

Socialist Challenge

WHITECHAPEL TRAGEDY

RACISTS RAMPAGE



KENNETH SINGH

Plaistow, London, 20 April:

**Ten-year-old Kenneth Singh
MURDERED**

Whitechapel, London, 4 May:

**Altab Ali
STABBED TO DEATH**

Wolverhampton, 7 May:

**West Indian youths
INJURED IN SHOTGUN ATTACK**

**Protest Against the
Racist Murderers:**

**Demonstrate
Sunday 14 May**

**St Mary's
Churchyard,
Whitechapel Road,
East London
assemble 11am**

INSIDE:

**PETER HAIN
on the
ANTI-NAZI LEAGUE**

**BOB WRIGHT
on the
AUEW**

**KAMLESH GANDHI
on
GRUNWICK**

EDITORIAL

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Racist attacks and self defence

THE BRUTAL killing of Altab Ali in Whitechapel, East London, and the attempted murder of black youths in Wolverhampton reflect the growing frustration of the racists. Having been frustrated at the polls — the NF vote slumped in many areas — many racist thugs are turning to physical assaults on black people. It is true that these have been going on for many years. But their intensity has sharply increased over the past few weeks.

In both Wolverhampton and Whitechapel the police had been told of the regular harassment of blacks. Numerous complaints had been lodged. But little, if any, action was ever taken. This is not accidental. We have commented many times in these columns on the widespread racism which exists in the police force itself.

FRUSTRATION WITH POLICE

Given the attitude of many police officers to black people, it is hardly surprising that they are less than enthusiastic in investigating attacks on black lives and property.

Does this mean that black people should stop making complaints to the police or other state bodies? Certainly not. But they should realise that self-organisation in the community to defend it will both be more practical and will compel the police to treat complaints seriously. The fact that a Wolverhampton community relations officer is virtually calling for black self-defence patrols is an indication of the growing and widespread frustration with the police.

It takes a death in the black community before they move into action.

BLACK ESTABLISHMENT

But it must be understood that self-defence is first and foremost a political task. It means that black people have to realise that unless they stand up and fight for themselves they will get little support from elsewhere. The black establishment has hitherto told black people that they should stay aloof from politics. Leave it all to us.

Leaving it all to them has produced no results whatsoever. More racist laws are implemented; attacks on black people continue to grow and not recede. And everytime those on the receiving end are the most underprivileged layers in British society.

It is only when the importance of participating in national and local politics is grasped that the basis for a meaningful self-defence organisation will emerge.

AUEW elections — part 2

WE WROTE last week of the unmitigated disaster which Terry Duffy's election represented for British trade unionism. This week we carry an interview with Bob Wright, the defeated Broad Left candidate, on our centre pages.

Bob Wright correctly stresses the consequences for the Engineering Union of a merger with the Electrician's Union. He also lays much of the blame on press interference and the organisation of the right wing. However it is the record of the Broad Left which also needs to be carefully scrutinised.

Should the Broad Left remain a rump which confines itself to union elections? We are strongly of the opinion that to continue on this course would be disastrous for engineering workers. The Duffy-Boyd alliance in the union will be looking for ways to smash the left even further.

TRANSFORMATION

What is posed more than before is the construction of a real class struggle alternative in the union. This means that the membership has to be mobilised to transform the Broad Left into a fighting organisation campaigning openly for the 35-hour week and union democracy.

Bob Wright says we tended to personalise matters by picking on Scanlon. But it is the structure of the union which creates the objective basis for this. How can we not 'personalise' when Scanlon casts 1 1/2 million votes the wrong way? The point is to fight for structures which make 'personalisation' impossible. Will the Broad Left tackle these issues at its postponed national conference, or will it put its head in the sand? A lot will depend on the outcome.

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HOME NEWS

Surprising successes for Socialist Unity

Defeat is Labour victory

IN THE COUNCIL elections last week, the losses suffered by Labour were the lowest in the lifetime of the present Government, reports GEOFF BELL.

So it is not surprising that Ron Hayward, general secretary of the Labour Party, was expressing satisfaction at the overall outcome.

Said Hayward: 'Some of the individual results in London are very bad, but there are some very good results too. I have seen headlines saying "Tories sweep into London". This is completely wrong.'

The results in Scotland were the most promising for Labour, and the threat of the Scottish Nationalist Party has now considerably diminished.

If the SNP were to maintain its claim of being a credible alternative to Labour, they had to attract significant working class votes in West and Central Scotland.

PLEASED

This they failed to do, and the general picture in Scotland was Labour advances at the expense of the SNP.

Overall, the fact that Labour is simply satisfied that there was no Tory landslide is a sign of the times. Nevertheless Callaghan has reason to be pleased.

The results, following the victory of Terry Duffy in the AUEW presidential election,

mark a further success for the policies of austerity and the Social Contract. The prospect of a right wing Thatcher-led government is, quite rightly, enough to scare even the most disillusioned Labour supporter traipsing to the polls.

LOSERS

But the fact is that in terms of cutting inflation and avoiding 'confrontation' with the unions, Callaghan does appear to be delivering the goods.

As well as the National Front, the real losers in the election were the Labour left and their friends and advisors in the Communist Party.

The left's strategy of being loyal Government supporters, waiting for a massive defeat for Labour at the polls and then launching a bid for control of the party, has come unstuck.

The Communist Party did disastrously at the polls. In Birmingham, for instance, 14 CP candidates polled only 1,436 votes. This compares with 1,151 votes for the seven Socialist Unity candidates — a

fact totally ignored by the Morning Star.

There is no doubt that in Birmingham and elsewhere Socialist Unity's policy of 'a fightback now' proved more attractive to militants than the Communist Party's.

SPECTACULAR

A number of spectacularly good results were achieved: Hilda Kean's 21 per cent in Spitalfield; Agnes Thompson's 12 per cent in Sandhills, Liverpool; and Rueben Goldberg's 456 votes (10 per cent) in a Bradford ward being the most obvious. (The NF got only 194 votes).

