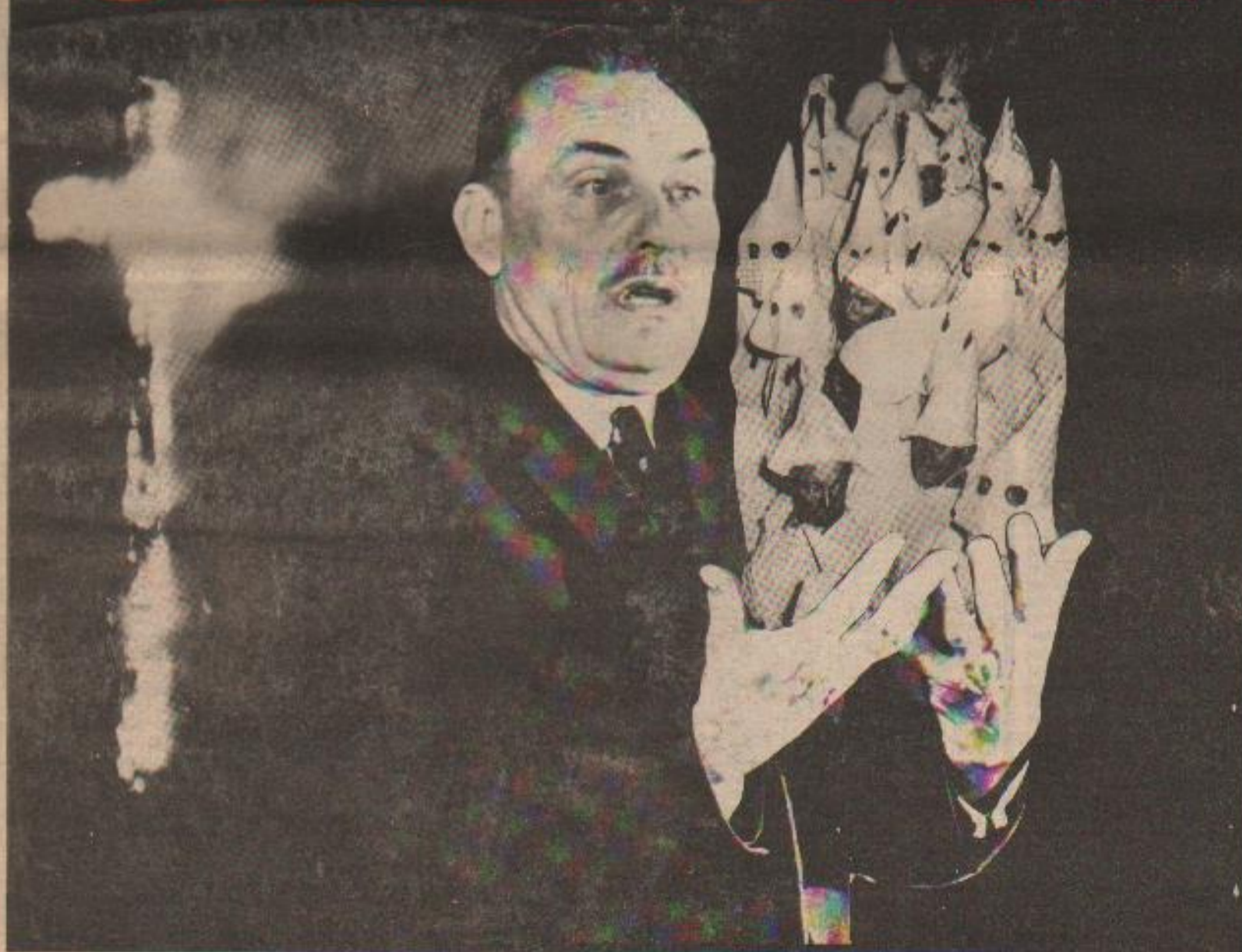


Socialist Challenge

KKK HOODS TERRORISE WOLVERHAMPTON

POWELL'S CHILDREN



ENOCH POWELL is the Grand Wizard of Wolverhampton. He must be feeling quite pleased with himself.

His children have donned Ku Klux Klan hoods and embarked on a campaign of terror against black youth in Wolverhampton. The police have, as usual, arrested more blacks than white racists. The Grand Wizard's successor as Tory MP, Nicholas Budgen, has equated the white hoods with those whom they seek to terrorise.

A few Uncle Toms have praised the police and to crown it all, Margaret Thatcher has virtually invited Powell back to the Tory Front Bench by her blatant appeal to racism on 'World In Action' last Monday.

In the face of this racist offensive, Labour has responded so far only with brave words. These are not enough. What is needed is to throw the resources of the Labour Party and the trades union into the fight against racism. This must take place at every level.

Anti-racists should organise the distribution of factory

bulletins. Labour MPs and trade union leaders should organise factory-gate meetings against racism and the left should unite to swell the size of every anti-Nazi and anti-racist demonstration.

Furthermore the lessons of the Wolverhampton events once again point to the necessity of black people organising their own self-defence in collaboration with local anti-fascists and anti-racists. For the police, as we have seen, are only mobilised into action after the event. It needs a black to be killed or seriously injured before any real investigation is mounted.

For racism runs deep into the heart of the British police force. The blue uniforms only give it an official seal of approval.

REPEAL THE RACIST IMMIGRATION LAWS

EYE-WITNESS REPORT FROM WOLVERHAMPTON ON PAGE 6.

INSIDE

LORD DENNING: 'We have ways and means of getting round the law'
— exclusive exposure p 3



— **Czechoslovak Socialist Sucked** — exclusive document on Petr Uhl's sucking. Page 12.

— **'We Value our Close Economic Links with Iran'** — the Foreign Office spells out its position. Page 12.

— **Exposed! Secret French report on the South African nuclear bomb.** Page 9.

— **How British Leyland boosts apartheid.** Page 11.



— **To Play or Not to Play. CHRISTOPHER ROPER on the World Cup in Argentina.** Page 13.

— **FAY WELDON, PETER KENNARD and JIM ALLEN discuss 'The Spongers'.** Page 15.

— **In Defence of the Communist Party by BEA CAMPBELL, JANE ROBERTS and CAROLINE ROWAN.** Page 7.

— **Judgement at Strasbourg** by TIMSHALLICE.

— **Devolution Blues** by NEIL WILLIAMSON. Page 2.

Editorial

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The return of Frankenstein

AS THE Tory Party continues to make more and more racist noises, earning for itself a rebuke even from the old scourge of the Kenyan Asians, Jim Callaghan, one of its old vampires is seriously considering a return to the fold. Enoch Powell was exorcised by Heath and retreated to Northern Ireland. But he could never completely integrate himself into the complex network of Orange tribalism. Like a guilty criminal he returned again and again to the scene of his old crimes.

His latest speech calls for the repatriation of black people in this country. He explicitly stated on ITV that he was referring to black children born and brought up in this country as well as their parents. Powell must be getting desperate. For to make a speech which reproduces fascist propaganda and aids the National Front indicates that the Grand Wizard of Wolverhampton is an extremely embittered politician who is prepared now to risk all in order to appease his frustrated political ambitions.

If he were logical he would forget the Tories and organise a unified racist organisation of the Right, in which explicitly fascist minorities were tolerated.

TORY HOOLIGAN

The British media has up till now treated Powell with kid gloves, deferring constantly to his 'intelligence', his knowledge of the Latin classics and his firm belief in Britain and the rule of parliament.

In reality Powell is a disaffected Tory hooligan. If, as he once confessed, his greatest ambition to be Viceroy of India is no longer possible, the next best is to become a de Gaulle-type leader of England, with a semi-populist, racist base. This appears a far-fetched notion at the moment. But if Scottish and Welsh nationalism succeed in denting the British State and establishing some degree of independence, Powell would be an obvious choice as leader of English Nationalism.

For his latest speech he should be prosecuted under the existing anti-racist laws. He will not be, in the name of 'freedom of speech'. But what that 'freedom' does to the real freedoms of black people in this country is not of too great an interest to the majority of politicians and the bulk of the media.

Medieval torture chamber

THE SAUDI ARABIAN government has institutionalised barbarism in its legal code. Other states are at constant pains to prove that they are not guilty of torture. But not the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is proud of its strict Islamic code of conduct. The Saudi Arabian Royal Family belongs to the orthodox sect of Wahabi Muslims. No modernist nonsense for them. Kemal Ataturk is a dirty word in the Saudi lexicon.

The state itself would probably not exist if it were not for its massive oil-reserves. The profits are spent to benefit the Royal Family and those closely associated with its political fortunes. Saudi Arabia is the creation of the American oil company, ARAMCO: It was built on royalties from the United States and its state structures were modelled on lines recommended by the United States. The combination of Wahabi fundamentalism and the CIA has proved to be fatal for the unfortunate people of the country. The West tolerates Saudi Arabia because of its oil, but also because a regime of this sort prevents the oil from being used to finance countries and movements hostile to United States imperialism.

The execution of a Saudi Arabian woman (the fact that she is a Princess is irrelevant) and her lover for defying the conventions of medieval morality is only the latest and best publicised instance of barbarity. The fact that the Western bourgeoisie accepts this barbarism shows all its concern for 'human rights' to be a cynical facade to cover up its old and new crimes.

The socialist groups were probably too over-stretched to mount even a picket of the Saudi Embassy in Britain. Likewise the Womens Liberation Movement. Next time we should make the effort. Because for the oppressed masses of that country even the smallest gesture is useful.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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By jingo, they won Parliament sabotages devolution

IT would be ironic if last week's decision to define a majority as 40 per cent of the total potential voters in the devolution bill would later apply to other elections in Britain. One of the first casualties of this new theory of democratic rule would be George Cunningham, Labour MP for Islington and the sponsor of the 40 per cent amendment. He polled exactly 34.26 per cent of the vote at the last election — nearly 7 per cent less than he would need to be elected. NEIL WILLIAMSON looks at what lies behind last week's vote.

It is unlikely that Mr. Cunningham will be bothered very much by the devolution amendment as it was a sabotaging manoeuvre, designed to make the referendum inoperative. The nature of Mr. Cunningham's allies are instructive — especially the Tory Party Union Flag group. Having watched the Empire crumble from Salisbury to Nepal, these Tory gentlemen have joined together, determined to draw the line at Edinburgh.

The result of this united front is a rigged ballot. Under the terms of the successful amendment, abstentions, illnesses, boredom and the normal 12 per cent of voters lost on electoral rules all get lumped together against the yes votes. On, for instance, a 60 per cent vote, if only 65 per cent want an assembly, it is still defeated. The explicit object is to stop the Scottish electorate deciding what changes in the form of government it wants.

OIL

Almost lost amid the furor over Cunningham's amendment was Jo Grimond's amendment giving the 'right of federation' to the Orkneys and Shetlands. Under the law of the sea this would mean that most of the North Sea oil would return to England, leaving Scotland only about 20 per cent.

This is meant to undermine the Scottish National Party, which has consistently argued the devolution cause on financial grounds: 'Scotland's Oil'. Grimond's amendment turns the argument on its head by responding in kind. This exposes the weakness of the SNP line, which works from the premise of oil and devolution rather than the

national rights of the Scottish people.

The background to this manoeuvring will not be found in the boardrooms of the City or in the corridors of Whitehall, but in the high temple of democracy — Parliament itself. It has been a trying few weeks for British democracy.

PRESSURES

Firstly, there was the successful Government move which caused more anger in Labour ranks than all the closed hospitals or dole queues put together — elections to the European Parliament.

Concerns for the rights of parliament came up again when broadcasting of its proceedings were discussed last week. The proposal to begin broadcasting in March was thrown out by MPs. In the age of live transmissions from the moon, we are still forbidden to hear our MPs in session.

In the midst of these pressures on the rights of the MPs comes devolution. Enough is enough. Alick Buchanan-Smith, ex-Tory Secretary of State for Scotland, summed up the situation. Moving against the referendum 'on principle' he explained that its use was 'an erosion of the power and supremacy of Parliament'. The Labour MPs nodded as they walked into the voting lobby to sabotage the referendum.

All this was quite predictable for a prosperous cattle farmer and Tory MP like Alick



Buchanan-Smith. But for Labour Party MPs such a policy flies straight in the face of real elective democracy — that of the Scottish TUC, the Scottish Council of Labour Parties, and the countless trade union bodies at a local and national level who have consistently supported an elected assembly.

The Government may manage to patch up this problem as it did with the first defeat of the devolution Bill. However, last week's revelling by Parliament is by no means its last. As we said in Socialist Challenge two weeks ago: 'It is this inability to act and react to the changing needs of bourgeois democracy in Scotland which guarantees that devolution will be a running sore in British politics'.

REFERENDUM

One side result of last week is that the policy of abstaining in the referendum (as many comrades of the Socialist Workers' Party favour) looks less and less credible. Such a position could only be justified if there was a serious argument that the issue is irrelevant. In 1978 when the vast majority of working class youth vote nationalist, such a position is

absurd.

ESTABLISHMENT

Alternatively, those supporting abstention have argued that there is nothing to choose between the two options of for and against an assembly. But last week's events proved, not for the first time, that much more is at stake than another tier of local government.

Of course sections of the upper class in Scotland are running about like headless chickens, trying to take the heat out of devolution. An example is the 'Scotland Vote Yes' committee, formed last week. A glittering array of Scottish establishment figures were present from Lord Kilbrandon to the moderator of the Church of Scotland.

Behind the sugar coating of the distinguished bourgeoisie on both sides, there are serious social forces at work, and last week made it easier to see them. On one side are jingoistic parliamentarians whose main project is to preserve their own ancient rights and privileges. On the other side lie the political aspirants (no matter how confused) of the Scottish people: the commuter with brief case in hand, as much as the Clydebank engineer.

Support for the devolution Bill, support for a yes vote in the referendum, and total opposition to the sabotage of Parliament is the only way to make sure that we are on the right side of that division.

SOCIALIST UNITY
Steering Committee Meeting
Sunday 12 February 12 noon-4pm
76B Digbeth (next to Digbeth Civic Hall) Birmingham

OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

2 Our socialism will be infinitely more democratic than what exists in Britain today, with full rights for all political parties and currents that do not take up arms against the socialist state. The Stalinist model 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-communists' nor the pro-Moscow wings have any meaningful strategy for the overthrow of the capitalist state. New revolutionary socialist parties are more necessary than ever before. Conditions today are more favourable than over the preceding three decades. But such parties can only be built by rejecting sectarianism and seeing internal democracy not as a luxury but as a vital necessity. This means the right to organise factions and tendencies.

The thoughts of Lord Justice Denning 'We have ways and means of getting round the law'

Lord Alfred Thompson Denning is, as Master of the Rolls, the head of the Court of Appeal at the Old Bailey. He is one of the most powerful judges in the country. Last week he celebrated his 79th birthday.

Lord Denning appears to like celebrations, especially ones which mark out his own power and authority. The night of 20 October last year was one such occasion. Denning addressed the Mansfield Law Society at the City of London Polytechnic. His speech was video-taped, openly and with Denning's full knowledge. Socialist Challenge has just seen and listened to the tape and it contains some interesting revelations on the views and prejudices of the Master of the Rolls. GEOFF BELL reports.

'I hope there are no reporters present', was Denning's opening remark. The rest of the speech showed there was good reason for such caution.

Most of it was an exercise in self-glorification, explaining to the law students who made up the bulk of his audience, what powerful figures Alfred Denning and other Appeal Judges were. 'By and large I hope we are keeping the Government in order', he said at one point, a piece of pomposity that well illustrates his general approach.

His address was concerned with reviewing the major legal decisions of 1977, embracing cases arising from the refusal of the Tory Council to implement comprehensive education in Tameside; the legal moves to prevent the Union of Post Office Workers from taking industrial action; and, most important of all the Grunwick strike.

SMUG

For the most part Denning recalled with smug satisfaction how the Appeal Court had successfully challenged various pieces of Government legislation. 'I do not care what they (The Labour Government) do', he said, 'as long as they keep within the law'.

But Denning's insistence on the supremacy of law became somewhat muted when it was not his interpretation of law. He recalled how the attempts to take the UPW to court for threatening to cut off communications to South Africa had ended with the Government, through the Attorney General, arguing that only it had the legal right to start such a prosecution. He went on: 'We (the Appeal Court) said the Attorney General was wrong and we could have an application by any individual... could come and ask us to tell if the law was not being obeyed. The Attorney General didn't like it at all'.

REACTED

Denning went on to tell how the presumptuous Attorney General reacted: 'The case was taken to the House of Lords, and you will all know the result. The House of Lords held that we were wrong; the Attorney General was the only person who could stop it, stop the Union of Post Office Workers from breaking the law. If he choose not to, because he was afraid of the trade unions perhaps... the court could do nothing to see that the law was

enforced. And that we must take to be the law'.

But then this Master of the Rolls and author of a book entitled *Freedom Under the Law*, added: 'But we have ways and means of getting round the law'.

EXPAND

Denning didn't expand on this observation. Instead he went on to recount how he dealt with the Grunwick case. The case in question was over the ruling of Lord Chief Justice Widgery that George Ward had to recognise APEX. Widgery's ruling was based on his interpretation of the Trade Union Employment and Protection Act. Let Denning take up the story, or at least his dishonest version of it:

'The facts as shown before us were, in that case, these workers, mainly from East Africa, had got employment in the Grunwick factory and were quite content.

'Then one of them deliberately disobeyed orders... so as to get himself dismissed. He had another job in the offing... He got himself dismissed and then got some of his friends together who went out with him. And those were the strikers. They weren't members of any union then, they were taken up by APEX.

RECOGNISE

'APEX demanded that Grunwick should recognise that trade union. Fair enough, and there was machinery under a new act that this could be put before ACAS, the advisory service. That didn't suit the trade union. They were not ready to go before the Conciliation Service and have it decided by them. They took the law into their own hands.

'As you will have read thousands of mass pickets were outside the Grunwick factory, trying to force the company to grant recognition by force, without going through the processes contained by law.

'And there it was, Mr Ward and the Grunwick people applied to us. I'm afraid ACAS didn't like this dispute continuing, with all these mobs and violence. ACAS said we can't get the view of all the workers inside, so we'll grant recognition. They decided in favour of trade unions. We said on the wording of this statute this is not lawful'.

This account of the Grunwick strike, is full of half-truths, misrepresentations and downright lies.

Contrary to what Denning



Photo: Press Association

LORD DENNING

said, APEX applied to ACAS on 15 October 1976, long before the mass pickets began. Contrary to what Denning says ACAS delivered its judgement on recognition in March 1977, again before mass picketing. So no way could the decision of APEX to apply to ACAS or the ACAS decision on recognition be influenced by what Denning calls 'mobs and violence'. Indeed the real question raised is this: when Denning was making his judgement, was he so determined to lash out at 'mobs and violence', that he was prejudiced in George Ward's favour?

