitalism, which created more diffuse urban areas, and ultimately the great metropolitan regions of today. And although industry may have been tied, in its early phases, by specific raw materials to specific locations, the nature of modern technology and communications means that there are generally few natural or technical limits in industrial location. 'Manpower appears as the fundamental constraint of modern industry'. It is the availability of labour power, and of the infrastructure which produces it, which ties industry to existing urban areas, rather than vice versa.

From all this theorising — backed up by detailed studies from the United States and France — Castells concludes that the realities of space, i.e. the organisation of urban areas or localities in general, are not so significant in terms of 'the economic system as a whole'. From the point of view of property relations or technological relations, Marxist theorists may well have been right to emphasise centralising tendencies and to ignore the structuring of localities. But from the point of view of the reproduction of labour power, 'cities' or 'urban areas' are essential units. Insofar as they can be defined in social terms, spatial units — cities etc. — are basically units in the process of the reproduction of labour power, just as factories are basically units in the process of commodity production. The city, urban area or region, is the level at which the housing, education, health, transport, distribution of consumer goods, etc., are organised in spatial terms.

Of course, Castells is aware that not all the activities connected with urban areas fall under this heading, just as not everything that goes on in a factory is strictly to do with production (e.g. the factory also helps to reproduce labour power, and to reproduce the dominant social relations). But he thinks he has picked out what is crucial to cities, or 'spatial units' generally, as such.

From this definition of 'the urban', Castells can move on to define the nature of 'urban politics'. This centres first of all on 'urban planning', which he sees as an intervention of the political, i.e. the state, in the organisation of a 'collective unit of reproduction of labour power'. The aims of this he further defines as those of assuring further reproduction and the interests of the dominant class in this process. Secondly, he defines 'urban social movements' as movements deriving both from general and from 'urban' social relations, which tend towards changing either the urban system or the general power relations in society. While urban planning is a fairly obvious reality, the idea of 'urban struggles' can, Castells recognises, suggest a false unity between struggles relating to diverse economic and social issues. He sees them rather as a series of struggles relating to 'secondary structural issues' (i.e. issues which are secondary to the main structural conflict between capital and labour in production), which can however become of primary importance at a particular point in time.

'THE LOCAL STATE'

One question which Castells does not deal with specifically is the nature of 'the local state', the main apparatus by which the state intervenes in the process of 'collective consumption'. English socialist writers have, however, begun to focus on this. There was an excellent pamphlet from the Community Development Project, *Local Government Becomes Big Business* by John Benington. Now Cynthia Cockburn has written a full-length study, *The Local State: Management of Cities and People* (Pluto £2.95), which takes up this question in some detail.

Local government conjures up the image of something very petty, boring and routinised — 'the parish pump', 'the town hall' — in the minds of most people, and many on the far left have been all too glad to evade thinking about it. But in fact it has become very big business, with its spending increasing even faster than the state's as a whole. The tighter central government control over its finances reflects its enhanced role, rather than a decline. One aspect of this has been the reorganisation into larger units. Another, which Cockburn analyses, is the development of new, more centralised, management structures, based on the ideology of 'corporate management' adapted from private industry.

Local government, at district/borough or county/region level, is not the sole represent-

ative of the state in an area, since there are numerous direct agencies of the central state — government departments etc. — which operate directly in localities. But it is the specifically local component of the national state — the 'local state'. Cockburn extends Castells' analysis by pointing out how the local state helps to reproduce the social relations of production as well as the actual labour power of the workers. It is because of this, she points out, that the local state defines its population largely in terms of 'families' rather than individuals, and that more often than not it deals with the woman, within the family unit.

COMMUNITY ACTION OR CLASS STRUGGLE?

The point of this analysis is to show (as Cockburn does in much more detail) that the 'community' approach is actually a part of the new 'corporate management' process of the local state. In addition, Cockburn gives us several reasons for rejecting the idea of 'community action' in the struggle against the local state: it accepts a territorial, rather than social, definition, of the forces in conflict; it is tied up with a purely 'consumer' approach; it is all too often defined in classless terms; and it is all too easily taken over by reformist parties for electoral purposes.

The alternative is to see the local class struggle, the fight against the local state, as part of 'the struggle in the field of capitalist reproduction'. This ties together the action of the 'users' of housing, health and other with that of workers employed by the local state. It also links these struggles, first with the struggles of women in the home, and second with the workplace struggle — to the extent that workers are seeing facilities outside work as relevant.

'For years,' Cockburn asserts, 'revolutionary parties of the left have neglected all forms of action but those of the factory floor: because in the employer you come up against the real class enemy, directly, in person. Not only is this crude (she adds), it is wrong.' Whether or not what she says is completely true, as in practice the left has increasingly related to areas of struggle away from the factory floor, it is certainly correct that our theory and politics have not really reflected this change. 'Industrial struggle in the key industries is still the heart of the labour movement and will remain so,' as Cockburn maintains. But action over services, by working people as users of them, and local state workers — for whom the kind of job they do affects the way they struggle is an increasingly vital field.