In most areas where Socialist Unity candidates stood they defeated the National Front, the Communist Party, and on occasions both Liberals and Tories.

Such successes are all the more remarkable when it is

remembered that unlike the Communist Party, Socialist Unity does not see the main aim of elections as winning votes — but rather to campaign on the vital issues, to explain the socialist alternative, and to organise around class struggle policies and campaigns.

In a sense the real test of Socialist Unity is the next few months, and how well those who worked in SU organise themselves around such issues as opposition to all immigration controls, for abortion rights, and in the fight against unemployment.

ARRIVED

In this the words of Steve Faulkner, who polled just under 10 per cent of the votes in Deptford, London, can be taken as a guide: 'Socialist Unity has arrived, and we're staying.'

NF- from humiliation to what?

THE ELECTION results were bad for the National Front. Nationally its vote fell by a quarter compared to last year and its hopes of gaining council seats in London were proved to be totally illusory.

Even before the election results were announced, the problems the Front faced were shown by the number of electoral frauds their members were engaged in.

They found it impossible to get the necessary number of nominations by 'normal' methods, and many signed the nomination forms believing they were backing Labour or other candidates.

It is easy to see why the Front is in crisis. They were beaten off the streets in Lewisham and most recently in Leeds. The Anti Nazi League carnival and the mass leafletting carried out by the anti-fascist movement further isolated them.

The racism of the Tories has stolen many of their votes.

Internal division in the Front is now to be expected. It is no secret that many of the NF leaders are itching to ditch Martin Webster. The bad election results may give them their chance by making him the scapegoat.

Certainly the hands of the

hard line 'action faction' will be strengthened. It is a sign of the times that many of the 1,500 strong NF march on May Day in London were chanting 'The National Front is a Fascist Front'.

Moreover, the Hitlerite British Movement is recruiting fast inside the NF. A member of the NF National Directorate attended the latest Hitler birthday party in Wiltshire and many NF members were involved in organising meetings for the Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke.

It is not just hypocrisy that makes the current issues of the NF's *Spearshead* devote a major article to attacking the KKK. There is a genuine fear that the rank and file will break into a rampage of bombing and thuggery.

The depth of the defeat will be measured by the extent to which the NF shows its real ideological colours and retreats to mindless violence.

The hope of the more far-sighted Front leaders is that in the long term Thatcher will not be able to satisfy the racist aspirations she has aroused and that the NF will be able to cash in on the subsequent disillusionment.

The problem for these leaders is that a significant section of their ranks will not wait for this process to run its course but will take the option of the 'bomb and boot'.



OUR POLICIES

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

Socialist Challenge believes that the two vital tasks confronting revolutionary socialists are: 1. To build broad-based class struggle tendencies in opposition to class-collaborationism in the labour movement. These should be non-exclusive in character grouping together militants holding a wide range of political views.

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

Interview with Peter Hain

Now we're in the big league

Following the success of the Carnival last week, JUDE WOODWARD interviewed PETER HAIN, press officer of the Anti-Nazi League, and asked him about the future of the League.

Despite the overwhelming success of the carnival on 30 April, which no one can deny, the National Front was able to march into the East End on May Day without opposition for the first time since the '30s. How was that able to happen?

It was a secret march that we'd got wind of before. But realistically, all the energy and organisation that had gone into the carnival had just exhausted everyone.

We had pushed them off the streets for — what — six, seven months now. The next stage is to mobilise on a mass basis for any march that they might be planning.

If they do attempt to engage in a Lewisham-style operation, where they fixed the date in advance, campaigned for it, and mobilised beyond their own ranks, then I think we should be able to bring out these numbers to have a mass presence there.

We've heard that the ANL conference is planned. Are there any details?

The details haven't been finalised yet, and probably won't be for a couple of weeks. It's a question of clearing dates, but it will be in late June or early July.

The aim of it quite simply will be to consolidate the

action approach that the League has developed. We're aiming to get people who will take action rather than talk about it.

We will deliberately avoid the traditional type of labour movement conference, where you take nine months to set it up, getting delegates and so on.

The main purpose is less to discuss policy and the wider political basis, than to carry on the momentum that has already been achieved. Originally we weren't thinking of holding a conference until after the General Election, but the political significance of the carnival demanded that we hold one now.

Will there be discussion about whether the ANL should take up immigration controls at this conference?

I hope this discussion will take place. All the main ANL speakers are making it clear that the Front is not the only problem, although it is the major target from the point of view of the League.

There is the much wider problem of racist immigration controls. So I would have thought that would be common ground.

What I don't want is to spend literally hours of wrangling over where we put the full stops and commas in particular political statements, as so often happens in



PETER HAIN at the Tribune meeting at last year's Labour Party conference — his first since joining Labour from the Liberals.

conferences of this sort.

It's a matter of building the consciousness of the wider issues out of the enthusiasm you had on the carnival; so that the kids realise that it is not just a convenient bogey man, much the same as opposing football team supporters.

What I don't want is restricting and, potentially, crippling the momentum by insisting that a watertight political statement is put out, which in any case the different groups will not agree on.

What will be the basis of invitation to the conference?

I don't know at the moment. I think it will probably be on the basis of local ANLs, but that has yet to be decided by the steering committee. What I am anxious for is the broadest possible representation at the conference.

Are you happy with the present structure of the ANL? It has been criticised for its lack of democracy.

I'm basically happy with it in the sense that we are not trying to rival the locally based and usually solidly based anti-racist, anti-fascist committees, which usually have a delegate structure within and around the labour movement.

Our structure, if you can call it a structure, is based on the original sponsors' meeting back in November. We elected the present steering committee at an open meeting; it's broadly representative of the labour movement, so it's a legitimate body in that sense.

We don't have membership cards. We don't pretend to people that by paying a pound they have constitutional rights. You have a supporter's card as a way of identifying with the movement; giving it funds, and as a way of recruiting on a support basis.

You can join a local support group or form your own. These groups are quite independent. They go round, distribute literature — campaign as they want to. There are also groups like Women Against the Nazis, or School Kids Against the Nazis.