Denning did not end there. He concluded his remarks on Grunwick by attacking Lord Scarman: 'Lord Justice Scarman held an inquiry. He said that Ward ought to recognise

the union, ought to take them back. I wish he had mentioned more the illegality of trade unionists. I won't say any more'.

When the Grunwick case went to the Appeal Court, *Socialist Challenge* said the strikers could not rely on judges. Reading these words of the Judge who in July 1977 presided over the Grunwick Appeal, the reason for our advice is obvious. Denning was apparently ignorant of the facts of the situation. All he saw were 'mobs and violence'. The conclusion for the Grunwick strikers is obvious. The struggle continues, and to see how it can still be won, let us remember the words of Denning: 'We have ways and means of getting round the law'.

News from nowhere

Introducing Mr Costello

BERT RAMELSON, the industrial organiser of the Communist Party, has been replaced by Mick Costello. To Ramelson must go the credit of failing to revitalise the CP's industrial arm and launching an attack on Labour's economic policies.

What will Costello be like? He is certainly an experienced member of the party hierarchy. His father was New Zealand's Ambassador to the Soviet Union during the war. Young Costello was educated in Moscow where he mastered both his politics and the Russian language.

Recently a book by him was published by Novosti Press in Moscow. Its title: 'Workers Participation in the Soviet Union'. All 167 pages can be purchased for 75 pence. The book is utter gibberish. It was clearly written either to earn a bit of money on the side, or to do a PR job for the old comrades, or both.

However readers should not let their judgement of Costello be clouded by this appalling book. At a Communist University meeting in 1976, a CP dissident, Dave Purdy recounted an interesting tale. Purdy had just made a critical speech on the USSR and was being attacked from the floor by an angry, sentimental Stalinist. He responded by telling the audience of 500 that Costello, in his research for his book, had visited factories throughout the USSR. At a steel plant, he had asked workers how they reacted if they were subjected to unpopular management decisions. The workers, in an unguarded moment, let the truth slip. They pointed to the heavy steel girders on the roof and told Costello: 'You see those. Well, when the foremen prove too troublesome there's usually an accident.'

This shining example of workers participation is not of course mentioned in the Novosti book. But it does reveal an extremely cynical Industrial Organiser of the Communist Party, a quality which is, given the nature of the job, exactly what is needed.

Equal pay damages

MANAGEMENT-UNION collaboration at Leyland in Birmingham over implementation of the Equal Pay Act has contributed to cracked ribs, spine and groin injuries, according to evidence being given at an Industrial Tribunal.

Woman worker Berly Finn claims she was unfairly dismissed from Leyland's Castle Bromwich factory for publicising what happened there after the Equal Pay Act was introduced. Previously labourers were employed to help with work lifting heavy metal components all day long, but the union agreed to dispense with these labourers as part of an equal pay agreement. Naturally, this has led to big savings in wages for management. Now the AUEW District Committee is being called on to mount its own inquiry into how the scheme was ever accepted and why women sacked for protesting against it have not apparently been given union support.

A suitable case for treatment

THE political health of failed Irishman Conor Cruise O'Brien appears to be getting worse. O'Brien was kicked out of the Irish parliament by the electorate after his repeated attacks on Irish Republicanism and his imposition of press censorship while in the Irish Coalition Government.

He has now ended up as Editor of the *Observer*. Two weeks ago O'Brien shocked Fleet Street by having the *Observer's* editorial in bold print and signed personally by him. This exercise in self-glorification was condemned by among others the *Irish Times* and Fleet Street's trade paper *UK Press Gazette*.

He has now gone even further and reviewed a play entitled 'Kingdom Come', currently playing near our office. Strange that an editor should become a reviewer of fringe theatre, but strangest of all is that the play was reviewed the previous week by the *Observer*. O'Brien obviously felt this review wasn't complimentary enough. So he added his bit. The play is, of course about the North of Ireland and O'Brien uses his review to once more attack the IRA. We look forward to the megalomaniac O'Brien reviewing Eamonn McCann's forthcoming play soon to be seen in the London stage. Or will no mention of it find its way into the columns of the *Observer*? Devotees of press freedom, watch closely.

Daleks in blue

THE COMPUTER services utilised by the British police force are due for an expansion soon. Already many civil liberty organisations and the magazine *Datalink* have voiced grave doubts as to the information stored in the Police National Computer (PNC).

It contains, according to the Home Office: a list of stolen or suspected vehicles; 2.2 million fingerprints; records of people who have committed 'more serious offences', etc. The police refuse to admit that the main use of the PNC is ultimately for political purposes.

So pleased are the police with the PNC that a set of supplementary computers are now being brought into play in the provinces. Meanwhile there is a large new computer at Tintagel House just near the House of Commons. Shirley Summerskill, the Labour minister at the Home Office, refuses to release the relevant details, including the fact that a number of Labour MPs have their political records on the new computer.

State Research, a London-based research trust, says that the system will hold 600,000 Special Branch files on individuals, many by nature political rather than specifically criminal. The patrolling copper can then consult the monster directly.

News from Nowhere will publish the best fictional account of a dalek in blue conversing with the computer after stopping a long-haired person on a random check. Maximum length: 400 words.

Speke plant in Edwardes' firing line

WORKERS at Leyland's Standard Triumph factory at Speke Merseyside this week entered their 14th week on strike, after a management attempt to introduce a speed-up on the production lines. TOMMY HEALEY, former deputy convenor at the plant, explains the background to this dispute which is affecting 5,500 workers.

More than 250,000 jobs were lost in 1976, according to the Department of Employment Gazette, bringing the unemployment figures to more than 1½ million. Hand in hand with this rising unemployment, another ruling class offensive is in full swing, on productivity.

On Merseyside, large numbers of workers have taken strike action in response to this at Fords, Standard Triumph, Dunlops, and on the docks. The common thread through all the strikes is manning levels. Stewards at Dunlops are faced with suspensions and sackings, after taking strike action when the management ripped up the agreement and imposed new manning levels.

The same situation exists at Standard Triumph, where the workers are now in their 14th week of a strike because the management ripped up the 1972 manning agreements and tried to raise line speeds from 14½ to 17½ cars per hour.

In the 14 weeks, shop stewards have called only one mass meeting, and they alone have picketed the gates continuously. The shop stewards argue there is nothing to report, so that there is no use in calling a meeting. Meanwhile, the Leyland management claim the strike has little support and the only local paper, *The Liverpool Echo* has had a field day with headlines of the 'Shut Up Warning to TR7 Rebels' sort.

TAUNTS

The stewards have been taunted by management to call a mass meeting 'or we will'. However, the stewards have printed their own leaflet, and the so-called 'rebels' never appear when the workers call up each Thursday for their tax rebates.

Union officials were due to meet Leyland boss Michael Edwardes on Wednesday to discuss the company's proposed job cuts. A mass meeting was held at Speke after that meeting. Edwardes' attitude is perfectly clear: management's job is to put capitalism to its best use, and if 30,000 jobs are lost in the process, then so what?

RESISTANCE

The struggle at Speke is crucial to the Leyland workers' resistance to the planned job losses. For Edwardes, it is the first nut to crack, if he is to get away with ripping up manning agreements throughout the corporation.

The manning level at Standard Triumph Speke is only the start. There are 6,000 jobs at stake and Leyland couldn't care less whether they produce the TR7 or not. The TR7 is produced mainly for the American market, yet all 20,000 TR7s exported to America were re-called for six faults to be rectified.

In fact the TR7 is America's highest faulted car by the American Safety Commission's standards. These questions and many more so far remain unanswered.

Only one week's production of the TR7 has taken place since August 1977, and yet there are 400 TR7s still in the compound at Speke. When stewards discussed the boycotting of cars in the compound, 100 or so were quickly pulled out to be stored elsewhere.

Many of the stewards believe that Leyland cannot give the cars away, which is why Speke was chosen for the new offensive. It has the extra advantage for management of having a weak workforce thanks to lay-offs.



Picket of Leyland's Speke factory: shop stewards insist that only they should appear on the picket line.

10 per cent norm A week of challenge

This week is a vital one for millions of workers determined to seek a real increase in their living standards. Vital pay negotiations in a series of nationalised industries co-incide with the start this Wednesday of an overtime ban which threatens to cut petrol supplies by over a third.

*The tanker drivers' overtime ban is in support of a 30 per cent pay claim. Of the major companies, only those employed by Mobil are not involved. The drivers are members of the Transport and General Workers Union which, at least on paper, opposes the 10 per cent norm.

*The steel workers have so far been offered only a miserly six per cent increase by the British Steel Corporation. On Wednesday leaders of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation were due to give their answer to the BSC offer.

*Gas workers have already rejected an offer of an 8.9 per cent increase. On Tuesday new discussions started between the leaders of the Gas Council and representatives of 40,000 workers.

*The miners' claim for new rates of up to £135 a week remains on the table. The National Coal Board and the Government are hoping the local productivity deals which have been negotiated will split the fighting unity of the union. The two sides met on Tuesday.

*Engineering workers meet employers' representatives on

Friday. An offer of a two and a half per cent increase has been described as 'derisory' by union leaders.

*Railway workers are claiming increases of from 30 to 60 per cent. Rail chiefs will try and win acceptance for productivity deals involving mass redundancies. In the last 18 months 10,000 jobs have been lost in the industry. Negotiations began Tuesday.

Other workers involved in negotiations this week include shipyard workers and water workers. But in every one of these claims the vast majority of union leaders involved will be seeking some compromise formula or sham productivity deal so as not to appear to challenge the 10 per cent limit.

Thus, for example, although Ray Buckton, general secretary

of the rail union ASLEF, has said he remains opposed to the 10 per cent limit, he has also stated he is willing to accept productivity deals.

CUTS

But even Buckton is a militant compared to some. Hugh Scanlon is one of the main architects of the 10 per cent limit, and if it is left to him, engineering workers will face another cut in real wages this year. Neither is Bill Sims, leader of the steel workers, the type of union leader with an appetite for struggle. In each of these struggles, the crucial factor will be the willingness of the rank and file members to force their leaders to pursue the claims, and ensure that the struggle is not left in the hands of union bureaucrats.



EEPTU members lobbying their annual conference in November last year.

Can 'Franco Chappello' defeat the 10 per cent limit? Power workers wage claim

A pay claim which would make nonsense of the government's 10 per cent limit on pay increases is currently being negotiated on behalf of 95,000 power workers. The main union involved is the electrician's union, whose general secretary, Frank Chapple, has been one of the staunchest supporters of incomes policy. RICH PALSER explains:

Ex-communist Frank Chapple has been a consistent supporter of wage restraint. He supported the 1966 wage freeze of the Labour Government, the Tory incomes policy which followed and the first two phases of Labour's incomes policy.

Because of now massive opposition to Labour's 10 per cent limit, Chapple was forced to call for a return to free collective bargaining at the last conference of the EEPTU. But his approach to 'defending' his members' living standards has not altered. In December his union negotiated a wages settlement for 50,000 electricians and apprentices which gave them a 10 per cent rise plus increases gained through local incentive schemes — a deal within the government's pay guidelines.

'INCENTIVES'

The effects of 'incentive schemes' will be the same as the increased productivity achieved in a power industry in which

70,000 jobs have been lost. But as with so many previous productivity and incentive schemes, the prospect of getting round the 10 per cent limit by another such deal is not really on. The pressure from his membership has left Chapple with little option but to threaten to challenge the 10 per cent norm.

'FRANCO'

Whether Chapple will turn these threats into reality is a very open question. The leadership of the EEPTU is not known for paying serious attention to the views of its rank and file. Chapple's method of operating in his union is reflected in his 'Franco Chappello' nickname.

His leadership of the EEPTU, which allows him to remain in office until retirement in 1985, began in 1961, when the ballot-rigging scandal toppled the Communist Party from leadership in the union. Election of full time officials was abolished; the lay executive

elects every two years was replaced by an executive of full-timers elected every five; the machinery to appeal against executive decisions was abolished; Communists were barred from holding office in the union; and the area committees were replaced with industrial conferences of purely advisory capacity.

POWERS

Although the left was unable to reverse these attacks on democracy at the last union rules revision conference, it has been growing in strength over the past years. Worried that elections to the executive could end his majority on that body, Chapple introduced new rules that conference which for the first time gave himself — and National Secretary Charlie Lovell — voting powers on the executive. Branch delegates who would have opposed these moves were excluded from the conference.

Chapple points to the industrial conferences of shop stewards as an extension of democracy in the union. But these have only advisory powers — and as the *Financial Times* remarked: 'The union has shown in the past it can keep a close watch on the political activities of its shop stewards.'

That's why no reliance can be laid on the EEPTU leadership to win the power workers' claim. A national conference of shop stewards in the industry must decide the strategy for winning the claim, demand control over all negotiations, and be empowered to accept or reject any offer made by management. To leave the struggle in the hands of Chapple would be to invite disaster.

FAMILY PLANNING CUT

IN A new round of cuts affecting services for women, East Sussex Area Health Authority is planning to close down five family planning clinics and divert the 28,000 people who attend them each year to local GPs. If implemented, this means that thousands of women will lose the specialised contraceptive advice and medical supervision.

Now local women's groups and others including NAC, CP and IMG militants are fighting back with the FPC. An anti-closure petition has been massively supported, and successful lobbies of the Area Health Authority are to be followed by a big public meeting on Friday February 3rd.

One day unity conference Getting it together again

ONE OF the features of recent activities and discussions on the left has been the involvement of ex-members of the International Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party. Apart from the Workers League, a group of about 100 formed when the IS Opposition were expelled from IS in 1975, many individuals and small groups are still active as revolutionary socialists in the trade unions, in the women's and gay movements, among black workers, and recently in the Socialist Unity and Socialist Challenge groups in the localities.

Now a national one-day conference of International Socialists on Revolutionary Unity has been called by a number of these activists [at the Africa Centre, King St., London WC2, on Saturday 11 February from 10 to 5.30]. The ad hoc organising Secretary of the conference is Martin Shaw, who was himself forced out of the SWP last year and is now active in Socialist Unity. Socialist Challenge interviewed him about the conference.

SC: The appeal for your conference talks about people who 'still identify to some extent with the ideas and experiences of IS'. Who exactly are you hoping will come along?

MS: There are a lot of people who are no longer in the SWP because they feel the best traditions of IS have been lost in that organisation. There are quite a few ways of defining

what those traditions are, but I guess that the things most people would agree were important are the emphases on working-class self-activity (particularly through genuine rank and file movements) and workers' democracy (including full internal democracy in a revolutionary organisation). In addition, most people would feel that sexual politics was a big, crucial area which IS never

got to grips with properly.

We are hoping that everyone who thinks along these lines, and in addition sees the possibility of closer collaboration with other groups like IMG and Big Flame as important at the present time, will be coming. Obviously we're specially keen to see people who are still active on the ground, coming to the conference, but there are a lot of people too who might come back into activity if they thought something viable was happening, and we're hoping they'll come too. Indeed, there's been a good response so far, over 50 people have already paid up, with a fortnight to go, and I expect there'll be over 100 there on the day.

SC: Quite a few of the appeal signatories were Workers League members, others not. What is the WL's role?

MS: Workers League generally are supporting it, and some of their members are very enthusiastic, but they are coming as individuals and I don't expect they'll make up more than a third of the Conference. Actually there are quite a few people interested



MARTIN SHAW

who were never even in IS, and most of the people will be coming from local groups and as individuals. A few SWP members are interested, too.

SC: Do you see the conference as making a definite contribution to revolutionary

unity?

MS: As this is the first meeting of its kind it's very difficult to say how definite its conclusions will be. We are all in support of moves toward revolutionary unity in general terms, but there may be disagreement about the way to move towards it, and how fast. Those of us who've called the conference don't have a collective view, so I can speak only for myself.

Personally, I think the first thing for this conference to do is to sort out the political questions — what we think the situation is today, what the priorities are, how far the 'IS tradition' helps us (and there's a lot of weaknesses in it too). At the same time, you have to have an organisational framework. I don't think there's any future for small new organisations today, and I think some members of Workers League have come to that conclusion from their experience too.

I think we're close enough to both IMG and Big Flame, and can learn a lot from them, and the perspective should be to work for a new revolutionary organisation involving them

too. I would like to see Socialist Unity as the framework for this, since this can be a means for a political intervention which can win new people towards us. Needless to say there would need to be a lot more commitment to Socialist Unity on the ground, as well as discussion between so-called 'revolutionary diplomats' before this would be possible.

SC: You mentioned the SWP. How do you see your relationship to them now?

MS: Well, I hope that what we're doing will have some impact on their attitudes. After all, it was IS which made a big unity appeal in 1968 and that was the policy for some time after that. So revolutionary unity's very much in the 'IS tradition', and it's not too late for them to change their minds. I think the key thing for me, and probably a lot of the people coming to our conference, would be the internal democracy question, but that's so related to your politics generally that there would need to be a lot of re-examination in the SWP, just as we are doing it, before we could get closer to them again.

NUJ strike ends

The epic journalists' strike at North of England Newspapers, Darlington, has just come to an end after a record seven months, with both positive and negative results. The hundred per cent post-entry shop, which was the 110-strong chapel's overall objective in the dispute, was not achieved. But valuable gains at local level were, writes JONATHAN HAMMOND

These include a house agreement on top of the existing national agreement; 20-30 per cent pay rises when pay policy permits, together with a commitment from the management not to let NUJ membership fall below the level at which it was just before the strike (81.35 per cent). And not least a strong and united chapel at Darlington, made so by its experiences on the picket line.

Other positive gains were the magnificent solidarity over several months of rank and file members of the three print unions at Darlington, the NGA, SLADE and NAT-SOPA. These unions did not cross picket lines and so brought the papers to a halt, reducing them to a duplicated two-page broadsheet.

Negative aspects of the dispute across from the NUJ executive's indecisive handling of it — and this is also a self-criticism, even though I and others on the executive argued for an early escalation of the dispute. After the print unions became involved, it was never clear how far the TUC Printing Industries Committee had taken control of the dispute from the NUJ executive; and this divided responsibility had a fatal effect on the timing of the proposed escalation, which in the event never took place.

SUPERB

None of this criticism reflects on John Hodgman, the NUJ full-time official with responsibility for the dispute, who, it was generally agreed, did a superb job.

The aims of a closed shop in journalism need to be debated far more within the journalists' union. It is fair to say that the Darlington chapel's only motive in trying to secure a closed shop was an industrial one. But should increased

industrial strength be the sole reason for having a closed shop in journalism?

I don't believe that the 100 per cent post-entry shop will, by itself, bring about a fundamental shift in the ideology of any newspaper. Only a change in the basic ownership and structure of newspapers and the media can start to do that. What it can do, however, is to put a chapel or a group of chapels in a position to apply, creatively and sensitively, the NUJ's Code of Conduct, to mitigate the worst aspects of anti-trade unionism, racism and sexism as they affect

the newspaper's content.