SOCIALIST UNITY AND LOCAL POLITICS

The Labour Party is so involved in the local state that any reliance on its councillors in the struggle is, as Cockburn shows in the case of Lambeth, a very dangerous business. Even the individual left-wing backbencher, however good his or her intentions, is — apart from being impotent — subject to the pressures of the group machine. The question then arises (but not for Cockburn) of how a new socialist party, committed to the class struggle in the field of reproduction, can relate to the different kinds of struggle which are taking place, and to the processes of local electoral democracy. One thing is certain: Socialist Unity's interventions in local elections must not be seen in isolation, but must be part of a real commitment to the local class struggle.

The Urban Question by Manuel Castells, £5.95, Arnold.
Local Government Becomes Big Business by John Benington, Community Development Project.

The Local State: Management of Cities and People, by Cynthia Cockburn, £2.95, Pluto Press.

Thanks!

THANK YOU for the transcript of Sir Richard Dobson's speech. Responsibility for enforcing the anti-racial incitement provisions

of the Public Order Act rests with the Attorney General, not with the Commission. I am therefore sending on to the Attorney General your letter and enclosure with a copy of this reply.
DAVID LANE (Chairperson, Commission for Racial Equality)

Working class by-passed

First-rate

I WAS half asleep on a bus when I read of Dobson's remarks in the morning paper. As soon as I could I bought a copy of Socialist Challenge. I have never read it before, but the revelations were terrific — first-rate journalism.

I wonder how many of these 'tycoons' in their private clubs think like Dobson: How about George Brown and Woodrow Wyatt? It's a pity these scum can't be recorded when they've got a guff of wine, gorging themselves on the wealth we produce.

It appeals to me to think that at the stroke of a pen, animals like Dobson can destroy jobs and communities. His 'resignation' from Leyland won't affect him much. He should have to sign on the dole and get a taste of the kind of life he and his kind force on us.

The story was great, but I bet you won't get any awards for it. Keep up the good work.
TOM NUTTALL (Leeds 6)

TARIQ ALI's pursuit of publicity with the Dobson tapes has completely by-passed the working class and those people attacked by Dobson in his speech. It has served only the interests of the international Marxist Group and the prestige of Socialist Challenge, and thereby played directly into the hands of the very people the paper has been attacking.

In my opinion, before the press conference was called, a campaign should have been carefully planned and built up that would have involved the whole length and breadth of the labour movement in the call for Dobson's removal as chairperson of Leyland. Representatives of all those people — numbering millions — attacked by Dobson should have been involved; including representatives from immigrant organisations; the Grunwick strike committee; the Arab states; and nationalised industries.

Those who were not prepared to associate themselves with such a campaign could have been exposed by SC. The identity of the informant should have been kept a secret as it served to act only as a diversion in the hands of the bourgeois press.

Of course, the importance given by the media to Socialist Challenge and Tariq Ali would have been a great deal less. But set against the enormous political weight such a campaign could have had internationally, would this have been such a disaster?
JUDY BARKER (St Pancras North Labour Party)

Wanted in draft aims: the young and the old

ON THE first reading I was struck by two omissions from your draft statement of aims: 'The Basis for Revolutionary Unity'. There were no explicit references to the plight of working class youth and old age pensioners in late capitalist society. This is a little ironic, since other pages of the same issue of Socialist Challenge demonstrate that socialist revolutionaries are far from indifferent to the struggles of these sections of the working class.

The cuts in housing provision, health care, and social services, together with the decline in the real value of State pensions have had calamitous consequences for the day to day existence of millions of retired workers. No doubt a few tragic cases of death from hyperthermia will once again get into the national press this winter. And it will be reported in such a way as to seem the result of neglect of a few hapless individuals, rather than extreme examples of the general social isolation of retired workers. A friend of mine is approaching 70 and has asked her employers to keep her on at work on no pay rather than face the loneliness of spending all day on her own.

Adverts featuring bikini clad young women are not only sexist; they encourage any feelings of inadequacy that old people have been driven into.

Again, like many women, old workers do not have an immediate personal relation to the means of production. If we reckon that a part of the struggle for socialism will be to ensure consumer (i.e. working class) control of State financed 'social services', the potential role of old people is far from insignificant. Revolutionaries do their own politics an injustice if they leave such discussions to the moralistic and face-saving rhetoric of the likes of Jack Jones.

Even the most cursory look at the position of working class youth indicates that one of the major priorities of a unified revolutionary organisation must be that of guiding their potential dynamism.

School leavers are left on the dole and the SS, or maybe they get a stocking-filler job with the job creation scheme. Either way, as far as succeeding in capitalist society is concerned, young

workers have 'no future'. At 16 they don't even get the bourgeois democratic right of the vote to register their opinion on the government policies that have precipitated this state of affairs. The signs of disaffection of working class youth from establishment politics (i.e. social democracy) glare at us with the intensity of the neon lights advertising the latest punk rock band.