What we say to people who

approach us, is: OK, you go and do it, it's your group, we'll help print a professional kind of leaflet and provide some resources, but basically it's up to you. We have no control over these groups.

What about democracy at a national level?

The steering committee was set up on a quite open and democratic basis in the beginning. We've got this action going, and the conference will provide an opportunity to sort out any hiccups or problems that there may be.

What I would resist is either the view that it is an undemocratic operation, because I don't think it is; or the view that you can organise a campaign like this by having a traditional model of organisation.

That model is provided more than adequately by the ARAF committees, which I hope we will strengthen. I hope that in the end this new constituency of people would be channelled into these organisations and into the wider labour movement, so that it's not a movement which comes and goes and leaves nothing solid behind it.

The other answer is that you've got to look at our record. I think you have to admit that it could not have been done any other way, or else it would have been done before. There have been other attempts to do it.

Will the ANL disband after the General Election? Is it temporary?

I see it as an emergency operation. The Front has been gaining ground electorally, in the schools, in the working class generally. It is an emergency job of propaganda and of activity to expose and stop that.

The target always has been the General Election. Frankly, I had not, and nor had anyone else on the steering committee, envisaged the absolutely explosive growth of the thing.

We realised that there was a vacuum to be filled. We hadn't realised its full potential. After the General Election, the

League will have to decide what it does next.

Does it disband and say to its supporters, go and feed in to your local ARAF committees, always assuming that the NF hasn't made an electoral advance? Or do we say that we have a responsibility to carry on our present activities?

All I'll say is that I see this as an emergency operation and I don't think that we will defeat racism and fascism by this kind of campaign at the end of the day.

What do you think about relations with anti-racist and anti-fascist committees locally? Some people have voiced complaints.

I understand that feeling. I think that many local ANL initiatives have been subtle in the way they set them up. They haven't talked to people the way that they ought to.

I think that we are all grown up and that these are just

natural hiccups in a thing that has taken everyone by surprise and grown explosively.

There has been some justification for bad feeling, but also people feeling that they don't like the ANL muscling in on their patch.

We've not been trying to build a body that competes with existing anti-racist and anti-fascist groups. Where that has happened we have tried from the centre to ensure that they are working in harness. But the local groups are independent.

We are involving new constituencies which, rightly or wrongly, would not become involved in traditional labour movement bodies like the committees, which I and many others in the ANL have been active in over the years.

These new constituencies and their potential should be welcomed by the older established committees. We hope in the long run to channel them into the older established committees.



At the Ilford picket of the NF in February.



These badges are all available from The Other Bookshop, 322 Upper St, London N1, 20p each plus 10p p&p.

HOMENEWS

Attacks in Wolverhampton

Racists bring out the guns...

ON 29 JANUARY 1978 the President of the Indian Workers Association in Wolverhampton NS Noor received a number of abusive and threatening letters. One of them was signed by a body claiming to be the 'Popular Front for the Liberation of Britain'. It stated: 'Foreigner Noor: The PFLOB has been formed to combat invaders and to free the country of foreign influence and indigenous treachery. The invaders will be driven out and all traitors punished. You leave now.'

Several weeks later five members of the National Front were arrested and charged with arson. They are currently facing trial for petrol-bombing Asian shops. The latest incidents to shake Wolverhampton happened in the early hours of last Sunday morning. A group of young blacks were on their way to a party. A blue Cortina drove past, a shotgun

was poked out of a side window and shots were fired. Two youths fell down wounded. Their comrades dragged them to safety, while others threw bricks at the car.

Some minutes later the car emerged again and there was another shotgun blast. The police arrived after the attack was over. The fact that even Maurice

Buck, the Deputy Chief Constable has stated that it was an unprovoked attack indicates the seriousness of the situation. The response of the black community has been quick. Bishan Dass, a member of the Community Relations Council, attacked the police for not taking previous warnings seriously. This normally 'moderate' figure said: 'We shall now actively consider forming protection patrols for the coloured community. We know the police have a hard job, but we are not completely satisfied at the protection they provide.'

The police are questioning three people in connection with the attack. David Stevens, a well-known local anti-racist militant and a member of the Anti-Racist Committee told

Socialist Challenge: 'In the previous wave of racist attacks in Wolverhampton, connections with the NF were demonstrated. There have been persistent rumours over the last month and a half which have reached the Anti-Racist Committee. These related to the allegation that known members of the NF had been seen riding around with a gun in a car. We believe that it is no coincidence that this event happened two days after the local election results in which racist candidates fared badly. We also believe that this demonstrates the total failure of the police to tackle the question of racist violence in Wolverhampton.'

An emergency meeting of the Anti-Racist Committee was scheduled for last night. The possibility of a further demonstration for this weekend will be discussed. For further details ring Wolverhampton 29335.

Election results

Birmingham

Saltley: LP 2780, 2576; Con 1241, 1174; Lib 390, SU 274, Lib 252, NF 228, CP 196 (SU won 5.6 per cent of the vote).
Soho: LP 3221, Con 840, SU 160, Lib 156, CP 60 (SU won 3.7 per cent).

All Saints: LP 1331, Con 466, Lib 115, SU 42 (SU won 2.1 per cent).

Sparkhill: LP 4030, Con 1778, SU 294, CP 149; Indep 115, Ind 63 (SU won 4.6 per cent).

Small Heath: LP 2823, Con 1066, Lib 363, SU 194 (SU won 4.4 per cent).

Duddeston: Lib 1430, Lab 911, Con 461, SU 80 (SU won 2.7 per cent).

Sparkbrook: Lab 2600, Con 1051, CP 200, SU 87 (SU won 3.9 per cent).

London

Deptford: Lab 1386, 1300, 1273; Con 421, 414, 376; NF 237, SU 230, WRP 237, 218, 205; CP 188, WRP 113 (SU won 9.3 per cent).

Islington Highview: LP 746, 643, Con 572, 544, SU 115, 105, NF 48, Lib 46, NF 45, Lib 36 (SU averaged 7.6 per cent).

