

# Socialist Challenge

## WANTED



## for Arson and Murder

This man is wanted for questioning by the working class in connection with the crimes of arson and murder.

**NAME:** Merlyn Rees.

**KNOWN ASSOCIATES:** The Labour Government

**APPEARANCE:** He occasionally disguises himself as a socialist.

**WARNING:** this man is particularly dangerous. He is now responsible for the death by arson of a number of people. He caused these deaths for the 10 per cent protection racket of his paymasters known by the initials IMF and CBI.

On 10 November he said any attempt to smash this 10 per cent racket would be 'far graver', than the loss of life he has now caused by his blackmail of firefighters.

**IF YOU SEE THIS MAN** — do not tackle him by yourself, organise in the labour movement.

**REES IS ALSO WANTED FOR QUESTIONING** in connection with police attacks on Grunwick pickets, the kidnapping of Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball, and the protection of fascists.

The Irish working class are seeking his extradition for countless crimes he has committed there.

# FIGHT FOR THE FIREFIGHTERS!

# Editorial

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## Scabs in uniform

CAPITALIST armies are not established to save lives. The protection of working people and their homes is not part of their duties.

It was the exact opposite when the British Army were in Aden, Cyprus, Oman or any of their other post-war 'campaigns'. Neither is it their role today in the north of Ireland where they are the instrument for inflicting the most concentrated repression in Western Europe.

And the protection of working people is not why they are being used by the Labour Government to fight fires.

From a practical point of view they are not an efficient weapon. Senior fire officers have warned that the troops will only increase the risk of death because the soldiers are untrained. For the Government their usefulness lies elsewhere.

First, by using the troops the Government can make it appear they are doing all they can to prevent the loss of life. Everything, that is, apart from giving the firefighters a decent wage.

### A POLITICAL WEAPON

Second, using the troops in this strike is a way of making working people familiar with the use of armed forces in industrial disputes.

The use of the army in the Glasgow firemen's strike in 1973 was the first for 20 years. Under Labour it has been quickly followed by the Glasgow corporation dust drivers' strike in 1975, and the intervention of the RAF in the assistant air traffic controllers dispute this year.

If 'saving lives' is the yardstick, what if nurses went on strike? Wouldn't a more widespread power workers' strike 'threaten lives'? Coal is necessary to maintain electricity, isn't this a justification in using troops to break a miners' strike?

But of course it is not a question of saving lives. The troops are being used as a political weapon, in what for the Labour Government is a political dispute. It is political because the whole attempt of the Government to jack up profits through the 10 per cent norm is at risk in this strike.

Other supposed 'neutral' weapons in the hands of the employing class are utilised. Rees appears on television to put the Government's case. There is no question of allowing the Fire Brigade Union the right of reply. The myth of 'balanced' presentation of opinions and views goes up in smoke — literally.

A comparison can be made with the use of troops in the North of Ireland. Year after year we have been deluged with propaganda stating how 'our boys' are upholding civilisation in Ireland. Recently a rare television exposure reported torture in the North of Ireland. The reaction of Rees was to say the programme should never have been shown.

### THE IRISH LABORATORY

The full horrors of Britain's war in Ireland have not yet returned to the mainland. But the signs are there. For instance Special Patrol Group violence on the Grunwick picket lines on 7 November was remarkably similar to the violence used by the Royal Ulster Constabulary against the civil rights demonstrators in 1968/9.

That violence and its subsequent multiplication will be subject to an International Tribunal into Crimes Against the Irish People next year. Hopefully the full extent of Britain's war against Irish people will then be on display. The use of Ireland as a 'laboratory' for repressive techniques against British workers will become clearer.

The use of troops in the firefighters' strike is a laboratory test as well — not for naked repression, as in Ireland, but a rather more subtle campaign of public relations and strike breaking. If the Government gets away with it this time, we can be certain that there will be new escalations in the use of the troops for scabbing.

The solution to the immediate problem is a simple one: pay the firefighters a living wage. But there is more at stake. A victory for the firefighters would be an important blow against state intervention against strikes, but the labour movement must wage a campaign for the disbanding of all those special forces — such as the SPG — set up to deal with strikes.

# Anti-Nazi League launched

SCHOOL STUDENTS, together with the Anti-Nazi League, are handing out 25,000 leaflets in London schools. The leaflets warn that the 'Nazi NF means no future, no freedom and no fun'. They aim to counter the racist Bulldog paper being put out by the National Front in the schools.

The campaign is one of the first steps in a propaganda offensive by the League — formed last Thursday. The ANL aims to unite all those who oppose the growth of the Nazis in Britain 'irrespective of other political differences'.

The League's plans at present do not include mass action on the streets. They see their main task as countering the fascist propaganda campaign, with the aid of

a £100,000 fund drive also launched last week.

The League's activities on this front are also underway with 35,000 copies of an anti-National Front leaflet being distributed for the 12 November by-election in Bournemouth where the Front is standing a candidate.

The sponsorship for the campaign is broad, involving over 30 left MPs who see the campaign as 'an alternative to streetfighting'

as Neil Kinnock put it at Thursday's press conference.

Kinnock is one of the appointed officers of the campaign. Others include Peter Hain (press officer), Ernie Roberts, prospective parliamentary candidate for Hackney (treasurer), and Paul Holborow of the Socialist Workers Party (national organiser).

It was unclear whether others leading the campaign shared Kinnock's view. But for the time being at least the activities of the campaign will be devoted to widening the leafletting campaign and seeking further sponsorship for the campaign including figures from the entertainment world, sportsmen and women.

Even Liberal and Tory MPs who feel they should unite against the Nazis are invited to join the campaign although

whether they would extend their support for a campaign of action seems dubious.

Tariq Ali, editor of Socialist Challenge, welcomed the forming of the League last week, putting his name forward as a sponsor:

'The growth of the anti-fascist movement in this country is phenomenal. But the lack of unity in action is deplorable. If the Anti-Nazi League can meet this need it must be supported. The first step could be a democratic national conference of all those active in the struggle and a national demonstration in the new year' he said.

'Last week the All-London Committee of Anti-Racist and Anti-Fascist Committees called on anti-fascist committees for a national conference.'

# THE NATIONAL FRONT IS A NAZI FRONT!



**STOP THE NATIONAL FRONT!**  
Anti Nazi League

## Freedom for whom?

ALAN SOSKIN — railway worker and member of the Workers' League — went to a meeting of the National Association of Freedom in West Ewell last month. On 4 November he appeared in Epsom Court charged with using 'threatening behavior' and 'insulting words' at the meeting — contrary to section five of the 1936 Public Order Act.

He explains below just how little value NAFF — the well-known lovers of liberty for Grunwick sweat-shops — attach to even the most fundamental democratic rights.

In court the prosecution alleged I had been shouting abusively and had raised my fists 'in

a highly aggressive manner', with the object of striking a NAFF steward. What the evi-

dence showed was that NAFF attract some nasty little thugs who despise democratic rights.

In the face of the star speakers — Norris McWhirter and Robert Moss — I exercised one of the oldest-established civil rights in a bourgeois democracy — heckling. I was told to shut up by the stewards. The chairperson asked if everyone could hear at the back of the hall. I replied, 'The Grunwick strikers can't hear you.'

McWhirter talked about unions having 'too much power'. I yelled out, 'rubbish'. I was approached by a character who slapped me on the shoulder. Others tried to intimidate me into silence. I stood up to protest against this infringement of my democratic rights. More NAFF stewards swarmed over to me.

After a brief scuffle I was dragged over the seats towards the exit — and the coppers took over. They turned out to be top-ranking officers — Chief Superintendent Jackson and Inspector Jenkins, both of the Z-division of the Metropolitan police.

### LOONY

In Court, the main prosecution witnesses — two NAFF members and an ultra-right loony — were in shambles. One even admitted committing a technical assault.

I could not reasonably be convicted on such flimsy evi-

dence, and was acquitted on both parts of the charge. But there's a sting in the tail. I had to retain a solicitor and counsel to fight the charge, and I lost a day's pay. I was assaulted by NAFF thugs and although I won the case — leaving the Court without a 'stain on my character' — the judge ordered me to pay £40 towards legal aid. All for contesting a charge which should never have been laid in the first place!

### VINDICTIVE

This vindictive decision could not have been made in the Crown Court — where legal fees are paid from central funds; but the Public Order Act is designed to exclude the right to trial by jury.

The lessons are clear enough. Ruling class justice will not work for the left. The NAFF knows this — that's why it uses the law against the labour movement. It has nothing to lose.

Defending ourselves against law is part of the class struggle, like defending ourselves against the boss at work. We can't rely on the law to protect ourselves.

NAFF is exposed by this case as a disgusting anti-democratic bunch of cowboys whose claim to freedom does not extend to allowing those who disagree with them their freedom to heckle. And NAFF are not above using strong-arm tactics to restrict that freedom.

# OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

## News from nowhere

### Journalists confess

THE DAILY MAIL, flagship of the Associated Newspapers Group, is in the vanguard of the attacks on workers seeking to defend their living standards. At this very moment, the Mail's elite corps of investigators is combing the country for the first victim of Merlyn Rees's 'burn, baby, burn' policy. Only they won't quite put it that way.

Of course, it would be utterly hypocritical for the stout and upright Hon. Vere Harmsworth's newspaper group to breach the dreaded pay policy for its very own staff. They just wouldn't do any such thing.

Wrong. Last week 250 representatives of National Union of Journalists chapters in the local and provincial press met to discuss their national claim for a £23 weekly pay rise. They were surprised to hear what the mothers and fathers from the chapters in Associated Newspapers' provincial outposts had to say. One by one they stood up to report under-the-counter deals for pay rises of between £3 and £15. According to one FoC, it was like being at a Billy Graham confessional.

What's more the increases, intended to head off militancy, are purely interim. The national settlement, which the union wants paid from 1 January, will be added on top.

Local and provincial journalists are among the worst paid white-collar workers. A chief reporter can gross as little as £50 a week; while on Fleet Street it is not unknown for reporters to live on their expense accounts. Needless to say none of this dissuades the Street of Shame's hacks from hammering workers struggling for a living wage. Over the past few days, however, readers of the Daily Mirror have been spared such diatribes, thanks to the withdrawal of labour by the NUJ chapel. The Mirror journalists are demanding increases of £3,000 a year.

### MacQueen (by appointment)

THE NATIONAL Association for Freedom detests illegality — by workers, that is. A particular target has been Post Office workers, in connection with union plans to boycott services to South Africa, and against the sorters' boycott of Grunwick mail. NAFF's policy clearly explains its choice of branch organiser in Strathclyde.

He is Hamish MacQueen, who was convicted in September 1974 of illegally broadcasting 'Radio Free Scotland'. No doubt NAFF's line on Scotland — strongly anti-independence and anti-devolution — was another factor influencing MacQueen's appointment. He was a prospective candidate for the Scottish National Party.

When a London representative of NAFF was informed of these facts by the new Scottish left-wing paper 7 Days, he said they would be taking 'immediate action'. By way of the iron rule of law, no doubt.

### Fair cop

LATEST in the 'Hitler's Children' saga. The officer charged with the official investigation of the prison deaths of Andreas Baader, Jan Karl Raspe, and Gudrun Ensslin is General Erwin Schule. The Paris daily Le Matin reported in its 11 November issue that Schule was a prominent Nazi, joining the Assault SS in 1933 and the National Socialist Party itself two years later. Obviously someone with an

instinct for self preservation. Schule offered his services to the Allied armies in 1945 to track down Nazi war criminals.

When these details first emerged last August, they were denied by the Baden Wurttemberg Justice Ministry. But Schule did not deny them when he was approached by Le Matin.

The last ex-Nazi exposed in these pages was Hans Martin Schleyer, the unlamented kidnap victim. We pointed out then that the personnel of the West German state and political parties had changed remarkably little from Nazi days. The appointment of Schule — who can no doubt be relied upon to produce an objective report — only confirms that assessment.

The only other paper to pick up on our Schleyer story, the London Evening Standard, tried to discredit it by associating our sources with the East German Government. In case the Standard wants to follow this one up, we can tell them where to look: the US Archives in West Berlin, which include Schule's own curriculum vitae, written for an application for promotion in 1943.

### What the tea leaves foretell

BROOKE BOND's advertising, to judge by a recent example in The Guardian, is more than especially tasteful. It informs us in so many words of that company's highly profitable exploitation of the Indian sub-continent. Sample: 'We struck roots in Indian soil 77 years ago, a small team of 96 men, enamoured with Indian tea. And like the mighty banyan tree we flourished over the years...'

This advertisement appeared on 7 November, the same day that the storm troopers of the Special Patrol Group were assaulting the Grunwick mass picket. The connection might not seem immediately obvious, until you open a packet of Brooke Bond tea. These presently contain a series of 'Police File' picture cards — disgusting pieces of police state propaganda which include exotic and laudatory descriptions of the Special Branch, search powers, Interpol, police-army co-operation and gun chases.

### Keeping up the standard

DANCES WERE the bait with which the Tories once lured wayward youths. All this, it seems, has now changed. The Federation of Conservative Students' stall at Liverpool University this term offered freshers a different attraction: NATO. On display were the alliance's handbook, and a colourful booklet on The Eurogroup which comes with pretty pictures of NATO's weaponry.

As the alliance's secretary-general explains in the introduction: 'The account illustrates how, in an informal and pragmatic way and with the minimum of bureaucratic apparatus, the Eurogroup has been able to make a number of substantive European contributions to the common defence.'

From which News from Nowhere can only conclude that Tory students may now look forward to shooting Catholics in Belfast, steering armoured cars in Bonn, or sailing aircraft carriers threateningly along Italy's shores. On the other hand, their meetings may already be packed with eager KGB operatives...

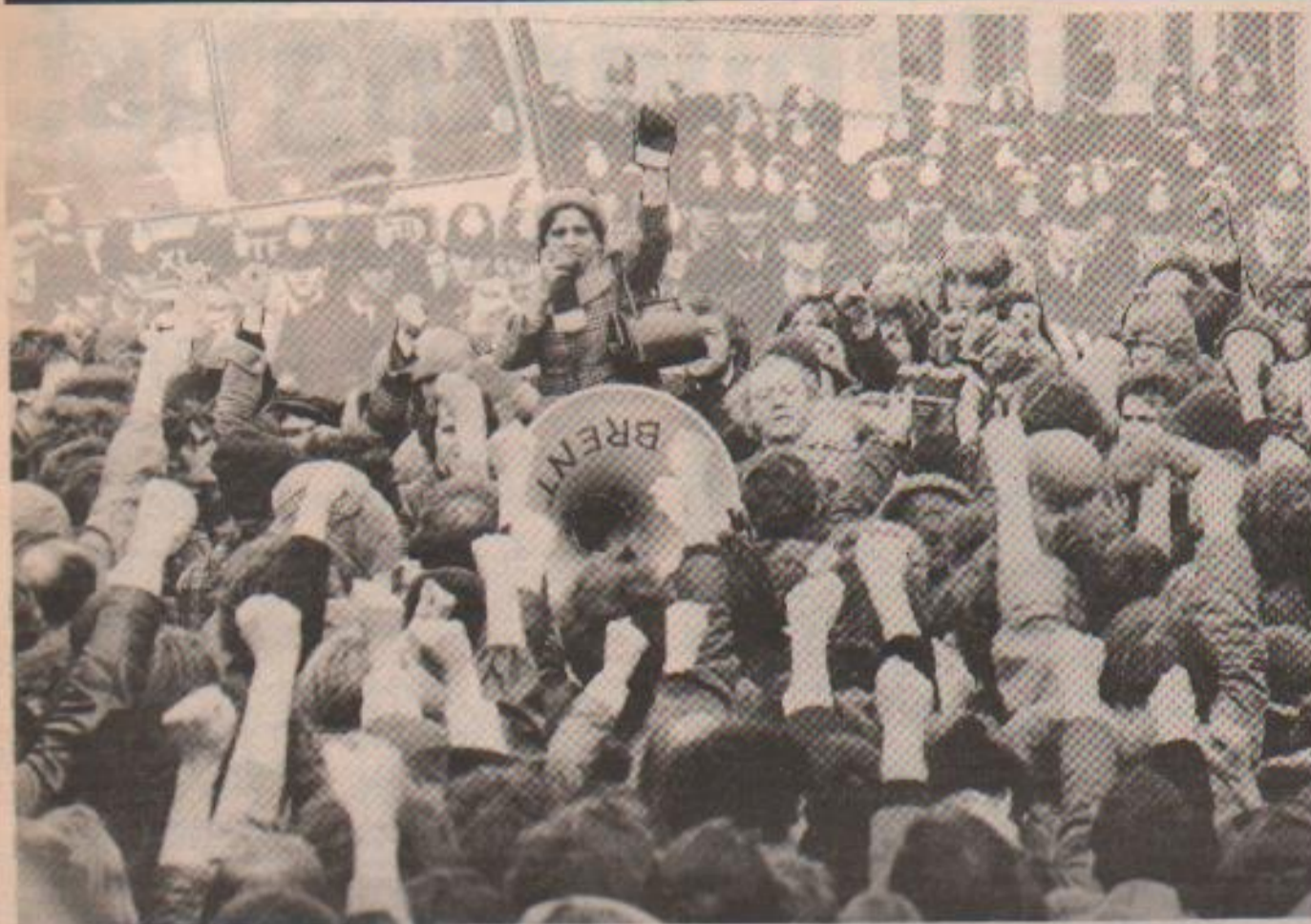


Photo: ANDREW WARD (Report)

# Why the battle of Grunwick goes on

LAST Monday, strike leader Jayaben Desai raised a clenched fist in defiance of the actions of the company cops, and as a symbol of the strikers determination to carry on.