The virtual collapse of the Young Communist League and the dogmatism and premature senility of so many members of the Labour Party Young Socialists show the need to build a principled and non-sectarian organisation of socialist youth. The discussion of how to achieve this in Britain would be helped considerably by information on the positive and negative aspects of youth work from revolutionaries in other so-

vanced capitalist countries.

Fighting the super exploitation and oppression of young and retired workers needs to be integrated into the draft aims — and not just by adding 'agism' to the long list of the 'isms' of oppression. The existing members of revolutionary left groups are predominantly in their 20's and 30's with no familial dependants. Although we can see historical reasons for the age structure of the revolutionary left, we should also note that the cultural and social norms of the activity of the revolutionary left often discourages workers of other age groups from effective participation. It would be a sadly missed opportunity if a new united revolutionary organisation emerged without much fuller discussion of these questions.
ANDY HIGGINBOTTOM (Bristol 6)

Blackburn replies

IN HIS review of *Revolution and Class Struggle: a Reader in Marxist Politics*, Martin Shaw has two criticisms to make of my editorial selection. First he points out that I did not include any contribution reflecting the state capitalist theory. My purpose in the Reader was to combine texts which assessed the 'classical' Marxist political tradition together with texts which critically examined the subsequent course of revolution and world politics. In my view the partisans of state capitalism find it impossible to explain the unfolding of world politics in such decisive events as the Chinese revolution, the Cuban revolution, and the Indochinese revolution because they deny the contradictory character of the Soviet Union.

Thus Ernest Mandel's crucial text 'Peaceful Co-existence and World Revolution' furnishes a coherent analysis of the Soviet role in world politics in striking contrast to the neglect of the international dimension in the writings of the international Socialist tradition. I also believe that there is a tendency in any analysis of Stalinism which focuses unduly on the purely economic dimension to ignore or underplay its peculiarly repressive political system.
In my view Lucio Colletti

Coppers on the headline

WILLIAM WHITELAW'S speech at the Conservative Party conference urging the Government to treat the police as a special case under the pay guidelines have received little comment in the left press. Given the part support by both the Morning

Star and Socialist Worker for substantial pay increases for the police, I think Socialist Challenge should champion the opposition to this blind economism.

The leader of the Police Federation has said that low pay is causing a mass exodus from the force. The State's ability to protect fascists at Hyde, and to contain picketing at Grunwick is weakened by this. Just this last Monday at Grunwick, a total Labour party figure who compared the struggle of the Grunwick workers to the police fight for higher pay got at best a mixed reception from the crowd. Later on that same day a pub crammed full of miners, students and other pickets spontaneously broke into a rowing chorus of 'Go home you bums' as one of the many police

coaches passed outside.

This proved to me that a large number of militants do understand the role of our police force, a lot better than the Morning Star and Socialist Worker would give credit for. The slogan I propose we champion is: 'Put the coppers on the headline', combining this with the demand for unemployed ex-police to be used in a programme of useful public works.

However, we should not suppose that a blow to the labour movement could strike at Grunwick management and the NF if the police were all on strike. The best police force for socialists is one that's starving, demoralised, on strike, and off the streets.
PAUL BRIDGEMAN (Manchester 10)



CDLM weaknesses

THE REPORT by John Ross in last week's Socialist Challenge on the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement conference chooses to omit any commentary on crucial weaknesses of that conference which were quite obvious to at least a section of the socialist militants who attended.

First, a great deal of time was given over to reports on various local struggles which were rarely related to the actual theme of how to defend living standards on which the conference was meant to give a lead. Indeed, many of the contributions amounted to little more than 'sales of woe' suffered by militants. While these may be interesting, by themselves they do not provide the sort of leadership that is needed to launch a successful fight against the Social Contract.

Secondly, the actual fight for an alternative programme — centred around the sliding scale of wages — was left entirely hanging in the air with no concrete proposals on the need to begin to organise militants into fighting organisations based within the unions which can actually turn such a programme into reality.

Thirdly, the actual major intervention decided on — to produce a leaflet for Leyland plants on the company's corporate bargaining plans — was seriously incorrect. (This leaflet was reprinted in part in the same issue of Socialist Challenge). The

central question facing Leyland workers — how to provide a united response to the company's centralised attacks on wages and the shop stewards movement — was not answered.

Instead the leaflet merely re-affirmed the need for plant-by-plant bargaining which has proved singularly ineffective in recent years in defending the position of Leyland workers. No strategy for uniting Leyland workers — such as through a national shop stewards conference — was proposed. Indeed, sections of the leaflet, where it implies the imminent abolition of the shop stewards movement in Leyland, are gross over-reactions to the present situation and represent a catastrophist analysis of the nature of the set-back likely to be suffered as a result of the ballot.