Islington Hillrise: Lab 858, Con 843, Lab 819, 808; Con 792, 730, SU 110, 97, NF 44, 34 (SU average 5.9 per cent).

Islington Tollington: LP 1027, 1023, 989; Con 455, 434, 392; NF 100, SU 97, NF 83, SU 79 (SU won 5.4 per cent).

Spitalfields: LP 950, 941, 835; SU 377, SWP 325, SU 318, Con 163, Others 145, 125; NF 87 (SU averaged 17.7 per cent).

White City: LP 1783, 1493, 1415; Con 607, 596, 526; WRP 114, SU 96, 57, 50 (SU won 3.0 per cent).

Liverpool

Sandhills: LP 1783, SU 281, Con 173, CP 67, Lib 56 (SU won 11.9 per cent).

Granby: LP 2110, Con 829, Lib 447, CP 103, SU 92, WRP 39, Others 23, (SU averaged 2.5 per cent).

Fairfield: Lib 1684, Con 834, LP 735, SU 102 (SU won 3.0 per cent).

Manchester Hulme: LP 1483, Lib 523, Con 386, SU 139, CP 54, (SU won 5.4 per cent).

Bolton

Bolton West: LP 1710, Con 913, SU 58 (SU won 2.2 per cent).

Bradford

Bradford: LP 1451, Con 165, SU 71 (SU won 4.5 per cent).

Breitmet: LP 2582, Con 2439, SU 83 (SU won 1.6 per cent).

Bradford Moor: LP 2295, Con 1672, SU 456, NF 194 (SU won 9.9 per cent).

Basingstoke

Basingstoke: LP 923, 906; Con 678, 638; Lib 154, 152; SU 131 (SU won 7.0 per cent).

Swindon

Swindon: LP 998, Con 656, SA 78, Lib 44 (Socialist Alliance is a candidate supported by the SWP and SU).

Socialist Unity and National Front votes

	SU	NF
Birmingham:		
Saltley	274	228
London:		
Deptford	230	218
	—	205
	—	237
Spitalfields	377	87
	315	—

Islington:		
Highview	115	48
	105	45
Hillrise	110	44
	97	34
Tollington	97	100
	79	83

Bradford:		
Moor	—	77
	456	194

Socialist Unity and Communist Party Votes

	SU	CP
Birmingham:		
Saltley	274	196
Soho	160	60
Sparkhill	294	149
Sparkbrook	87	200
London:		
Deptford	230	188
Manchester:		
Hulme	139	67
Liverpool:		
Sandhills	281	67
Granby	92	103

and in the East End

..and the knives

AT 7.30pm on council election day last Thursday a young Bangladeshi, Altab Ali, was stabbed in the neck in the Whitechapel Road district in the East End of London.

He died in an ambulance on the way to hospital.

The local Asian community is in no doubt that this was a racist murder, and at a 500-strong meeting of Asians held on Sunday it was decided to call for a demonstration to protest against the growing number of racist attacks.

The police would not confirm to Socialist Challenge that the attack was racist, but the press liaison officer at Lemna Street police station added: 'We are not ruling out any option.'

Not so non-committal was the Institute of Race Relations. Commenting on the death of Ali, the shooting in Wolverhampton, and the murder of another 10-year-old Asian in Plaistow, London on 21 April, the Institute said:

'What we are witnessing is an increase in the frequency and seriousness of racial violence.'

The Institute added: 'The increased severity of these racist attacks is not a coincidence. Our researches show that...when politicians and the press mount a racist campaign for their own political ends, it results directly in increased attacks on black people.'

'Margaret Thatcher's pronouncement on "Swamping

our culture", the Tory demand for and end to all immigration has worked up overt race hatred.'

The Institute also reiterated its support for black self-defence. They commented that telling black people to rely on 'the normal forces of law and order' was 'a prescription for genocide'.

In East London, an Action Committee Against Racial Attacks has been formed and it is this body which has called the demonstration on Sunday, 14 May, leaving St Mary's Churchyard in Whitechapel Road at 11am.

Supporting the demonstration is Socialist Unity, whose candidates won an average 17.7 per cent of the local election vote in the area where Altab Ali was murdered.

Said Socialist Unity: 'We must begin a local campaign to sweep the racists off the streets. Only by relying on our own strength will we be able to defeat the fascists.'

'We urge all those who gave their support in the election campaign to give equal support to the protest activities that are being mounted in the coming days.'



BERRY BEAUMONT speaking at the NAC Conference

Abortion conference

The National Abortion Campaign has just held its third national conference. The issues that the campaign had been discussing throughout the year were debated and hopefully laid the basis for further work and discussion in the coming year.

Socialist Challenge supporters in the Brighton NAC group report on the conference.

The NAC conference, held at the end of last month, was disappointingly small, with only a hundred people attending. But, apart from that, it was clear that enthusiasm for the campaign has not died down. Many NAC groups have become increasingly active, and like ours, are recruiting more people.

The first day was devoted to positive legislation. We voted to adopt our own legislation which would remove all legal and medical restrictions on the right to abortion, and ensure that there is open access for every woman to free abortion facilities.

The main difference that emerged over positive legislation was whether to draw up our own bill or to support the one drafted by the Abortion Law Reform Association.

Some people were doubtful about ALRA's bill because it includes a time limit of 28 weeks, so that a woman would not have the right to choose once the fetus is 'viable'.

This was presented as a tactical position to make the bill more acceptable to wider groups.

We voted against this because setting the date at 28 weeks is arbitrary and could be reduced still further on the basis of viability. We also felt that NAC should not compromise in any way on the

right of women to make all decisions concerning their fertility.

However, we decided to support the ALRA bill if it were introduced into Parliament, as it would be an advance on the '67 Act.

On the second day, we agreed on a draft for the NAC declaration of abortion rights which 'will be both a declaration of the rights of women in relation to abortion and a comprehensive programme of what is needed to make these rights a reality'.

It was decided that for NAC to pursue its aims it was necessary for it to take a clear position against the cuts in the NHS, particularly where they directly affect the provision of abortion facilities.