A case in point is the closed-shop agreement the NUJ has with Wilson and Whitworth, publishers of the Stratford Express in East London, which contains a clause recognising the primacy of the Code of Conduct. The recent agreement between the NUJ and the National Graphical Association on race reporting could also become a very important factor, when closed shops on provincial newspapers are more general than they are now.

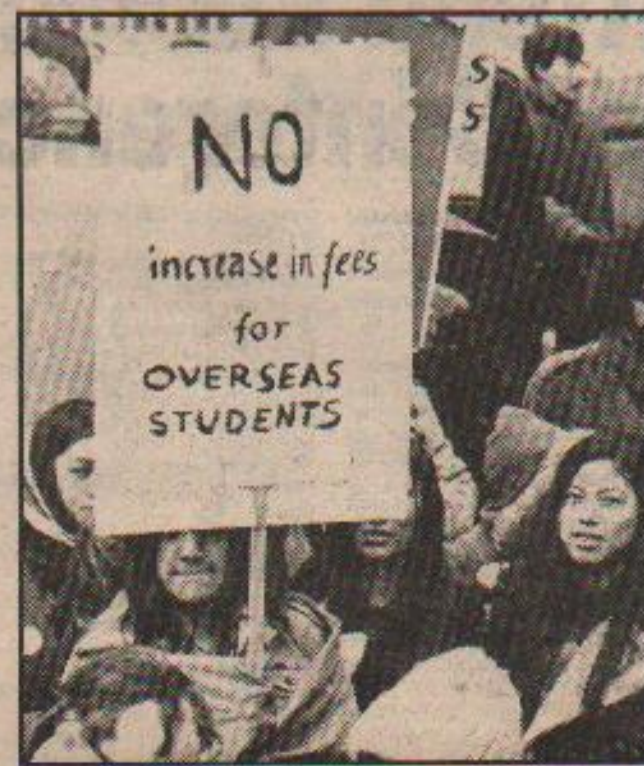
As regards the conduct of future disputes of this kind, the offers made by the NGA and SLADE executives to the NUJ, to explore the possibility of a common strategy to secure closed shops, needs to be taken up. Nevertheless, the journalists' union also has to learn to stand on its own two feet and take its own decisions.



Darlington journalists lobbying NUJ executive members during the strike. Jonathan Hammond is second from right.

Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM

Racist fines for London polys



LAST weekend the Inner London Education Authority took a new step in its drive to crack down on overseas students in London colleges. REDMOND O'NEILL reports.

At a meeting of the Further and Higher Education Subcommittee of ILEA, on 25 January, it was decided to 'fine' two London polytechnics to the tune of £50,000. Their 'crime'? Failure to comply with ILEA's guidelines for cutting overseas students numbers. The quotas in London aim to reduce the proportion of overseas students in individual London colleges to 25 per cent by 1981.

If successful the result will not be more places for 'British' students but college closures, the scrapping of courses with a high proportion of foreign students, and redundancies

The major problem in organising a response to these racist measures has been the absence of any coordination of activity at an all-London level.

At December's NUS Conference, the national executive was censured for its inactivity on overseas students, by an overwhelming vote. As a result, on 11 February, the NUS is organising an activists' meeting to discuss the fees and quotas campaign.

LAUNCHING PAD

In spite of the fact that NUS will attempt to prevent this conference taking any decisions, it can act as a launching pad for real activity in the colleges as it represents the first coordination of any kind to be organised this year. Following the conference there will be a national demonstration against fees and quotas on 22 February.

The NUS leadership has done little or nothing to build either of these activities. It is therefore very much up to militants in the colleges to do so. In London this can be done by organising coordination of activities — such as occupations of the larger colleges —

prior to the demonstration, using these as bases to get out to the smaller colleges and win trade union support.

But if the campaign is to have a longer term perspective, it will be necessary to fight at the conference for a clear line of no reliance on college authorities, but demanding they turn their moral abhorrence of racial discrimination into practical measures — first and foremost refusing to implement racist quotas or discriminatory fee levels.

The type of alliance which can seriously take on ILEA and the government is with the college workers. That can be built by instituting joint enquiries by the unions and students, which can demonstrate the existence of concealed quotas and demonstrate the relationship between cuts in overseas student numbers and cuts in jobs.

The government's offensive against overseas students clearly attempts to split the student movement along racial lines. Such moves can only facilitate the present drive by the National Front to gain a base amongst youth in the schools and small colleges.

Racist ousted in union election

BILL JARVIS, a well-known figure in the West Midlands labour movement, has finally been thrown out of office as President of Birmingham Trades Council. Jarvis gained national notoriety in 1976 after a speech blaming immigrant workers for the deterioration in social and public services in the West Midlands. Despite a vote calling for his resignation by Birmingham Trades Council, Jarvis refused to resign or retract his statements. And after a massive red-baiting pro-Jarvis press campaign last January, Jarvis narrowly held onto his seat as President.

But this year he was not so fortunate. He has now lost his position as President to Maurice Ludmer, a member of the NUJ as editor of *Searchlight*, and a well-known anti-fascist and anti-racist militant. Ludmer defeated Jarvis on a vote of 136 to 128 of the delegates voting.

The removal of a racist like Jarvis and his replacement by an active militant in the fight against the National Front and racism should encourage more efforts to remove such figures from office in the labour movement and so strengthen the fight against racism.

Self defence needed against the racist wolves



One of the vilest features of racist thuggery in the USA's Deep South has begun to make its appearance on the streets of Wolverhampton. DAVID HAUGHTON reports.

Gangs of youths in cars cruise black areas late at night, don white balaclava helmets, and set about lone blacks with clubs and knives.

At least ten such attacks — all of them resulting in the victims requiring hospital treatment — have been reported to the police in recent weeks. So far, predictably, the police have failed 'to make any headway

with inquiries'.

It was Wolverhampton's *Express and Star* which first described the hoods worn by some of the town's football fans at matches as 'Klan style'. But these were adopted as protection against closed-circuit TV cameras, and the indications are that racist thugs latched on to the publicity, rather than maverick football

'hoofigans' attacking blacks.

This is the background to what the national press headlined as a 'race riot' in Wolverhampton last Friday night. Between two and three hundred black youths leaving a disco were determined to make the streets safe, and headed for a pub known to be a hangout for the National Front.

A large police contingent arrived to protect the NF, and in the clashes that followed seven blacks were arrested and five police officers slightly injured. The following night, two white youths wearing

hoods were arrested.

Leaflets urging blacks to go around in groups at night — to prevent attacks — were circulated during the week preceding Friday's clash, and the Wolverhampton Anti-Racist Committee, which meets as *Socialist Challenge* goes to press, will be discussing the organisation of self-defence groups in order to make the streets safe.

The Committee will also consider proposals for a campaign and fund in defence of the seven youths arrested.

The fight against racism in Brum

MR IVOR MORGAN, a National Front sympathiser at British Leyland's Longbridge plant in Birmingham, thought that giving Nazi-style salutes and marking his clock-card with a swastika was 'just harmless fun'. Fortunately this fascist's association with the butchers of millions of workers and Jews in Europe did not impress his work-mates at Longbridge — 200 workers in the East Works engine assembly department stopped work last Friday in protest against Morgan's activities.

At the moment this action has forced the management at British Leyland to remove Morgan from the shop floor. But talks with the unions at Longbridge indicate that they may only remove the fascist to another department. No doubt Communist Party convenors on the Longbridge Works Committee are worried about Morgan's 'freedom of speech' if he gets the sack.

Such considerations are an insult to the millions who died at the hands of the fascists, and to the black workers who suffered every day from fascist attacks. Instead of discussing removing the fascist to another section of Longbridge, the unions should make the stoppage in the East Works official and force Leyland to sack Morgan.

'More than an attack on free speech'

by PETER PURTEN

Saturday 11 February is the date set for a demonstration in protest against the recent conviction of *Gay News* for blasphemous libel.

The successful prosecution of *Gay News* by Mary Whitehouse in July 1977 is part of a growing backlash against the limited gains made by lesbians and gay men in the last ten years. At its most horrific, this backlash saw the murder of ten gay people last year. In the North of Ireland, Ian Paisley has launched a 'Save Ulster from Sodomy' campaign, and is fighting — along with the Festival of Light — against the extension of the 1967 Sexual Offences Act to Northern Ireland where, as in Scotland, male homosexuality is still illegal.

Its most recent manifestation was the attack by 20 National Front thugs on the Vauxhall Tavern in South London following the fascist picket at the Education TV Centre of the Inner London Education Authority. In this attack, two gay people were seriously injured, and the pub itself was seriously damaged.

PROSECUTION

The defence of *Gay News* is thus far more significant than just defending a newspaper. The prosecution of this paper — and support for it by the media, the church and the State — has made physical violence against gays almost respectable. Although many have rightly attacked the paper for its sexism and hostility to radical ideas, as the only mass circulation paper for homosexuals *Gay News* plays a vital role in reaching gay people who

are isolated, frightened and repressed — encouraging them to recognise the validity of their sexuality.

DEFENCE

The National Gay News Defence Committee is fighting to spread an understanding of these issues through the defence of the paper. The Committee stresses that the prosecution of *Gay News* is more than an attack on free speech and rights of gays to organise and communicate; it is part of an attempt to crush the demand advanced by both the gay and the women's movement for the right to control their own lives.

The Gay News Defence Committee needs and deserves support. It has drawn up a model resolution which can be moved in trade union branches, trade councils, student unions, anti-fascist committees and Labour Party branches. The resolution reads:

'This branch deplores the erosion of civil liberties as evidenced by the recent use of an antiquated blasphemy law to convict *Gay News* and its editor Denis Lemon.

'This branch calls for the repeal of the blasphemy law and the quashing of the conviction of *Gay News* and its editor and urges its members to support the forthcoming demonstration in London on 11 February'.

The demonstration is assembling outside Temple underground at 1pm and will rally in Trafalgar Square. The Defence Committee (to which groups or individuals should affiliate) can be contacted c/o 146 Mayall Rd, London SE24, telephone (01) 274 0843.



1000 attend Socialist Feminist Conference

JUDE WOODWARD reports

LAST weekend 1,000 women gathered in Manchester for the first socialist feminist conference since 1975. They continued the debate within the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) about the relationship between feminism and socialism.

Discussion at the conference was wide-ranging and a large number of political tendencies were represented; left groups, and a very large proportion of non-aligned socialist women.

Much of the general discussion was tentative, which was not surprising after a lull of nearly two years since the last gathering of this kind. But there was plenty of resolve that the work of the socialist feminist current should be carried forward. A recall conference was decided on for the early spring of 1979, which will be more fully discussed at a workshop at the next WLM conference.

Meanwhile, *Scarlet Women*, a journal produced for subscribers by a group of socialist feminists, is to be expanded, regularised and sold publicly. Its address is 5, Washington Terrace, North Shields, Tyne and Wear. This journal will be made more representative and strengthened by a network of regional correspondents from local socialist feminist groupings.

The women organising the International Women's Day workshop joined with those from the Third World Women's workshop to suggest that the socialist feminist current should take up work around

repression in Latin America and Iran.

This is in keeping with the international decision to emphasise repression as well as abortion and unemployment at International Women's Day this year (8 March). A meeting to co-ordinate international activity and a rally during International Women's Week is being held on Friday, 3 Feb, 7.00pm at 16, Hoxton Street, London N1.

CONSTRUCTIVE

The Women and Ireland group drew attention to the fact that it was the anniversary of Bloody Sunday. Many women regretted being unable to show their solidarity with the struggle of the Irish people by joining marches that day. It was widely felt that socialist feminists must make constructive contri-

butions to Irish solidarity work.

At the conference there was repeated expression of the importance of fighting the advance of racism and fascism. Clearly most feminists understand the threat of fascism to their political organisation as women. They also wished to add their weight to the struggles of black women.

Women welcomed the suggestion of one Asian woman calling for an all out fight against the immigration laws.

A national conference for women in the movement who are active against racism and fascism is being held on 11/12 March.

The conference saw the beginning of a serious effort to build a vital socialist feminist current within the wider autonomous women's movement.

The Communist Party and Feminism

Communist women reply

Bea Campbell, Jane Roberts and Caroline Rowan

We welcome the opportunity offered by the Socialist Challenge critique of Communist women's position vis the Socialist Feminist current in the Women's Liberation Movement to state our own stance, although we are limited in this both by shortage of space and by the somewhat confused nature of the original critique.

We can summarise the arguments of the authors, Cath Cirket and Val Coultas as follows:

1) The family is the principal institution of women's oppression. The basis of women's oppression is material, i.e. the sexual division of labour within the family. This material oppression is 'reflected' in sexist 'ideology'.

2) Given that the family constitutes the fundamental block to women's liberation, it must be removed, i.e. abolished. The material preconditions for its abolition are only possible under a new system of production, i.e. Socialism.

3) Since women's liberation is materially tied to socialist revolution, there can be no separation of tasks of Socialist Feminists from revolutionary socialists as a whole.

4) The failure of feminists in the CP to understand the material roots of women's liberation has its political consequences in the reduction of political struggle vis the WLM to 'ideological' exposure of sexism and women's rights, missing out the need for a united fight for women's liberation politically in the labour movement. This then leads to missing the potential of the women's movement as a 'spearhead' in the struggle for socialism — and the need for socialist feminists to fight for this position within the WLM.

Let's look at the consequences of this approach, in terms of what it says of the IMG's position.

1) Your model of the family never analyses the conditions of existence of material oppression. You have no politics NOW for the family, sexuality, personality, consciousness or the sexual division of labour (and in that sense you are at odds with the whole tenor of the WLM). We, on the other hand, believe these must be integrated into revolutionary practice and strategy if these are to represent women.

2) The IMG strategically expounds no autonomous political future for the WLM, effectively collapsing it into a ginger group of the labour movement under the guidance of a revolutionary elite. However, we not only formally respect the autonomy of the WLM, we believe in it. An autonomous women's movement must be, in our view, an essential medium for women as a political force.

3) The IMG still sticks to a concept of revolution as a cataclysmic moment detonated by the revolutionary vanguard. This means that they never tackle the problem of consciousness or movements as mass, autonomous sources of political initiative. In the Communist Party, we reject vanguard elitism, we see revolution as a process, as mass politics — mass movements of consciousness and action towards control, in which independent political forces come together in a political formation. Now we would like to go into a little more detail about our points of difference.

The Family:

We were a bit stunned that your only reference to revolutionary socialism and the family seems to be the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848. However, forgiving that, we agree that the family is an important starting point. Any analysis of women must incorporate their position within the working class and their position as a sex; that means analysis of the relations of production and the relations of reproduction, which clearly would start with the family. But that isn't enough. You also need to analyse the totality of the social relations of production and the social means by which the subordination of women is secured.

You don't consider the possibility that capitalism may dispense with the family for us, and you don't discuss the family's function in binding adherence to ruling class ideology. Your sleight of hand attitude towards sexism as a bundle of ideological baggage, as simply obstacles, leaves you with no account of the way they are operational in the ruling class's hegemony.

Challenging sexist ideology is not just a matter of making chaps nicer, but of changing practice, an internal reconstruction of the workers movement, and that's what we understand — and you misunderstand —



Detail from photo by: LARRY HERMAN



working class hegemony to be about.

You dismiss the patriarchal relation and you dismiss social relations WITHIN the family. You are silent about the effects of women's subordination and banish the raising of consciousness from having any material place in politics, dismissing it to the seemingly flighty realms of ideology — which in your mode has no materiality.

As far as we can see, you end up reducing the struggle around the family to a kind of antique bravado, a bit reminiscent of the 'fuck the family' rhetoric which thankfully seems to have disappeared from the WLM's vocabulary.

You say nothing that has got any strategic utility for a movement that has hugely refined Marxist theory about relations of reproduction and their connection to class and the state, a movement that has shown the penetration of state power 'into the bosom of the family'. And you have still less to say to most people who, 'naughty, naughty, happen to live in or were born into families. It's this sort of thing that drives mothers in the world and in the WLM bonkers.

'The women's movement has shown the penetration of state power "into the bosom of the family".'

Socialism-Feminism and the WLM

We suggest that you have no notion of socialism-feminism as an inescapably political concept and not just 'feminism plus socialism'. And because you have no theory of autonomy, of an equal and democratic relation between political forces, you have no way of assimilating the WLM's political impact (and no amount of vanguardist flattery on WLM's behalf can alter that).

All you propose is the socialist-feminist current directing the WLM's energy towards the Labour Movement. This typifies your problem, for you have no strategy from within for the Labour movement. Come on! You can't use the socialist-feminist 'vanguard' as the instrument of your purchase on a labour movement from which you are isolated and which you long to lead.

What is Our Position?

It is quite wrong to say that Communist feminists oppose the consolidation of the

socialist feminist current — that would be completely inconsistent with Communist practice.

But what we do oppose is:

— using socialist feminism as sanctuary from WLM.

— flight from our responsibility within the movement for its survival and expansion as a mass movement.

— vanguardist capture of this or that current or campaign by certain left groups (mentioning no names, although most of them seem to have forsaken us in recent years.)

In this respect we share most non-aligned feminists distaste for small left groups making relentless takeover bids in the movement.

Instead, we believe socialism-feminism should be concerned with:

— What do we mean by socialism? Is it the varieties hitherto on offer —

Feminists have long had a critique of sexist socialism, so the problem is how that lucid contribution can be located within socialist politics, within the contemporary debate about what constitutes a truly contemporary socialist process.

This certainly involves exploring our relationship to the left. The dilemma which is experienced on an informal, individual level must be integrated into our socialism-feminism on a theoretical and strategic level.

— What is the WLM and our relation to it? After all, the ground of our existence is the WLM, it is our reference point, we are of it, our socialism-feminism is within it. Yet you talk of it almost as if you were exiles, but not as if you/we were the subjects who live the problems of the movement too. The movement's problems — and they are big ones — can't be solved by evacuating into a caucus, corner or current, simply fleeing from the discomfort of the movement's condition. We have to take those problems on.

— Revolutionary strategy: What are our differences here? Your concept of the revolutionary vanguard, with a hierarchy of relationships ranging from the advanced sections of the working class to the ignorant and confused masses is opposed by ours, which is a concept of a mass revolutionary party in democratic alliance with autonomous political forces. In essence, ours is about the creation of a new mass political formation. Your position, in our view, assumes an elite and passive mass. Ours assumes the engagement of the masses.

The IMG is forced to make totally dishonest claims about the feminist impact within the CP. Firstly, you insist that the party is a bureaucratic monolith, and when that doesn't stand up, because feminists have joined the CP and had effect, you present the party as a crumbling sentimental giant indulging the fair maidens who are doing their own thing.

Clearly, you have no idea about life in the CP. You seem unaware that since 1970 women have been one of the most controversial and combative groups of people within the party. And they have had effect, both in terms of policy and the growing number of women's groups and committees, from local to national level.