It was because of these failures that the CDLM conference failed to provide any real lead to the militants, apart from the correct decision to build the National Rank-and-File Conference. At the level of how to begin in practice to assemble the sorts of forces necessary to turn the tide against the trade union bureaucracy and the Labour Government it provided no answers. We had expected that Socialist Challenge and certainly John Ross might have noticed some of these problems.

JOHN GRAHAM (Birmingham ALEW), PATRICK SIKORSKI (Birmingham CDHSE), PAT HICKEY (Pover, TGWU)

Socialist Challenge EVENTS

HOME COUNTIES

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

SCOTLAND

For information on Socialist Challenge contact Scottish Socialist/Socialist Challenge bookshop, 64 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 64 Queen Street, Glasgow. Join in SC sales outside Boots (corner of Reform Street) each Saturday, 11am-2pm.

GLASGOW Socialist Challenge Forum, 'Grunwicks: The view from the left', Thursday, 17 November, Scottish Socialist bookshop, Top floor, 64 Queen Street. All welcome.

SOUTH/WEST

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

BRISTOL Socialist Challenge Forum every fourth Tuesday of the month, Baptist Mills Centre, Horsey Road, Bristol 2, 7.30pm.

SWANSEA Socialist Challenge public meeting: 'Nationalism — Scotland before Wales?' Alan Freeman introduces a discussion on the national question in Britain, 7.30pm, Friday, 4 November, St Helens Inn, Vincent Street, (off Argyle Street), Southfields

LONDON

SOUTHALL. Supporters group meets fortnightly. For details phone 01-573 5095.

GREENWICH/LEWISHAM Socialist Challenge group meets every two weeks. For details ring Ray on 01-659-1187.

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 Anglessea Road, Whenvhoe.

YORKSHIRE

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge meeting, Friday 18 November: 'Fight Racism Now'. Speaker: Raghib Akbar. Socialist Unity candidate in Ladywood by-election. Friendly and Trades Hall (opposite Huddersfield station), 8pm.

SHEFFIELD Socialist Challenge supporters meet weekly on Thursdays, 7.30pm, the Lion Hotel, 3 Nursery Street, (off the Wicker), Sheffield.

HULL Socialist Challenge meeting, 23 November. John Ross: 'Lenin and building the party', 1.15 University Union; and at 7.30pm, YPI Building, George Street. 'After the social contract — what strategy for the rank and file'.

MIDLANDS

For details of activities of local supporters contact Socialist Challenge Centre, 76b Digbeth High Street, Birmingham. (Tel: 021-643 9209).

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

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

NORTH WEST

For details of activities in the NW write or ring the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre, Third Floor, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1. 061-238 2352.

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

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

BURY Socialist Challenge group meets at the Royal Hotel, Silver St., every Wednesday at 8pm.

LEIGH Socialist Challenge readers group. Next meeting 3 November, Courts Hotel, Church Street, Leigh.

WARRINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets regularly. Ring Manchester Socialist Challenge offices for details. 061-238 2352.

Nuclear power

AT A RECENT meeting of the Southampton Socialist Challenge Group the question of nuclear power and in particular fast breeders, nuclear power plants, came up. It was agreed that socialists should have a position on this issue.

However, except for Arthur Scargill's testimony to the Wind-scale inquiry, Socialist Challenge has not published anything on the question. Given that in both Western Europe and North America opposition to nuclear power is becoming an issue in national politics, it is important that a debate is started on the British left. Socialist Challenge could reprint some of the many articles on the question that have appeared in the papers of European and North American revolutionary Marxists.
MIKE TUCKER (Southampton)

I AM WORKING on a book on the British Disarmament Movement, a section of which is concerned with the subsequent activities of CND and Committee of 100 supporters. I would be very interested to hear from activists from the 1956/1965 period who would be willing to complete a questionnaire.
R.K.S. TAYLOR (Epsom), St Andrew's Avenue, Morley, Leeds 27.

Info wanted

Mandy Merck reviews 'Annie Hall'

Very funny, but there's no real targets

ALVY SINGER (Woody Allen) and Annie Hall (Diane Keaton) are standing in line at an art cinema to catch Ophuls' *Sorrow and the Pity* for about the millionth time, when this asshole behind them starts pontificating about Fellini to his unlucky companion.

When he's finished with Fellini, it's why McLuhan thought TV was an intense medium. Finally, the exasperated Singer steps into close-up to appeal to the audience of *Annie Hall* — the film we're watching — against this jerk. So the asshole starts to argue.

After all, he's a lecturer in Communications at Columbia, and he reckons his 'insights into McLuhan are of some value'.

Bullshit, retorts Singer, McLuhan would totally repudiate your interpretation of his work. And zap! Into the real lobby strides the real Marshall McLuhan himself — and proceeds to upbraid the pretentious prof for misunderstanding *The Global Village*.