The main debate of the conference was on our day-care campaign. We want day-care abortion units to be set up, and we are hoping to use this campaign to win support in the labour and trade union movement. These units would help make abortion a free, safe, easily available, short operation in an out-patient clinic.

We also discussed NAC and elections, students, the trade union conference on abortion planned for October, the implications of the slogan 'a woman's right to choose', and a projected NAC international day of action on abortion.

ANTI-RACIST, ANTI-FASCIST CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

Box 85, 182 Upper Street, London E1

CONFERENCE 3/4 JUNE

THE CARF, NATIONAL and London Coordinating Committees have decided to call a conference where some of the issues facing the anti-racist and fascist movement can be discussed and where hopefully a firm united democratic

national structure for the movement can be built.

If you would like to send delegates or observers from your organisation/committee, group please write to the organisers as soon as possible for details.



SCRAM — the Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace — received a warning letter before 4,000 demonstrators occupied the site of a proposed nuclear power station in Torness, near Edinburgh, on Sunday.

The letter, from the South of Scotland Electricity Board, said that SCRAM would be liable for any damage to the site. It did not say who would be obliged to accept liability for a nuclear explosion. Among the demonstrators were Scottish miners and groups from France and Germany.

HOME NEWS

APEX Conference

Grunwick: more of the same is hopeless

THE APEX leaders think that the time is almost ripe to finally kill off the Grunwick strike.

General Secretary, Roy Grantham, made this clear when he told the Union's annual conference in Eastbourne last week that unless ACAS recommends in favour of union recognition within four or five weeks, then the strike would have to be called off.

JONATHAN SILBERMAN, who attended the conference, reports.

Grantham was summing up on the debate which had been carefully prepared by the right-wing leadership from the very start of conference. Minister of Sport, Dennis Howell, giving the Presidential Address set the scene.

'It is a pity', he said, 'that so often the far left in politics do

not allow these qualities (reason and good sense) to assert themselves but wish to pursue confrontation politics.'

'This approach does great damage to the movement. The voice of reason is easily drowned by the chanting of mass produced slogans. And the almost inevitable violence

which such occasions produce not only stoke the fires of extremism but drives away moderate people...'

'This Union, above all others, has cause to understand these truths, as we have seen at Grunwick. Here a dispute with the most honourable motivation has been savaged and tarnished first, by those who refused to accept the disciplines and the collective wisdom of the elected leadership of this Union...'

DEBATE

The debate on Grunwick was introduced by the Union's Vice-President, Les Smith. He justified the suspensions of the

officers of the Strike Committee for the hunger strike outside the TUC which, he described, as 'wholly counter-productive'.

He defended the TUC's failure to lead a campaign for cutting off services. He said that to attempt to do so was both 'impractical and illegal'. The TUC had never committed an illegal act in the past, he said, and it would be incorrect to commit one now.

Strike Committee Chair, Kamlesh Gandhi replied to Howell and Co. 'It's not a question of the strikers not accepting the discipline and collective wisdom of the union leaders' he said. 'It's a question of the leaders not supporting the actions of the strikers!'

Conference was not totally convinced by the leadership's position. It gave newly elected EC member, David Winnick, big applause when he said that the road of 'excessive reliance on legal form and procedure has meant failure by the EC to mobilise the full strength of the union and the trade union movement at large'.

SENTIMENT

But this sentiment was not expressed in votes. Conference overwhelmingly supported the section of the Executive report dealing with Grunwick and voted out the critical resolutions.

Delegates could see no

alternative in practice. Over the last six months the Strike Committee has generally endorsed the Executive's objective of winning the strike through ACAS. The APEX leaders were able to use this to their advantage.

The conference decisions ensure that continuation of this strategy for the Grunwick strike is now demonstrably hopeless.

Unless the Strike Committee is prepared to rebuild the mass picketing against the wishes of the APEX leaders, then the strike is doomed. This is the difficult choice facing Saturday's conference.

'We'll stick it out to the end'

TESSA VAN GELDEREN, recently interviewed KAMLESH GANDHI, a member of the Grunwick strike committee, to discuss how he sees the future of the strike.

'I'm afraid that there is nothing effective that we can do any more. If we call a mass picket we have to be certain that we can get the numbers. We don't want a repetition of 7 November, when very few people turned up.'

APEX and the TUC won't support the resumption of the mass picket, so lots of trade union delegations would be reluctant to support it.

We could lobby the TUC but what's the point? Look at the firemen. There was a genuine case; the TUC had a policy opposing the 10 percent wage limit, and they didn't get any support. So what chance would we get when we are asking for so much more?

now the mail has been diverted and it doesn't go through Cricklewood any more. It goes through four other depots, where we've got no contacts, and there are even NF members in them.

Lots of people think that our struggle is all over, that we've tried everything and there's nothing more we can do. We've two aims for the conference. Firstly, we want to thank the movement for its support.

LESSONS

And we also want to draw the lessons from the Grunwick dispute. This is very important. There are a number of disputes like ours — such as Garners, Sandersons and others. If we lose at Grunwick then we are going to lose all these disputes.

The most important lesson is to rely on our own strength and not to go through legal channels. We still have to look for support from the labour movement.

We will stick it out until the end. We are committed to the movement and to our people on strike. We can't just give up. Many people have found it difficult to find other jobs once they say that they are from Grunwick.

If eventually we do have to look for other jobs, the strike committee will be the last to go. The main thing now is to get delegates to the conference on 14 May.

SYMPATHETIC

As for sympathetic industrial action, well, officially, we come up against a brick wall. We've had meetings with other unions. We lost the vote with the electricity workers at the end of last year. The General and Municipal Workers Union is obviously not going to support us.

Unofficially, there's only the Postal Workers' Union. But



Kamlesh Gandhi speaking in the Grunwick debates at APEX conference. Dennis Howell in the chair.

A 'left' reputation to keep

ASTMS Conference

THE WHITE-COLLAR union ASTMS holds its annual conference this weekend. It seems set to adopt a far-reaching position on racist activity in the union, and to re-affirm its opposition to the Government's economic strategy. An ASTMS delegate reports.