Certainly, we haven't got all we want, either in terms of policy or active commitment, we are the first to admit that and we always have. But at the same time some progress has been made. The CP supports the WLM and its demands, and is committed to fighting for women and against sexism. Our programme, the *British Road to Socialism*, does state that the condition of women is a central problem for socialism. Your programme, *The Transitional Programme of the Fourth International*, says nothing.

Inner Party Democracy

You describe the Party as a bureaucracy, with no internal democracy, a party in which we have not taken on the leadership — well the leadership would be the first to disagree with you?

You counterpose against our structure your own, with its factions and tendencies. Well, our structure is not perfect, and a forthcoming commission will be the instrument of a debate on this within the party. The point is, however, that our debates are public and accessible, while yours are conducted within your own four walls. How can we estimate the effectiveness of your democratic machinery, when the outside world is not allowed access to its political content?

Finally, we hope that this debate on socialist feminism will help to locate it firmly within the WLM and that it — i.e. socialism-feminism — will not fall prey to the wranglings of different left groups, into which it has dissolved in the past.

The ecologists: back to Luddism

IT IS ENCOURAGING to see *Socialist Challenge* opening its pages to representatives of the campaign against nuclear power — a debate between ecologists and Marxists is long overdue. As part of that debate, there are several points in Rob Edwards' article in the Christmas issue which need taking up.

For Marxists, it is a fairly basic position that a communist or socialist society must take over and build on all the technological, scientific, and cultural developments of previous bourgeois societies. For us, technologies and scientific developments are not destructive or undesirable in themselves — neither do such developments or discoveries themselves take societies forward, or hold them back.

Always, for us, it is the social relations into which such technologies enter which renders them dangerous or alternatively progressive.

The splitting of the atom — and the enormous potential for unleashing energy from within matter — was probably the most important practical scientific achievement of the twentieth century. It was, in turn, made possible by the most important theoretical gain: Einstein's theories of relativity.

LIBERATING

For us, such discoveries indicate potentially liberating forces for the whole of humanity on an enormous scale; to free them from hunger, cold, and socially unnecessary, degrading manual labour. There are also, of course, in the present economic and political situation, potentially destructive possibilities, in the form of nuclear weapons. We have to work towards a balance of forces where the destructive potential is minimised and eventually extinguished, while maximising the productive potential of such forces.

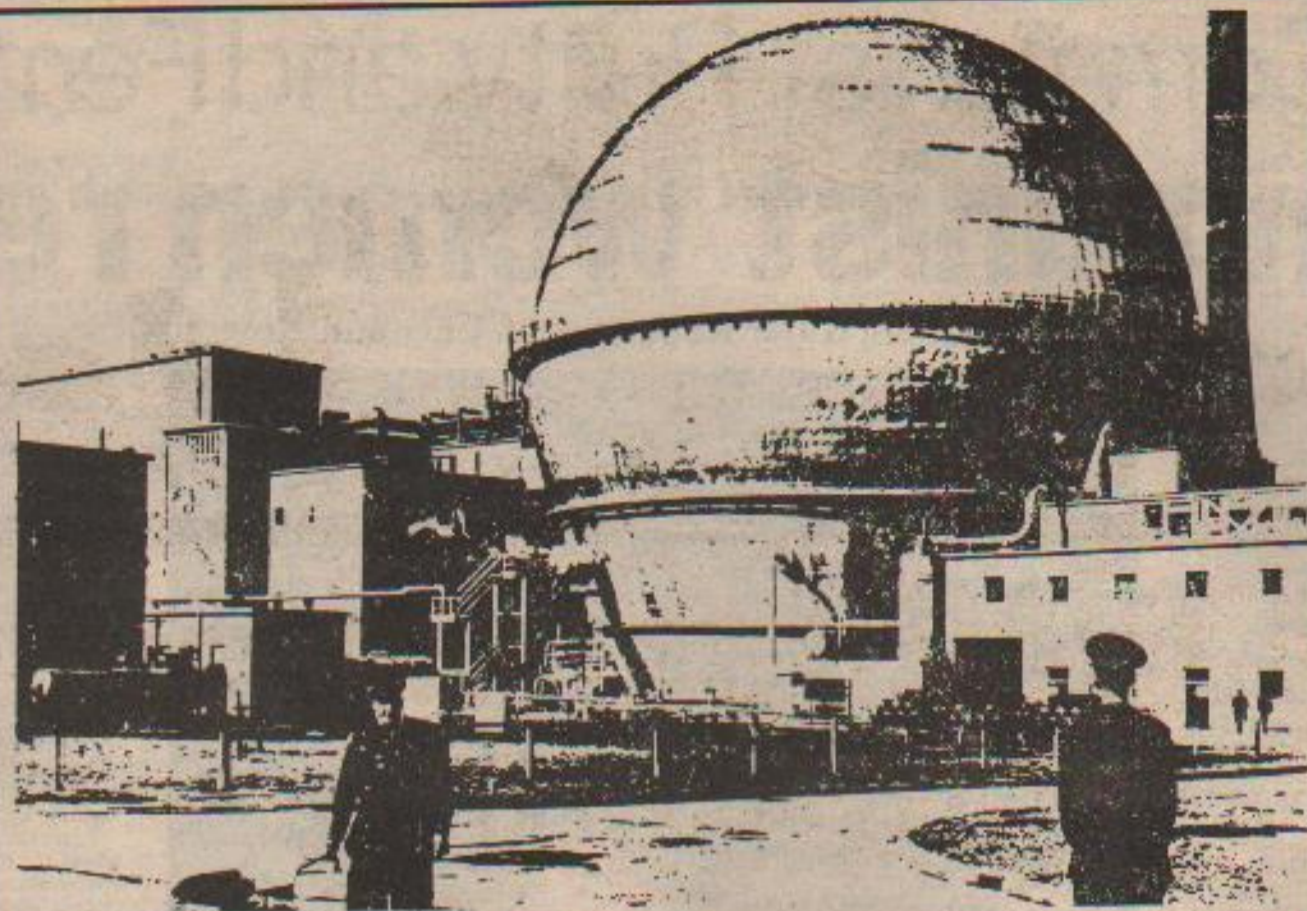
To reject nuclear power per se (ie to suppress or 'forget' about it) as Rob Edwards and the bulk of the ecology and conservation movement want to do, is to replace politics by a new, backward looking, naive form of 'Luddism'.

Basically, they don't want to tackle the social relations underlying capitalism, through revolutionary change. They locate the ills of society simply within the development of technology alone. Edwards wrote: 'People do not want more high technology and the alienation which it implies — they especially don't want a technology that is unavoidably wedded to humanity's most fearsome weapon'.

Let us ignore the mechanical 'guilt by association' argument used to demand nuclear power. For Edwards 'high technology' = 'alienation'. A similar argument is put forward by John Fowles elsewhere in the same issue of *Socialist Challenge*. For us on the other hand, 'alienation' is not a result of technology, but the social relations governing such technology.

We recognise that a planned economy, controlled by and involving the whole of the working class, could harness all large-scale technology, including nuclear energy, for socially beneficial ends. And people could feel genuine control over these processes.

Edwards' solution lies elsewhere: 'Alternative energy strategies, based on the small-scale, decentralised use of the sun, wind and waves at least offer the possibility of a society



Should atoms be kept in their place?

THE REACTION was alternately humour and hysteria when Cosmos 954, the Soviet intelligence satellite, made its unscheduled landing in Canada. Cartoonists had great fun with dogs, little children, Eskimos and others unwittingly bringing home this lethal object.

And, despite 'unprecedented' co-operation between the United States and the Soviet Union to defuse their danger, there is no doubt that the incident lends itself to a new bout of propaganda against Soviet military power.

We regard Soviet use of nuclear power in a very different way from the imperialist nuclear 'deterrent'. Soviet nuclear weapons were developed as a response to a very real nuclear threat from the West in the

1940s. It is a threat that still remains.

As this latest incident shows, the Kremlin bureaucracy is certainly irresponsible — literally — in its use of nuclear power, both military and civil, but in defending its own interests it cannot help but defend the workers states against imperialism.

Nevertheless, it is chilling to know that there are some 900 active satellites orbiting the earth, many of them with nuclear reactors, any one of which could repeat the failure of Cosmos 954 in a densely populated area.

On this page we print three contributions to the debate on nuclear power, prompted by an article in our Christmas issue by Rob Edwards of the Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace.

Excellent safety record

THE NUCLEAR power issue needs discussion in *Socialist Challenge*, but please not along the lines of an irrational fear of radioactivity and equating nuclear reactors with bombs. There are a great many points to be considered before accepting or rejecting nuclear power, either as part of a diverse energy programme or as the ultimate answer to all energy problems.

Nuclear power stations have an excellent safety record. Safety standards are far higher than those in other industrial plants, particularly hazardous chemical plants. This is not, of course, a reason in itself for accepting nuclear power. Rather it is an indication of the effect of political pressure on setting safety standards. It shows that hazardous processes can be made safe.

The most controversial aspects of nuclear power are plutonium production, reprocessing of fuel and waste storage. Without nuclear reactors, no plutonium can be made for nuclear weapons. In fact nuclear reactors were first developed for this very purpose. However it is extremely naive to assume that if we close down all nuclear power stations, no more plutonium will be manufactured.

Storage of nuclear waste could be a problem, especially

without adequate reprocessing facilities. However it is not insurmountable, since several solutions are technically feasible. The overall quantities of waste from nuclear reactors is very small. The problem is that it is more highly concentrated than naturally occurring radioactive material and therefore constitutes a significant localised risk.

Fossil fuels — coal, oil and gas — are also potentially dangerous to the earth's ecology in the long term. The effects of continuing production of carbon dioxide and sulphur dioxide by coal-fired power stations have received very little attention recently from groups such as the Friends of the Earth.

It is also worth noting that under normal operation, more radioactivity is released from coal-fired power stations than from nuclear ones.

Arthur Scargill in his opposition to nuclear power is not at all concerned with environmental issues. It is perfectly clear he knows very little about these. He is primarily concerned with maintaining the industrial power of the mines by advocating an electricity supply system which is dependent on coal.

Any high technology industry is potentially dangerous because of the changes it necessarily brings about in our 'natural' environment. But we can't all live in ecologically respectable cottages in the country with solar panels, heat pumps, windmill generators and home-grown organic vegetables.

There is a cost/benefit comparison which must be made

before rejecting a technology which has the benefits of nuclear power. As well as a quantitative assessment of the extent and nature of the risks involved, benefits like freedom from air pollution and reliable electricity supplies should be considered.

Perhaps the most important question to ask about nuclear power is why it has become such a sensitive issue. It is not solely because of the environmental hazards involved. The issue is also about the politics of technology — who controls it, and why. The decision to develop nuclear power may have been made by the wrong people for the wrong reasons.

A decision to scrap it should not be made on that basis, but on the basis of an informed debate among those who will have to put up with the risks; everyone, not just technological experts.

At present it seems that the only people willing to stimulate open discussion are against nuclear power. The effect of this on 'public opinion' is predictable.

What is the nuclear industry hiding? The answer to this may not be unacceptable risks, but simply the intention to hold on to control of the decision-making. Such a highly-developed technology is very powerful tool for those who control it. Would nuclear power present the same problems under democratic control and without the accompanying and infinitely more threatening nuclear arms stockpile?

Charlie Young (Somerset)

The dangers are insidious

MANY READERS may still be uncommitted as to the stand that they should take concerning the expansion of nuclear sources of energy. With a Government decision — on the basis of the imminent report on the Windscale Inquiry — expected to be made this March, it would seem important for opponents of such energy sources to mount a vigorous campaign against Windscale receiving planning permission for a waste reprocessing plant.

Opponents of the use of nuclear fuels cannot be placed into a single category with a common, delineated concern. Individuals have their own, very firmly held views as to why the disadvantages of atomic power far outweigh the claimed advantages. These views, while differing greatly, are nonetheless valid and show a considered concern.

To some opponents, the nature of the fuel source is most questionable, in that the discovery of nuclear energy was a product of war. Having first been used in the form of a bomb, its use as 'domestic' or peacetime energy is no guarantee that it will not again be used in a more horrific, developed way against populations. While the energy is still produced it can too easily be rechanneled.

POLICE STATE

The related problems of 'terrorism' and the security of raw materials in transit is another region of concern. The materials — and the wastes — represent better 'hostages' than plane loads of people. Waste is already regularly in transit and the first use of the radio-active bluff is probably only a matter of time — unless the energy source is dropped. A repressive, 'police state' is the eventual outcome of a nuclear reprocessing society. In the UK there is already an armed force of four hundred 'special constables', with nuclear related duties and very wide powers. This is already an abhorrent situation and any extensions to the force must be resisted.

Production of fossil fuels, such as coal, is not safe. But to a very large extent provision of safety devices and precautions taken by a considerate industry could minimise the risks. With atomic materials, the dangers are not only mechanical but even more insidious. The carcinogenic effects of radioactive material is an unclear area, as are the other possible biological interferences to workers in this field.

That British Nuclear Fuels has admitted responsibility, through radio-activity, for the death of at least one worker unfortunately strengthens this case. The effects are not all known or understood, and the material will not 'just go away'. Mistakes of this generation cannot be corrected; therefore they must not be made.

There is no convincing reason for the necessity of nuclear power, with its potential mistakes. Coal, oil, gas, and timber offer immediate sources of energy. They are not renewable sources, nor perfect, but used with care would allow development of alternative supplies — such as wind, wave and hydroelectric power, and solar energy, if this were made a priority. With conservation of energy — and energy using materials, there need be no energy gap.

The decision on the extension of nuclear plants in this country is to be made this year. A demonstration on 19 March in London is hoped to influence the decision the way that we believe to be correct, and any additional support will increase the 'power' of our protest.

Geoffrey J. Tann (Sheffield)

Carl Gardner (N. London)

Latest in the South African nuclear saga

The French Connection

A confidential document from Framatome, the French company engaged in building a nuclear power station in South Africa, reveals the depth of Franco-South African nuclear cooperation. The document, which is a report from a delegation that visited South Africa in 1973, was recently published by Rouge, the French Trotskyist daily. CHRIS O'BRIEN reports.

The visit took place between 26 January and 7 February 1973, with a team composed of representatives from Framatome and Spie-Batignolles, the two French companies involved in building the Koeberg nuclear power plant. The interesting point about the report is not so much the project itself, which has been known about for some time, as the extent of Western governments' complicity in South African nuclear development. Ironically Framatome made contact with the Electricity Supply Commission (Escom — the South African energy authority) at the conference of the International Atomic Energy Authority in Geneva, a body supposedly designed to restrict nuclear proliferation!

PREDICTABLE

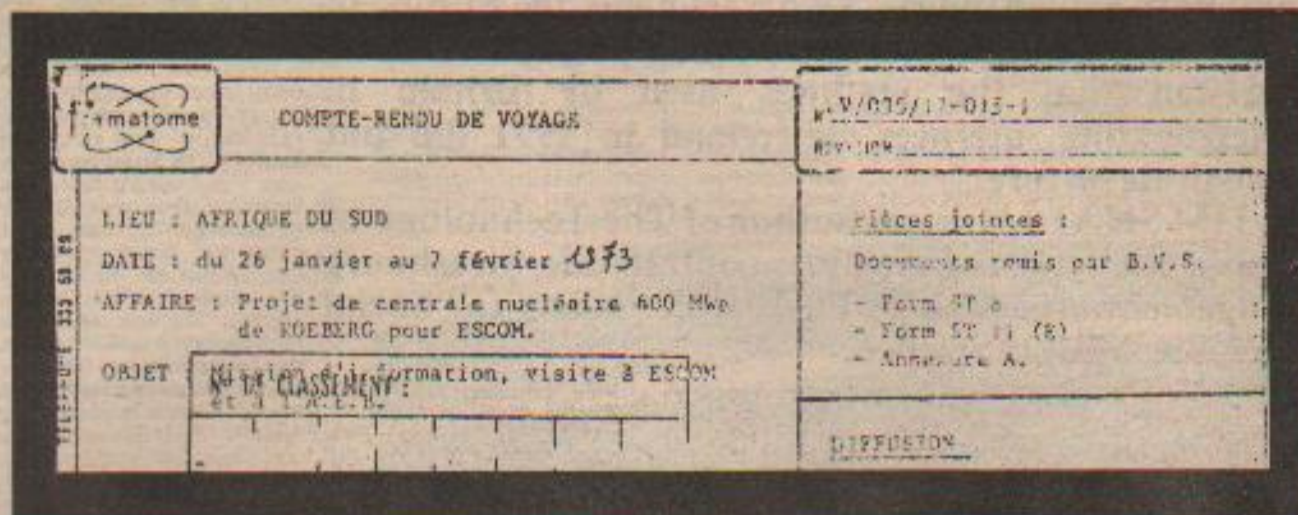
Predictably the delegation also contacted representatives of a number of French-based multinationals in South Africa, including such well-known names as the French Bank, Credit Lyonnais and Total. The trip was timed to coincide with a delegation from the French Senate Commission on Economic and Planning Affairs. The report makes it clear that this was no accident and that the vice-president of the Commission, Senator Chauty from Loire-Atlantique, stayed an extra two days in South Africa to accompany the Framatome team.

Chauty went with them on visits to the Atomic Energy Board, Escom, and the Industrial Development Corporation. As the report noted: 'This action has given the FRA-SB mission a political dimension! Chauty obviously lit it off with Dr Roux, boss of the Atomic Energy Board. He proposed that Roux visited France at the official invitation of the French Atomic Energy Commission.'

HELPFUL

Framatome had similar things in mind. They wanted a delegation that 'could visit our factories and have discussions with the EDF (the French energy authority)'. The report says that the EDF could be helpful in the problem of comparing kilowatt hours between nuclear and fossil fuel. Framatome wanted to see if the visits could be arranged by 'the EDF in liaison with us.' There has been no denial from the EDF.

The report displays considerable awareness of the political implications of the visit. Whereas there were various political restraints on Anglo-American nuclear aid to South Africa, the Vorster regime 'has confidence in France. Gradually the Afrikaners are replacing the English in important posts of government and industry.' This tale of overt French political collaboration with the



South African nuclear industry fits into the overall picture which is emerging of how South Africa got the bomb. South Africa is the world's third largest uranium producer, so its nuclear development was stimulated by a fairly obvious trade-off between raw materials and technology.

There were three major partners in this exchange: the USA, which provided skilled personnel, as well as Safari 1, South Africa's first research reactor; France, which was contracted to build the first two nuclear plants; and West Germany, which contributed the uranium enrichment process.

ENRICHMENT

The Americans continued to supply the fuel for Safari 1 from its first functioning in 1965 until such time as South Africa was able to provide its own fuel. To the astonishment of the world's scientists, Vorster announced in 1970 that his scientists had discovered a

new uranium enrichment process. According to information which is only just beginning to emerge, this process was the jet nozzle technique developed by German scientists at the research establishment in Karlsruhe. This was confirmed in 1975 by Dr Roux of the South African Atomic Energy Board.