Scenes like these have made *Annie Hall* a big grosser in the states — over 9 million dollars so far, more than most of his earlier films combined. His previous work had even less exposure here; but when *Hall* was a hit at this year's Edinburgh Festival, United Artists not only changed their mind about releasing it, but threw together a big poster campaign and opened it simultaneously at five London cinemas.

Hall is Allen's *Alice B. Toklas*; the subject is not so much the Keaton character, or even the

hero's romance with her, as Alvy himself — a Brooklyn-born Jewish lad who grows up to become a neurotic comedian.

Admittedly, *Annie* is 'funnier' than most of Allen's previous films — except *Sex* which was extremely funny, but also extremely disconcerting, and even cruel. Everyone I know is quoting the schoolroom scene in which a little girl, speaking of herself 30 years later, declares 'I'm into leather'.

That — and the unconscious, delighted anti-semitism with which *Annie Hall* says to an appalled Alvy: 'Grammy Hall would say you're a real Jew' — brought down the house the night I went. Nonetheless, risking the wrath visited on the pretentious professor, I'd like to raise a few questions about the film.

Alvy Singer is obsessed with death, in particular the genocidal murder of the Jews. Life, like romance, he points out, is painful yet too short. You often can't

stand it; but you don't want it to end. The object of *Annie Hall* seems to be consolation about this dilemma, for Alvy/Allen and for us.

But this expressly elegiac attitude is, literally, fatalistic. You can't challenge mortality in the elegy, only transcend it by proposing something else in consolation — heaven, the continuity of the natural world, the eventual victory of the struggling class, whatever.

And while I am roughly in accord with Allen's biology, I do not share his view of social relations. Painful or not, the vicissitudes of heterosexual relations under patriarchy aren't 'natural'. They are no more inevitable or immutable than anti-semitism.

This isn't, however, something you learn by seeing *Annie Hall*. Allen continually refuses to point the camera at any real targets: the anti-semites, like the coke-snorting record execs, the Hollywood hedonists, and Professor Phoney, are all out there somehow.

The audience is continually consoled, continually exempted from any blame or exhortation to struggle, any discomfort. After all, isn't the effect of the McLuhan episode to simultaneously flatter us, by showing that we can get an 'intellectual' joke, and at the same time relieve our anxiety about not understanding all these new communications theories?

And isn't it more comfortable to view a conflict of the sexes in



DIANE KEATON and WOODY ALLEN 'Did he know something about the queues?'

Launching a paper with a difference

'EGIN' in Basque means 'to do' or 'to make'. It is also the name of a newly-launched Basque daily, which even before it came out on the streets last month was set fair to knock its fascist competitors back into the gutter. FRED FAIRBURN reports from Euzkadi.

I attended the public presentation of the new paper, *Egin*, in the Bilbao suburb where I live. A hundred people heard two introductions, brief and to the point, before going on to ask questions and to discuss how they could support, build, and participate in the paper.

It was a scene that has been repeated in every town and village of Spanish Euzkadi over the past six months. The first speaker outlined the chief aims of the paper: the defence and promotion of Euzkadi as a national reality, and of Euskera (Basque) as the national language; opposition to all forms of oppression and exploitation; and the provision of a forum for all political currents.

The second speaker, who spoke in Spanish since the paper is bilingual, went straight on to the organisational nuts and bolts. This is what really sets the paper apart, and places it in a recent tradition of working class control over sections of the media in Portugal and Italy. *Egin* is to be financed by popular subscription, through 'participation bonds' (a maximum of fifty at £13 each). Its contents will be provided by a network of local and industrial correspondents, with priority given to those sectors in struggle; and these networks will elect regional co-ordinators who will work in tandem with the journalistic staff. The paper will be controlled by assemblies of bondholders and participants.

Egin was not conjured up out of a vacuum, but stands in the tradition of popular working class opposition to Spain's bourgeois media. Popular boycotts last year reduced a Pamplona daily's circulation to precisely thirty copies, while similar actions knocked a third off a San Sebastian paper's circulation, after the editors had bolted in fright over the French border! And the combative Basques had already thrown up a mass-circulation weekly, *Punto y Hora de Euzkalerria*, which is run as a co-operative.

But *Egin* is no mere co-operative. It was already well known in advance of its first edition, having been present through broadsheets on every major demonstration since March. They have raised over £1.5m since the start of the mass campaign, but the euphoria surrounding the paper was quietly levelled by one staff reporter I spoke to, who pointed to 'the contradiction between what we want to do, and what is possible'. They had a march stolen on them by *Deia* (*The Call*), which with similar slogans and format — and an instant £3m from the Basque Nationalist Party — was on the streets by the June general election.

Egin will be costly to maintain in more than one way, as the fascist bomb attack on the Barcelona satirical weekly *El Popus*, and more than 40 prosecutions of journalists so far this year clearly show. *Egin's* future is tied up with the future of the radical nationalist left — whose populism and fear of definition it shares — but it has moved boldly into a gap in the provision and gathering of information, and will provide the Basque mass movement with a vital forum for debate.