ASTMS is the fastest growing union in Britain, having expanded from a membership of 70,000 at its formation in 1968, to just under 400,000.

It also has a 'left' reputation to maintain. Under Clive Jenkins' leadership, it has consistently opposed the policies of the Labour Government and the collaboration of the TUC.

Yet the conference agenda does not allow for real debate on where the strategy of 'convincing the broad movement' has got the union. Nor will there be much opportunity for socialists to put forward a real alternative to build co-ordinated action.

MAJOR

On most of the major topics, the resolutions selected for debate are limited to re-iterating existing policy, such as urging the national executive 'to use all its resources to convince the Government'.

Similarly in the major debate on racism, the discussion is limited to a single composite motion to which there are no amendments. Resolutions calling for an end to immigration controls, the repeal of the Public Order Act, and affiliation to the Anti Nazi League have been excluded.

The only additions to the policy adopted last year are proposals to encourage participation of minorities in union

affairs, and a strongly worded statement that 'racist expressions by any member is incompatible with membership of the association'.

While fascist activity within the unions should be opposed, this formulation suggests that racist ideas in the union can be fought by bureaucratically excluding them.

The tensions that exist in the union will most likely emerge in the debates on the rule book, on which many proposals seem to be attempts to outmanoeuvre the growing right wing in the union.

Through Red Collar, the first steps towards an organised left wing in ASTMS have been taken. Red Collar can avoid the same fate as previous rank and file journals in the union by becoming a vehicle for developing an analysis of the nature of ASTMS and its particular brand of left leadership.

EXTENSION

It must also fight for a thorough-going extension of rank and file control of the union.

Red Collar No 2 is now out and available from EOA Books, 34 Cowley Rd, Oxford — price 10p. Fringe meetings at conference include an Anti Nazi League public meeting on Sat 13 May and a Red Collar meeting on Sunday 14 May.

What counts is the fighting policies

CPSA Conference

'THE fact of the matter is that the majority of the National Executive Committee moderates are Labour Party members, socialists and social democrats. And they do not believe in using the union as a political forum'.

So says Daylight, the paper of the moderate block in the Civil and Public Service Association. RICH PALSER reports from Brighton on Monday, the first day of the CPSA national conference.

So concerned is the moderate block to keep politics out of the union that according to a leaflet distributed by the left at the conference, the employers' organisation Truamid has spent £10,000 on moderate Kate Losinska's campaign for the presidency.

The leaflet, jointly published by elected committees of the Broad Left and Redder Tape

groups, states — this money was spent for leaflets, meetings, postage costs, and bussing members to branch annual general meetings.

— that Truamid totally finances Daylight

MODERATES

If any of these accusations

are true — and they are based on documented evidence — they show just what sort of politics the moderates want to keep out of the union.

Replying to these accusations the moderates admit that Truamid has given financial assistance, particularly to produce Daylight. It is money they say is being 'progressively repaid'. Repayment may take some time, however, if the moderates continue to lavish resources like they have in staffing a permanent office at the conference at The Old Ship Hotel.

FINANCES

But finances are not enough. In the presidential election at conference, 'moderate' Kate Losinskas polled only 66,420

votes, with independent Ken Lever getting in with 103,622.

Peter Coltman, the Broad Left candidate, received 37,059 votes after the Militant supporters of the Broad Left supported Ken Lever. It seems more than likely that the Broad Left will win a majority on the NEC but what counts is whether or not they really campaign for fighting policies in the union.

That will be decided later in the conference when delegates will be voting on motions to oppose all incomes policy and censure the executive for supporting the 12-month rule. Others call for affiliation to the ANL, for a campaign for free state nursery provision and support for the International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland.

HOME NEWS

W. Yorkshire

Transporting unity

PLATFORM was formed in September 1976 as a pressure group in the Transport Union to help unite busworkers in West Yorkshire around specific issues.

At first, there was talk that we were proposing an alternative and a threat to the existing union structure. But the local TGWU now understands our role within the union as a progressive influence on its policy and day-to-day decisions.

One of our best known activities is the production of our monthly magazine **Metro Platform**. At first, we took up the issues of bus cuts, improving trade union democracy with rank and file control, health and safety, and general conditions and wages of busworkers.

Since then, the **Leeds Platform** — founded and produced by a group of interested busworkers — has expanded into **Metro Platform**. It now involves workers in Bradford, Halifax, and Huddersfield as well as Leeds.

JOINT STEWARDS

We are faced with a metro-wide management, so in addition to a metro-wide **Platform**, we are fighting for a metro-wide TGWU joint shop stewards committee.

The most consistent issue we have campaigned around has been bus cuts. Some setbacks have occurred. For example, last year the Bradford area struck, but was not supported by Leeds.

Now the chickens are coming home to roost. Leeds is

faced with major cuts of its own. And once again, the need is clear for an effective joint shop stewards committee. Through our activity, we have been able to develop close working relations with the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport group — a public transports users group who have consistently opposed the cuts.

TRAVELLERS

Platform believes that fare rises lose passengers, which in turn loses revenue. And so, a vicious spiral of cuts is set up. Because of this, **Platform** has willingly provided speakers to support, and seek support, for various initiatives throughout the Community Associations and labour movement.

The way transport is organised is chaotic. That's why we affiliated to Transport 2000's local branch. We are absolutely against sectionalism. There are separate lobbies for the Railworkers Union and the Transport Union. Our policy is clear. We support integrated transport. That means a fight for a whole cake of sufficient size — not just our own slice.

The group meets monthly to co-ordinate these policies, to produce our paper, and to press for the implementation of our policies in the union. **ROD DAVEY**, secretary of the **Metro Platform**

LEEDS busworkers voted unanimously on Sunday to continue their strike against new schedules which would bring transport cuts.

And on Monday, busworkers in the other three areas of West Yorkshire joined the strike in solidarity with Leeds.

London: 18m bus miles go

ON 26 April the first stage of London Transport's 'reorganisation' of buses took place. Despite claims by management that it would provide a more reliable service, it represents a cut in the target for total bus miles from 211 million to 193 million, **MARTIN EADY** reports.