Socialist Challenge (3 November 1977) has already revealed details of this process and how the South Africans got hold of it. The important point is that although STEAG, the partly state-owned German company that discovered the jet nozzle technique, withdrew from its contract with the Uranium Enrichment Corporation of South Africa Ltd (UCOR) in 1973, West German-South African nuclear collaboration continues to this day, with Dr Roux and his German counterparts exchanging visits just as they have since Karlsruhe began researching the process in 1959.

There is no doubt of West German state collaboration in

all this. For example, General Rall, the head of the Luftwaffe, visited South African nuclear research centres in 1974 — a year after the cancellation of the STEAG-UCOR contract. And when another West German company, MAN, supplied the Valindaba enrichment plant in Northern Transvaal with turbo compressors, the stores department of the West German armed forces obligingly supplied NATO code numbers.

But there is another knight with his white charger parked just around the corner: Britain. Like the West German Government over the OTRAG project in Zaire, the Labour Government is at pains to stress the purely commercial character of Rio Tinto Zinc's exploitation of the Rossing uranium mine in Namibia.

BENN'S DEAL

It was Tony Benn who, as Minister of Technology, signed the RTZ contract with the British Atomic Energy Auth-

ority in 1970. It was the same Tony Benn who, in 1973, pledged himself and Labour to cancel the contract when they got back into power. And it is Tony Benn who is the Energy Secretary who keeps the deal alive to this day.

CRIMINALS

The political significance of the contract is obvious: it constitutes British recognition of the South African occupation of Namibia. But it probably goes a step further.

South Africa has already indicated the importance of Rossing for its own programme of enriched uranium. And there are two further huge uranium deposits — whose location has been kept secret by South Africa. RTZ may have prospecting rights on these as well.

So it looks like the Labour Government has joined the long list of criminals who have helped South Africa get the bomb.

France - Germany - Britain

The rivals

by RICHARD CARVER

IN ONE sense the political importance of Western nuclear aid to South Africa is obvious. It provides the Pretoria torture-merchants with the ultimate weapon.

Liberal commentators prefer to believe that South African nuclear arms are simply strategic and would never be used internally. Don't you believe it! The barbarity and apparent unreason behind the regime's past actions leave no doubt that an apartheid state mortally wounded by the liberation struggle would have no hesitation in consigning the

whole of southern African to oblivion, itself included.

But there is another aspect to the revelations on this page. It looks increasingly likely that southern Africa is being used as a workshop for German rearmament. The terms of the Potsdam agreement of 1945 and the Treaty of Brussels in 1954 specify that West Germany is not allowed to develop long-range and guided missiles on its own territory.

The development of its own nuclear technology on South African soil is a way of getting round this. Presumably, in the event of a confrontation with the Soviet Union in Europe,

there would be missiles with nuclear warheads on standby in South Africa.

Germany has tried the same trick before, when the Weimar Republic of the 1920s used the Treaty of Rapallo to build up its armed forces on foreign territory. Only then the partner was the Soviet Union!

The OTRAG project in Zaire is another fascinating example of the new methods of imperialist intervention. As the article on this page suggests, there can be little doubt that this is another way for the West German state to develop its nuclear capacity.

Increased German activity in

Americans can provide satisfactory answers.

Why was the Zaire Government prepared to make this unprecedented territorial concession to a private company?

Why does the OTRAG missile system bear such a striking resemblance to the European 'Ariane' system?

And why was the first launch from the OTRAG test site at Luvua on 17 May 1976 preceded by tests at Lampoldshausen, the home of the German national aerospace authority?

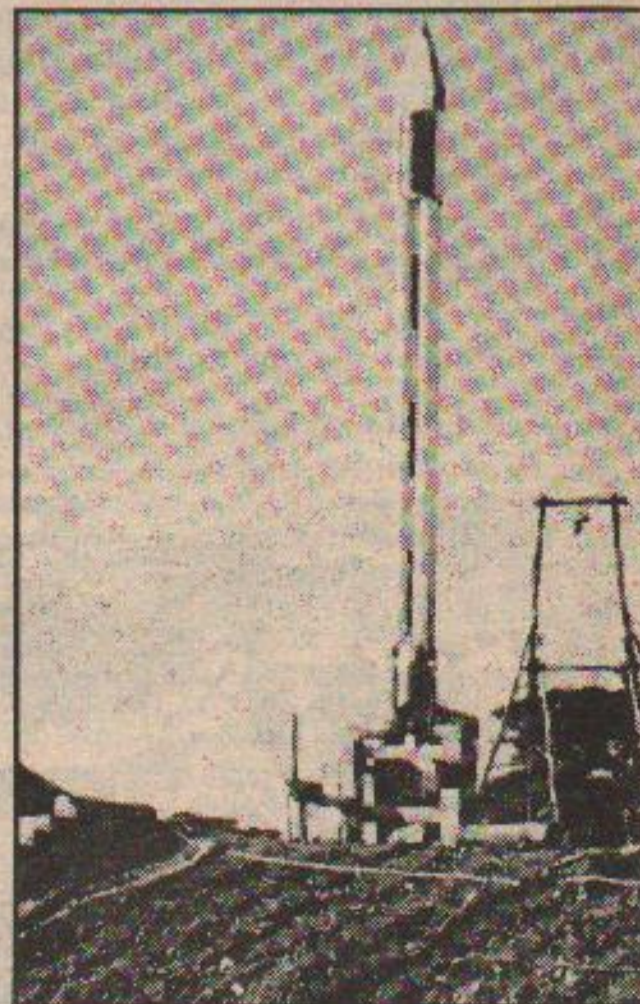
Africa — for example in Somalia — has been one of the most important features of recent months. But French involvement has been on the up as well, with direct military intervention in Zaire and the Sahara.

NEO-EMPIRE

We cannot tell whether there was any Franco-German agreement to protect the OTRAG concession last April when French and Moroccan troops went in to put down the Shaba rebels. It is clear, however, that France is set upon carving a neo-empire in Africa and that German interests could be an obstacle.

There is also a rising anti-German sentiment at home, if not from Giscard especially, then certainly from all the other major parties, with the Socialists and Communists no exception. No wonder the French aerospace authorities look askance at the OTRAG project, which bears a striking resemblance to their own Ariane system.

In a period of increased trade rivalry and hostility to West Germany, Europe's strongest imperialism, little thought has been given to the possibility that those rivalries might spill over into the political or even military arena.



WEST Germany has other, more obscure methods of nuclear involvement in southern Africa. Most bizarre is the OTRAG concession in eastern Zaire. By an agreement of 6 December 1975 the Zaire Government agreed to give complete control of a tract of land along Lake Tanganyika totalling 10 per cent of Zaire's territory to the Orbital Transport und Raketen Gesellschaft for an annual rent of 25 million zaires (about \$50 million).

OTRAG's business seems to be testing Cruise and long-range missiles. OTRAG di-

rector Lutz Kaiser claims that this is for purely commercial purposes: 'Our company will launch...[satellites]...into orbit for whatever country can afford to pay. We sell satellite launching, powered by our launch missiles. We operate like a road haulage company.' He names the Brazilian and Indonesian governments as two of his clients.

Both the Bonn Government and the US State Department confirm the purely commercial character of the operation. But a number of awkward questions remain, to which neither the Germans nor the

This is only speculation, but the scenario is horribly familiar. It isn't just Rapallo that comes to mind from the inter-war period: the military build-up, the increased chauvinism, the scramble for colonial territory.

And Britain? Former Prime Minister Harold Wilson claims that relations with South Africa, and the Namibian uranium contract in particular, is the determining factor in British politics. Draw your own conclusions.

Strasbourg verdict

The art of disguising torture

Being ignorant and reactionary is not a characteristic unique to British judges. Two weeks ago, the European Court of Human Rights displayed its prejudice with its decision that the methods used by Britain in interrogating internees in Ireland in 1971 did not constitute torture.

TIM SHALLICE, co-author of *The Technology of Political Control* (Penguin), contests the Strasbourg judgement on behalf of the **British Society for Social Responsibility in Science**.

The justification the European Court used for their decision is farcical. The techniques employed, they said, caused 'intense physical and mental suffering and acute psychiatric disturbance during interrogation'.

INTENSITY

Yet they did not 'occasion suffering of the particular intensity and cruelty implied by the word 'torture'.

But if your anxiety is made to spiral to a level where you are temporarily insane, where you hallucinate and lose all sense of space and time, it is difficult to see how things could get worse. And this is what did happen in the cases considered at Strasbourg.

The British judge, Sir Gerald Fitzmaurice, argued that the methods were not torture because if they were how 'does one characterise...having one's finger nails torn out, being slowly impaled on a stake through the rectum, or roasted over an electric grid?'

The answer is easy. Such methods are old-fashioned, unscientific and much too obvious. The first requirement for torture in a liberal democratic capitalist state is that it can be easily represented as relatively innocuous.

TORTURE

If Sir Gerald reads *The Times*, he will no doubt agree with Bernard Levin's denunciation of Russia's uses of

psychiatric treatment as torture. But he seems unable to make the intellectual leap from mental tortures in Russia to ones committed by the British Army. Others share his reluctance. For example the *Sunday Times* offered no opinion on the Strasbourg verdict. Perhaps the editor had forgotten that on 21 November, 1971, his paper had carried an article by leading psychiatrist Anthony Storr entitled 'Why Hooding is Mental Torture'.

The response of the judiciary and media was a triumph for the British Government's policy of cover-up and delay. Ever since the news first began to percolate out in the autumn of 1971, British governments have adopted a policy of agreeing to virtually anything — even that

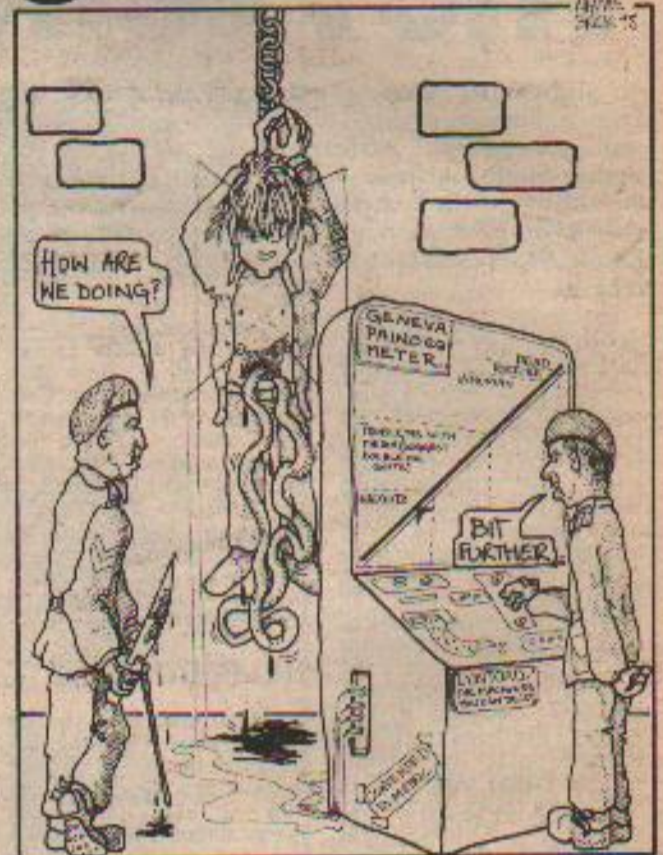
they had used torture — providing no more information came out, and they didn't have to take action against anyone on the Army chain of command.

When sued by victims, the Government decided to settle out of court to the tune of £150,000 in order to avoid publicity. At Strasbourg they spun things out for four years without allowing any testimony on the important issues. Most effort was put into blandly denying that the British State was responsible for torture, arguing: 'The State can only be responsible if it could be shown that such regulations (concerning the torture techniques) had been tolerated at the level of the State'.

EVIDENCE

The evidence exists. Lord Balmiel, Secretary for Defence, said in November, 1971: 'Ministers were aware of the principles underlying interrogation in depth...The procedures have been used in the course of five separate campaigns or emergencies in the last ten years'.

A Minister admits that with full ministerial knowledge the British Army had been engaged in torture for a ten-year period. So the 14 Irish cases must be the tip of the iceberg. Seven years is ample time for fearless



exposures by the British media. Yet with the exception of the *New Scientist*, for whom the functions of the techniques is more obvious, there has been a deafening silence. The British Government need have no fear of Watergates. The ruling class the legal system, and the mass media are too tightly integrated.

Bloody Sunday Commemorations

The Tribunal gets under way

Build the International Tribunal! That was the main message of the speeches at the rally held last Sunday to commemorate the deaths of the 14 demonstrators killed in Derry by British Troops on Bloody Sunday, 1972, reports OSCAR GREGAN

The rally in Hammersmith followed a 1,200-strong demonstration organised by the Bloody Sunday Commemoration Demonstration Committee. In another London demonstration to mark the deaths — organised by Provisional Sinn Fein — over 500 people marched.

The International Tribunal had been publicly launched at a press conference the previous week. Its purpose is to investigate British presence in Ireland.

Appealing for support for

the initiative at the press conference were: Joan Maynard MP; Phil Flynn, deputy general secretary of the Irish Local Government and Public Service Union; Lord Gifford, a lawyer and prominent champion of civil liberties; and officers from the Tribunal planning committee.

DISTURBING

The officers explained: 'Britain's exercise of military, judicial, and political control of the North of Ireland has

disturbing implications'. They added: 'There is sufficient reliable, yet alarming information available on various aspects of Britain's involvement to necessitate an independent inquiry.'

The officers went on to say that the inquiry will concentrate on:

- *The role and activities of the British Army, and the British security forces in Northern Ireland — the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Ulster Defence Regiment.
- *Allegations of torture at



BERNADETTE McALISKEY addresses a 1200-strong rally in Hammersmith Town Hall last Sunday.



Socialist Challenge supporters on the Bloody Sunday demonstration.

interrogation centres, and allegations of abuse and assault on Irish prisoners in British, including English, jails.

*The operation of no-jury courts in N. Ireland.

*The operation of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act and the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act.

*Charges of discrimination in many fields, levelled at the N. Ireland authorities.

*The treatment of Irish republican prisoners in the Maze Prison (Long Kesh) and other jails.

*The question of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Is the Government's influence being used to censor the flow of information and ideas?

Already the Tribunal has the sponsorship of many prominent politicians, trade unionists, legal figures, writers and artists from Ireland, Britain,

the United States, and Europe. These include the national executive of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, the Association of Legal Justice in Belfast, the executive of the National Union of Students in Britain and five Labour MPs.

AUTUMN

It is expected that the first session of the Tribunal will take place in London this autumn. The organisers hope that the major sessions will be held before the largest and most representative body possible of delegates elected from trade unions and other labour and student organisations.

Because of the important role that international public opinion can play in monitoring any infringements of human rights in the North of Ireland the 'jury' will be joined by a panel of figures of international repute.

Socialist Challenge welcomes the call for the Tribunal. We agree with the views expressed by Phil Flynn at the press conference, that any such inquiry — having examined the evidence — should indict the British Government and British Security forces. We also feel that an international campaign to focus the attention of the world community on Britain's presence in Ireland would play an invaluable role in aiding the liberation struggle of the Irish people.

The words of Bernadette McAliskey, spoken at the rally on Sunday, need repeating. 'The British left is catching on', she considered when stressing the need to build the Tribunal. 'The British left now needs to justify those remarks and to turn the International Tribunal into the most successful initiative of the year.'

Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (IFL)

Leyland profits from Apartheid

It's no accident that British Leyland chose a white South African, Michael Edwardes, to succeed Dobson as chairperson, writes JOHN HUNT.

Leyland's South African connections are extensive — British Leyland South Africa is the company's biggest operation outside Britain. And it is immensely profitable. Over the last five years Leyland has made five times as much profit from each of its workers in South Africa as it has made from its workers in Britain. The reason for this enormous profitability is simple — Black workers in South Africa have no political rights; they are denied government recognition of their trade unions; they are liable to imprisonment for union activities; they have no right to strike, and strikers can go to jail, or be banished to remote areas. Without the right to organise, Leyland's black workers suffer from appallingly low wages; have no control over line speed or other questions of working conditions; and cannot fight redundancies.

But despite the obstacles in their way, Leyland workers have been waging a tremendous struggle for elementary trade union rights. In April 1973, the

Metal and Allied Workers Union was formed as an organisation for Leyland workers, and began recruiting at Moberi, Leyland's heavy vehicle plant in Durban. By June 95 per cent of the workers had joined.

RECOGNITION

But management refused to recognise the union, and instead tried to set up 'liaison committees' and 'works committees' as a substitute for real union rights. It refused to grant the workers' demand for a plant referendum on recognition of the MAWU. So in February 1974, the workers struck for recognition. Leyland sacked all of the strikers, who were forced to back down in March.

But MAWU continued its work. By October 1976, Leyland was so incensed by the militancy of the Moberi workers, that it decided to move its bus production to another plant, drastically reducing the number of jobs in Moberi. In November 1976, the Vorster government issued banning orders on the MAWU

secretary Alpheus Mthethwa, and MAWU organisers Siphokubekha and Gavin Anderson, preventing them from taking part in union activities for five years, and effectively house arresting them.

Leyland built many of the trucks and armoured troop carriers which had been used that year against the students and workers of Soweto by the South African army and police, so perhaps this was some form of recognition of the services rendered by Leyland to apartheid.

And still the MAWU's fight for recognition continues. The story of that fight, and its implications for the labour movement in Britain is the subject of an outstanding new pamphlet, sponsored by Coventry Anti-Apartheid and Coventry Trades Council and produced by Coventry Workshop. It is entitled **British Leyland in Britain and in South Africa**. Simply and concisely written and imaginatively produced, it needs to be read, sold and used by every trade unionist who sees the need for international working class

solidarity.

The pamphlet highlights the failure of the Labour Government to take any effective action on British firms operating in South Africa. The Government has dealt with the embarrassing fact that Leyland is even defying the code of practice of the House of Commons committee on British firms in South Africa, which recommends recognition of trade unions by management, by...pretending that

Leyland is following the code!

In a letter of 1 June 1977, the parliamentary undersecretary of state at the Department of Industry, Leslie Huckfield, told Frank Hooley MP that Leyland complied with the sub-committee's recommendations. This is simply untrue.

British Leyland in Britain and in South Africa concludes with a section on the need for solidarity with the struggle of black workers in South Africa. It calls for Leyland workers to

take selective blacking action against supplies to South Africa and points out the need to campaign both for Leyland to recognise the MAWU, and for the ending of Leyland investment in South Africa.

British Leyland in Britain and in South Africa, 20p, sponsored by Coventry Trades Council and Coventry Anti-Apartheid Movement produced and published by Coventry Workshop, 40 Binley Road, Coventry.