COMMENT

Art critics need soul

PETER FULLER'S review of the Royal Academy exhibition 'British painting 1952-77' has proved invaluable to me as a graphic designer who does a certain amount of work for the left. For years I've marvelled over the visual imbecility of revolutionaries: the recurring demands that every item of information on a leaflet have equal prominence; the unfeeling massacre of brilliant cartoons by Steadman, etc. in the very first issue of *Socialist Challenge*.

This seems to be based on a refusal to believe that the major part of the process of perception is unconscious, and so any aspect of a design (good or bad) that 'nobody'll notice' is assumed to be without effect.

This much I've known for a while. What I couldn't understand was how revolutionaries could keep up this attitude while in a struggle against a capitalism which pours out a staggering sum into advertising and packaging design — selling not only products but also the idea that freedom and fulfillment can be bought through commodity consumption.

Now I see the light. The clue is in Fuller's choice of the painting *Mosaikbild No. 3* to typify 'what's wrong' with recent painting. This painting is unusual because it can be 'read' almost like a narrative or at least like a poem. In a way it's very like a moralistic Victorian painting or a Socialist Realist one. Though *Socialist Challenge* reproduced the painting, Fuller felt obliged to recount its 'message' as he understands it. It 'exudes uncritical optimism about the values of post-war British culture', and so on.

I'm not going to latch on to the flaws in this reading (e.g. why *British* culture? — Elvis and Monroe were American, the title and the car are German)... partly because I don't like the painting much myself. But what I find tedious is the way, first the painting is treated as typical of its type and, secondly, the way Fuller assumes that all visual art can be 'read' on the basis of its



Mosaikbild No 1 (1974), by Peter Phillips: 'Love-hate relationship.'

superficial elements.

On the first point: *Mosaikbild*, though it uses a 'photo-realist' painting style, is in the declamatory tradition of American Pop Art (as Fuller observed). But just so far as it's a celebration of consumer values, it misses the point the Americans (consciously or not) first made so well: the cheapness and disposability, the amphetamine sensuousness of the visual form those values had taken. Critical analysis of a more typical Pop Art work would uncover the love-hate relationship with consumer society.

This is the link with the second point: it seems Fuller's approach to all painting is to try to read its 'polemical intent'. No reader of *Socialist Challenge* needs to be told that a painting which is a single sheet of black or grey cannot 'mention industry'. That there's no way it can 'contribute... to the way in which we see the world' is all the same a risky proposition, if only because to see such unexpected objects labelled 'art' is a new experience.

My guess is that Fuller, like most revolutionaries, has no feeling for the core of the artist's

motivation, which is self-indulgence... Only the positive pleasures of creation can more or less unconsciously produce the subtleties of a complex visual statement.

Fuller, it appears, considers the artist's duty lies in the necessity for visual truthfulness in relation to the material world. It happens that from time to time great art has been made in pursuit of this — technically impossible — goal (e.g. Impressionism); but it has been produced because the artists felt excited about the idea, not because of their Historic Mission.

Or as Leon Trotsky put it in his address which opened the Founding Conference of the Fourth International: 'Art and science do not find their fundamental nature through patrons; art, by its very existence, rejects them. Creative activity has its own internal laws, even when it consciously serves social developments... Poets, artists, sculptors, musicians, will themselves find their paths and methods, if the revolutionary movement of the masses dispels the clouds of scepticism and pessimism which darken humanity's

horizon today.'

HUDSON PACE (London SW11)

COMMENT Deutscher Prize

THE UNDERSIGNED members of the Jury of the Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize wish to announce that the Prize for 1977 to the value of £100 has been awarded to S.S. Prauer for his book *Karl Marx and World Literature*. The author is Taylor Professor of German Language and Literature at the University of Oxford.

The prize for 1978 will be awarded in the autumn of 1978, and a jury drawn from among the sponsors will be glad to consider work published or in typescript. Any such works should be submitted by next May to The Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize, c/o Lloyds Bank, 68 Warwick Square, London SW1.

PERRY ANDERSON, E.H. CARR, TAMARA DEUTSCHER, ERIC HOBBSBAWM, MONTY JOHNSTONE, RALPH MILIBAND, ISTVAN MESZAROS



A street poster for Egin: 'No mere co-operative'

THE OTHER CINEMA

25 Tottenham Street, London W1. Tel: 637 9306

BIRTH and THE CHICAGO MATERNITY CENTRE STORY. Two films criticising the accepted attitudes to childbirth in the West. 'Birth is being kept in wrappers, not often even part of the "women's right to choose" campaign. Women are submitted to humiliation for no medical reasons. These films show both what is and what should be. They are both good drama and weapons for an important fight.' Sara Mantland. Time Out At: 2.00/4.15/6.30/8.45 weekdays (no matinee Sat and Sunday; not showing Nov 7-9).