The mass picket heard the strike committee's plans for the next stages in the battle of Grunwick. The most immediate is a mass lobby of the TUC on 23 November, the day the general council next meets. It is expected to be an angry lobby, at which trade unionists will be able to express the disgust they feel at the inactivity of the official leadership of the trade union movement on the Grunwick dispute.

Emphasising this will be the token hunger strike which some members of the strike committee are expected to start next week. They will be starving themselves for a number of days, outside Congress House.

### MASS ACTION

The strike committee is also finalising plans for another day of mass action. It is likely this will be 12 December. The strike committee is appealing for one-day stoppages in support. Already groups of workers, including Kent miners and London building workers, have pledged support.

The police violence on 7 November was the most intense seen so far. Labour MP James Marshall commented later that he was 'appalled... by the degree of violence' the police 'exhibited to many pickets'.

These complaints and the numerous photographs of police brutality cut no ice with Merlyn Rees. He said: 'The police have my full confidence and the confidence of the Government. I

will repudiate anyone who denies that'.

But no one is likely to deny that the police outside the Grunwick factory are getting the full backing of the Labour Government. Rees and friends have shown time and time again where they stand on Grunwick.

But while the TUC and the Labour Party wash their hands of the strikers, rank and file trade unionists continue to respond. A shining example are the Hounslow hospital workers.

Picture left shows sister Cath Cooney of Hounslow and two of her colleagues helping one of the victims of police violence.

A series of local conferences are being organised to co-ordinate such support for the Grunwick strikers. The South-East region of the TUC — secretary Jack Dromey — will be organising one for its area, and others are being planned for elsewhere.

Sad to say, such help will come too late for a horse named Sulphuric which last week fell and broke its neck just as it was about to win a race. The horse in question was owned by a Mr. G. Ward. Wreaths should be sent to him, c/o Grunwick factory, Chapter Road, Brent, London.

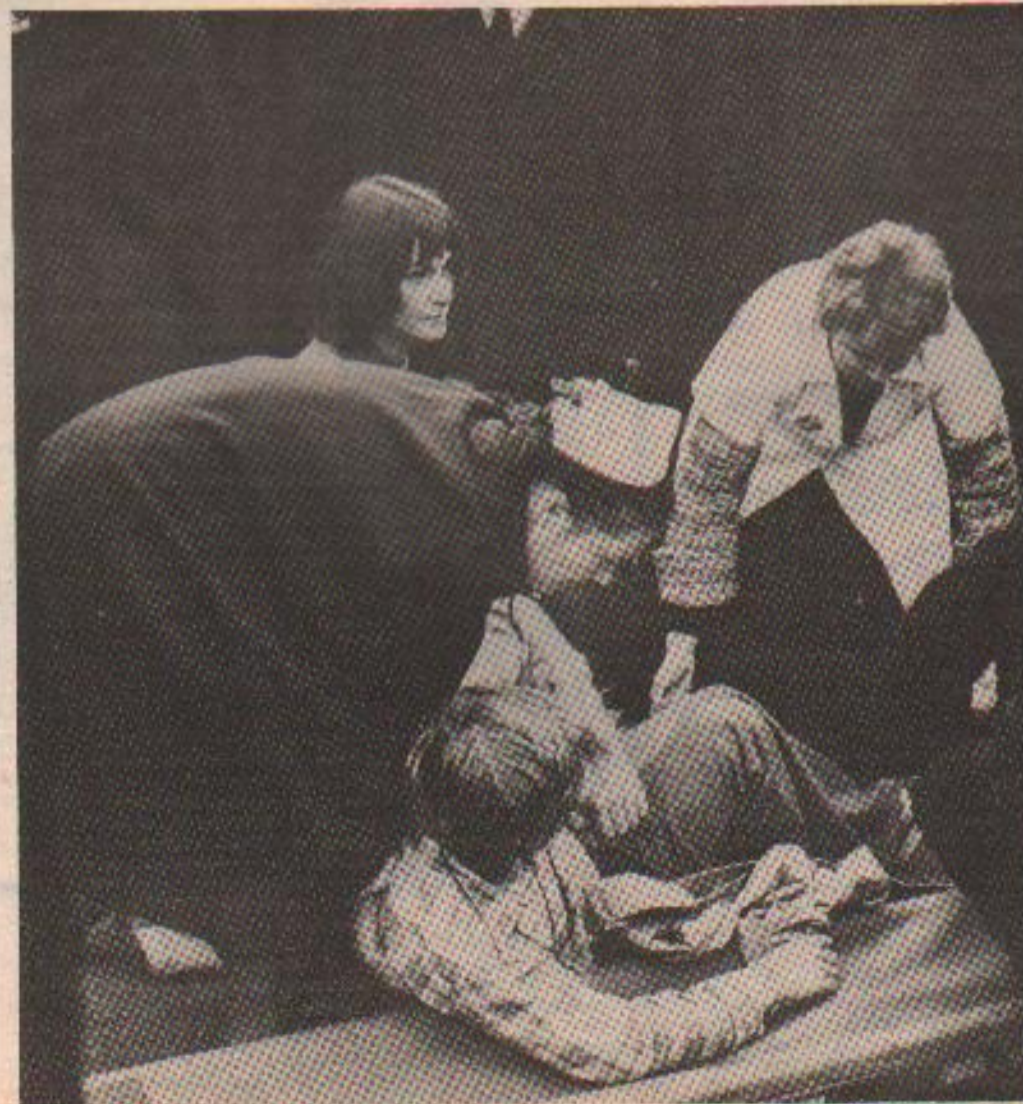


Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (IFL)

### THE BATTLE OF GRUNWICK



view from the left  
By Geoff Bell, Nick Gosling, Jonathan Silberman, and Tessa van Geldern

30p **Revised edition PAMPHLET**

The Battle of Grunwick: View from the Left, now in its second reprint, is published by Socialist Challenge at 30p plus 10p postage. Orders for five or more post free, 20 or more copies post free and 10 per cent discount. Cash with orders, to: Falgout Ltd, 328-9 Upper Street, London N.1.

# Police are really bugging us!

## 'D'ye ken John Peel?'

**MORE ALARMING** information has leaked out on what sort of data is held on the files of the British police and the Army in the north of Ireland. This data contains not only 'facts', but hearsay, membership of subversive organisations like the Anti-Blood Sports League and even data about the known associates of suspects. Now police have categorically refused to say how a routine inquiry to the Police National Computer provided them with the information that a car owner was a prominent member of the Anti-Blood Sports League.

**THE STORY** started on 23 January this year. PCs William Robertson and George Hurst were patrolling a service station on the M6 when they saw a Ford Cortina left unattended. They checked with the Police National Computer Unit at Hendon.

Through this unit any police officer can radio in by walkie talkie and get the following information simply from the registration number of a vehicle: 'If the vehicle is stolen, which area it was stolen from, what time it was stolen, the crime book reference number. 'If the vehicle was not stolen: the name of the owner, the owner's address, the length of time he or she has owned the vehicle.

### DESECRATING

But our two constables found out a little bit more. Last month the car-owner and two others appeared in court charged with desecrating the grave of the 18th century huntsman, John Peel. John Kay, prosecuting, said 'The car was checked out on the Police Computer. He (the police officer) was also told that the owner was a prominent member of the Anti-Blood Sports League.'

Then a magazine of the

computing industry, **Datalink**, took up the inquiry. They first quizzed Scotland Yard, but were told that the Police Computer was the responsibility of the Home Office. So they asked the Home Office.

### CONSTRAINT

'This is a very complicated thing' **Datalink** was told. 'The Police are responsible, within certain constraints laid down by the Home Office, for information on the file.' What are the constraints? 'It mustn't exceed a certain amount of space' was the only concrete reply which the magazine received.

There are a number of possibilities which could have led to the 'John Peel' case. The vehicle might have been stolen, (it wasn't). The vehicle might have been registered in the name of the Anti-Blood Sports League, (it wasn't).

The other possibility is that the vehicle registration file at the PNC has an area in it in which can be stored any information the police see fit concerning the owner of that vehicle.

There are 12 million or so car owners in Britain.



**Datalink** concludes: 'As much of the vehicle information is either numeric in nature or can be readily identified via the use of codes there ought to be room to store little odds and ends — although the system obviously isn't big enough to hold everything on everybody. What does seem to be

rather vague are the actual guidelines which govern the information that's held there on the police national computer.'

'Are there any, other than limitations of storage space?'

Because if membership of the Anti-Blood Sports League is held there — what isn't?

## 'We always get our man'

by **RICHARD FIDLER**

**CANADIAN** Solicitor General Francis Fox and top officials of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have repeatedly denied that the RCMP breaks the law in the course of its activities. But since the disclosure of an illegal break-in at the Agence de Presse Libre du Quebec — and the judge's astonishing discharge of the police officers involved — evidence has begun to pile up showing that the APLQ action was anything but exceptional.

This has now been confirmed by individual officers of the RCMP. On the CBC television programme 'The Fifth Estate' on 20 September, members of the force were quoted as saying that illegal wiretaps and break-ins are 'common practice'. They described their participation in such activities. Locksmiths, on the RCMP's payroll as 'informers', described how they regularly assist RCMP agents on some of the more complex assignments.



### OVERZEALOUS

One of the officers interviewed by 'The Fifth Estate' recounted how he and another cop once were listening to the radio while sitting in on a wiretapped conversation when they heard then RCMP Commissioner Maurice Nadon on the radio denying such practices existed. 'There we were sitting there with all the equipment in front of us.'

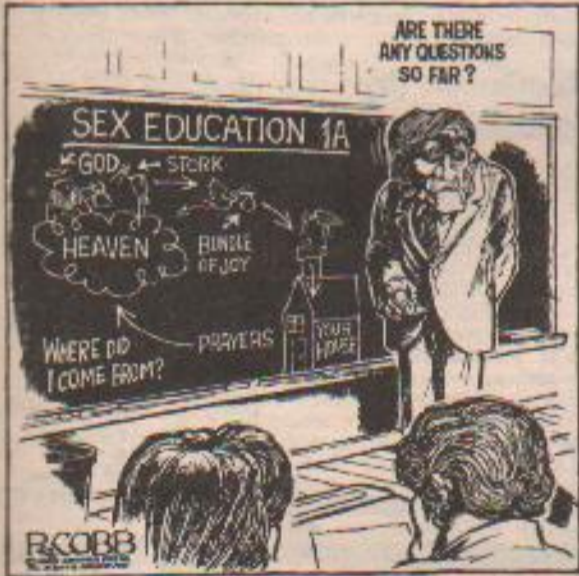
The two officers who agreed to be interviewed indicated that they had decided to speak out because they feared the RCMP brass would disown them if their activities were revealed, thereby leaving them alone to face the rap. They cited recent statements by retired RCMP Deputy Commissioner William Kelly, an unofficial spokesperson of the

force, that illegal activities were the work of 'overzealous' junior officers.

Recent news reports confirmed that the RCMP carries on extensive surveillance of trade unions, farmers' organisations, the New Democratic Party, and other left-wing political parties. It is certain that such organisations are targets of these illegal methods.

'We know that it is often done in drug cases,' senior CBC producer Ron Haggart told the press, 'but this type of surreptitious entry is widely used in all types of investigation.'

These disclosures show that the conduct of Canada's political police is essentially similar to that of its US counterparts, the FBI and CIA. They indicate that illegal police activity may be as widespread in Canada as it is south of the border.



## The Pope and friends

continued from back page.....

ians to join such a party ... and fight from the inside to ensure that a decision like this goes no further than the conference minute book.'

It is debatable whether such Catholic 'entryism' is necessary since the Scottish Council of the Labour Party has been bending over backwards to explain that there is a world of difference between conference and Government policy!

That is certainly true. The fight now must be to demand that the Government drops its anti-abortion plans and implement conference policy. One piece of

legislation which will be worthwhile is the repeal of Sections 58 and 59 of the 1861 Offences Against the Person act. This archaic law was recently dug out to prosecute a 14-year-old girl who took laxatives and a hot bath to try and induce an abortion, and her brother for helping her procure it.

The office of the Director of Public Prosecutions last week admitted that it had made a mistake and a Royal Pardon is likely.

But that is not enough. There is nothing to stop this dangerous law being used in other cases. Already there is talk of a Private Member's Bill or a 10-minute Bill to wipe it off. That's the sort of abortion legislation we want.



These racist posters and slogans, more at home in the Third Reich than a North London newspaper office, have now been removed from the walls of the Southgate Gazette and the journalist who put them up, a member of the reactionary Institute of Journalists, has been

warned. The posters had decorated the wall for months, tolerated by the Institute members on the newspaper, until North London NUJ branch sent local officials to see the paper's management. They demanded that the IJ member responsible be given a formal

reprimand, with a warning that if he ever displayed racist posters again he would be instantly dismissed for grave misconduct. Branch secretary Howard Hannah told them: 'I am sure you will agree that the spread of racism should be resisted at every turn. Newspapers bear a

particular responsibility in this. Clearly, therefore, a display of such disgusting material is intolerable — especially in a newspaper office.' Shown the evidence of the wall decorations, management had little choice but to agree to the NUJ's demands.

## MULTI-RACIALISM

A threat to our children's future



HOW IT USED TO BE...



HOW IT IS NOW!

In only 30 years, the face of Britain has been changed by coloured immigration. Coloured immigration not only makes less and less room for British people it threatens our future...

## As miners' leaders plan local deals £135 - and now!

by Geoffrey Sheridan

*THE COURSE of the miners' pay claim has become a little too predictable for comfort. As Socialist Challenge reported last week, the strategy of the right wing of the mineworkers' executive is to delay for as long as possible any action on the demand for a £135 basic wage for coal face workers.*

*The immediate blocking device is the attempt to swing local productivity deals, with the firm support of the Government, the Coal Board, and Joe Gormley's wreckers who hold a narrow majority in the NUM leadership.*

OVER the past few days, the area executives in Lancashire and Leicestershire have joined the pleas from a number of pits in the Midlands for the Coal Board to conclude local incentive schemes.

The NUM national executive at its meeting last Thursday — far from condemning such moves as counter to the national ballot result, which showed 55 per cent against the divisive productivity carve up — spent most of its time weeping over the ballot.

Gormley even had the temerity to announce that he had been unable to locate any legal loophole that might render the

ballot invalid. Instead the right contented itself with a 14 to 8 vote to 'deplore' the activities of the left executives who had successfully campaigned against the incentive plan.

### MOUNTAIN

While Gormley & Co now sit back for a report on special payments already being made in some districts, the press is doing its best to build these into a mountain. The reality is somewhat more sobering.

As in every industry, local managements have contrived



JACK COLLINS

perks to speed up production here and there, with a nod and a wink from the local union. A bonus for working in watery conditions is sometimes paid when there's no water. Teach-ins held on a Saturday morning can last 60 minutes, with a full day's pay for attending. Wangles that have been around since the first lump of coal was hewn from the ground.

But the right has a lot to lose, not least the jocular vein of the Government and TUC-backed

pay policy which is bleeding wage packets to satisfy the City leeches. And it is that vein which the miners' claim is threatening to sever.

So far the left leadership in the NUM has made it plain that it will strenuously resist all attempts to carve out local deals, which needless to say would be at the pits that are easiest to work.

Already there have been walk-outs by miners at the Sutton, Silverhill, and Babbington collieries in Nottinghamshire in protest at accusations by union officials that they had voted No in the ballot because of their own 'private' incentive schemes.