Our Motoring Correspondent writes: We have been unable to identify Mr. Vorster's car. We guess that it is not a Mini, but it is probably built by British Leyland all the same.

Smith talks in a tangle

As the talks between the architects of the 'Anglo-American proposals' for Zimbabwe and the representatives of the Patriotic Front open in Malta, Ian Smith's own alternative of an 'internal settlement' seems to be running into heavy water with the walk-out of the key delegation from the United African National Council, led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa. **ROY ALEXANDER reports.**

The present stalemate reflects the difficult manoeuvre that Muzorewa and Sithole, leaders of the two most opportunist nationalist organisations, are trying to carry out. They are attempting to get a firm grip on political power for themselves by doing a deal with the racist government, which must necessarily entail big concessions.

At the moment talk is of guaranteeing the country's whites — less than 10 per cent of the population — 28 per cent of the parliamentary seats for up to 10 years after independence. At the same time they have to continue to sell to their followers the lie that such a deal would be genuine 'liberation', won without all the pain and cost of the guerilla struggle.

It was Sithole who first gave signs of these pressures, haggling over the length of time that the whites would be guaranteed such special political privileges. Muzorewa, now afraid of losing ground to Sithole, is also trying to haggle a bit, so that he can be seen as a defender of the people's interests — now over the method of election of white representatives.

SCEPTICISM

The leaders of the Patriotic Front claim that they are going to the Malta talks in a spirit of extreme scepticism. And well they might. For it is clear that British and American imperialism will not contemplate any serious action against Smith that might put power in the hands of people they do not have firm control over.

Their game is simply to wait until 'internal settlement'

attempts founder, and then try and push forward their own plan, which is as much a betrayal of the right of the Zimbabwe people to self-determination as Smith's plan.

UNITY

The contradictions in the 'internal settlement' are now quite evident. But the tragedy is that the liberation fighters in ZANU and ZAPU — the Patriotic Front organisations — cannot take advantage of it because their leaders continue to appear as simply another set of power seekers trying to take advantage of the situation. So why not choose the road of Muzorewa and Sithole, which is at least easier, if no more sure?

A clear call from the liberation fighters for unity of

the whole black population around a programme of action for the liberation of Zimbabwe, including a clear commitment to early free elections to a Constituent Assembly, could split the 'internal settlement' manoeuvre wide open, and render the Anglo-American proposals still born at the same time.

Help South African Socialists!

CHARLIE VANGELDEREN and CARL BRECKER launch an appeal for books for South African socialists.

THE IMPACT of the post-Soweto struggles, the liberation wars in Zimbabwe and Namibia, and the obvious weakness of the nationalist

movement has led to widespread discussion, a great debate and a great thirst for knowledge.

We want to intervene in this debate, to start the process of building Marxist organisations

which can steer the masses away from opportunism, pure nationalism and tribalist conflicts. Already discussion groups are springing up in a number of countries which want to get a grasp of Marxism and understand the principles of the historic debates about the struggle for socialism in underdeveloped countries.

We have had a request for help from a group of African comrades who are involved in building such discussion groups in two southern African countries and among Soweto students in exile in other countries.

They want:
*to build a Marxist library
*to obtain a supply of basic Marxist pamphlets for the discussion groups
*to acquire a small duplicator [cost about £50-£75] to enable them to circulate material.

Marx: Capital, Volume 1
Marx and Engels: Selected Works, Vols 1 and 2
Engels: Anti-Dühring,
Lenin: Selected Works, Vols 1, 2 and 3
Lenin: What is to be Done?
Lenin: Two Tactics
Mandel: What is Trotskyism?
Mandel: Revolutionary Student Movement

These needs are modest by European standards where we have a rich supply of literature, but in the African context they are well beyond the means of these comrades, many of whom are refugees.

This week we start by printing the titles of some of the books and pamphlets required. Over the next few weeks we will print more. But this list is by no means exclusive. Any other relevant material would be welcome.

ASSISTANCE

You can help either by dipping into your pockets or organising activities to raise funds. We propose, at an early date, to call a small meeting in London which can exchange ideas for more effective assistance to our comrades in the front line of the struggle.

Contact: Socialist Books for South Africa Appeal, c/o Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

ACTIONS

Local anti-apartheid groups across the country are planning actions in their areas for 11 and 18 March. The AAM nationally has produced a series of leaflets, briefing papers, and pamphlets of particular interest to trade unionists for use around the trade union week of action, 15-21 March. For further details of these or the Action Conference contact: AAM, 89, Charlotte Street, London, W1P

Emergency Anti-Apartheid Conference

COORDINATION of action against racist South Africa will be the concern of a forthcoming Emergency Action Conference, called by the Anti-Apartheid Movement for Saturday, 11 February, at Friends' Meeting House in London.

Open to delegates from all organisations supporting the aims of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, the Conference has so far been sponsored by the South East Region of the TUC, the National Union of Students, and Liberation.

Speakers will include Leslie Harriman, Chairperson of the UNSpecial Committee Against Apartheid, Labour Party Chairperson Joan Lester, MP,

and the Hon. Secretary of the AAM, Abdul Minty.

It is hoped that the delegates to this important conference will commit themselves and their organisations to building a mass solidarity campaign with the struggles in South Africa. To that end it is important that the conference issues a clear call to action for the whole labour movement, and outlines further practical steps which can be built out of the mobilisations that will be taking place throughout the month of March, as part of the AAM's own 'month of action' and the international week of trade union action.

For it is certain that these

£2.00
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French Communist Party opposition 'Max Pierrat' in the shadows

'There are thousands of comrades who are asking questions.' This is the claim of the left opposition inside the French Communist Party (PCF). The opposition which has emerged publicly in the last two months has published a series of statements under the collective pseudonym of 'Max Pierrat'. RIC SISSONS and PAM HURST report.

Doubts in the minds of many PCF members have been brought to a head since September. It was then that the Communist and Socialist Parties, finding themselves unable to agree upon an updated Common Programme, broke the Union of the Left. In October the PCF, after a meeting of its Central Committee, opened a fierce polemic against the Socialist Party (PS). This culminated at a national congress of the PCF four weeks ago to launch the party's campaign for the March elections. Marchais, the

party's General Secretary, stated that he would not guarantee, in advance, to transfer votes to the PS in the second round.

It is in the context of these sharp exchanges between the PCF and the PS that the left opposition has surfaced within Marchais' party. They consider that the Marchais leadership has been pursuing an 'opportunist' line.

The opposition is made up of 'all those who collectively or individually reject the social democratisation of the PCF' and 'who consider that a

revolutionary communist line is necessary to confront imperialism in crisis'.

The opposition estimates that since October it has been instrumental in organising over 100 meetings of PCF members to discuss the future of the party. They claim these have involved several thousand party militants.

These gatherings have not been restricted to intellectuals, but for the most part made up of workers, and included members of cell, town and federal leaderships. Already they have established a network which permits national coordination.

The opposition argues that the Union of the Left broke down because at no point have united committees been organised at the base. Thus one of the central planks of the 'Max Pierrat' current is for popular

unity committees in the factories and neighbourhoods. They further criticise the Union of the Left for failing to draw into it important social layers, without whom change will not occur, such as women, youth and immigrant workers.

The call for popular unity committees is theorised by the opposition in the demand for the PCF to revert to a line of 'class against class' as advanced by the third Communist International in the early 1930s. This they consider entailed 'unity at the base, sometimes at the base and the summit, but never only at the summit.' It is into the latter category that 'Max Pierrat' considers the Union of the Left mistakenly fell.

The opposition attacks the 'reformist' party leadership for dropping the dictatorship of the proletariat from its

programme; for failing to take up the struggle against the 'Europe of multinationals'; for accepting the French nuclear strike force; for renouncing international solidarity against repression; and finally for distancing itself from the socialist states and the Soviet Union.

PROGRAMME

While criticising the PCF for putting the USSR at arm's length the opposition fails to take a clear stand on the suppression of democratic rights in Eastern Europe, which on occasion the 'Euro-communists' in Italy, Spain and France have done.

With the imminence of the March elections the left opposition has stated: 'It is necessary to beat the right.' In order to correct its mistakes the PCF should advance a new programme that makes it clear that to 'end the crisis, finish capitalism' and 'that there is no other escape than the transition to socialism.' They further demanded a 'vast and thorough-going debate in the PCF prior to the new

democratic party congress in February.

The opposition has been forced to operate under a collective pseudonym and publish its statements in non-party magazines because of the lack of internal democracy within the PCF. At the recent national Party Congress there was not one vote amongst 3,000 delegates either against or in abstention. Considering that there was no discussion in the ranks of the party beforehand and the delegates were picked by the federal committees this comes as no surprise.

This forces the opposition underground. The leadership's suppression of internal democracy has been aided by 'dissident' party intellectuals, such as Eleinstein and Althusser. Eleinstein recently commented in an interview in the weekly *Politique Hebdo*, 'I am not at all favourable to the existence of tendencies which can only transform themselves into splits.' Althusser in *New Left Review* 104 stated, 'Recognition of organised tendencies seems to me to be out of the question in the French Party.'



NOT the best of friends: Mitterrand (left) of the Socialist Party and Marchais of the Communist Party.

More details on college spies Foreign Office backs Iran

Further information has emerged, revealing the extent of Iranian government surveillance on British campuses and the complicity of some college authorities. CHRIS O'BRIEN reports.

Documents which show the readiness of many academic registrars to hand over the names of Iranian students to the embassy without consultation are quoted in the February issue of *National Student*, the paper of the National Union of Students. This is the latest in a flood of information since *Socialist Challenge* first uncovered details of a survey being carried out by a Kent University lecturer called Chris Hale for the Iranian embassy.

value our close economic links with a country which supplies about a quarter of our oil and is our largest export market in the Middle East. We also have certain obligations to Iran as our ally in the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), which we regard as an important

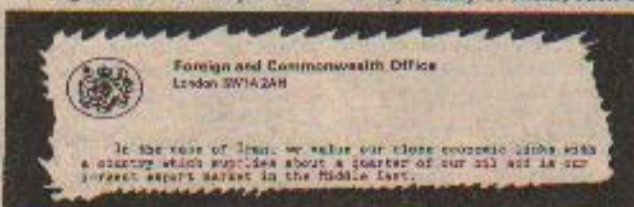
College authorities seem to have the same happy-go-lucky attitude towards their Iranian students' welfare. As we explained in our original article the Hale survey was only the latest in a series, and that Habib A. Dashti, the embassy's educational counsellor, had conducted such a survey himself two years ago.

These latest documents are the college responses to that survey. Many of them, such as

As we have explained before, there is documentary evidence of cooperation of embassy staff with SAVAK, the Iranian secret police. There is no doubt that the results of surveys like these would be immediately available to SAVAK. It is this which makes many Iranian students change their names.

National Student has done a considerable service by making this information public. It has provided the raw material for a national campaign against college collaboration with Iran. But the NUS has failed in the past to mount any serious action on Iran, and doesn't even have a national policy on the question.

The overseas student population is increasingly enraged at Government and college policies, and at the failure of the NUS leadership to back their grievances or to allow genuine independent organisation of overseas students within the NUS. So now is the moment to turn an undoubted journalistic scoop into political action.



HUMAN RIGHTS

Most interesting is a statement of the British Government's position from D.E. Tatham of the Foreign Office Middle East Department in response to a resolution from Kent students' union. He says that Foreign Secretary Owen attaches great importance to the question of human rights but that 'in the case of Iran, we

source of stability in the region.'

Tatham adds that 'we believe that Iran has made significant progress this year in improving human rights.' He was probably thinking of the 10,000 oppositionists who were arrested just around the time he was writing in November.

Brighton Polytechnic, Leeds Polytechnic, Polytechnic of the South Bank and Huddersfield Polytechnic had no hesitation in handing over students' names.

Dashti claims that he is only interested in obtaining numbers of students. In which case, why ask for names?

Intercontinental Press combined with IMPRECOR

ARTICLES and commentary on the French election campaign are a continuing feature of the new weekly *Intercontinental Press/Imprecor*. The latest issue [Vol. 16, No. 4] contains an article by Jean-Claude Bernard, a separate commentary on the campaign of the French Trotskyists of the LCR, and the text of the LCR's open letter to delegates at the recent congress of the French Communist Party.

Other features include: 'The Rising Women's Liberation Movement in Spain'; 'Price of

'Respectability' Rising for Italian CP'; and 'Argentina — The Spectre of a Cordobazo'. Single copies are 30p plus 10p p&p, but why not take advantage of the favourable subscription rates: £9 for one year [48 issues], £5 for six months [24 issues], or £2.50 for an introductory offer of 10 issues. All new subscribers will also get a free copy of *Imprecor* No. 19 [New Series] devoted to the world economic situation. Write now to *Intercontinental Press/Imprecor*, P.O. Box 50, London N1 2XP. All cheques/POs should be made out to *Intercontinental Press*.



LEADING Czechoslovak oppositionist Petr Uhl is out of a job. The document we print here, dated 28 November last year, is his notice to quit from the Petrubi national enterprise where he worked as an engineer. The sacking took effect on Tuesday 31 January.

The document is explicit on the political nature of the dismissal. The first paragraph after the date of dismissal reads: 'You do not conform to the politico-moral requirements that the Petrubi national enterprise has a right to expect from its workers employed as technicians, given the national importance of these tasks. As a signatory of the so-called 'Declaration of Charter 77' you have identified yourself with this slanderous pamphlet.'

World Cup Football 1978

Videla versus the Montoneros

By CHRISTOPHER ROPER, journalist and Latin American specialist.

Argentina's military dictatorship hoped to turn the World Cup finals in June into a propaganda spectacular, but things are not going quite according to plan. The generals' public relations advisers, Burson & Marsteller of New York, saw the football championships as a 'unique opportunity' to freshen the junta's unsavoury international image.

Following their advice, the generals have spent the equivalent of US\$400 million on preparations, and 5,000 foreign journalists have already sought accreditation for the games. There is just one hitch. When the generals made their plans two years ago, they were convinced it would take them less than two years to crush all popular resistance to military rule. The visitors were to be presented with a new disciplined Argentina, in which workers did not go on strike, bombs did not go off at night, and the trains ran on time.

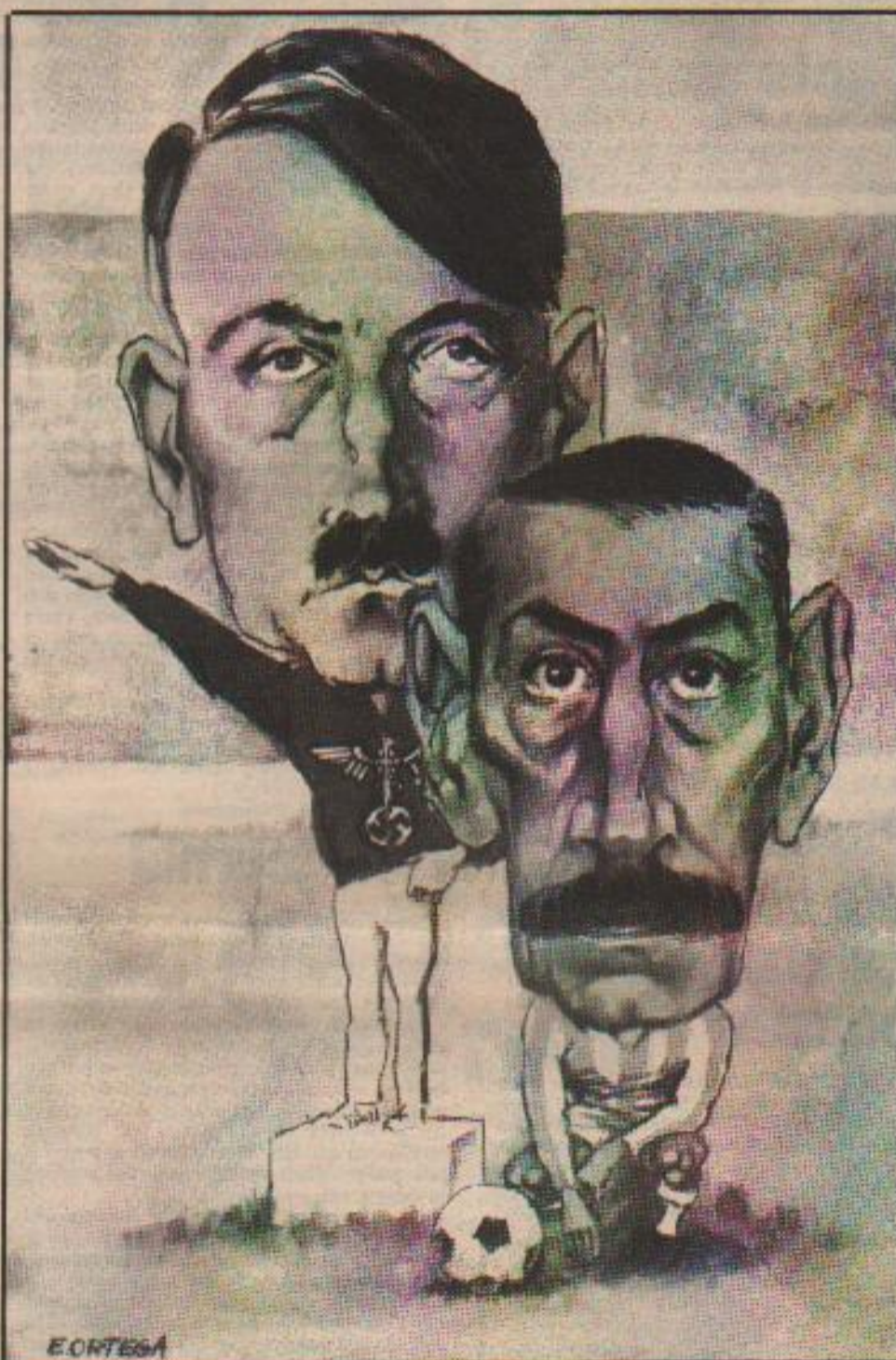
In fact, although strikes are banned, and thousands of workers have been imprisoned or murdered for organising industrial action, major stoppages have become a regular event in Argentina, disrupting public services and defying government policy.

Last November a striking railwayman was shot dead in one of Buenos Aires principal railway stations. This fact was broadcast every half hour over the radio in an attempt to intimidate other workers into returning to work. The propagandists are now worrying that actions of this kind in June could actually worsen the country's image. One action they are taking is to confine accreditations to sports journalists. The problem with visiting journalists is that they are less easy to control than those who live in Argentina all the time. One British correspondent in Argentina, who seems to act as a fulltime apologist for the junta, is Andrew Tarnowski of *The Times*. Tarnowski has been particularly assiduous in his duties since late last year when he had difficulties in renewing his visa to live in Argentina. Other journalists have been threatened by midnight visits from the security police.