Plus one screening only of CONTINUAR A VIVAR (Living On) Sun Nov 6 at 5pm. New film from Portugal about the impact of the fascist overthrow on a fishing village, organised by the Portuguese Workers Co-ordinating Committee.

Socialist Challenge

Lobby to keep hospital open: 9 November

Hound the Hounslow body snatchers

A MASS lobby of the area health authority's meeting has been called on 9 November by staff occupying the Hounslow Hospital. The resolution — put by the community health council — on the authority's table is to re-open Hounslow Hospital during this financial year.

David Ennals, the Government's social services minister, will also be lobbied at his department's offices at Elephant and Castle in South London the same day. CARL BRECKER, chairperson of the Hounslow Occupation Committee, told *Socialist Challenge*:

'The focus on the DHSS is because Ennals has made this ridiculous statement condoning what happened at Hounslow Hospital when they carried out the raid to remove the patients. This was a treacherous move for the labour movement as a whole. But focusing attention on Ennals must not pull too many people away from the lobby of the area health authority.'

'Pressure needs to be maintained on the authority because they can make a mockery of the resolutions being discussed. The authority could try and find a

formula to get themselves off the hook — such as saying Hounslow will be re-opened as part of next year's plans; no dates, no time limits, no guarantees. It is only a mass lobby which can keep the pressure on them.'

The lobby is being supported by the public employees' union in London, which has finally made the occupation official — at least until 9 November. NUPE is also committed to defending the staff against dismissal.

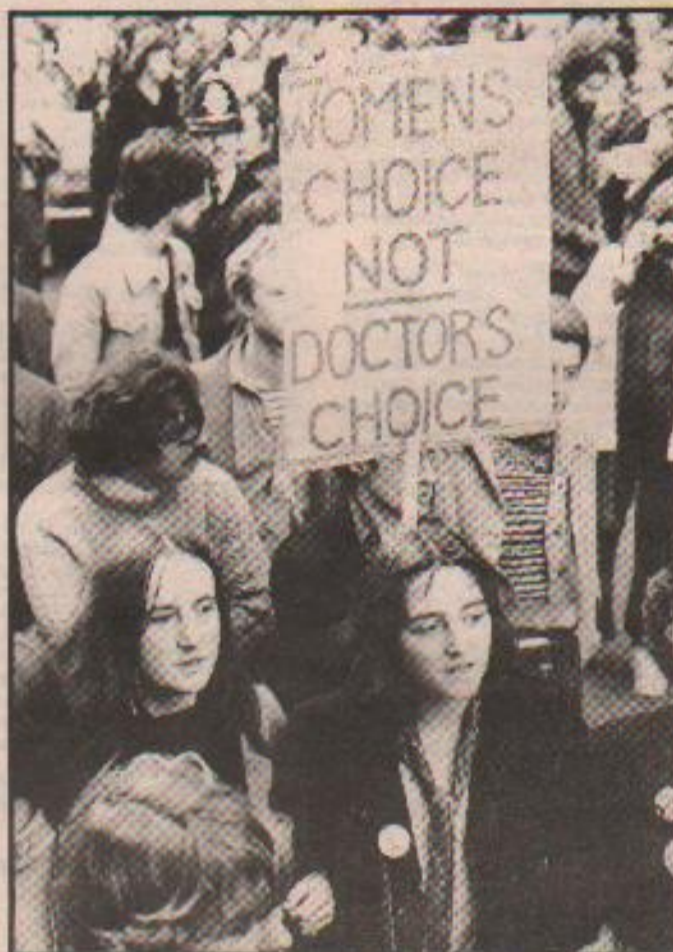
Meanwhile, on 5 November Hounslow workers — supported by the work-ins at the EGA,

Plaistow and St. Nicholas hospitals — are holding a labour movement delegate conference on the cuts and hospital closure.

Carl Brecker told us the conference is 'designed to bring together all the people in the hospitals — in the first instance — who are actively involved in the fight against cuts and hospital closure, together with those in industrial unions who respond to the call against closure. We will be working out a very practical programme of action on how we make sure that what happened at Hounslow does not happen to any other hospital that seriously takes up the fight against cuts'.

Details of both the conference on 5 November, and the day of action, can be obtained by phoning the Occupation Committee at 01-570 4448.

On page 4 Rich Palmer, our *Socialist Challenge* correspondent covering the dispute at Hounslow, assesses what sort of programme of action needs to come out of the conference.



SIX THOUSAND demonstrated in Birmingham on Saturday in the largest pro-abortion march ever seen in Britain outside London. The demo came at the end of a week in which the Labour Government committed its greatest treachery so far on abortion rights.

At a secret meeting on 25 October, Health Minister Roland Moyle brought together MPs to plan new attacks on abortion. Most of the pro-abortion MPs on the Benyon Bill Committee were not invited. But anti-abortionists were there in force, including Benyon, Leo Abse and James White.