Arthur Scargill is right to argue that the unity of the NUM would be at stake if such schemes are stamped through, but his suggestion of withholding union dues is not the best way to fight this.

### STRIKES

As Kent area national executive member Jack Collins points out: 'The only time we've ever had complete unity was in the strikes of 1972 and 74, because of the national power loading agreement which put virtually everyone on the same wage.'

The lesson of that experience is obvious. The struggle for the £135 must begin now. The miners will rapidly find that they have all the support they need from within the labour movement to put the knife to the pay policy. But delay can be fatal.

Every day that passes, with a mounting number of approved pay deals, strengthens the 'legitimacy' of the 10 per cent norm and the 12-month rule. Every day sees a further drop in working class living standards.

## AUEW Broad left Still honouring Scanlon's memory

**THE POLICIES of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers could be a major factor in the fight against the Government's 10 per cent pay norm. The union's national committee, which played an important role in the demands for a return to free collective bargaining, met on Monday. JOHN GRAHAM reports.**

Left wingers in the AUEW are expected to fight for increases of about 30 per cent and reduction in hours, while the right are likely to block any attempt to challenge the Government's pay policy.

The national committee is also expected to try to revive the industry's national agreement, which was suspended during pay restraint. The final policy will go to the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions next month, before being submitted to the Engineering Employers' Federation.

A key part of the political battle within the Engineering Union centres on the second round of the election of Hugh Scanlon's successor. Left wingers have no option but to vote for the Broad Left candidate, Bob Wright, the only alternative being Terry Duffy.

Duffy is an arch right winger, who has made no secret of his support for the Labour Government's wage restraint policy. The Broad Left's national assembly meets in Birmingham on Sunday and will no doubt be celebrating Wright's good performance in the first round of the ballot.

This could help to cover up some facts the Broad Left may

like to forget, for despite Scanlon's open reneging on its policy of opposition to wage restraint, and his contempt for union democracy, the Broad Left has never dissociated itself from him.

And Communist Party member Les Dixon, also a member of the AUEW EC, voted for the resolution which effectively allowed Leyland to sack the tool-makers during their dispute in spring.

Dixon is billed as a main speaker at Sunday's assembly, a sure indication that the Broad Left, far from discussing these issues, will be using the meeting just to whip up support for Wright.

While it is vitally important to prevent Duffy becoming the next president of the AUEW, there is also a need for a national co-ordinators and shop stewards conference in the New Year.

This could launch an independent campaign in support of a pay claim to defend basic rates and reduce the working week to 35 hours without loss of pay.

The Broad Left Assembly is at the Digbeth Civic Centre, Birmingham on Sunday, from 11am to 4pm.

## The threat to teacher militants Farsky and Rich

THREE teachers who have actively opposed the compulsory transfer of teachers by the Inner London Education Authority are being hauled up before the NUT's Professional Conduct Committee on Saturday morning. NUT militants have called for a mass lobby of the meeting.

The case against Dick North, Bernard Regan and Dave Whiteley is being bought by Communist Party member Mr. Farsky and right winger Mr. Richardson, President and General Secretary of the 1,400 strong Inner London Teachers Association.

They claim the three teachers were responsible for disrupting an ILTA council meeting in July when teachers from Ben Jonson school in East London tried to put their case.

Fred Jarvis, the NUT general

secretary has joined in the right-wing witchhunt by sending letters which were circulated by the three teachers to their supporters, as evidence to the Professional Conduct Committee — an action outside his responsibilities and clearly designed to prejudice the case.

The central issue in the case is the compulsory transfer of teachers by the ILEA from one school to another. Farsky and Richardson want teachers to knuckle under the employers' demands. North, Regan and Whiteley have actively fought the proposal.

If the ILEA is allowed to continue this compulsory transfer policy, it could mean a further 600 teachers forcibly moved this year, and the loss of about 120 teaching jobs.

\* The mass lobby is at NUT headquarters, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1.



WORKERS at the Hotel Metropole in Paddington, West London have been on strike for over a month, without strike pay, for a £50 minimum wage. Management are using their union's [GMWU] support for the 12 month rule to resist the claim. Pickets are needed every day, with mass pickets on

Friday between 6 — 10pm. Messages of support, donations and offers of help should be sent to the Strike Committee, 76 Hatherley Road, Walthamstow, London E17. [Tel 01-723 4782]. Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (JFL)

## NUPE rejects 10 per cent offer

THE executive of the National Union of Public Employees this week rejected a 10 per cent pay offer, worth a miserable £4 a week to their lowest paid members. But strong action by rank and file members is still needed to make sure there is no sell out. STEPHEN PAGE, NUPE shop steward, St Andrew's and Hellested hospitals branch, reports.

NUPE's annual conference in May unanimously called for an end to all forms of wage control and instructed the executive committee to submit claims for a substantial increase in pay with a basic minimum of £50 a week. The EC was also ordered to prepare action in support of the

claim. But last month, at a conference of the Eastern Division of NUPE, the divisional officer made clear what the pay proposals would be.

He spoke simply of 'a substantial rise', without any reference to a £50 minimum. Instead he

talked about 'the smallness of the national cake'.

He indicated that the Union would negotiate with management as far as possible, and when no light could be seen at the end of the tunnel, they would present the whole package to branches and take a ballot.

A recently formed group called CAN (Campaign for Action in NUPE) who called for the £50 minimum at the annual conference, are now calling on branches to fight to make the union stick to the annual conference decision.

### NATIONAL RANK AND FILE DELEGATE CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, 26 NOVEMBER  
CO-OP HALL, MANCHESTER

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

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

Credentials for delegates from the Rank and File Centre, 285a Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

Communist Party Congress

# Executive victory won't stop the slide



**DELEGATES** to the British Communist Party's 35th Congress cheered and clapped at last Sunday evening's session when a majority of 193 to 137 delegates won the right to a wide-ranging review of the ailing *Morning Star*. It was the first time in decades that the party membership had defeated their leadership.

**DODIE WEPLER** and **OLIVER MacDONALD** argue below that this vote could mark new problems for the incoming executive. The leadership will emerge from Congress with its Draft almost unscathed but a deep-rooted frustration still remains amongst CP members as to whether the executive will be able to halt the decline of the Party in its practical work.

The aim of the first day of the Congress seemed to be to isolate the pro-Moscow opponents of the Draft. But the need to distance the executive from the full-blooded Eurocommunists, like Bob Purdy and Dave Prior, was not forgotten. Gordon McLennan, party secretary, set the tone in his opening address.

He emphasised the dangers to the party posed by the 'Frenchite splitters', referring darkly to how 'the enemies of the party' welcome such splits. This theme was taken up by speaker after speaker, isolating delegates who were putting the same arguments as break-away New Communist Party supporters.

McLennan also dissociated the leadership from the concept of Eurocommunism. He declared himself as loyal to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as any other CP

the points they contested in the new Draft were either orthodox Marxism, or else they appeared in previous versions of the *British Road*.

He seemed to say 'What on earth is all the fuss about? There is nothing of any importance that is new.' Where the executive felt on weak ground — notably on the leading role of the Communist Party in the mass movement and on the need for strong action against possible military



coups — the executive declared the Draft needed strengthening.

The first debate following the introduction was on whether to accept or reject the Draft. Stuart Bloomfield from Ipswich, the main pro-Moscow speaker against the Draft, wanted more time to discuss out all the issues. He said that any more amendments would get swamped by the 2600 already submitted. Bloomfield argued that the Congress debate on amendments should form the basis of a new Draft to be ready for 1979. In the meantime, the existing programme could be adhered to. This conciliatory gesture seemed to indicate his supporters would not split after the Congress.

George Matthews replying said the party was denounced by its enemies on the left and right for its monolithic internal rules. But when a debate emerges, the same people accuse the party of being in a crisis.

Matthews tongue-whipped the opposition for failing to produce any alternative to the Draft, but Bloomfield's response was unanswerable: how could anyone produce an alternative in the 350 words permitted?

330 delegates backed the executive with 48 in opposition.

Once the amendments began to be debated, the consequences of the inability of delegates to provide complete alternatives emerged. McLennan was the only person to introduce a proposed strategy for the party.



Others in the party who had coherent alternatives were unable to take equal time to develop their ideas before Congress.

The absence of any right to form political tendencies on an equal footing with the majority of the party's executive left delegates without clear political choices between alternative strategies. The lack of inner party democracy did not stop there.

The 22-person committee handling amendments also gave a free hand to the new executive to do as it wishes with over 1300 amendments: they are accepted to be redrafted at the discretion of the executive. Forty were recommended as non-acceptable.

One hundred and fifty amendments were designated for debate at Congress. Of those, the committee chose only those containing the 'sharpest' formulation of the differences. This meant delegates could only choose between the Draft, and amendments which were often the crudest and most extreme formulations. Not surprisingly, all were thrown out by Congress with large majorities.



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

The debate on the new Draft was interspersed with debate on practical work of the party and with a multitude of fraternal greetings from other Communist Parties including from Dinmukhamed Kunayev, Politburo member of the CPSU.

The first theme of debate — 'the broad democratic alliance' — shed light on the role of the executive committee, in its attempts to balance deftly between the different wings of the party. This concept — which was meant to replace 'the anti-monopoly alliance' — was seen as an improvement by the leadership when it was introduced. Not so at Congress.



After delegates argued furiously the merits of the new concept — Jack Woddis of the executive stepped in to declare the executive was in favour of both concepts! The whole debate had been a waste of time, since the new term — the 'broad democratic alliance' — was in fact replacing the old one of 'broad popular alliance', not the 'anti-monopoly alliance' at all!

The executive does not have to appear as an open majority tendency developing its own views during the pre-Congress debate. So the membership was left in this debate on alliances — and others — battling away, only to be upstaged by some nimble footwork from the platform at the Congress.

The debate on the 'nature and role of the party' received even shorter shrift. An amendment from the Eurocommunists spelt out their view of international democratic-centralist organisation. For them, it meant developing a British Marxist tradition, intervening as a centralised 'united collective', with 'close relations' between the party and 'communist movements' in other countries, 'based on independence and equality of each Communist Party'. Their notions are a far cry from the traditions of the Communist International. Only 14 votes were mustered behind this resolution against the executive.

The practical work of the party will not be altered by Congress deliberations. The central question facing the working class — the wage restraint of the social contract — did not even warrant a separate resolution. Instead, Ken Gill — CP member of the General Council of the TUC — argued that unemployment was the number one concern of workers today, covering up for the role of the Communist Party in opposing strikes which threatened to sweep away Phase 2 in the last year. Ken Gill spelt out the alternative: the TUC has the policies, he said, 'because I moved them. Now we just need to implement them'.

The debate on racism and fascism was partly directed against the so-called empty sloganeering of the 'ultra-left'. The mover agreed, with reservations, to leave out the 'No platform for fascists' slogan. But a number of speakers said they would have supported its inclusion if they had had the option. Other resolutions on the party's practical work — even burning issues like that of Ireland — were carried without debate.

In light of the impact which the

Communist Party has made in the women's liberation movement, an astounding feature of the Congress was the tiny number of women delegates, a mere handful of those who spoke, as well as the total absence of any debate on a strategy for building the women's movement itself.

The fight for women's liberation is not treated as integral to the struggle for socialism by the leadership. But even in the debate on the system of alliances where the question of the women's movement appears in the Draft, an off-hand two sentence reference was the only mention of the existence of the movement.

It is equally evident that the women themselves have been unable to make any dent in the programmatic positions of the party. The amendments on gay liberation were remitted, as were the bulk of those on women's liberation.

By Saturday evening outside observers to the Congress would have had the impression that the party was peacefully sorting out the new Draft — without much worry on the part of the executive. But the conference suddenly came to life when a central aspect of the parties practical work was put under the spotlight: the debate on *Morning Star*.

Editor Tony Chater's remarks went little further than his public appeal for the £187,000 deficit and to reverse the annual loss of 2,000 readers, printed two weeks ago in *Morning Star*. But the genuine dissatisfaction with the paper provided a focus for discontent from all corners.



A fiery concluding speech from executive member Gerry Cohen, appealed to party loyalty, and then in desperation claimed there was no difference between the amendment and the emergency resolution.

But when Cohen made an unprecedented plea on the floor of the Congress — backed up by Chairperson McGahey — to remit the amendment to the executive, delegates howled 'Out of order'. As M. Page from Hackney explained: 'We have already waited two years to get our reply to *Morning Star* resolutions remitted at the last Congress'.

A wide range of suggestions came forward on how to journalistically improve the paper and much concrete experience from industrial militants in selling it. Every delegate — including the executive — expressed concern. But the membership remained unconvinced that the executive can halt the decline of the party in such a central aspect of its intervention.

The vote for the amendment represented frustration, but not a hard-hitting alternative strategy for building the party's press with implications in all spheres of the party's intervention. Nevertheless, the 35th Congress of the Communist Party will be marked less by a re-united Party around a new programme and rather more for the question mark delegates placed over the leadership's ability to reverse the party's declining fortunes.

Oliver MacDonald was the author of last week's *Battle of Ideas: The Communist Party in Crisis*.



Glum looks at Congress top table. Gordon McLennan is on the right.

Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

## Socialist Unity meets in London to discuss How to fight in elections

## A programme for action

With only days to go before the Socialist Unity Conference in London, Pat Arrowsmith, well known peace campaigner, has added her name to the dozens of trade unionists and socialist militants backing the conference. In addition, Colin Talbot and Lewis Davies, two members of the NUS Executive have also signed, in a personal capacity.

The agenda before the conference will be deciding an interim programme for Socialist Unity — including items such as what attitude militants should take towards the Labour Government, where to stand candidates, and the organisation of Socialist Unity before and after the elections.

Socialist Unity cannot pretend

to be a national alternative to Labour, but by presenting a programme of struggle uniting militants both inside and outside the Labour Party it can make sure that the interests of working people are not submerged in some 'commonsense' electoral compromise.

Everybody at the conference

will have voting rights, because they are the people who will be campaigning for the policies of Socialist Unity.

Women supporters of Socialist Unity will be meeting before the conference at 11 o'clock in the conference hall to discuss how they should organise in the campaign and build further support for the Socialist Unity in the women's movement in particular.

This week we publish extracts from some of the documents submitted for discussion and voting to the conference. Ted Coxhead explains why the IMG will be arguing for the slogan:

'For a Labour Government — build a socialist alternative' at the conference.

In a subsequent issue we will be printing material from Big Flame explaining why they are against this slogan at this stage.

We ask our readers to make sure that their area is represented at the conference on 19 November. We ask you to circulate the letter of support for the conference and get militants to read and discuss the documents for the conference.

Letters on Socialist Unity and views on the conference in particular are welcomed by Socialist Challenge.

The programme below has been jointly submitted by Big Flame and the International Marxist Group for voting on at the Socialist Unity conference.

**For a Guaranteed Decent Standard of Living.** No to all wage controls — for an immediate across-the-board increase to fully compensate for the losses of real wages we have suffered. Wages, benefits and pensions to be made inflation proof by linking them to rises in the cost of living. A national minimum income of £50 per week for the low paid, unemployed, pensioners, sick and disabled. An immediate price freeze on essential goods.

**Stop Unemployment — No Sackings, No Redundancies.** Fight productivity deals and natural wastage. Replace every job lost. Guarantee jobs for all by a 35-hour week, with full pay. Nationalise under workers' control all firms threatening closures. No unpaid lay-offs. Work or full pay. Defence of women's jobs against unemployment.

**No Public Spending Cuts — For Better Services, Not Worse.** Build more houses, schools, hospitals and nurseries. For a crash programme of public works to create more jobs and meet our social needs. A free health service, controlled by its workers and users. Education is a right not a privilege, stop the fees increases. Housing for people not profits. Stop the run down of direct works. A freeze on rents and rates. The right to fuel, at cheap prices.

**Full Rights and Liberation for Women.** No discrimination in work or benefits. For legal and financial independence for women. End the co-habitation rule, the married wo-

men's rate and 'Head of Household' rule. Free abortion and contraception on demand — A woman's right to choose. Nurseries for all who want them, controlled by those who use them.

**Fight Racism, Stop the Fascists — Full Rights for Black People.** No to all racist discrimination. No platform for the Nazi National Front to spread their racist poison. End all immigration controls, there's room for everyone but the bosses. Full support for the right of black people to defend and organise themselves against racist and fascist attacks. **Support International Struggle of the Working Class — Towards Socialism.** For the right of the Irish people as a whole to self-determination, withdraw all British Troops from Ireland now. For the liberation of the peoples of Zimbabwe and South Africa — break all links with the racist regimes. Withdrawal from NATO and all Britain's military alliances. Combat the power of the multinationals, build links between workers of all countries. Build the independent power of the working class. Don't rely on the politicians in Parliament. Our strength lies in our own struggles.