The next stage of reorganisation due to be introduced in October will reduce the service even further. In response to this, and pressure from the Campaign to Improve London Transport, the official leadership was forced to call a series of 1 hour stoppages. These have now been suspended while 'talks' take place.

UNDERGROUND

Meanwhile, fares are set to increase again in June, and a plan for cuts on the underground is to appear soon.

It is in the light of all this that the Campaign to Improve London Transport is organising a lobby of the GLC on Tuesday 16 May from 5-6pm as the first step in reversing the cuts, safeguarding jobs, and reducing fares. The aims of the lobby are to gain publicity and begin to mobilise workers and passengers in defence of their transport services.

The next steps must be to

show how workers and passengers by their own activity can take control of fare and service levels, and to develop a workers' and passengers' plan for London Transport. Such a plan would be a powerful weapon to counterpose to the Tories' plan to make LT pay its own way, something that is completely incompatible with an adequate transport service.

ROUTE 256

The campaign of Waltham Forest Trades Council against withdrawal of route 256 is an excellent example to follow, involving a massive leafletting campaign in factories and residential areas served by the route.

Socialist Challenge supporters are urged to mobilise for the lobby, and for the next meeting of the campaign, which is on Tuesday 24 May at 5.30pm in Unity House, Euston Road.



CARDIFF journalists lock out by Thomson regional newspapers. The Times and Sunday Times — also part of Thomson — have just announced that all their workers will be locked out in two months' time if they don't agree to knuckle under.

Newspaper lockouts

1,400 journalists ready to strike

AN ALL-OUT battle is looming between the National Union of Journalists and Thomson regional newspapers — one of the largest provincial press chains. **GEOFFREY SHERIDAN** reports.

The NUJ leadership will decide at the end of this week whether to call out all 1,400 journalists in the Thomson regional group on indefinite strike.

A third of the journalists have already either been locked out for imposing sanctions or are taking solidarity strike action.

The dispute, which began on the **Evening Post-Echo**, in Hemel Hempstead, promises to bring to bring the biggest strike in the NUJ's history — in response to Thomson's attempt to inflict a defeat on the journalists in order to pave the

way for job-saving new technology.

Three weeks ago 77 journalists on the **Echo** were sacked for taking action to improve on a £7.09 a week national pay settlement. They refused to accept a loss of jobs as the price for a productivity deal.

CONFETTI

When journalists throughout the Thomson regional group took solidarity action in support of the Hemel journalists, dismissal notices were handed out like confetti.

As the NUJ chapel on the **Western Mail** and **South Wales Echo** in Cardiff put it: 'We worked to rule by refusing to go out of our way to help our management.'

'Normally we do this by working unpaid overtime, missing meal breaks, and working on more than one job at a time.' Management responded with a lockout.

In Cardiff and Reading, the journalists have produced a regular paper to report their own struggle together with other local and labour movement news. The Cardiff paper has so far made a profit of £200!

The printing facilities are being provided by the Transport Union, which has told its members not to cross

the picket line. However, printworkers in the NGA and SOGAT have been told to scab by their unions.

PROTRACTED

The battle could well be protracted. Thomson, which last year made a profit of over £9m in its regional papers alone, can sustain its plan to weaken the journalists through its assets in North Sea Oil, TV, and package holidays.

'Another of the newspaper baronies to take on its journalists is the Westminster Press group, where journalists in Acton, Hendon, and Watford have been forced to strike in order to gain full back pay on a national settlement.'

Classroom politics

FIVE HUNDRED people attended the Politics of Education conference held by the Socialist Teachers' Alliance at the end of last month, report **JAN POLLOCK** and **CLARA MULHERN** for the STA Education Working Party.

The themes of the conference were organised on the questions of Education and Social Democracy, and on Industry, the State and Education.

Platform speakers, who included Raymond Williams, Simon Frith and John Holloway, presented their papers for general discussion, and this was followed by workshops on more specific topics.

PROGRESSIVE

The very size of the conference, which attracted teachers from every sector, showed a willingness to work out a concerted response to the education crisis.

Besides members of established left groups — STA, Rank and File, CP, Radical Education, Teachers Action, and Teaching London Kids — the conference was attended by progressive teachers from the libertarian tradition, many of



BETTY HUNTER speaking at the STA conference

whom had no previous experience of the politically organised left.

The conference's size and the diversity of currents present led to unforeseen difficulties. There was friction over the question of the organisation and the emphases of the conference itself.

The debate about structure raised some valuable points — notably around the operation of sexism — but was often confused. This prevented many contributors from direc-

ting themselves to the political themes of the conference.

Despite these tensions, the need to take advantage of the STA's initiative was acknowledged in the workshops. Most decided to form themselves into groups which will meet to consider areas like:

school and work; curriculum; and standards and assessment. This will aid the STA in developing future campaigns on key educational issues.

A newsletter assessing the conference and reporting the proposals made by the workshops, is to be circulated shortly to those who attended, to help ensure that the enthusiasm generated at the conference is not dissipated.

Speke — slim chance left

AT A mass meeting in Liverpool on Saturday workers from **British Leyland Speke plant** voted by a two to one majority against a resolution from their shop stewards to reject the company's latest pay offer, reports **JACK BEAUMONT**.

This decision represents a major blow, not just to the shop stewards and the Leyland combine committee who backed them, but to the whole of the labour movement on Merseyside.

At least 3,000 lost jobs will now be added to the dole queue in an area in which there is 15 per cent unemployment. The effective closure of the plant

can only demoralise a workforce which was already weak through last year's long drawn out management provoked strike.

Responsibility for this serious defeat rests with shop stewards and combine committee leaders who offered no real leadership until it was too late.

Even at Saturday's meeting chairperson of the combine committee **Derek Robinson** was still quoting with approval the much vaunted 'plan' of Leyland boss **Michael Edwards**. Yet it is this very plan which insisted that Speke be closed.

Only the fact that one third of the workers at the mass meeting were opposed to closure shows there is still a slim hope left to save the jobs.