The press were not allowed to attend the meeting, nor were they given any information afterwards. But it is understood discussion took place around four main areas: the time limit for abortions would be reduced from 28 to 22 weeks; the conditions of functioning for charitable clinics would be made stricter; would be made easier for doctors to refuse abortions on the grounds of 'conscience'; and abortion counselling will be a target for more controls.

Judging by the mood of the Birmingham demonstration these proposals will be met with fierce resistance.

Fund Drive

Give Healey's Tax Rebate To Your Paper!

So Denis Healey has decided to give everybody a small Christmas present — 'small' being the crucial word. Having beat the working class with his right hand, Healey makes a pathetic gesture with his left. We all need help in the battle against inflation and dropping living standards, but *Socialist Challenge* needs it more than most.

To see the new year your paper must boost its income by £1,800 from the fund drive. £362.98 came into our coffers — £237.02 short after four weeks. So what can be done about it?

Local supporters groups could follow the examples of Oxford and South London. The Oxford *Socialist Challenge* Group has organised a number of fundraising events, the latest was a second-hand book stall. Since the paper was launched they have been our most consistent fund raisers, sending in nearly £100.

Our South London supporters organised a sponsored swim in the local baths. They inform us £100 is on the way. One intrepid swimmer stroked his way to £50 — a simple but effective way to help.

And why not buy and sell our fundraising items: the *Socialist Challenge* calendar and the forthcoming Russian Revolution souvenir issue? Both will help swell our bank balance. Besides which they make excellent Christmas presents.

While our ruling class — somewhat chastened by Dobson's hasty departure from Leyland, and now no doubt frisking dinner guests, chauffeurs, and private secretaries — seems to have convinced itself that *Socialist Challenge* is armed with all manner of electronic gadgets, the reality is sadly different.

To be honest, we are anxious to acquire even the most basic essentials of our technological age. This is our checklist: a radio, TV, tape recorder (yes, we've got one, but it's not up to much), typewriters (ours are clapped out), paper, and all manner of other office paraphernalia. If you have any of these at your disposal, please bring them to our office, or let us know and we'll arrange transportation.

From the foregoing you will appreciate that we are not exactly riding the crest of capitalism's crisis. In fact, inflation has lifted all our costs — including typesetting, design, and printing bills — and it is for this reason that we are obliged to increase our cover price to 15p with this issue. We're sure our readers will appreciate the economics that make this unfortunately necessary.

Finally, all our supporters — thanks to the 'generosity' of Denis Healey — can give us a helping hand. Show your contempt for the tax handout and put the money to good use — send it to *Socialist Challenge*. If only 500 readers donated the tax rebate we would be sure of another £10,000!

On this page we have printed a 'pledge' form for your tax re-

bate. Fill it in and send it off to us today. In this way both of us will remember your contribution. And we won't forget to ask you for it, when the payout occurs. Show Healey what you think of his handout by aiding in the fight for socialism and helping *Socialist Challenge*.

In the last two weeks £279.98 came in to the fighting fund...



Coventry TASS member	2.00	Edinburgh labourer	10.00
Leamington readers	1.00	Siob Butler	1.00
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Blitz on London's health

LONDON'S HEALTH services face an economic blitz. 76 hospitals are intended for closure or relocation by 1986, according to a report just prepared for the National Union of Public Employees.

The Labour Government's cuts will mean 20,000 fewer beds in London alone, and 24,000 fewer staff in the London region than in 1975, the report says.

Health Minister David Ennals has the nerve to say that he would never approve a closure if the case for keeping it open is strong enough. What rubbish. The case against hospital closure could hardly be stronger.

In the past three years the Labour Government has closed 123 hospitals in Britain — and dozens more are in the pipeline.

Ennals says that this is OK because facilities are just being moved to larger, more modern hospitals.

But in addition to the fact that this means massive impersonal hospitals miles away from the communities they are supposed to serve, the cuts and hospital closures have also meant tens of thousands of beds being lost from the health service.

An estimated 35,000 beds have gone from the NHS since 1971. The waiting lists have now shot up to the figure of 600,000. Consultants freely admit today that patients on the ordinary waiting list are unlikely to get a bed unless they become worse, and go on the urgent waiting list. Now the consultants are having to sub-divide these lists into 'ordinary' urgent and 'very' urgent cases!

Ennals pretends that all that has to be done is to shorten the patients' stay in hospital. This is nothing other than an attempt to apply the technique of Henry Ford to the NHS. Longer waiting lists cannot compensate for the loss in beds! And nurses and staff who have to cope with more critically ill patients when their own numbers are being cut drastically are placed under an intolerable strain.

That's why health workers at hospitals like the EGA, Hounslow Hospital, and Plaistow Hospital have started to fight back.

It's time the rest of the labour movement joined them.