**The Resources Are There to Meet Our Needs.** End all interest payments to the money-lenders. Nationalise the banks and finance houses without compensation. Abolish arms expenditure. Stop all the compensation payments to the former owners of the nationalised industries. **For the Defence of Democratic Rights.** End the police harassment of black people. End state intervention in anti-fascist activities. Repeal the PTA. For an end to State attacks on gay people, their organisation and press.



**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 N.1.

# 'Return Labour, but build a socialist alternative'

**TED COXHEAD**, a member of the National Committee of the International Marxist Group, will be asking the Socialist Unity conference to both stand candidates against Labour in constituencies throughout Britain and call for the return of Labour Government. Below he explains why and how.

THE MARXIST LEFT in Britain has been plagued by the question of what to do about the Labour Party and elections ever since the early days of the British Communist Party.

Either the far left has buried its head in the sands of trade unionism, muttering about what a diversion the elections are, or ritualistically called a critical vote for Labour.

Neither of these approaches have been successful. To ignore elections means leaving the arena free for capitalist politicians — at a time when the masses are showing an interest in political questions. It also means failing to confront the question of who should form a government.

'Critical support for Labour' has often meant in practice simply telling people to vote for

a party with whose policies you fundamentally disagree, and having little else to say in the election campaign.

How to be critical, where to be critical, and how to organise around your criticisms has often been so unclear as to make a 'campaign of critical support for Labour' meaningless.

When Marxists participate in elections they have to try and show how the immediate issues which people are fighting about can be taken up and won. They have to put forward demands and policies which can be fought for through mass action and open up a struggle for socialism — a socialist alternative to Labour's betrayals.

But today it is a stubborn fact that the great majority of working people do not understand the need to build a socialist alter-

native to Labour. They might be prepared to fight the boss at work, or struggle against cuts in the social services. The most class-conscious workers are even prepared to take up issues like racism, women's oppression, Ireland, South African and the defence of democratic rights.

### POLICIES

On particular issues they are even prepared in practice to adopt policies and take actions which are in direct conflict with the traditional methods of struggle that social democracy is willing to countenance.

But the great majority of workers have not yet rejected reformist ideas, they still look to a solution by government that will grant their demands.

The formation of the Labour Party came about because the trade unions broke with the Liberals and formed a party based on the organisations of the working class. This was a step along the road towards freeing the working class from

the interests of the employers and their state.

### RESULT

Yet the result of the break in Britain was the formation of a party which still retained a capitalist programme — despite its trade union base. Marxists have the task of encouraging the working class to continue those steps towards independence it took when breaking from the Liberals, so that it can build a party with a programme that represents its own interests.

To do this the working class has to confront the reformist leaders in direct open political conflict. In elections, the best way of doing this is to stand candidates who can present a socialist alternative.

Since Labour came into office it has whipped its 'left' wing into line. By use of the social contract and its alliance with the union leaders it has been able to police the unions. Its deliberate policies of unemployment and cuts in living standards have

weakened the resistance of working people to Labour's attacks.

Nevertheless a fight back has started — although a halting and hesitant one.

In trade union and parliamentary election the far-left is getting votes that would have seemed impossible a short time ago. On issues like racism, the right to organise in a union, women's rights and the fight against wage freeze, an opposition is swelling up in the ranks.

### OPPOSITION

Standing candidates committed to class struggle policies can help that opposition grow — by arguing for a vote for alternative socialist policies during the election, and pointing out that activity after the election that really counts, if it is aimed at uniting the opposition to Labour's betrayals.

But these candidates must stand firmly against the return of a Tory government — indeed any government of capitalist

parties. The demoralisation sown by the Labour Government in the working class would give them the chance to unleash a massive offensive against the workers' movement.

Also the return of a Tory government would divert the growing radicalisation — a radicalisation that is more and more beginning to oppose the traditional ideas of social democracy — and swing it behind the simple slogan of 'Get the Tories out'.

A re-elected Labour Government, complete with betrayals, will not automatically lead workers to turn their backs on Labour and look to revolutionaries. That has to be fought for.

### CANDIDATES

That is why the IMG argues now for Socialist Unity to stand candidates in elections, candidates who raise the slogan: 'For the return of a Labour Government but build a socialist alternative'.



# FIREFIGHTERS ASK YOUR SUPPORT

**DOUG MACKAY**, a Birmingham branch secretary of the Fire Brigades Union:

“The average firefighter takes home £36 to £46 a week depending on age and marital status. The rate for someone who has passed his qualifications' exam and with four years in the job is £15 below the adult male average wage. And this for a 48 hour week, working shifts. We have to work two weekends out of every three. Even on the weekend off we have to work every Friday night until 9am Saturday morning.

The Government is offering us 10 per cent and an enquiry. What they ignore is that our claim is based on an enquiry which has just reported — The McArthur Report.

Contrary to many stories in the press we do not get any perks. For instance, unlike the police we do not get a rent allowance.

Our claim is for the average male adult wage plus 10 per cent to take account of skills and danger. This is hardly a revolutionary demand.

We are told we can't have our claim because it would mess up the country's so-called economic recover. But they are quite happy to award her royal majesty a £290,000 rise!

We are not responsible for the country's ills. It is the bosses who have thrown 1,500,00 workers on the scrap heap of the dole queue, slashed public expenditure, and let inflation rip.

The press are attempting to brand us as irresponsible baby burners. Let's face it, no one joins the fire brigade who hasn't got a social conscience. But a social conscience doesn't pay the rent or food bills.

We urge all trade unionists to argue our

case with their fellow workers to counter the press and TV propaganda. Our fight is your fight. As the first major group to take on the 10 per cent rule we need your support. The Government knows we are the flag bearers for the public sector. So should you.

Don't fail those who never fail you. Smash the 10 per cent. Support the firefighters!”

**COLIN MIDDLETON** Area Secretary, Tyne and Wear Fire Brigades Union.

“Leading firemen — those who are fully qualified — are on about £47 a week take home pay. I've been in the fire service for 27 years and that's what I get — £47 a week.

If the lowest paid of us packed it in and went on the dole, we'd only be about £5 a week worse off. There are already members claiming family supplement and free school meals for the kids.

In this brigade, I don't think there is one of our members who dissented about

the strike. Feelings are really strong. Rees himself promised us in May that our case was a needy one. We've toed the line for two years. The police go the rise in 1975, but we didn't. We hope the public will stand by us and support us.”

**FRED HILL**, Chairperson, West Midlands Brigade, Fire Brigades Union.

“The only people to blame for any casualties are the Labour Government. We don't take this action lightly. We won't be receiving any strike pay and this is the first strike in the union's history. We have taken part in numerous sets of negotiations and several working parties but all we have been offered is a paltry 10 per cent Strike action has been forced on us.

We will be countering the attacks of the press. We will be issuing leaflets to the trade union movement and we shall be looking to addressing factory, hospital and workplace meetings.

## Labour's human s

*JIM CALLAGHAN says he sympathises with the firemen, but that the 10 per cent norm must be observed by all. Home Secretary Merlyn Rees says that 'incalculable consequences' would result from the FBU strike, that loss of life is threatened.*

The concern of the Labour Government knows no bounds. 11,000 troops are being trained to break the strike. Although Rees himself admits they cannot compensate for the skill and experience of the firefighters, he will not stop the strike by paying the firemen a decent wage.

For Rees the dangers that would result

from breaking the 10 per cent norm would be 'far greater for the community as a whole' than the dangers to life and limb arising from a firefighters' strike.

But who gains from the 10 per cent norm? Certainly not over 10 million trade unionists whose wages are held back whilst inflation rages at 15 per cent. Nor the old age pensioners, who get a meagre £10 Xmas bonus only to go without meat in January. Not the local government and hospital workers, who are being denied a basic minimum wage of £50 by the 10 per cent norm.

But the wealthy certainly do gain from the 10 per cent limit. All it needs is fo

## How to fight back against press lies

The fire fighters are being bombarded with every lie that the mass media can dredge up. On Monday morning, the banner headlines spelt out 'scab' in very large letters.

But the bosses' press 'freedom' is not inviolable. After all it is trades unionists who handle practically every aspect of news production.

So here is a fight-back checklist on the road to press freedom — and victory for the fire fighters!

**Right of reply.** Almost all news is put together by members of the National Union of Journalists. The NUJ has a code of conduct, which all members undertake to abide by. It is backed by disciplinary powers, and any member can bring a complaint against any other member. This is what clause 4 of the code states:

*'A journalist shall rectify promptly any harmful inaccuracies, ensure that correction and apologies receive due prominence and afford the right of reply to persons criticised when the issue is of sufficient importance.'* It is with the fire fighters that the right of reply primarily lies, so make sure your local FBU branch knows about clause 4.

And whenever the media presents a 'concerned citizen' denouncing the fire fighters, demand that a statement of support from your union branch, trades council, women's group, or other organisation is published.

**Press releases.** Make sure one is sent to every local news editor.

**Phone-ins.** Don't presume that only assorted reactionaries ever get on. Demand to be heard!

**Who to contact.** Never take No for an answer. If the editor or reporter doesn't want to know, ask to speak to the union representatives, or arrange a deputation to meet them.

On local papers, the unions likely to be involved are: NUJ (editorial), NGA (typesetting and machine room), NATSOPA (clerical and printing), SLADE (process work), and SOGAT (distribution). On the national papers, the engineering and electricians unions are also involved. On local radio the main unions are: NUJ and ABS. On television, it's NUJ, ABS, and ACTT.

If all else fails: then why not arrange a picket or lobby of your local media? And keep this checklist handy for the next strike.

## How you can help

### DO

OPEN ALL DOORS to the striking firefighters. Invite them to meetings of your trade union branch, trades council, shops stewards committee, Labour Party meetings.

The chief danger the strikers face is isolation from the rest of the trade union movement. The ruling class press will attempt to enflame this situation by a massive campaign of hate.

### DO

Fire enthusiasm for the strikers' by building support groups in localities. These are best established by existing bodies, such as trades councils, public sector alliances etc.

But try and make sure that whatever body is set up, members of the Fire Brigade Union are involved, and the committee as a whole is as broad based as possible.

### DO

Make sure the strike is not lost through lack of fuel. The firefighters are receiving no strike pay, so raise money from them by workplace meetings and collections.

### DO

At least contact the nearest picket line to give your support. The strikers must be re-assured time and time again that they are not isolated.



# FOR

Despite the fact that firefighters have a particularly difficult job and deserve recognition for it, I still support all workers — particularly low paid workers in the public sector — fighting for better wages and protection against inflation.”

**RONNIE SCOTT, Strathclyde region strike committee, Fire Brigades Union:**

“No firemen will assist or instruct troops in the use of equipment. There will be pickets on all fire stations and county buildings. Anyone who wants to support the pickets can do so through the strike committee.”

Our conference decided to take out full page advertisements in the national press. Apart from that we expect the full support of the *Morning Star*, *Socialist Challenge* and *Socialist Worker*.”

# sacrifice

groups of workers to settle within 10 per cent, for shares to rise on the stock market.

Rees says the firemen are getting a good deal, since he has already offered to cut their working week from 48 to 42 hours. Now that's really magnanimous of him. The firefighters have worked a 48 hour week for years. But since when has a 42 hour week been such a privilege that workers have to forego a decent wage to achieve it?

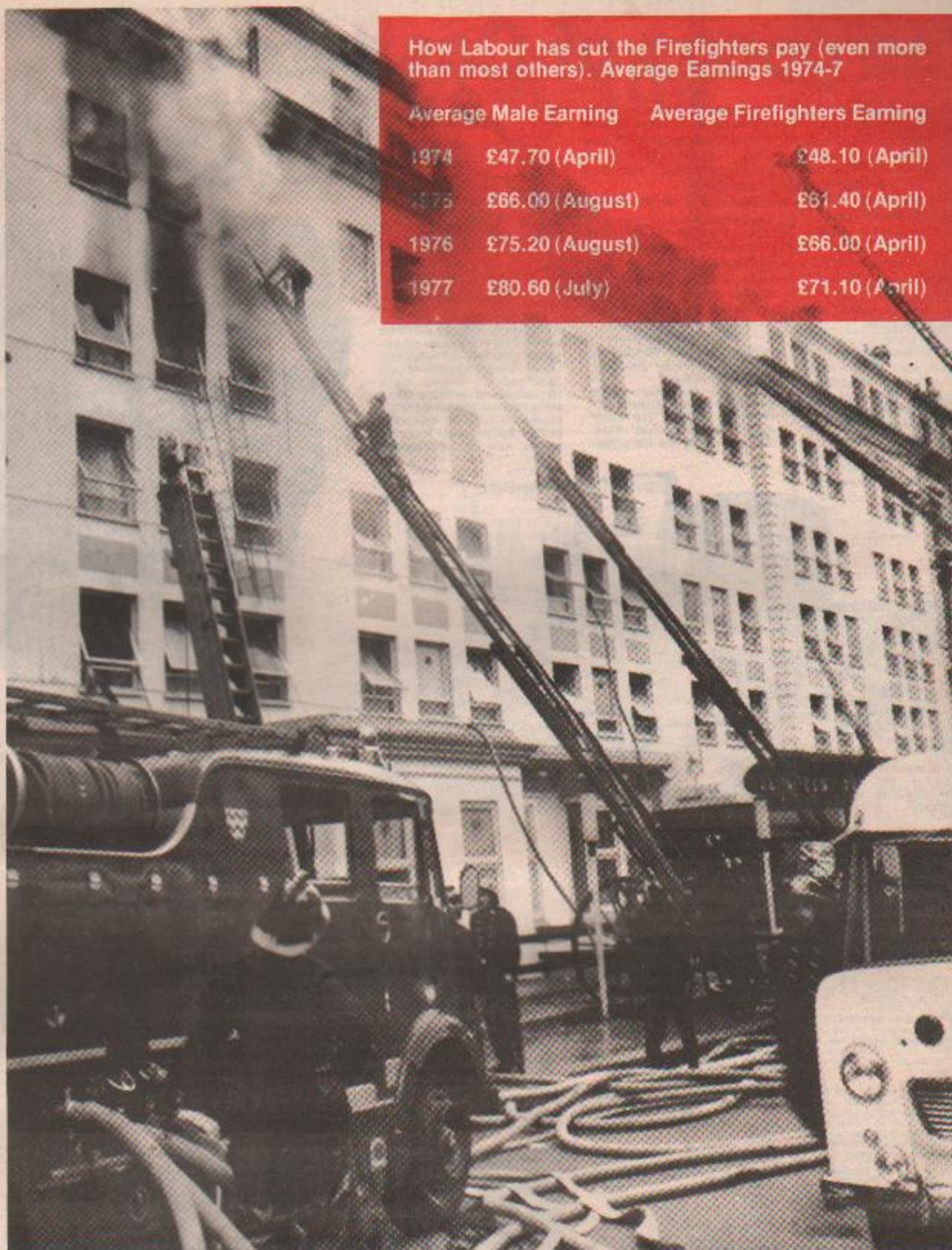
For Rees and the Labour Government profits and the 10 per cent norm come before saving peoples lives. That is what they mean when they talk about 'sacrifice'.

# DON'T

Stay at work, if you think there is a fire-risk. Workers have every right to refuse to work if their safety is at risk. Those working with dangerous chemicals are especially advised to stay at home. Such action is also an appropriate way trade unionists using their economic strength to force the Government to stop playing with fire.

# DON'T

Pay too much attention to 'official' statements from the executive of the FBU. Remember they voted against strike action. It is far better to establish contact with the rank



How Labour has cut the Firefighters pay (even more than most others). Average Earnings 1974-7

	Average Male Earning	Average Firefighters Earning
1974	£47.70 (April)	£48.10 (April)
1975	£66.00 (August)	£61.40 (April)
1976	£75.20 (August)	£66.00 (April)
1977	£80.60 (July)	£71.10 (April)

and file firefighters — it was they who voted for the action.

# DON'T

Forget the importance of the FBU strike. They are fighting against the 10 per cent limit, and that fight is one that is necessary to ensure the health and safety of working people. A victory for the firefighters will be defeat for the entire Government strategy of insisting on another year of wage cuts.

## Solidarity the Brum example

The Birmingham 'Public Sector Pay Action Committee' was set up from a conference of over 150 stewards in October. It was formed out of the realisation that public sector workers face a common enemy in the fight to defend their living standards — the governments cash limits and 10 per cent pay guidelines.