Although foreign journalists have not yet been kidnapped (detained and perhaps murdered) by the death squads, it is a sufficient threat to keep most of them quiet. There have been suggestions that Europeans should boycott the championships in protest against the bloody repression, which has claimed between 10,000 and 20,000 victims since the March 1976 military coup.

But the political organisations and parties which are most actively engaged in the resistance argue against a boycott. They say that it would be misunderstood by ordinary people in Argentina who are looking forward to the championships, and could give credibility to the military claim that there is an international campaign against Argentina. Instead of a boycott, they ask visitors to see the World Cup as an opportunity for active solidarity with the Argentine people. They hope footballers will call for the release of political prisoners, that newspapers will send reporters and photographers with a nose for politics as



BERLIN OLYMPICS 1936 ARGENTINA WORLD CUP 1978

well as sport, and that people will listen to what the locals have to say about their government. In fact the junta is making it almost impossible for ordinary people to reach the stadiums to watch the games. To buy a ticket you have to subscribe to the whole series of games in any one of the stadiums, at an astronomical price. Worse yet, you have to give your name and address when you buy the tickets. In this way,

the police hope to prevent local fans from turning the games into massive demonstrations against the junta. With all rallies, meetings and other forms of normal political activity banned, Argentines have been using Saturday football matches as an opportunity to give vent to their feelings.

At one recent game a penalty shot went wide

and hit a policeman in the face. He rushed onto the field and began to belabour the unfortunate player with a truncheon. When the other players ran to his aid, other policemen joined the fracas, at which point the crowd began to chant: 'Montoneros, Montoneros, Montoneros...' Montoneros, originally one of the many Peronist guerilla groups which sprang up to oppose the 1966-73 military dictatorship, is today the most important revolutionary organisation in Argentina. Montonero politics have developed along clearly socialist lines during the past two years, marking a clear break with the confused populism of Peronism.

Unseemly scenes will probably be avoided during the World Cup matches, but the impact of thousands (or even hundreds) of tartan-clad Scots fans on the Buenos Aires police is hard to imagine. There are likely to be casualties on both sides. Lord Avebury recently asked the government what action had been taken 'on the reported theft of £40 from six British seamen in three separate incidents by police officers in Buenos Aires; and what advice they will give British citizens visiting Argentina for the World Cup as to how they can protect themselves from harassment by the police?'



Undoubtedly, the Montoneros and other revolutionary organisations will be looking for some way to make themselves felt in June. The Montoneros have promised they will not undertake any military operation which might endanger the lives of visitors or interrupt the games. But they warn that the military might place bombs or commit some other act of violence, which would then be blamed on 'subversion'. Just before Christmas the military kidnapped two French nuns and then published a forged communique which purported to show the Montoneros were responsible. This was quickly denied, not only by the Montoneros but also by the religious order to which the nuns belonged. Forged communiques are becoming increasingly common in Europe. This may indicate the importance sectors of the military attach to discrediting the Montoneros. The forgeries are sufficiently crude to be detected instantly by anyone involved in Argentine affairs, but may be creating some confusion among non-specialists.

In Argentina it is less easy to confuse people. There is no doubt in peoples' minds that the only 'terrorist organisations' in the country are the army, the navy and the air force. To the extent that the armed forces wage war on the whole people, especially on the working class, they are forging a new unity between the political vanguard and the masses. This is reflected in the political development of the revolutionary organisations, which despite heavy losses are facing the future with optimism.

They have now survived the military campaign of extermination, and are preparing for the counter-offensive. They see many symptoms of military weakness. The government's economic policy has failed and Argentine industry faces the worst recession in its modern history. Already the military are beginning to quarrel among themselves.

What's Left

Rates: 30p per word. Display £2 per column inch. Deadline: 3pm Saturday before publication.

INTERNATIONAL Socialists and Revolutionary Unity. Conference sponsored by ex-IS/SWP activists. Sessions on IS tradition, political situations, revolutionary unity, Africa. Centre King St, London WC2, 11 Feb. Details and registration [£1 includes documents in advance] from Martin Shaw, 57 Salisbury St, Hull.

SHAH'S BLOODY Munday. Mass protest against Iranian terror campaign. Sat 4 Feb, 11am-4pm. Iran Air, Piccadilly W1. Called by Committee Against Repression in Iran.

EAST LONDON Socialist Unity meeting. Wed 8 Feb, 7.30pm at the Britannia pub, Mare St, Hackney (in Town Hall). Open to all supporters.

BRITTON SOCIALIST Club. Fri 3 Feb, 6pm. Counteract in 'Sorewood' - an everyday story of people up against the law. Sponsored by Radical Alternatives to Prison. Adm 50p.

MANCHESTER CHILE Solidarity Campaign day school on Chile. Sat 11 Feb, 11am-6pm. Plus social 8pm to midnight. At the Squat, Dewas St, Manchester.

SOCIALIST CABARET benefit for Right to Work film. Fri 3 Feb. Cast presents *Confessions of a Socialist*. Plus disco. Live Band APB. PA available for singers and musicians. Bar. Bill late. Adm £1 (50p claimants) in the AA, 34 Bedford Square, London WC1.

RACE & CLASS quarterly journal of the Institute of Race Relations. Current issue includes articles on 'M'Hamed Ali and the Tunisian Labour Movement', 'Solomon and Imperialism', 'The Emergent Marxism of Richard Wright's Ideology'. Annual subscription £5.50. to IRR, 247 Pentonville Road, London N1.

SOUTHAMPTON WOMEN'S Centre benefit. Broadside's The Working Women's Charter Show, plus Sandra Kerr. Sat 18 Feb, 7.30pm. At St Matthews Church Hall, St Marys Road. Tickets 75p from 16 Harbour Road, Tel. 29725.

HULL IMG is holding a day school on 'Revolutionary Socialism: Why and How'. Sat 11 Feb, 11am-4pm. Council member, Hull University Students Union. Disco in the evening. Creche available. Registration forms from: D. Booth, 7 Parkside Close, Park Avenue, Hull. Tel: 492550.

DEFEND THE ARTS campaign and Manus Benefit night. North-west Spinner, the group at the centre of the political banishment controversy will be performing Out of Control, plus live music, grub, late drinking. Sat 4 Feb, 8pm at the Squat, Dewas St, Manchester. Tickets £1, claimants 50p.

CRIMES AGAINST Irish Women Committee Social Dance, Discussion. Sat 4 Feb, 7.30pm. Roebuck pub, Toltonham Court Rd, WC1 (nearest tube Goodge Street). We are women collecting evidence to submit to the International Tribunal on Ireland. All welcome. Adm 50p.

BLACK PEOPLE'S campaign against the 'Suicide' laws. Fri 3 Feb, 7.30pm. Speaker: Alex Lyon at John Ewling Infant School, Eiverton Road, Doniford.

'SMASH THE NAZI NP' badge. Black fat and lathering on green. 22p each, 10 for £1.35, 50 for £5.35, 100 for £12.65, all incl. post. From: Box HP, 341 Glossop Rd, Sheffield.

THE OTHER CINEMA benefit to secure future of distribution company. Wed 8 Feb, 7.30pm. Black 6 sale and support at Ladbroke House (N. London Park), Highbury Barn, London N4. Adm £1.20. To help campaign or for information, ring Stephen Wallace. 01-734 4131, or 01-496 5286.

FIGHT RACISM badges. 15p each plus 7p postage. Orders of 10 or more 11p each and post free. Send to: Badges, PO Box 58, London N1 2XP. Cheques payable to J. Wilson.

CAST - imaginative, sophisticated and quick-hit form of agitprop which leaves most other groups gasping. (Sandy Craig, Time Out, 2 Dec 1977). CAST offer you a half hour show, 'Confessions of a Socialist' plus disco and use of PA for your own entertainers. Book now for your next benefit, social party. Phone 01-808 4208 (ext 1).

LONDON IMG Day School on the Revolutionary Party. Saturday 4 February, 11am-5pm at Caxton House, St Johns Way, London N19. This school is open to all IMG sympathisers and Socialist Challenge supporters by credential from London IMG, c/o PO Box 50, Leconfield, N1, or by signed letters from local IMG organisers.

LONDON IMG will be organising a series of all-London aggregates over the next two months as part of the International Marxist Group's pre-conference discussion. Because of the crisis of perspective on the revolutionary left and moves towards revolutionary regroupment, the following organisations and individuals have been invited to attend the conference: Workers League, Big

Flame, International Socialist groupings, Liberator Communist Group and Socialist Challenge supporters. If you are a member of any of these currents and would like to attend the London discussion, write for details to London IMG, c/o PO Box 50, London N1.

GARDIFF Debate between IMG and Communist Party. 'What strategy?' Mon 13 Feb, 7.30pm. Corporation Hotel, Growbridge Road East. Admission 20p (OAPs and unemployed 10p).

KINGS LYNN radical discussion group. All shades of left opinion welcome. For further information contact: Tim Webb, Kings Lynn 5768.

'TRADE UNION action against apartheid. Speakers Chris Childs, TU officer of AA movement, and local trade unionists. Organised by Southampton AA group. Mon 20 Feb, 7.30pm. St Matthews Church Hall, St Marys Road.

THE LONDON Labour Library is a democratic and cooperative venture which aims to provide information and library facilities to trade union activists, socialists, black groups, women's groups, and gay groups. We invite all individuals and organisations in the labour movement to support us in our efforts to liberate information resources in order to service the struggle for workers' rights. We need books, periodicals,

money and offers of support. Write to: London Labour Library, c/o 265a Seven Sisters Rd, London N4.

FIGHTBACK Conference in Defence of the NHS. Sat 18 Feb, 10am-5pm. Central Hall, Westminster SW1. For details, credentials etc contact: Fightback Conference, c/o Occupation Committee, Hounslow Hospital, Staines Rd, Hounslow, Middx. (01-570 4448).



Become a walking bill-board. Two-colour Socialist Challenge supporters' badges are popping up all over the place. Obtain yours from the address above, 20p each plus 7p post. Ten or more 16p each, post free.

Pinning up an image

PAT MASTERS argues (*Socialist Challenge*, 12 January 1978) that 'pin-ups represent nothing more than a degenerate titillation to entice men to buy various brands of beer, cars, newspapers, etc.'

People who argue in this way often overlook an obvious point. Pin-ups also entice women to buy cosmetics, clothing, household furnishings and durables, and so on. A glance at almost any wide circulation women's magazine will confirm this simple fact. The reason for mentioning this is to insist that the more overtly sexual manifestations of women's oppression as a sex are widely accepted by women too.

You would soon lose your readers if you argued against formal equality for women in a modern women's magazine, but an avalanche of stereotyped sex roles in both editorial and advertising matter seems to be necessary to sell women's magazines. If you doubt this, or consider it an exaggeration, then just scan the covers!

The *Yorkshire Miner's* sexism stands beside the awful 'personality' spots to be found in some of the journals of trade unions with mainly women members, although it should be said that most of the latter are also written and edited by men.

BRYNLEY HEADEN, Hull

Sexism unscarred

AT THE National Abortion Campaign benefit on 15 January — line-up: Sadista Sisters, Dead Fingers Talk, Black Slate, Polly Styrene and X-Ray Spex — we were dismayed at the anti-feminism of most of the audience, which we feel was encouraged by the lack of political direction from NAC. There was no bookstall, speakers or banner — the tacit assumption being that the gig was for fund-raising only. This raises the important question of sexism in music and the relation between music and politics.

The reaction that punk and reggae generate among an audience is highly exciting, and directly threatens the status quo. While *Rock Against Racism* is showing that rock can raise funds and politicise its audience, the audience at the Round House in London were not confronted with the fact that women don't have control over their own bodies and sexuality in this society, and that most music is still enforcing sexist images of women.

It would be unrealistic, even at a NAC benefit, to expect a predominantly male and punk audience to fall over themselves in supporting women's rights. But the fact that NAC remained almost invisible throughout the whole evening meant that all elements of sexism went unchallenged.

Because the connections between music and sexual politics were not made, feminists were

fragmented and women in the audience were hassled, and in some cases attacked (verbally and physically) — the usual anti-women, anti-abortion, machismo crap.

Through *Rock Against Racism* and the Tom Robinson band, the issues of black and gay oppression are getting some public recognition. Women's bands and the issue of sexism in music are still very much ignored. The choice for women seems to be either total exclusion from mixed gigs, and therefore a repetition of powerlessness, or a political campaign to force audiences and musicians to confront women's oppression.

'Machismo Up Yours!'

CLARE YERBURY, VICKY ASPINALL, CERI WILLIAMS [N. London]

Facts wanted

THERE WILL be many comrades who will want to take up the points raised in your 12th January issue by John Ross. For my own benefit, could John Ross answer the following questions:

1) Can he furnish the readers with any evidence which argues the positions he ascribes to Dave Purdy, Mike Prior or Geoff Roberts, that 'it is impossible to successfully challenge the most basic ruling class institutions'?

2) Can he likewise give any evidence to show that the above mentioned ascribe the setbacks in the class struggle solely to the 'overwhelmingly unfavourable factors of capitalist society'?

3) Could he also indicate — through following all of Poulantzas' work on the Capitalist State — where Poulantzas ascribes the impossibility of successfully challenging the most basic ruling class political institutions, 'simply because the ruling class is overwhelmingly powerful and won't tolerate anything else'?

4) Could you also give the readers evidence, Comrade Ross, of the allegation that, 'For the reformists (presumably Purdy, Prior, Roberts) the enemy which has to be encountered and defeated within the working class is not the Labour bureaucracy, but rather the so-called "ultra-left"?'?

Answers to these questions will be interesting to many of *Socialist Challenge's* readers.

ALAN MacDOUGALL, [London]

Parsons: We didn't hold hands with the bosses

YOUR REFERENCE to the campaign by trade unions at C.A. Parsons last summer, though very brief, gives quite a misleading impression particularly around the idea of a 'happy partnership' with management. The following points might clarify the position:

The campaign was organised and imple-

mented by the trade unions and taken out into the broad labour movement. It was the support of particular trade union bodies — the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the NUM, for example — which influenced the Government, not the C.A. Parsons management.

Your reference to the Carter demonstration implies that this was a joint effort. In actual fact that march took place because the trade unions were resolute in the face of immense pressure from all sorts of bodies that it should be cancelled — from Government level right down to C.A. Parsons management. You fail to mention the second march which Parsons management did everything they could to sabotage. This involved wives, husbands and children (who were kept off school) of Parsons workers and contingents from a number of factories in the area who came to declare their support.

The campaign was not for Drax only, though that was required to solve serious problems at Heaton, but for the industry as a whole. At that time the Government was being pressed by the CEBG, GEC, the Department of Industry, the NEB, and others to make the Drax order contingent on restructuring of the industry to half its present size, under GEC control. There is no doubt that the fight for the Drax order forestalled attempts to set up a private monopoly under Weinstock and the closure of several plants in the industry — including GEC. Your bald assertion that Parsons and GEC were in competition for Drax completely bypasses the realities of the situation. (In fact part of the Drax contract is going to the GEC factory at Larne which is particularly short of work.)

The fact that the company turned on sections of the workforce and tried to force redundancies after Drax had been announced came as no great surprise and your quotations imply a naivete amongst TASS members at Parsons which does not exist. There was no need for a change in our attitudes or any basic 'reappraisal'. The broad campaign for Drax was a fight for jobs — so also was the local skirmish with management. There was no change of policy. It was simply a matter of becoming involved in a different phase of the struggle to retain jobs in the industry.

I hope that the above points indicate that the complexities of the Parsons/Drax campaign cannot be compressed to fit a particular point of view without some distortion becoming obvious.

R. MURDOCH, [Newcastle]

New journal

The *Bulletin on Social Policy* is a new socialist publication, set up by and for people working and studying in education, health, housing, social and community work, and all other of the Welfare State services. Its aim is to establish a forum for people to share their ideas, to publicise what is going on in the Welfare State, to overcome the barriers which exist within and between its various branches, and to develop a unified, collective, and critical understanding of the welfare services which will combine established and new theoretical ideas with the practical problems and experiences of working in these areas.

In order to achieve this, the *Bulletin* will depend upon as wide and active participation and membership as possible. Its pages are open to all people in all fields who share a common concern for the achievement of socialism, who see in their work the need to distinguish and to defend what positive gains have been made, but who also see the Welfare State and its operation as fragmenting and obstructing the development of socialist consciousness and action. The *Bulletin* will be one means by which we can begin to analyse and understand these limitations, and so develop a more suitable and coherent practice in our struggles.

The *Bulletin* will appear at least three times a year, at an annual subscription of £2 (or £1.50 for those with low incomes). For further details and subscription form send s.a.e. to:

The *Bulletin on Social Policy*,
2 West Bridge St.,
Crook,
Co. Durham

Widgery: human face has slipped

IT WAS interesting to see that the present debate around *Socialist Challenge* has revived the debate around *Socialist Worker* in 1974. A number of comments will be relevant to mapping a way forward for SC.

First, there was no real debate on the change in SW in 1974. To quote Duncan Hallas and Chris Davidson, both of whom were then on the National Committee, the changes in SW took place 'after a single discussion on the national committee without the membership ever knowing about it.' The first we knew of it was when two of the paper's journalists were sacked. I find it interesting that Dave Widgery can complain about the possible effects of IMG control over the Editorial Board of SC when he knows full well how his organisation conducts its debates.

Secondly, despite Dave Widgery's claims that Tony Cliff was arguing for a more political paper, it was generally understood that the changes in SW were to make it more popular at the expense of its politics. Just compare it today

to what it was four years ago and you'll see the difference. Cliff stated that: 'Our audience is largely made up of young workers with very little political tradition and quite often with very little trade union experience.' SW had to be popularised to appeal to this audience!

Since these changes, SW has increasingly failed to relate to militants. It contains very little serious political analysis and comment and is filled instead with horror stories and fighting talk. Despite this and much frantic campaigning besides, the IS/SWP has not increased either the quality or quantity of its membership. It has managed to attract only a politically inexperienced and frequently changing membership, whilst at the same time losing many of its leading militants.

To conclude: the debate around *Socialist Challenge* and the Conference must be thoroughly democratic. Also it would be wrong to try and make SC more 'popular' by jettisoning some of its politics, as some readers have argued. What is needed is a paper capable of relating to the advanced sections of the working class and aiding the current moves towards a revolutionary regroupment. I feel that, although by no means perfect, SC is going a long way to fulfilling both of these roles.

STEVE CASS [Middleborough]

DAVID WIDGERY [*Socialist Challenge*, 19 January] doesn't do too badly with the jibes himself. But as a 'self-appointed revolutionary diplomat', 'Patron Saint of Regroupment' and 'Marxist intellectual', can I suggest that David looks at what *Socialist Worker* is, rather than telling us what it was supposed to be?