In Birmingham they knew that any group of workers, like the firefighters which challenged the 10 per cent limit, would face a battle with the Government, their supporters in the union leaderships, and the attacks of the press.

So to pursue a common fight against the cash limits, they have decided to hold a one day strike on 23 November of all Birmingham public sector workers.

With the FBU now in the front line, the Action Committee is turning all its resources behind them. The 23 November demonstration will be a massive show of solidarity with the FBU, so strengthening the fight of all

public sector workers. 15,000 copies of the Action Committee Broadsheet building for the 23 will be supplemented by at least two further bulletins.

The first is being written by firefighters to strengthen morale and organisation within their own ranks.

Teams of firefighters and members of the Pay Action Committee will tour hospitals, local government and water services depots in Birmingham to build support for the demo. Broader solidarity with the strike will be discussed at the next meeting of the Pay Action Committee on 16 November.

# The goons of Castlereagh

On Tuesday 24 February 1959, Tory Colonial Under-Secretary Julian Amery had this to say: 'The Government in Kenya and the Prison Service in Kenya is perfectly capable of keeping its own house in order and is doing so. Our contention is that the organisation of the Prison Service is right and is what it should be and that safeguards against abuse are effective.'

A week later eleven Africans were beaten to death by warders at Hola Detention Camp.

On 27 October the Thames Television programme *This Week* presented a careful study, utilising statements from doctors and solicitors, of the interrogation methods used by the Royal Ulster Constabulary at Castlereagh Barracks, Belfast. Observing the response to this in Parliament and the press, you might be forgiven for thinking you had heard it all somewhere before, writes LIZ CURTIS.

The Northern Ireland Office denounced the Thames programme makers as irresponsible and stated that the lives of police officers would be put at risk.

Kenneth Newman, Palestine-trained Chief Constable of the

RUC, was 'furious'. He claimed, 'this force is vitally concerned with human rights...'

As usual, Airey Neave, Tory spokesperson on Northern Ireland stole the show. The broadcast of 'uncorroborated' statements would be just the propa-

ganda tonic the revive the flagging spirit of terrorism, he declared.

Hard on the heels of these denunciations came revamped versions of Newman's claim that prisoners were deliberately wounding themselves. 'Investigations indicate', said the *Telegraph* on 31 October, 'that one hard-line Provisional was given large whiskeys and a box of king-size cigarettes for punching himself in both eyes while in Castlereagh's Interrogation Centre'.

The following day that our Airey, ably assisted by the press, launched his propaganda masterstroke. 'Shame of our Soldiers in Ulster Slams' announced the front page of the *Sun* on 1 November, and the whole debate about torture had been neatly headed off, with the apparently gullible British public being led by the nose into the uncom-



August one of the many people arrested was Leo Martin, who was so badly beaten both by the Army at Fort Monagh and then by the RUC at Castlereagh that his doctor said he didn't know how he had survived: as well as being beaten all over his body, he had sandpaper rubbed over his back, he was hit on the head with a belt, and an attempt was made to strangle him.

## TOOTHPICKS

Many other detainees have made statements describing how they were made to go round the cell on all fours like dogs, had toothpicks inserted under their nails, been spun round by the hair, been threatened with electric shocks, had thumbs pressed into their ears, had a rope tied to the ankles which is pulled every time the victim gives an 'unsatisfactory' answer.

Many of the statements conclude like one made by Mrs Gillespie of Turf Lodge on behalf of her son Jim, arrested in September: 'The Branch men threatened to kill him unless he signed a statement, which he did so, because he said he could not take any more of the beatings and mental torture which they were inflicting on him.'

Such signed statements are the reason for the whole operation. Over 80 per cent of convictions in the no-jury courts of Northern Ireland are obtained on the basis of such 'confessions', which are therefore the foundation of the RUC's much-vaunted success at putting people away.

## TORTURE

Torture to elicit statements, complemented by the no-jury courts, is the lynch-pin of a strategy which essentially in-

volves putting as many young Catholic working class people to jail as possible.

## PROTESTS

Whatever the public silence on this side of the water, protests against torture continue to come from establishment bodies such as the SDLP and the Association of Police Surgeons, from a group of 30 Northern Ireland solicitors who are contemplating a boycott of the courts, from West Belfast trade unionists who organised a protest march down the Falls Road last week, and even from the UDA.

And in the ghettos, torture and the H-blocks are having the same effect on the children that internment did on the generation now in the forefront of the struggle — instilling in them an abiding hatred of British rule.



fortable bunkers of Crossmaglen Barracks.

Amid all the thunder, not one public voice has asked them why, if Castlereagh and other interrogation centres are so spotless, they don't simply throw open the doors and invite us all inside.

The most publicised cases are only the tip of the iceberg. Eddie Rooney, 25, from Ballymurphy, as thrown from a second floor window of Springfield Road RUC station during interrogation on 28 February.

In June, 64-year-old Peter McGrath was driven insane under interrogation at Castlereagh and ended up in an Omagh mental hospital able only to say three words — 'Home.... bath.... hospital'.

During the Queen's visit in

## What's Left

Rates: 3p per word. Display £2 per column inch. Deadline: 3.00pm Saturday before publication.

**BENEFIT** for the Lewisham Defence Campaign in support of the Lewisham 200. Peggy Seeger and Ewan McColl at St. Pancras Town Hall (The Camden Centre), 25 November at 7.45pm.

**DON'T** be seen without your Socialist Challenge badge, 20p plus 7p p&p from Socialist Challenge (Badges), PO Box 50, London N1. Cheques/POs payable to 'The Week'. Bulk orders (10 or more), 15p post free. Cash in advance only.

**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.

## North-West Peoples Festival

A celebration of popular culture and struggle  
A day of fun and politics  
Sun 27 November 11am-11pm at Belle Vue, Manchester.  
Tickets from £2, reduced for OAPs and others. Details from 28 Hathersage Road, Manchester 13. 061-224 5378. Organised by the North West Communist Party.

**RACISM** — The need for black self-organisation. Anarchist Workers Association public meeting, Thursday 24 November, 7.30pm. Centreprise, Kingsland High Street, London. Further information from London AWA, 1 Pearson House, London WC1.

**IMPERIALISM** and Motherhood. Anna Davin, member of the editorial collective of *History Workshop*: a journal of socialist historians, will lead the discussion at a meeting organised by the Institute of Race Relations, Tuesday 29 November, 6.30pm, 247/249 Pentonville Road, London N1.

**IMG FORUM** — 'The Polish Working-Class Opposition'. Speaker: Peter Green. Friday 25 November, 7.30pm. London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London.

**NATIONAL Gay Socialist Conference**. First planning meeting — Saturday 26 November in Phillip. For details of venue ring Phillip on 01-451 0806.

**GAYS** for Socialism — yeah! The badge you've all been waiting for. 3 colours and featuring 2 lavender moles. 20p + 7p p&p, or 15p for 10 or more post free. From Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1. Cheques, POs to 'The Week'.

**SOCIALIST** Theatre Group requires actors/actresses/director for play already underway. Phone after 6pm, Mike on 01-340 2389 or Debbie on 01-226 1794.

**STA Social**, Friday 18 November at 8pm, with disco. At Mile End Teachers Centre, Seager Place off Blindfold Road.

**EUSKAL** Jaiakia (Festival Vasco) Organizado por Euskal etxe, con Enrique Celaya, Mikel Laboa, Xabier Lete y Antton Vitorde en el Acklam Hall, 36 Acklam Road, London W10. Empezar a las seis de la tarde.

**WOMENS VOICE**. November issue out now! Is the pill really safe? More on maternity leave, etc. 20p including postage from WV (SC), 6 Cotton Gardens, London E2.

**CAMDEN** Anti-Nazi Campaign jumble sale, Saturday 19 November, 2pm at Winchester Project, Winchester Road, Swiss Cottage, London NW5.

**7 DAYS in the 6 COUNTIES**  
JOHN MAGEE reports from Belfast.

THE HOLIDAY resort of Newcastle, County Down, was host to the annual conference of the Social Democratic and Labour Party from 4-6 November.

Last year's conference had seen this largely Catholic middle class party split down the middle on the issues of negotiated independence and British withdrawal. Since then a founder member of the SDLP, Paddy Devlin, was kicked out of the party amidst a blaze of publicity and a new rival has emerged — with the formation of the Irish Independence Party.

One could have been forgiven for expecting that such developments would have been fiercely debated by party leaders and delegates, but not a bit of it.

Instead the conference was a real tribute to the party managers. Motions demanding British withdrawal were themselves

withdrawn and a resolution urging discussion of independence for the North was passed over.

The Irish Independence Party was dismissed as 'not just has-beens, but never wasers', while the only reference to Devlin was a comment from party leader Gerry Fitt who said he was sad as Devlin was a 'personal friend'.

What the delegates did do was to give near unanimous support to a new policy document entitled *Facing Reality*.

In fact *Facing Reality* gives a wide choice of 'realities'. There is an emphasis on Loyalist intransigence, but also one on the prospect of 'power sharing'. There is both the 'Irish dimension' and reference to Britain's 'sovereign responsibilities'. In short it is a hot-potch which merely papers over the divisions in the SDLP.

Thus while the Deputy Leader John Hume saw the document as a continuing role for Britain in turning Ireland into a 'beautiful patchwork quilt — united in diversity', two other prominent members, Ivan Cooper and Paddy Duffy, declared, 'we have to make it quite clear that we believe in only one thing — British withdrawal'.

A rather different conference was held the same weekend in the more drab surroundings of Ballymurphy Community Centre in West Belfast. Attended by over 200 militants, it was organised by the Relatives Action Committee, which for the last 18 months has been campaigning on the streets against the removal of political status from Republican prisoners.

A notable feature of this conference was the high level of political debate and the wide

representation of political organisations. Only the SDLP and the Official Republicans were absent.

Enthusiastic support was given to a call from the Independent Socialist Party, Peoples Democracy and the Movement for a Socialist Republic for the building of broad support for a further conference on the general theme of repression which is to take place in January.

Other speakers argued the need to take the issue into the trade union movement and to fight for industrial action in support of the prisoners.

Michael Farrel of Peoples Democracy called for support for the International Tribunal into British War Crimes, soon to be launched in London.

# The Tale of two conferences



Former dictator Papadopoulos (left), doing his Anthony Quinn imitation. He's now able to practice it in the relative luxury of Korydallos prison.

# Greek clampdown on opposition Shadow of the Colonels

by RICHARD CARVER

IT'S NOT just the West German Government which is using 'terrorism' as an excuse to clamp down on oppositionists. Greece, which provided a staging post for the GS9 commando on its Mogadishu mission, has increased repression against the far left in the run-up to this week's general election.

Five newspaper editors and a left-wing singer have been arrested and charged with 'moral responsibility' for organising protests against the Greek role in the Mogadishu raid. They include Iannis Felekis of *Odo-fragma*, the paper of the Organisation of Internationalist Communists, the Greek section of the Fourth International.

## WORLD CONGRESS

With two other far left groups the OIC organised a protest at Athens University, the day of the announcement of the Stammheim 'suicides'. The charges against Felekis also relate to an article on the tenth anniversary of Che Guevara's death and the publication in 1975 of the reso-

lutions of the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International. The latest news is that he may face two years in prison anyway for articles published in April 1974 — before the fall of the military dictatorship.

## AMNESTY

An Amnesty International report published earlier this year is highly critical of the Greek regime's record in bringing the military torturers to justice. Former dictator George Papadopoulos was even given a special chicken dinner on the tenth anniversary of the military coup!

But there's no such laxness in the Karamanlis Government's treatment of the left. Thirteen people were recently sentenced to a total of 28 months in jail for minor charges arising out of a demonstration. One got three and a half years for possession of a megaphone!

Iannis Felekis is no stranger to Greece's prison system. He spent five years in jail under the colonels, and has been repeatedly harassed since. After his arrest on a conspiracy charge in 1976 Felekis told *Red Weekly*:

'My arrest must have looked like one of the more brutal scenes of the evening. As the police threw me to the ground, they kicked me and beat me with their clubs and fists. They were so infuriated that they often hit each other.'

'After a while they took me to a washbasin and shoved my head under water every time they finished a round... Our faces were bruised and lacerated.'

This was the same man who had been tortured for two solid months by the military police a couple of years earlier.

## MESSAGE

Ironically the editors were first taken to Korydallos jail, the rather congenial home of George Papadopoulos, but the authorities quickly realised their mistake and transferred Felekis to Egine.

The five managed to smuggle out a message from Korydallos, entitled: 'We are the electoral excuse for the parliamentary dictatorship of Karamanlis'.



French paras — North Africa still remembers their last bloody intervention in Algeria.

# French threat to Sahara The empire builders

by CHRIS O'BRIEN

THE FRENCH decision to send paratroopers to Senegal increases the threat of direct intervention in the Western Sahara, a threat already raised by the alert to elite units in France.

The Association of Friends of the Saharan Republic in Paris

says that the 1600 paratroopers and marines had already been sent into Mauritania. The troops in Senegal are paratroopers from both the Foreign Legion and the regular army. The paras are still remembered in North America for their brutal repressive role in Algeria in the 1950s.

The ostensible reason for this latest move is the holding of eight French hostages by the Polisario Front, the Saharan liberation organisation. The French are technicians at Zouerate in Mauritania, Mauritania and Morocco, both former French colonies, divided the phosphate-rich Sahara between them when the Spanish pulled out two years ago.

The Polisario has taken the hostages to draw attention to their demand that Morocco complies with Red Cross requests to publish the names of Saharan prisoners of war. Of course, the chances are that it cannot do this, if the murderous record of King Hassan's regime is anything to go by.

None of this worries the French Government in its much publicised concern for life and limb. The simple reason for its intervention is the obvious one: to consolidate French economic interests in this potentially profitable area. But it fits into a wider strategy of more or less overt

military intervention in Africa, and an attempt to line up the French-speaking African states behind the project.

Senegal, strategically placed in the middle of West Africa, is central to this strategy. It was from there that the abortive invasion of Benin was organised in January, and it was the launching pad for French and Moroccan military intervention in Zaire in April.

In Zaire the idea was to take over Belgium's role as principal imperialist power in the area. In the aftermath of the Shaba war French firms have won a number of the old Belgian copper mining concessions. President Giscard has a similar operation in mind for French-speaking North-West Africa. The desires of the Saharan population — which overwhelmingly supports the Polisario — just don't come into it!

Nor does the Times seem very interested in what the Saharans want — despite UN backing for the demand for self-determination. On 17 October it ran an article by cold warrior Lord Chalfont, entitled 'Why the West would be wise to take the Moroccans more seriously'. The map which accompanies the article redraws the Moroccan and Mauritanian borders so that the Western Sahara no longer exists!

# In Brief

**AUSTRALIA:** Brisbane police arrested 100 people protesting at the Queensland Government's ban on demonstrations. The protest was on the day of the state election, whose result was a foregone conclusion. The gerrymander is such that in the last election the Labour Party won more votes than either of the right-wing coalition parties, but got fewest seats. The Government tried to stop the Aboriginals having the right to vote.

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Police last week arrested 645 blacks in raids on houses in the Pretoria township of Atteridgeville.

**USSR:** Leading dissident Pyotr Grigorenko is being allowed to leave the USSR for an operation, but he told a press conference of fears that he might not be readmitted.

**BURMA:** According to the Burmese Communist Party, 552 troops were killed and more than 100 captured in heavy fighting in the north of the country last month.

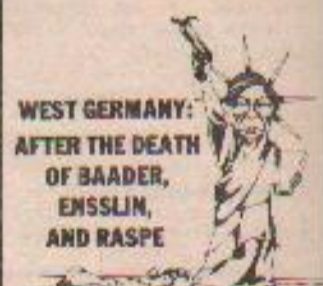
**PHILIPPINES:** The Government says that some 50,000 people have been killed in fighting between the Government and Moslem oppositionists since 1973.

**EL SALVADOR:** About 1,500 workers demanding pay rises for farm labourers occupied the Ministry of Labour last week, taking two Cabinet Ministers hostage.

**IRAN:** 2,000 Tehran University students are boycotting classes in protest against police brutality, arrests, and censorship. A fortnight ago riot police attacked a group of 300 students. The Shah is meeting President Carter this week to discuss human rights.

**CHINA:** China used the 60th anniversary of the Russian Revolution as the occasion for a sharp attack on the Soviet leadership, which it described as 'a fascist party of the bourgeoisie monopoly bourgeoisie'. But this didn't stop Chairman (sic) Hua Kuo-feng attending a fascist cocktail party at the bureaucratic monopoly embassy.

**SPAIN:** Santiago Carrillo of the Spanish Communist Party, however, refused to attend a Soviet Embassy reception in Madrid on the anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Instead he went to a dinner party given by the King in honour of President Bongo of Gabon.



AN APPEAL by the Fourth International for collective, united solidarity activity with the victims of repression in West Germany is published in the latest issue of *Inprecor*, together with a declaration by the GIM, German section of the FI.

Other articles in this issue, No 75 (New Series), cover plans for international women's action on 8 March, the rebirth of workers' struggles in Algeria, an assessment of the Frelimo government in Mozambique, the manoeuvres over Zimbabwe, and the Popular Front government in West Bengal. Also included is a discussion contribution by Mexican revolutionaries on 'The New Course of the Latin American Revolution'.

Price 30p, *Inprecor* is available from The Other Bookshop, almost all IMG branches, or by post from Inprecor, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP (add 10p for p&p). Subscriptions 27p (25 issues) or £3.75 for six months from the same address.

# Lawyer visits London New light on Baader case

by ADRIAN YEELES

'NORMAL security check.' That was the explanation Heathrow police gave last Thursday night when they arrested two representatives of the Committee Against Repression in West Germany.

Not the kind of thing you expect when you go to meet someone at the airport, but a timely reminder of the 'normality' facing Thursday's arrival Heinz Funke, the late Andreas Baader's lawyer, and anyone in West Germany brave enough to question the official 'suicide' version of the recent deaths of the Red Army Faction prisoners in Stammheim jail.

Speaking later at a packed meeting of the CARWG in London, Funke reported the latest harassment of dissidents; the investigation into the father of Gudrun Ensslin, who dared to say that his daughter had been murdered; the fact that none of the lawyers, whatever they think, dare to suggest that the three were murdered; the press witch-hunt of the lawyers' press conference after the deaths as 'incitement to murder'.

Funke also supplied more

information on the events leading up to the deaths:

\* Andreas Baader was removed from his cell one hour after the kidnapping of Hans Martin Schleyer so that the guards could give it a complete search, all objects being removed, checked, and returned one by one.

\* Although Gudrun Ensslin was only allowed to have battery-operated electrical items, she is supposed to have hung herself with an extension lead.

\* After his death Baader was found to be wearing high lace-up hiking boots with sand in the treads. This was on the sixth floor of a top security prison!

The meeting was also told of the contents of a secret West German police document detailing plans to subvert the Bertrand Russell Tribunal that has been set up to look into allegations of repression in West Germany. Written before the recent deaths, it maps out a campaign to pressure parties and individuals to stop them giving evidence to the Tribunal. All the more reason, then, for socialists outside West Germany to express their solidarity with victims of repression through support for the Tribunal.

# LP Africa conference

by ROY ALEXANDER

A joint conference is being organised between the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Labour Party to discuss the current situation in Southern Africa and the organisation of solidarity in this country. Open to delegates from local Labour Party and affiliated organisations, it will take place on Saturday, 3 December.

The morning session will be addressed by the Foreign Secretary, David Owen, who will answer questions about Labour Government policy over Zimbabwe. The Conference will then break down into separate seminars on South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, and meet in plenary session again in the after-

noon to discuss campaigning.

This year's Labour Party Conference broke with the Labour Government's pro-imperialist manoeuvres, despite a desperate plea from Owen, and adopted a resolution from the Dewsbury constituency party calling for material support for the Zimbabwe freedom fighters and sanctions against South Africa.

It is to be hoped that this Conference will reiterate such views, and demand of Owen how, in the wake of such a decision, the Labour Government's representative at the UN could link hands with the Americans and the French to sabotage African proposals for effective action against South Africa.

This Conference is an excellent opportunity to begin the organisation of those activists in the Labour Party who are fed up

with the Government's cowering to the racists and collaboration with American imperialism, and want to see a genuine socialist policy of active solidarity of all those fighting for their liberation. It is to be hoped that practical steps will be taken from this Conference to co-ordinate the activity of such militants, and begin the difficult — but essential — task of winning over the ranks of the Labour Party to this view.

\* Joint AAM-Labour Party Conference, Saturday 3 December, 10am-5pm, Transport Hall, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1. Registration fee £1. Credentials and further information from: AAM, 89 Charlotte Street, London W1 or Labour Party International Department, Transport House.

# New murder raids on Lebanon

## Israel's strategy of tension

On 9 November the Lebanese villages of Azieh and Hissiyeh were bombed off the map in less than two hours by Israeli Phantom jets, missile boats off the coast, and heavy artillery across the border. Between 100 and 200 civilians were killed and according to Wafa, the Palestinian news agency, three Palestinian commandos. M. JAFAR reports.

Ostensibly the raid was in retaliation for a minor Palestinian guerrilla operation in which three Israelis were reported killed. On 11 November Israeli aircraft struck again. This time they killed more than 12 people

near the Lebanese city of Tyre. The swift and hard-hitting 'reprisal' attack has long been an important instrument of Israeli policy. A succession of such attacks have preceded every major Arab-Israeli war in the



Lebanese village after the bombs.

past, starting with the infamous destruction by the specially formed Unit 101 of the Israeli army, of the Arab village of Kibye in October 1953. This was

followed by a succession of raids on Gaza in 1955, which were to culminate in the 1956 war. These raids have invariably been used by the Zionist regime

as a tactical means of escalating tension, and building up the appropriate 'climate of opinion' both inside and outside Israel. From the long term historical point of view there is no doubt that these latest attacks will fit into the same pattern.

But it is mistaken to conclude from this that the most recent attacks will immediately herald yet another all-out Arab Israeli war. For one thing, the Geneva 'peace settlement' farce, on which President Carter has staked much of his personal reputation, has yet to be played out. Historically the Zionist state has never gone for an all-out war

without at least the tacit consent of American imperialism.

On the other hand, the Arab ruling classes, Syria included, desperately want to avoid such a war at the present moment. President Assad of Syria is reported to have urged the PLO to withdraw from its bases in the south in accordance with the Shtoura agreement made three months ago, immediately after the attack.

And the spectacle of Sadat of Egypt on the very day of the raid, conceding to the Israelis all the procedural obstacles which they have erected on the road to Geneva, and promising to negotiate personally in Tel-Aviv itself, if necessary, is too pathetic for words. The Egyptian regime's survival is now completely tied up with what it can get out of Geneva. War in the short term is complete suicide for it.

### SIGNIFICANCE

What is the significance of the attacks then? Israeli Prime Minister Begin himself dropped a big hint on 11 November when he said in a public statement to the Egyptian government: 'We stretch out our hand to you. It is not, as you know, a weak hand...' The Zionist attack is intended to underline the Israeli negotiating stance at Geneva, which can be summed up in the dictum: 'Might is Right'.

Its vast military superiority over the Arab regimes and its newly found political strength, derived from the consequences of the Lebanese civil war, are being restated in these barbarous attacks on helpless civilian targets. The Arab ruling classes are being reminded not to set their hopes for the terms of a 'peace' settlement much above the actual relationship of forces, seen in the crudest of military terms.

# Latin American strikes

## Southern cone flares up

The current miners' strike in Chile — the first openly declared strike since 1973 — and the recent public sector strike in Argentina are an indication that the brutal dictatorships of Latin America's southern cone are not getting things all their own way. BOB JOHNSON looks at how the Argentinian Government dealt with the strike — another example of the use of troops for strike-breaking — and the rifts it has opened up in the ruling class.

The Argentinian dictatorship has repressed the wave of public sector strikes and go slows which began on 26 October, but it has not completely recovered its poise.

The crisis started with a week-long stoppage by rail workers, who were joined by the workers of the Buenos Aires Underground, state-employed electricity, oil, water and dock workers, and the pilots of Argentina's international airline. The workers' demands for wage increases between 80 and 130 per cent constituted a direct threat to the regime's pay policy, which has fixed an upper limit of 40 per cent inclusive of productivity deals.

strikes made them the clearest demonstration yet of the ability of the Argentinian workers to fight back in the face of repression and cause what are, at the very least, embarrassing dents in the military armour.

### PROPAGANDA

After some day's hesitation the Government sent in the troops, arrested — and in at least one case shot — strike leaders, and broadcast a stream of threatening propaganda. However it also made some concessions, improving the previous offers to raise the final settlement to 35 or 40 per cent.

Increases of this order will not be enough to maintain the workers' living standards. Inflation will be close to 200 per cent this year, which means further big drops in real wages are to be expected on top of the 60 per

cent decline in the six months following the coup. On the other hand, rises of 35-40 per cent without productivity conditions come perilously close to a breach of the official limit and it is clear that these settlements mean something less than a resounding victory for the Government.

### UNPOPULAR

Politically this is important. The strategy of Economy Minister Jose Martinez de Hoz involves pushing through measures which are highly unpopular not only within the working class but with considerable sections of the bourgeoisie itself. As in Chile — and in Argentina in the first years of the previous military regime — the proposal is to depress wages and to bankrupt a wide range of allegedly uncompetitive industries producing for the home market. In the long run, supposedly, the overall efficiency of the economy will improve.

But meanwhile there is strong opposition from the owners of the affected industries and from the wider forces associated with the ideology of *desarrollismo* ('developmentism'). This current is stronger and politically less

demoralised than in Chile, and it is not without its supporters within the armed forces.

So far the approach of Martinez de Hoz has prevailed because the military came back into power determined to follow through what they had initiated and then abandoned in 1967-69 and because the policies were able to build up a certain momentum before they hit a major obstacle.

But even before the strikes sections of the military — especially the Navy — were beginning to question the political wisdom of squeezing wages further. After 26 October the national newspaper reflecting the *desarrollista* interest launched an open attack on this and other aspects of Martinez de Hoz's policy.

### DIVISION

The struggle of the public sector workers has not won what it set out for, but it has helped to widen the divisions within the ruling class and to weaken the political resolve which the armed forces still require to implement the policies of their choice. In the long run this may prove more important.

# Chinese executions

## Over to you, Uncle Joe

RECENT reports from China indicate an important change in the traditional methods of settling political differences. Tales of thousands of executions of oppositionists are more reminiscent of the Soviet Union in Stalin's heyday than the relative moderation of Mao's China.

The scale and character of the violence remains unclear. There has been no official confirmation of the reports, which are based on what visitors have been able to glean from wall posters. Still, the recent announcement of the convening of the National People's Congress next spring was accompanied by none too subtle warnings to 'some bad people'.



CHENG CHAO-LIN — not heard of since 1974.

According to the wall posters, the current executions are part of the continued drive against the 'gang of four' and its supporters. No doubt these 'radicals' are a prime target, but the purges are a way of settling other scores with dissidents and independent thinkers. For instance, Li I-ch, the author of a famous wall poster attacking the 'gang of four' has reportedly been imprisoned. The reason would be his independent stance to the Chinese bureaucracy.

### SELECTIVE

The significance of the purge is that it marks a more open espousal of Stalinist methods. There have been frequent executions in the past, but hardly ever as a way of settling inner-party disputes. Mao's method was the use of sections of the mass movement against his opponents in the bureaucracy, with a far more selective use of organisational methods.

The last major attempt to do this — the Cultural Revolution — backfired. The mysterious death of Lin Biao marked the beginning of a turn away from the masses as a way of resolving

bureaucratic differences. With the death of Mao there is no leader who can confidently command enough support among the masses to dare to unleash them upon the political scene.

One group of victims of the Chinese regime who have received little publicity are the Trotskyists. It is now approaching the 25th anniversary of the arrest of two or three hundred of them, who have since disappeared without trace.

The only exception is Cheng Chao-lin, a founder of both the Chinese Communist Party and the Trotskyist movement, who was known to be alive and still in jail as late as 1974. Ironically Cheng was an old comrade of the now rehabilitated Teng Hsiao-ping.

As Greg Benton pointed out in a recent article in *The Guardian*, it was Teng's influence in 1975 which was behind the amnesty for several hundred people described as 'Kuomintang war criminals': 'Will Teng's leniency extend to his old comrade Cheng Chao-lin? It is, of course, possible that Cheng, now in his 70s, has died since he was last heard of in 1974 — if so will his friends ever know?'

# Her Majesty's protection racket

## Hong Kong police

by RICHARD CARVER

SO ENTHUSIASTIC was the Governor of Hong Kong to let off the colony's corrupt police that he has broken the law to do it. In consultation with the Colonial Secretary, the Governor, Sir Murray Maclehoze, conspired to breach the Statutes of Limitation by curbing the activities of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

These days it is no secret that the Hong Kong police force is corrupt from top to bottom. Last week's police revolt is conventionally explained by the unreliability of the Chinese police. It was they, we are told, who infected their British officers.

But Hong Kong, the British colony on the fringe of China, is one big red light district. Quite apart from the sweatshop labour and microscopic rates of taxation, it is the place for illegal trafficking of all sorts. Recent revelations of corruption in the British Porn Squad are a reminder that such a system can only operate with police collab-



oration — a fact the colonial administration has consistently tried to ignore.

Only when it was faced with the political embarrassment of the 'Curry King' — police chief

Peter Godber — was it forced to take action. But the flourishing drugs, gambling and prostitution syndicate in Godber's district had been brought to the attention of the authorities as far

back as 1963.

Even the ICAC has a limited scope. When it discovered that some 70 or 80 per cent of the present, post-Godber force was corrupt, all it could do was pick out a few scapegoats. Anything else would have left the colony without a police force.

The alternative — sending in the Gurkhas — was hardly calculated to attract investment. It was no surprise, then, that the Hong Kong business community enthusiastically backed the Government policy of an amnesty combined with selective discipline. Law and order is a distinctly secondary consideration when such a crucial part of the state apparatus is threatened.

But the problem would not go away, and last week officers stormed the colonial administration. The Government is now caught between the masses, who want the criminals brought to justice, and the prospect of finding itself without any police. No prizes for guessing which it will choose.

**A** debate has recently exploded in the National Union of Students bringing to the fore questions too long buried — Zionism, the Palestinians and Israel. Unfortunately it has also become entangled in the issue of 'no platform' for racists and fascists and NUS democracy. It is crucial for the left that this debate untangles itself into two parts. The first is the question of the nature of Zionism and Israel. The second is the problem of democratic rights within the student movement.

There is no massive campaign to ban Jewish Societies in the colleges. A small number of colleges have passed resolutions which in one way or another limit the rights of Zionists to propagate their views. Such actions can in no way be described as anti-semitic as the press and the Zionists allege. Nevertheless these moves are incorrect.

These mistakes have come about almost solely due to a mistaken policy of the Socialist Workers Party and its student supporters, a policy which shows a serious mis-interpretation of the 'no platform' policy. The SWP are not the only ones who have been guilty of this mis-interpretation, but they are the only ones who persist despite the obvious errors that have resulted from it.

## FASCIST MOVEMENT

The 'no platform' policy was originally adopted by NUS to defend democratic rights. It was based on the analysis that the emergence of organised fascist groups posed a serious threat to the rights of the black community and, in time, to the whole labour movement. In order to defend their rights the labour and black movements had to act to prevent the growth of a mass fascist movement. As part of the campaign a policy *stopping* major fascist rallies and demonstrations would be needed.

The response to the NUS adopting this policy in 1974 was a massive press witch-hunt supposedly in defence of free speech. The response of the left to this witch-hunt was two-fold. The reformists in the NUS began retreating and eventually made a head-long dash for cover, completely dropping the 'no platform' position. The far-left responded by the slogan 'No Free Speech For Fascists'.

This fell into the trap of actually believing what the bourgeois press said about our campaign — that we were out to deny democratic rights rather than to defend them against the growth of the fascist movement.

## FASCISTS AND RACISTS

A further complication, and error, was the lumping together of fascists and racists, fascism and racism. The essential fact about fascism is that it organises to actually implement its policies, including its racist policies, by direct action. While all fascists are racist and prepared to try and physically drive black people out of Britain the reverse is not true.

There are racists throughout the labour and trade union movement. Even the 'left' inside this movement supporters racist policies such as immigration controls. The NUS itself is committed to a policy of supporting 'equitable and democratic immigration controls' — a racist policy. Does that mean 'no platform' for the NUS? Such a position is patently absurd, but it is exactly the logic of the position of 'no platform' for racists, and the logic of those who seek to deny a platform to Zionists, or limit their freedom to organise.

In fact 'free speech' for fascists and racists play a very different role. The fascists demand the freedom to organise, demonstrate and speak in order to win recruits to their bands of goons and thugs. To them it doesn't matter if they lose debates, if the majority are against their reactionary ideas. They are a party of action. Racists, on the other hand, are actually afraid of free and open discussion.