'We wanted SW to present the ideas of working class people, in their own words, rather than processed by professional journalists'. True, this was the overt rationale for the abrupt changes in SW in 1974. What it has turned out to mean is that some professional journalists have talked down to the working class, while others who did not agree with this walked down to the dole and out of IS. David does not answer the point that whatever 'we wanted' to do with SW, it has in fact tended to be brash and sensational. It is David's reiteration of the failed rationale for the present SW which is 'stunningly out of date'.

I stick to my point that the political level of SW is 'abysmally low'. Not because, as David Widgery alleges, I think of 'politics' as 'reviews by Marxist intellectuals, preferably myself, of other Marxist intellectuals' recent books'. David might have noticed that I myself criticised SC for a bias to 'intellectuals'. But because SW refuses to deal seriously with the political problems involved in 'the battles and the disappointments and the passions and the creations that make up working class life'. And because SW refuses to recognise difficulties and disagreements as a necessary part of building a socialist workers' movement. And because SW even insults its readers by failing to give information on the trade union movement and the left which does not suit its immediate purposes. SW is a 'trade paper' in an obvious sense.

I am frankly disappointed that David, known to many as 'The Human Face of the SWP', is so easily provoked into a simple defence of SW, which he must know to be an evasion of real problems. Similarly I am amazed that he can seriously advance his claim that 'we in the SWP do believe in revolutionary unity' in the face of his leadership's persistent refusal of any and every proposal for collaboration from other groups. Nor does the claim to work with other people on specific issues square very well with instances such as the blatant attempts to bypass the united anti-fascist movement, and to exclude the CP and the far left from the founding of the Anti-Nazi League. And finally, David, the 'Would they let you do this in Russia?' question — could anyone else on the revolutionary left write your sort of letter to SW and have it printed?

MARTIN SHAW [Hull]

IDEA

Took this idea for a walk in the park — well, more of a thought really; but — who knows?

Some people, they see an idea, they kick it around till it clears off.

Other people say, they're all right when they're small, but — you know — in a town...

There's a big one around; looks at you with both eyes, as if it meant it.

An idea like that you can't keep in a kennel, can't keep it chained up.

Some people say it's dangerous, should be put down. But that sort, they don't really like any ideas.

Of course, one that size is too big for one person, one family even. Too big for a park or one country — needs the whole world to roam in.

HUGO DEWAR

Socialist Challenge EVENTS

NORTH WEST

For details of activities in the Northwest write or ring the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre, Third Floor, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1. 061-236 2352. Open Tuesday 8-10pm, Thursday 8-10pm, Saturday 10-12pm. Room available for meetings. Duplicating facilities available.

BURY Socialist Challenge group meets every Wednesday, 8pm at the Wheatsheaf pub, Bury New Road. Whitefield (near Whitefield bus and train station).

LIVERPOOL Socialist challenge group meets fortnightly on Wednesdays at the Dolphin, Canning Place.

WARRINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets regularly. Ring Manchester Socialist Challenge office for details. 061-236 2352.

NORTH EAST

DARLINGTON Socialist Challenge sales on Saturdays outside Northern Road on High Row, 11am-1pm.

MIDDLESBOROUGH Socialist Challenge sales on Saturdays outside Boots at Cleveland Centre, 11am-1pm. Socialist Challenge is also available from Harrisons (newsagents) in Linthorpe Street.

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge is on sale Saturday from 11am-1pm outside the Library in the Plaza. Next Socialist Challenge group meeting on Thursday, 9 February, at the White Lion pub, Cross Church Street, 8pm and fortnightly thereafter.

DURHAM Socialist Challenge Group meets every first and third Thursday.

7.30pm to 9.15pm in the Big Jug pub, Claypath, Durham City. Details from: Jim Fox, 41 The Avenue, Durham. Next meeting, 16 February. Socialist activity in the unions.

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 Thursdays 6pm. Wide range of Fourth International publications.

DUNDEE: information about Socialist Challenge activities from 64 Queen St, Glasgow. John in SC sales outside Boots (corner of Reform Street) each Saturday, 11am-2pm.

EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge meetings every second Wednesday. Contact: George Kerevan, 12 Marchmont Grove, Edinburgh. Tel: 031-346 0465.

ABERDEEN: information about Socialist Challenge activities, ring Jim on 43696 (after 5pm).

SOUTH WEST

SOUTHAMPTON: After the firefighters. Which way for the Unions? Wednesday 3 February at 8pm. Speakers: Rich Palmer (Socialist Challenge industrial correspondent) and local trade unionists. At St Mathews Hall. Following meeting: 'What is capitalism?' Thursday 16 February, 8pm at The Anchor.

LONDON

WANDSWORTH Socialist Challenge group meeting: 'Crisis of society. Crisis of the left'. Wednesday, 8 February, 8pm at new venue: WCCR, 172 Lavender Hill, SW11.

NEWHAM Socialist Challenge Forum. The class struggle after the 'fire fighters' strike. Speakers: Dore Woppler (Socialist Challenge Editorial Board). Tuesday, 7

February, at 7.30pm. Greengate House, NE London Poly, Greengate St., Plaistow.

For more details of forums, write: Newham Socialist Challenge Forum, PO Box 50, London N1. Tel: Area 01-225 0571.

BRENT Socialist Challenge group. For details of meetings write to: London IMG, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

HARROW Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly. Anyone interested please contact: PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

HAMMERSMITH Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly — details from London IMG, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

SOUTHALL Supporters group meets fortnightly. For details ring 01-579 5085.

HARINGEY Socialist Challenge readers group meets fortnightly in the West Green Community Centre, Stanley Road (off West Green Road). Nearest tube: Turnpike Lane. Next meeting: Monday, 6 February, 7.30pm. Karen Margolis on 'Socialism and Feminism'.

GREENWICH/LEWISHAM Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly. For details ring Ray 01-609 1187.

SOUTHWEST LONDON Socialist Challenge supporters meet every two weeks in Battersea. Further information from 26 Latchmere Road, London SW11.

CAMDEN Socialist Challenge group meets every first and third Wednesday of each month in Kentish Town. For details ring Ne: 369 5288, or write PO Box 50, London N1.

YORKSHIRE

HULL: For details of Socialist Challenge events ring David, Hull 492890.

LEEDS Socialist Challenge Benefit Disco. At 'Heaven and Hell', Hogerona, Leeds 1. Tuesday, 7 February, 9pm - 2am. Tickets 40p at the door.

The Day the Scroungers Loafed No More

A study in kindness

'Isn't that what all women get?' asks Pauline, sad heroine of Jim Allen's *The Spongers*, drowning in the sea of sub-sections which finally cost her and her family their lives, clutching as she goes under at straws of common-sense and ordinariness, writes **FAY WELDON**

Women certainly get the squalid worst of our welfare system, expected (as ever) to put up with what they are given, keep their mouth shut, and be grateful.

Cuts come, the Jubilee celebrations go ahead, Pauline's mongrel daughter gets shifted to an old people's home because the council can no longer afford to keep her in the private home where she's happy.

No one will give her the real reason. Inflation is high; supplementary benefit is not; Pauline can't manage. Bureaucracy turns its strange, cruel face towards her; she flails about a little, then shrivels up and voluntarily disappears, thus saving us, the tax payers, a little of our horrendous burden. A drop in an ocean of distress.

The Spongers, directed by Roland Joffe, produced by Tony Garnett, was in its extraordinary way a study in human kindness.

The neighbours' kindness to Pauline; hers to her children. The community and social worker, the staff of the residential homes, even the officials, the appeal board, the councillor — all are distressed by the notion of suffering and doing their best to alleviate it.

(Only the deputy director, superbly and subtly played by Iva Clough, emerges as any kind of villain, exercising her power with insolence and malice mingled.)

Even the bombarding letters and forms, which so baffle Pauline, have been devised by well-meaning people. But what use is that to Pauline, condemned as a 'bad manager' — that worst of female faults

— spending the rent money on food for the children, a donation to the Jubilee, a scarf for herself?

Christine Hargreaves, that excellent actress, gave Pauline the ragged face of the underprivileged, and many faces too — witchlike when pounding up the pills — all the world offered her for consolation — to make the lethal doses of good-night cocoa all round; childlike at the Jubilee party; beautiful on her night out at the club.

It is not poverty and hardship as the world used to know it, but bad enough for Pauline to feel that death was preferable, and the world not good enough for her children. And who's to blame her?

The Spongers gave us one set of truths. There are of course others. We get the social institutions we deserve. Neighbours are seldom angels. Vicious clients and competent social workers do exist. Old women love the Jubilee, though young ones suffer for it.

I was in a home for the mentally handicapped on a day when consternation reigned — one of the children had been moved from a home for the aged where she was happy to a properly equipped children's home which she hated. But the Allen-Joffe-Garnett truths were presented with integrity, intelligence, and a muted indignation more moving than the rage it would be so easy to feel.

FAY WELDON is the feminist author of *Down Among the Women* and a number of radio plays, whose latest book, *Little Sisters*, is due out shortly.



Jubilee party, with Christine Hargreaves (centre) as Pauline holding baby Dawn.



Paula McDonagh as Paula, who is moved to an old peoples' home.

Fertile for the Front

The characters in *The Spongers* are not political; militant action would not have come naturally to them. Not having an 'author's message' made the play dramatically much stronger, argues **JIM ALLEN** in this interview with Peter Anderson.

I consider that the damage has been done by Ian Sproat and others. Although it has been shown that his figures (on the so-called 'scroungers') are invented, they have been very effective in dividing worker from worker; the employed against the unemployed. Many workers see the unemployed as 'untouchables' — there is no class solidarity.

The very fact that a comedian in a working men's club can get away with endless jokes about the unemployed and people on social security shows how far things have gone. The worst of it is that among themselves, the unemployed have no unity, no political muscle. And they accept the system's claim that it is a personal failure.

This point is taken up in the scene where the community worker gets angry at Pauline for saying that what is happening to her is her own fault. In the '30s, there was no welfare and people stuck together much more. There were points of unity between the employed and the unemployed — you had to have unity to survive. Now people can just about survive on what they get on the SS.

It's having the worst effect on the kids on the dole; they are getting no experience of trade unions, no class perspective. They have to hustle to survive and only see workers in competition with other workers.

The revolutionary left has no presence in places like the Langley estate near Middleton,

In spite of Britain's supposed welfare state, a woman laces five cups of cocoa with a lethal dose of pills, drinks one herself and hands the others to her children — in order to escape from poverty.

That is the finale to *The Spongers*, the play shown on BBC-1 on 24 January. It is reviewed here by **FAY WELDON** and **PETER KENNARD**. The author of the play, **JIM ALLEN**, adds his own comments.

Paper forms of tyranny

Engels wrote that realism is the 'reproduction of typical people, under typical conditions' and just as Engels saw certain 19th century writers fulfilling this proposition. *The Spongers* should be included in the tradition, succeeding as it does in by-passing the commonest political pit-fall of realism on television, writes **PETER KENNARD**

This is that the viewers are swallowed up by the plot and not given any space to exercise their critical faculties. The part of the play that seemed most important to me was a space between shots — a blank screen. On the sound track, Pauline, the mother, is saying goodnight to her four children, her voice quite calm and matter of fact.

In the previous sequence she had been shown emptying hundreds of pills into the five cups of cocoa that she was about to drink with her children. She switched off the light and the screen was blank for about a minute. My involvement in the continuing narrative of the play was broken suddenly and I was forced to reflect on the build up of events that had led to this moment.

Subtle contradictions are exposed in the play. When the bailiffs arrive to remove the furniture, for example, Pauline is putting up balloons in the street for the Jubilee. She is still carrying the balloons when she walks with the bailiffs into the house. Two different realities are brought right up against each other.

The bailiffs have arrived to inform Pauline that if she does not pay the £262 she owes in rent, the furniture will be taken away. They are not portrayed as archetypal bullies, but as men who constantly have to revert to bureaucratic language and pieces of paper that must be filled in.

They are the first of a long line of bureaucrats who spin a web of abstractions around the

material problems of Pauline, abstractions which bring no money.

The editing of the play also serves to point up the contradictions. Scenes of Pauline's family constantly interact with various committee meetings, the coverage of which is set against her reality.

A community worker fights for Pauline's case. He is shown shouting until he is blue in the face at the Labour chairperson of the social services committee, who ends by saying that he can do nothing and the community worker does not understand what 'working for socialism' really means.

The character of the community worker acts in the play as a force to widen the situation from the particular events depicted. He does not present an answer to the mother, either in fact or in theory, but he is important in that, unlike the other social workers, he demonstrates by his actions an awareness of the woman's actual experience.

Engels wrote in reference to poetry: 'I believe that the thesis must spring forth from the situation and action itself, without being explicitly displayed'. *The Spongers* fulfills this proposition, mainly because a person such as the community worker is not caricatured into a one-dimensional character.

WORD EDIFICE

Whatever the various authorities 'want' to do to help, they are unable to because they have constructed an edifice of language aimed at continuing things as they are. The working class woman cannot break into the constructed world into which the bureaucrats are hermetically sealed.

Language in Allen's play is used as a tool to confuse and tyrannise a woman into suicide. It is more important for the stability of Britain in Jubilee year that this family should be allowed to die rather than be listened to. Their words would have had to penetrate the verbal smokescreen of the State and the validity of its institutions.



Jim Allen: 'The worst of it is that among themselves, the unemployed have no unity, no political muscle.'

Socialist Challenge

Lenin 1917: bread, land, peace

Us 1978: bread, bread, bread!

WE ARE facing a financial crisis of a somewhat acute nature. Despite the big gains made by the paper and the fact that our Fund Drive targets are regularly met, we have an accumulated back debt of £3000 which needs to be paid off within the next month.

The substantial part of this debt is owed to design and printing firms who have produced Socialist Challenge, our Russian Revolution anniversary special, and the four-page supplements that have been inserted in the newspaper. Normally, commercial firms allow their customers a month's credit. Most of the firms we are dealing with have been rather more generous than that. But their patience is wearing very thin.

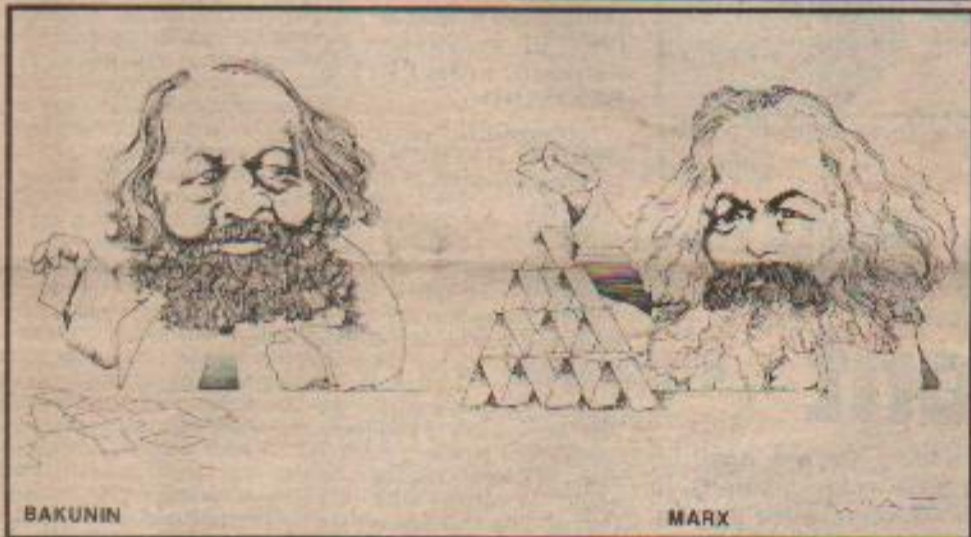
We know that many readers donate as much as they can. We also know that many are extremely cynical about appeals for money. The fact of the matter is that we are at a very vital stage of the development of this newspaper. This issue is being distributed in ten M.H. Smith's outlets in London. If the test is successful, a national distribution could take place which could transform our circulation.

For if we sold another 3000 papers a week we would become self-sufficient.

In order to move forward we have to pay off our back debts. Hence this appeal. We could engage in demagogic and moralistic appeals, but we do not wish to insult our readers' intelligence. All we say is that our books are always open if you want to come and check why we are in debt. We doubt whether we will need a special appeal like this again, given our increasing sales and your response to the Fund Drive. So treat this as a one-off emergency.

I enclose £..... for the SC Emergency Appeal. The following person might be able to donate £..... as well. You can write to him/her at the following address:

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ADDRESS
TEL NO
Tear off and post to: SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EMERGENCY FUND, PO Box 50, London N1



IN THE FIGHT for survival of Socialist Challenge, the monthly bankers orders — made out by supporters — are our lifeblood. This regular and guaranteed income, presently totalling £138 per month, forms the bedrock of the fund drive.

So as we move into February, the January bankers orders have fallen due.

To make £1800 over a two-month period, we need an average £138.46 per week. The

bankers order therefore covers this week's target except for 46 pence. By filling out a bankers order, you can give your favourite paper a definite donation every month, or even every week if you prefer. You can use the form printed on this page.

SPECIAL OFFER

- ★ Russian Revolution special. Text by Isaac Deutscher, design by David King. 50p.
 - ★ 1978 Calendar. 13 posters from Paris, May 1968. 4 colours, £1.
 - ★ Subscribe for one year to Socialist Challenge (£10) and receive a calendar for 1978 free.
 - ★ Set of 6 postcards of Peter Kennard photomontages on South Africa, Ireland, 1974 miners strike, Sevso, USSR and Chile. The set £1.
 - ★ Socialist Challenge supporters badge, 20p each plus 7p postage. Orders of 10 or more 16p each, post free.
- All available from Special Offers, Socialist Challenge, PO Box 58, London N1.



Become a walking bill-board. Two-colour Socialist Challenge supporters' badges are popping up all over the place. Obtain yours from the address above, 20p each plus 7p post. Ten or more 16p each, post free.



Hyde, Manchester, was yet again the focus for an anti-fascist demonstration, when the Tory-controlled council generously gave the use of the town hall to the NF last Thursday. Chief constable Jim Anderton ('I will do my best to see that the NF are not attacked') turned out 2,000 cops to ensure the two coach loads of Nazi-saluting fascists safe conduct. Anderton has called for every one in Britain to carry identity cards and have their finger prints taken.

SPONSOR A JOURNALIST

OUR PLAN to win financial sponsorship for an additional journalist to join Socialist Challenge's editorial team has begun to show results. Bankers orders totalling £20 a month have so far been received. These are from Jane Lott, London, who has booked us in for £5 a month; playwright David Edgar, another £5; and IW, London, who has made out a monthly order for £10. Our thanks to these three comrades, who have placed us on the road to our monthly target of £125.

Expanding the existing editorial team of five is essential if we are to carry out the kind of coverage and presentation of articles which we — and many readers — want to see. So find your pen and sign up now for the Sponsor a Journalist campaign by filling in the bankers' order form.

Anything from £1 up — undertaken individually or collectively — will be gratefully received. Perhaps your friends at work, college (or on the dole queue?) might be willing to

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