An Arab student once said that the worst enemies of the Jews are the Zionists. They

*Yet another massive press campaign has been launched against the British student movement. The issue is Zionism and free speech.*

*COLIN TALBOT, a member of the NUS Executive and supporter of the Socialist Students Alliance, explains how Zionism and the press offensive can be defeated.*

# ZIONISM and FREE SPEECH



are certainly racist, a fact which is not understood or accepted by the vast majority of the student movement who hold all sorts of illusions about 'poor little Israel'. The best way of exposing Zionism and Israel is to openly challenge the Zionists to defend their case.

## OPEN DEBATE

Moves to restrict the rights of Zionists have actually aided those who want to avoid an open debate about Israel and the Palestinians. The NUS Executive have seized the opportunity to beat the 'ultra-left' over the head with both hands, ably assisted by the press. The majority on the Executive, the Broad Left, do not have a clear policy on Zionism and tend to capitulate to the pressure from the Zionist lobby. They do not want an open debate, which is why they did not attempt to get Palestine discussed at the up-coming NUS Conference.

The Executive has also been attempting to repeal the 'no platform' policy for almost two years and have been blocked by an alliance of their own supporters with the 'ultra-left'. By their heavy-handed attack on those Unions who have restricted the rights of Zionists they have sought to win the dual objective of avoiding a debate on Palestine and defeating the 'no platform' position. Those like the SWP who compound this confusion of issues are merely preparing the ground for a successful conclusion to this attack. Only by understanding the specific character of Zionism and the appropriate tactics to fight it can the muddle be sorted out.

## RACIST CARTOONS

Racism is discrimination against people on the basis of their ethnic origins. Zionism, as implemented in the state of Israel, certainly does that. As part of an NUS delegation which visited the Near East, I saw a shop in Israel full of cartoons,

of which over half were racist jibes against 'dirty, lazy, stupid Arabs'. We were told of the virtual lynch-mob atmosphere which was whipped up by the town council of Carmiel when one of its inhabitants proposed to sell his house to an Arab.

These racist attitudes stem from the basic character of Israel as a Jewish state. Israel was founded on the expulsion of the Palestinians in 1948, and we saw ourselves some of the camps which house half-million Palestinians in Lebanon. The notorious Israeli 'Law of Return' gives automatic citizenship to any Jew from anywhere in the world, whilst native Palestinians are allowed to rot in the refugee camps. Ethnic groups other than Jews are systematically discriminated against in Israel, officially and unofficially. In this sense Israel is certainly a racist state.

Racism as an ideology usually arises as a justification of the oppression of one group or nation of another. It is often linked to actual national oppression — in the case of Israel the Palestinians — but it is not the same thing. The Israeli state is one which both oppresses the Palestinians as a people and breeds racist discrimination against individual Arabs.

Those who live in Israel, at least the anti-Zionists, know that since 1948 there has been a massive growth of racism as such. Overt racists such as Prime Minister Begin, who in 1948 were considered the lunatic fringe of the Zionist movement, today are nearer the centre of the Zionist political spectrum. It is important for the anti-Zionist movement to realise these two aspects of the nature of Israel, as national oppressor and as racist state, rather than using the crude formula 'Israel equals racist' and thinking that disposes of the problem.

## ORIGINS OF ZIONISM

There is a further and vital point to understand about Zionism. It originated not as a justification for oppression but as a reaction against the oppression of the Jews in Eastern and Western Europe. This clearly marks it off from virtually every other racist ideology. The fear of anti-semitism is still a real and justified one for most Jews, the Nazi holocaust has indelibly printed this fear on their minds. It is quite wrong for socialists to simply dismiss or ignore this problem. Zionism provides a reactionary answer to the 'Jewish problem', one which disarms Jews from fighting anti-semitism.

Zionists actually agree with the anti-semites that Jews have no place in our society, the anti-semites want to push Jews out and the Zionists want to push them in, to Israel. Socialists must put forward an alternative — an uncompromising fight against all forms of racism and particularly against racism against blacks and Jews.

We fight for the rights of blacks and Jews to live in this country and to live their own lives with their own cultures. More than this we fight for abolition of the root cause of anti-semitism and racism, the moribund and decaying capitalist system. Zionism's answer is for Jews to retreat to the ghetto, even one as big as Israel, while we say Jews should stand up and fight for their rights.

## FREEDOM OF DISCUSSION

A campaign around the question of Zionism must have three essential elements. Firstly it must assert clearly the national rights of the Palestinians, for the dispossession of the Palestinians is the single and most important question. Secondly it must expose the racist nature of the Israeli state, which is a logical consequence of the dispossession of the Palestinians and the project of a Jewish state. Thirdly we must put up an uncompromising fight against one of the roots of Zionism — anti-semitism.

The methods by which these objectives should be pursued are those appropriate to the ends. By encouraging defence of democratic rights and the maximum freedom of debate the bureaucratic attempt by the NUS Executive to choke off the debate can be blocked, and a major blow struck at the 'ghetto' consciousness from which Zionism feeds.

# Our editorial on Thorpe

## Angry

The Editorial Board will be making an editorial statement in next week's issue.



WE ARE writing to express our strong objection to the editorial of 3 November. We are angry that *Socialist Challenge* should pick up gay rights to belabour the Liberal and Labour Parties, while offering its readers a shallow and thoughtless analysis.

The editorial ignores entirely any understanding of sexual politics that goes beyond a moralising individualism which says that it should be irrelevant whether you are heterosexual or

homosexual.

Gay women and men know that it is relevant, and that the psychological and physical violence that we face every day is not due to old-fashioned Victorian attitudes. All of us have been threatened, and many of us injured — and we have never thought this is a suitable subject for the mockery with which you treated Norman Scott.

The violence, discrimination and victimisation faced by gay women and men have strong and thriving roots in a society based on the nuclear family and where women and men are given distinct roles from the day they are born. It is because of this sexism, which is not Victorian, but modern and integral to bourgeois society that it is beyond the Liberal Party or any other party — or even the left — to take up the question of homosexuality seriously.

In demanding a simple separation of the 'public' and the 'private' the editorial implies a

denial of sexual politics and negates any coherent consideration of the inequalities of power implicit in the sexist structure of society.

In particular, it has been a major objective of the gay movement to fight for the possibility for gay women and men to live their sexuality publicly and to the full: this is not a private but a political struggle.

If the struggle against sexism could be won by exhortation, then perhaps *Socialist Challenge* would not have dealt with homosexuality so flippantly and opportunistically.

Least of all, while preening itself over its revolutionary conduct, would the editorial both refer to the 'sexual preferences... of some National Front leaders' and at the same time maintain that such preferences are irrelevant.

ALL LONDON GAY GROUPS (AGAINST SEXISM, RACISM AND FASCISM).

## Smear

APART FROM the hideously self-righteous tone of your editorial (*Socialist Challenge*, 3 November), you finish off:

*'Even during our successful campaign to expose Peter Mariner, the fascist agent in the Ladywood Labour Party in Birmingham, we treated as irrelevant information which we had on the sexual preferences of Mariner and some National Front leaders.'*

This of course invites your readers to imagine a lot of really juicy, and personally discrediting, activities indulged in by political opponents, without any need to substantiate or to specify. You obviously don't need any other pointers from Robert Moss on 'how to carry out a good smear' (page 9, same issue).

I'd call your leader hypocritical. What would you call it?

CHRISTOPHER LILLY (Poplar)

WE WERE absolutely appalled by your editorial in *Socialist Challenge* (3 November). Let us go through the worst points in the order which you made them.

The first paragraph stinks. It is a 'joke' about the (alleged) fact that Norman Scott was to be murdered for having had a gay relationship and not keeping quiet about it. The bourgeois press and *Socialist Challenge* can find this attempted murder a giggle because, in the end, they regard Scott as just 'a dizzy little thing'. Whatever your explicit views, that is the meaning of the first paragraph.

This typical bourgeois view of gay men is made the more sickening by the fact that this year at least eight men in Britain have actually been murdered solely for being gay. We want an editorial apology for this insult to gay people.

Despite the fact that it is no longer a crime "Between consenting male adults" the general attitude remains essentially Victorian. This is the only sentence of analysis in the editorial, and it is completely bourgeois liberal. First, the choice of the criminal law, which has never been applied to lesbian acts, as the key, obscures the central fact that lesbians are oppressed far more completely than gay men. Secondly, anti-gay prejudice is not an ideological hangover from the past — 'Victorian' — but is something created in the present

by the compulsory family (see *Socialist Challenge*, 8 September). What revolutionary would trivialise racism as 'Victorian'?

Though the editorial seems to say, what is the case, that Maureen Colquhoun was sacked primarily for being a feminist lesbian, it proposes that Labour Party members do absolutely nothing about this. Rather as a priority, they should be campaigning to prevent the Labour Party discriminating against gays in the future. You do not have necessarily to call for Colquhoun's reinstatement to do this.

'We insist the private life of everyone should remain private'. It is the specific oppression of gay people that we are supposed to keep our sexuality private. Without making it public we have little chance of personal happiness, and moreover there would be precisely no gay struggle and no gay movement. If you mean 'Keep the state out of private life', you should say so.

The last sentence of the editorial must rest as a model of smugness and self-contradiction.

The editorial stands for gay rights but it appears to understand nothing about gay liberation.

PHIL DERBYSHIRE, BRANLEY MITCHELL, JAMIE GOUGH, PETE MCKEWEN

## Socialist Challenge EVENTS



DON'T be seen without your Socialist Challenge badge, 20p plus 7p p&p from Socialist Challenge (Badges), PO Box 50, London N1. Cheques & POs payable to 'The Week'. Bulk orders (10 or more) 15p post free. Cash in advance only. In red, black and white.

### HOME COUNTIES

**BASINGSTOKE** Socialist Challenge readers group meets Tuesday 29 November and 6 December at 8pm. Pritchard Room, Chute House, Church Street.

### 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.

### 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, Horely Road, Bristol 2, 7.30pm.

### LONDON

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

**LEWISHAM** Socialist Challenge benefit. Food, bar, music from Chile, disco. Entrance 75p. 7.30pm on Friday 16 November at the Lee Centre, Alalbie Road (off Lee High Road), London SE13.

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

### EAST ANGLIA

**CAMBRIDGE** Day School, Sunday 20 November at Mawson Hall, Mawson Road, Cambridge.

Agenda: 11-11.30 — Registration 11.30-1.30 — Politics of the CPGB 1.30-2.30 — Lunch 2.30-4.30 — Politics of W. European CPs 4.30-5.00 — Balance Sheet of School

Speaker: Oliver MacDonald PLUS at the same venue at 7.30pm. Debate between the CP and IMG on 'The British Road to Socialism'. Speakers Bob Rowthorn (CP) and Oliver MacDonald (IMG). Registration £1 (50p unemployed).

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

**COLCHESTER** Socialist Challenge supporters group meets fortnightly on Tuesdays, 6pm, Room 3.322 University of Essex. For further information contact Mike at 11 Anglesoe Road, Wivenhoe.

### YORKSHIRE

**HUDDERSFIELD** Socialist Challenge meeting, Friday 18 November: 'Fight Racism Now'. Speaker: Raghib Ahsan. 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, 78b Digbeth High Street, Birmingham. (Tel: 021-643 9209).

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

### NORTH WEST

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

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

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

**BURY** Socialist Challenge group meets at the Royal Hotel, Silver St., every Wednesday at 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. 061-236 2352.

## A women's page?

I OBJECTED very strongly to the letter in *Socialist Challenge* No. 20 calling for a page of the paper to be given to the women's movement.

The assumption behind the comrades' request seems to be that the women's movement want a page — an assumption I think many socialist feminists might challenge, let alone women in the movement who disagree with socialist feminism.

This is not to suggest that everything is fine with the coverage *Socialist Challenge* gives to sexual politics. Indeed, I think there has been a certain weakness on the part of the editorial board in initiating debate on women's liberation in its broadest sense.

But to call for a page for the women's movement — rather like a radical form of the *Guardian* Women's Page —

surely cannot be seen as an ideal solution to this lack of coverage.

The debates on the women's movement and the discussion among revolutionaries about women's liberation should be presented to and by *Socialist Challenge* readers in an integrated way — in *Speak Out*, *Comment*, *Surplus Value*. The editorial and features of the paper develops its coverage of these issues throughout its pages — women from the women's movement will request space.

I don't think they need men or women in left groups to formulate these requests for them. I think socialist feminists want to see feminist issues linked, whether they support the paper or not, to all aspects of revolutionary practice — not just to one page of *Socialist Challenge*.

VAL COULTAS (W. London)

## Local strength

MARTIN SHAW's article *Politics and Class Struggle in the Localities* (SC 20) provides an important reminder of the need to focus on the role of class struggle in relation to the local state. There is one dimension to this subject which Martin only touches on briefly, which requires a fuller debate — that of intervening in local elections.

The British left has a long tradition of making such intervention only at the level of propaganda, rather than policy, which is an important distinction to make.

Historically, the weakness of the Left standing in elections, local or national, is that it is done basically for propagandist purposes — to use the opportunity to put over elements of a socialist programme — as Socialist Unity is doing at present. The weakness of this approach is that, rarely in this century, has the left explored the possibilities of implementing socialist policies at the local level.

This is partly because the left only grudgingly accepts the political value of electoral work anyway. In addition, it avoids the responsibility of actually devising programmes which could concretely develop and support local struggles in an institutional way — this is all too easily dismissed as a species of reformism.

Yet it is only by demonstrating in practice that local affairs can be run differently, breaking with the bourgeois clique politics of the local Town Hall that wider sections of the working class can be won to support socialist policies. The achievements of the early independent Labour Party demonstrates both the positive and negative sides of this process, as do the

events at Clay Cross. However both represent a necessary aspect of any overall strategy for revolutionary change.

In reality, such an orientation will need to take account of the traditional weight of the Labour Party in this field, and, I would argue, need to work through these established channels.

The role of the Labour Party in this respect is, unfortunately, not developed by Martin Shaw, though it is discussed fairly comprehensively in a recent pamphlet by Murgatroyd, Rees and Reynolds, *Taking Local Decisions*, which deserves a wider discussion in the labour movement.

In France, the Unified Socialist Party, for one, sees its foothold in municipal councils (gained in March 1977) as bases of struggle for the political mobilisations expected in 1978. In Italy, the Italian Communist Party, for all its faults, has attempted to use its control of Bologna as an example of the reforming potential of a future PCI government.

No doubt readers of *Socialist Challenge* would find much to criticise in such policies in terms of their detail. Yet to continue ignoring the problems of socialist advance in relation to local government merely provides an index of the marginalised position of the left in this country. This needs to be debated if it is ever going to be changed.

PETER JENKINS (Manchester)

*'Taking Local Decisions: The Democratic Reform of the Labour Party and Local Government.'* ILP pamphlet, 50p, 49 Top Moor Side, Leeds LS11 9LW.

## Scargill not challenged



I WAS surprised and angry, on reading the 'conversation' with Arthur Scargill in *Socialist Challenge* No. 19, at the uncritical tenor of the questions asked.

At no point was Scargill put on the spot about many important political questions for which he has either no answer or the wrong answer. In particular he was not questioned, and challenged, on his views of the importance of the struggle against women's oppression.

The Yorkshire Miner, paper of the Yorkshire Area NUM has on

page three (the traditional page it seems) a 'pin up', and attempts to protest at this sexism have been laughed off.

On the Grunwick picket on 17 October, I and other women from Sheffield were insulted by Scargill in the Strike Headquarters even before the picket began. Scargill emerged out of the toilets with some of his mates saying 'War there's a beautiful bird in there'. On being challenged Scargill made no attempt to back down or apologise, accusing Women's Libbers of 'not wanting equality but domination over men' and justifying the Page Three Pin Up on the grounds that it sold papers to miners and got them reading about 'real political issues'.

I expected that some challenge would be made in the interview to this sort of trivialisation of women and their oppression, however none was forthcoming. Does this mean that *Socialist Challenge* agrees with Scargill that the struggle against Wage Controls and the Labour Government are 'real political issues' whereas women's oppression and the struggle against it are not? JANE PETRIE (Sheffield)

## Australian building workers

I WAS astonished to read in *Socialist Challenge* 20 October, (News from Nowhere column) a laudatory item on Australia's Building Labourers' Union.

I presume you are referring to the union commonly known as the Builders Labourers' Federation. If so, your praise is quite unjustified.

You say that officials are 'paid an average workers' wage, and recallable by those who elected them'. In reality, the BLF is run by a bureaucracy which uses undemocratic methods and even thug tactics to destroy any opposition.

The leadership of the BLF is in the hands of its federal secretary, Norm Gallagher, who is associated with the Maoist Communist Party of Australia (Marxist Leninist). In the late 60s and early 70s the New South Wales branch of the union was headed by Jack Munday, a member of the Communist Party of Australia.

Under Munday's leadership, the NSW branch adopted pro-

gressive and militant policies on many social questions — protection of the environment, homosexual rights, and others. Hundreds of millions of dollars worth of building projects were held up by laws imposed to prevent destruction of the environment or demolition of people's houses, etc.

However, with the onset of the world recession, the union was hit by unemployment which Munday had no strategy for fighting. Taking advantage of the partial demoralisation which resulted, Gallagher removed the democratically elected NSW leadership with the aid of the courts, the bosses and thuggery.

The former leaders of the NSW branch were 'expelled for life' and in the recent election Gallagher was 'elected unopposed' after the nominations of opponents were rejected on technical grounds.

CHRIS SLEE (Parkville, Australia)



# Love of worker bees

Socialist feminists argue that there cannot be women's liberation without revolution, nor revolution without women's liberation. PAM HURST reviews Alexander Kollontai's novel, *Love of Worker Bees*, which sustains that argument.

First published in 1923, when Lenin was dying, *Love of Worker Bees* was also written in the period when the Soviets had already passed a law to simplify the formalities of marriage and divorce. Did it mean the end of women's oppression? Kollontai, who had fought to marry the man of her choice and then left him in revolt against 'the tyranny of love' to become

an active member of the Bolshevik Party, knew better. Her novel is absorbed with this conflict between a woman's political activity and personal relationships. *Love of Worker Bees*, translated by Cathy Porter, includes three interrelated narratives with the theme of women's

servants, and a mistress. When Vasilisa leaves the communal house to live with Vladimir she is expected to give up her political activities and to take over managing the bureaucrat's house. Kollontai describes her growing demoralisation with illuminating insight. The relationship crumbles. Vasilisa becomes more and more isolated and jealous of Vladimir's mistress. She is totally imprisoned in her role as housewife and by her submissive sexual relationship.

Kollontai does not conclude on a pessimistic note, for as soon as Vasilisa makes new friends she realises what a shadow of herself she has become and begins to fight back. She joins with workers in her husband's plant to fight against his policies. She decides to go back to work. As well as sharp criticism of the abuses of the NEP, Kollontai sketches a picture of the conflict between marriage and fulfilment. Vasilisa has regained her independence through contact with other women.

The second story is a portrait of three women of the same family but of different generations. The grandmother is an old feminist who struggled in her time for women's equality. The mother, of the same generation as Vasilisa, faces the problem of being a party activist and married to a younger comrade. Her daughter represents the new generation, shocking her mother by sleeping with her stepfather and other men. They all seek liberation through the revolution, but their consciousness varies according to their past.

'Sisters', the title of the third story, is similar to the first. The narrator, Vasilisa, tells us of a woman married to a NEPman. She breaks away after years of oppression. Her demoralisation ends when she gathers courage to talk to the prostitute her husband brings home one night.

All Kollontai's heroines are women workers. Their common problem is the difficulty to make the new freedom effective. All decide to become committed revolutionaries because through this struggle they find a way of setting themselves free of the old constraints.

By making her readers aware of women's most intimate thoughts and acts, by bringing out into the open the so-called 'personal' problems, Kollontai has outlined the basis of solidarity among women.

Her heroines may be set in different contexts but their problems are the same. Their sexual

oppression becomes apparent to them from the confines that the family imposes. Jealousy appears as a result of these restricted relationships, but turns into love and sisterhood as soon as the relationship breaks from the family circle.

Utopian? Perhaps, but Kollontai does not pretend to solve the totality of the problem. When Vasilisa leaves Vladimir she still loves him but has understood that her fulfilment is elsewhere than in his house. Kollontai does not pretend that these problems of sexual attachment die immediately. What she does is to point to a direction in which women can turn — the recognition that to live as slaves does not fortify relationships and that through struggling for better living conditions women can liberate themselves.

This underlies a change in the consciousness of how women see themselves. It is here that we can measure Kollontai's enthusiasm. Never in the novel does she let the reader be depressed about the way things are moving. Vasilisa returns to the communal household. She is ready to start work in a new textile factory and organising a crèche for her child.

Throughout the book this new way of life is developing and will finally destroy the old consciousness. The daughter in the second story, a new woman created by the revolution, represents a



fight for emancipation. All three are set in the context of post-revolutionary Russia, obliged by the economic situation to introduce the New Economic Policy.

The NEP gave the market forces a greater freedom. Kollontai opposed the policy, partly because she saw it as a source of unemployment for women, who would then be thrown back into the family structure.

The first story tells us of the life of Vasilisa Malygina, a 28-year-old woman worker. She is a member of the Bolshevik Party and a real fighter for the party and women's rights. Kollontai pictures Vasilisa as a woman of the new generation, a militant who understands that women will only be liberated if communal houses are established to take on household tasks and childcare.

Vasilisa tries to set up such a house but is confronted by many problems, all deriving from the old habits and an individualistic way of life imposed by centuries of oppression.

Describing such difficulties, Kollontai gives us a real account of the problems confronting the revolution, especially the need to create a new ideology and a new way of life. The pressure becomes too great on an isolated Vasilisa, who turns back to a personal relationship with an anarchist, Vladimir Volodya, for her sexual and personal fulfilment.

But times have changed. Vladimir has become a NEPman and part of the bureaucracy. He has all the trappings of the very life Vasilisa has been trying to replace — a huge house,



woman whose life is satisfactory because she knows what she lives for.

*Love of Worker Bees* vividly shows that by making a turn to an active role in society, by coming to grips with the reasons for their oppression, by breaking the isolation of the home, women change their own way of life, of thinking and create the conditions for their own liberation.

*Love of Worker Bees*, by Alexander Kollontai and translated by Cathy Porter, is published by Virago at £2.50.

# Scientific organisation



The Communist Party's position in the 1930s that socialism was largely synonymous with planning and that the application of science for the benefit of the people had an important role in this context, struck a chord among working scientists. Well-known scientists, such as Bernal and Haldane, were prominent supporters of this view. But by the 1950s and 1960s this movement had largely dwindled and the focus for those who remained had changed.

Then the emphasis was on the co-operation of scientists, East and West, in such areas as the Pugwash anti-nuclear weapons conference, and in scientific trade unionism (the Association of Scientific Workers later to be fused with ASTMS). Science and technology had become depoliticised.

In the Vietnamese war, American capitalism was able to mobilise its scientists and technologists on an unprecedented scale and with little initial opposition. A large number of novel weapons were produced for obviously repressive purposes. The Honeywell Corporation, for instance, developed a means of overloading North Vietnamese hospital facilities.

Honeywell scientists invented the plastic bomb, which breaks into thousands of pieces each unlikely to kill and not detectable to X-rays. Slowly throughout the world the repressive role of science in the Vietnam war began to produce a reaction among scientists and the working class movement.

One result was that groups of scientists, reaching from liberals to Marxists, began to organise, but often over only single issues. In Britain this process led to the setting up of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science, BSSRS (a name we were

later to regret), over a thousand strong and under the patronage — which the society was soon to lose! — of a string of eminent names.

But the 1970s were not the 1930s. A science which had produced hundreds of repressive ideas and machines was much harder to hold up as progressive. Nor could it just be said to be misused when the Jensens and Eysencks claim that their work is scientific. While a new analysis of the role of science under capitalism is clearly needed, no consensus has emerged among Left scientists.

The CP, for instance, tends to see the problem as still mainly one of the mis-use of science by capitalism. Others see the whole of present-day science and technology as completely penetrated by capitalist ideology and practice. BSSRS exists uncomfortably between these two extremes.

## SOCIAL CONTROL

BSSRS members agree, however, that science and technology have particularly central roles in late capitalist society, since its contradictions have crucial scientific components. Science increasingly dominates the productive process. For example, robot welding machines replace skilled workers and force those who remain to work at their pace. It is also integral to various means of social control.

In an earlier article we described how biological theories are involved in the oppression of women. And on a general political level, moves towards the strong state are being assisted by the developments of technologies of political control, such as riot control techniques and data banks.

We feel that it is crucial that the Left takes up these issues. An effective response is possible: take work hazards. Capitalism will always sacrifice the health of its workforce to ensure profits, but this is particularly so at a time of continuing recession. Social democracy can offer only palliatives: the ear defender, face

mask and goggles. Obviously there is only one satisfactory answer — control over the design and construction of the production process by the workforce.

BSSRS has found an eager audience for its work in this area. Information from our pamphlets and from *Hazards Bulletin* has been used with effect in a number of struggles in industry and the public sector.

There are many such fruitful areas of work on science, although the overall political discussion remains very incomplete. This year the AGM is being organised as a conference open to all on the Left who are interested. It is taking place in London the last weekend in November. It is important that militants take more seriously the important possibilities that exist for political intervention in science and technology. Working scientists are particularly welcome.

Most of Saturday, 26 November, will be devoted to two working sessions discussing specific areas of political action. Provisionally these include the following: nuclear energy, work hazards, agribusiness, technology of political control, women and science, sociobiology, women and hazards, ecology, science teaching, race/IQ/anti-fascism, genetic engineering, cuts and employment, computers and radical statistics.

On the Sunday we will be holding the AGM proper and considering the role BSSRS as an organisation should be playing in the radical science movement and on the Left.

Conference details from: BSSRS, 9 Poland Street, London W1. Tel: 01-437 2728. Crèche available. Fares pool and small entrance fee. The conference is on 26-27 November, from 10am-5pm at Montefiore Hall, Hanbury Street, London E1.

# Socialist Challenge

Socialist Challenge Benefit

Saturday, 26 November at 6.15pm. At the Other Cinema, Tottenham Street, London.

## Fistful of Dynamite

starring James Coburn and Rod Taylor. [Sergio Leone, Italy, 138 mins., Italy 1971].

Set in Mexico in 1914 following the collapse of the Diaz dictatorship with Coburn playing the part of an exiled Irish Republican who joins up with a group of Mexican revolutionaries.

Followed by a discussion on 'Irish Republicanism' led by Geoff Bell (author of *The Protestants of Ulster* and a member of Socialist Challenge Editorial Board).

Cheap drinks and food available. All for only £1.20

# Socialist Challenge

## Who's behind the attack on abortion rights? The Pope, Callaghan, and the Bishop of Cardiff

It's not very reassuring to find that behind last week's moves to restrict abortion rights is a cabal of the Pope, James Callaghan, and the Bishop of Cardiff. Although last Thursday's ballot in the House of Commons seems to have reduced the risk of an anti-abortion Private Member's Bill, Health Minister Roland Moyle has convened two meetings to try and arrange a Government-sponsored compromise Bill, writes SARAH ROELOFS, International Marxist Group representative on the National Abortion Campaign Steering Committee.

Both meetings were attended by prominent anti-abortionists. The other side was represented by Joan Lester and Conagh McDonald at the first meeting, and Jo Richardson at the second. Moyle's idea is that there should be a compromise to 'tidy up' existing legislation, by strengthening aspects of the 1967 Act at the same time as clamping down on pregnancy advice bureaux and shortening the period of pregnancy when abortion is legally available.

The impetus behind this project comes from the highest levels. The Pope is known to have discussed the subject with James Callaghan, who has also received representations from the Bishop of Cardiff and others. So it looks

as though it is Callaghan who pulls Moyle's strings and he in turn is in close consultation with the Almighty.

All the Labour women involved have expressed their opposition to any compromise Bill, but the danger is that they are giving a cloak of respectability to Moyle's manoeuvres. Even at a National Abortion Campaign day school in Sheffield last weekend, there were some people who thought that such a Bill presented no

threat. But any Bill which includes these sort of provisions on bureaux and 'viability' is an attack on abortion rights. The Labour Abortion Rights Campaign and NAC must both demand that pro-abortion MPs give no more support to these meetings.

### BRAINE WAVE

Moyle's original plan of using a Private Member's Bill seems to have fallen by the wayside. The top three names in the ballot for Private Member's Bills are pro-abortion Tribunes and the fourth a pro-choice Tory. The nearest prospect is Norman St John Stevas, the prominent Catholic Tory, at number 13, who says he will give his place up to Sir Bernard Braine, who has attended Moyle's get-together on behalf of the antis.

Apparently Moyle and the anti-abortionists plan to nobble Norman Buchan, the Scottish Tribune who was drawn fifth. Buchan voted for the 1967 Act but, though he is pro-choice, abstained on the White and Bennon Bills. He assured *Socialist Challenge* that, although he had been approached by anti-abortion organisations, he intended to sponsor a Bill on health and safety at work, providing protection and compensation for asbestosis victims. He was a moving force behind the Health



Two hundred women responded to a call from activists in the women's liberation movement to 'Reclaim the night' — by defiantly marching through Soho last Saturday night. The idea came from a similar protest organised in Germany recently.

The march was violently attacked several times — noticeably by heavies from Soho's sex shops. One sister, attacked by a man in the street, was arrested by a police officer who immediately arrived on the scene. The woman was pulled clear by other marchers — and when the policeman re-gained his feet in the scuffle, he remarked 'you women do your cause no good with this sort of behaviour'. The same sentiment was echoed by a police inspector on the scene who said 'Get on home to your mum. After all we all know what you want.'

and Safety Act.

The Government and anti-abortionists seem to be out of luck with Buchan, but their selection of him as a target underlines a very real problem. After the Labour Conference vote in favour of free abortion on request, the Catholic Church in Scotland threatened to call on its members not to vote for pro-choice Labour MPs.

With a large Catholic Labour vote and Labour's shaky position

in Scotland, this makes the conference decision in favour of the 'free vote' all the more dangerous. Already Scottish Tribunes like Dennis Canavan openly support the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child, and others may also have a sudden change of 'conscience' under pressure from the Catholic hierarchy.

Norman Buchan himself has been subjected to this kind of pressure in the past. In 1974 he

was repeatedly visited by delegations of children from convents, and 'repentant' Catholic women who had had abortions were wheeled out to denounce him.

The danger is emphasised by an article in the 14 October *Catholic Observer*: 'It would be unrealistic, in our view, for Catholics to withdraw en masse from the Labour Party ... The only real answer is for concerned Christ-

continued on page 4



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ANOTHER good week for the fund drive. Over £200 poured in to our ever open cash box. Half of that came from the proceeds of the October film benefit at the Other Cinema. Another generous supporter sent in another £50 as a thank you for Dobson's head. That makes a grand total of

£765.94.

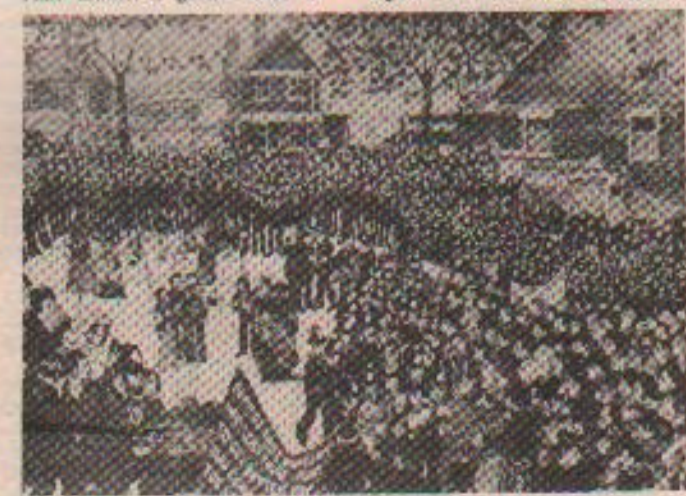
Nevertheless the fund drive is still lagging behind in the drive to reach £1800 by the new year.

Our position would be greatly eased if all our readers gave half or more of their tax rebate. A few supporters have already agreed to do so. However,

Healey and the Labour Government have temporarily put the blocks on this venture by refusing to meet the just demand of the Inland Revenue Staff to be paid for extra budget work.

Readers in the Inland Revenue have been quick to tell us not to expect the rebate in November due to Callaghan's intransigent stand on wages. Socialist Challenge wholeheartedly backs these workers, even if it makes us short of money.

However this should not put off readers filling in the pledge form. Send in the rebate when you finally receive it.



A memento of the Grunwick picket line. A print of a painting by Dan Jones, Secretary of the Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council. The original has been given to the Brent Trades Council. Proceeds from the full colour print will go to the strike committee. Of the limited number produced Socialist Challenge has 100. If you want one of these historic prints then send £2 plus 10p for postage and packing while stocks last.

### This week our thanks to:—

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Film Benefit	100.00
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