Photo: LIZ HERON

Socialist Challenge

International Socialist Alliance

Socialist Challenge Paper of Socialist Unity?

WITH the Socialist Challenge conference just three weeks away, we are printing a contribution to the debate around the paper submitted by RICHARD KIRKWOOD, on behalf of the steering committee of the International Socialist Alliance.

This article is a shortened version of a paper which, along with others, will be available to Socialist Challenge supporters when they apply for their conference credentials. We invite all readers to put their pen to paper to respond to the points of debate raised by the ISA comrades or to open up new areas of debate you think should be covered by the conference.

The main way a revolutionary paper's success can be measured is how well it can be used by militants to intervene in the class struggle. Does it address itself to the crucial problems facing militants, and to the audience they are addressing? It is this concern which holds back most (potential) affiliates of the International Socialist Alliance from committing themselves to Socialist Challenge.

AUDIENCE

The heart of the question is who the paper's audience is. The main readership of the revolutionary press is among the 'vanguard'. But what is this 'vanguard', or, as we often say, this 'advanced layer of working class militants'?

This concept contains two elements. First it gives a class identification. We are interested above all in addressing

ourselves to workers. This doesn't mean 'workerism', surrendering to the prejudices of groups of workers. But it calls for a writing style and language which is accessible to people of little or no formal education, many who may be 'advanced' in political or trade union terms.

It also means that issues should be raised that relate to the lives of workers; to what workers, as workers, can do about Ireland, for instance. Complex or theoretical issues shouldn't be avoided but academic jargon that often goes along with them must be.

Many of our articles must also be within the reach of slightly hesitant readers with whom this advanced layer of workers will want to discuss the paper's ideas.

On feminist issues, for example, workerism at best reduces them to a trade union level. Other socialists write on

feminism in terms which appeal only to those at least partly convinced. The task is to take feminist ideas to militant, socialist workers unconvinced of their relevance.

This class orientation doesn't ignore the problems and concerns of other groups. Articles on student issues or on debates in the intelligentsia can be written so that workers can read them easily.

The definition of the vanguard is political in a very specific sense. It doesn't refer to the programme endorsed by these militants, but to the activity they undertake. Concern with programme must focus on the consequences for activity in specified and concrete situations.

This doesn't mean ignoring marxist fundamentals. An important result of the twin dominance of stalinism and social democracy was the exclusion from the basic political development of many advanced workers of ideas that are basic and appear second nature to many revolutionaries. Our paper will need to argue for these, not take them for granted.

EXPANDING

The 'vanguard' is always expanding into new sections, amongst new people who don't have the political experience, knowledge, or ideas of an 'older' political generation. A paper must continually repeat basic politics, at both the analytical and intervention level for these newcomers. And it must have the sensitivity to identify new audiences, its strengths, its needs, and so on.

How does Socialist Challenge measure up to these criteria? Alas, not very well. In style and content, it addresses itself to a vanguard defined in far narrower politico-ideological terms. The problem arises from the tendency of the IMG to equate politics with ideas and programme rather than with activity.

Ideas and programme are relevant, but they are not and cannot be the main touchstone. This equation leads to formalistic, intellectualised and ultimately substitutionist practice. In this case, it leads to major faults in Socialist Challenge.

More serious than the paper's long articles, few pictures and 'intellectual' bias is its failure to get the source of its priorities right.

MISSING

A concern for the issues and problems being generated within the class is missing. One positive feature of Socialist Worker remains this sensitivity.

Of course part of this criticism is due to a different conception of how a programme, a political orientation, a conception of transitional politics for today is to be created. For us the living experience of workers is of crucial importance and must guide the paper.

A paper must learn from readers who may not be very politically sophisticated. This is essential if we are to develop a living relationship with readers and thus create a paper with real and deep roots in the working class.



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

This has implications for the balance of the paper as well as its style. It means more shorter articles. It means that more of the 'theory' has to be written simply. But above all it means that there must be a conscious effort to make at least half, and usually more, of the paper directly related to the issues in day-to-day struggles or immediate political concerns of the working class.

These concerns will not always be 'industrial'. They may be 'community' or 'sexual' politics, or national political events. They may be campaigning issues. But they will be 'popular' and written in a popular way.

SHIFT

This sort of orientation will not emerge overnight. Many of the people who can feed in the material are not at present involved with the paper. But many are on its periphery. And many will come in to writing, reading, selling, if they see a shift in orientation. Such a change requires that SC leans over backwards to bring new layers in.

Finally, the political control of the paper is a major stumbling-block in widening its base. The change from a purely IMG paper to a more open one is not yet a reality. To make it so means once again leaning over backwards. It means concretely, and clearly abandoning IMG political control.

Whether this means the IMG giving up its majority on an editorial board is less important than a clear declaration on the political principles. If the IMG accepts, as 'Our Common Ground' suggests, that most of the disagreements with Big Flame, ISA, and other revolutionary groups are on

secondary matters — not questions of principle — then it follows that many of the detailed positions that the IMG adopts on this or that question are not the only revolutionary ones.

An open revolutionary paper might well therefore avoid putting these particular positions in its general articles. On most major issues there is more agreement than disagreement on the revolutionary left. The positions of the IMG, its proposals for campaigns and so on, could be put in separate articles.

This practice would, at first, probably blunt the political

edge of the paper. But if, as we all hope, the development of joint work in other areas leads to greater clarity about areas of political agreement or even to some political convergence, then we could help to develop a campaigning edge in these areas and political debates in others.

In the end the aim must be to make Socialist Challenge the paper of Socialist Unity — whatever form or name that grouping eventually takes. This would help make the paper less 'sectarian' and would be crucial to turning Socialist Challenge into a wider popular paper.



'We're coming' to the Socialist Challenge Conference

I would like to attend the annual conference of Socialist Challenge supporters and enclose £1 registration fee.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE GROUP (if any).....

Please fill in and send to Socialist Challenge Conference, PO Box, 50, London N12PX.

CHELTENHAM MAY 27 'B' THERE!

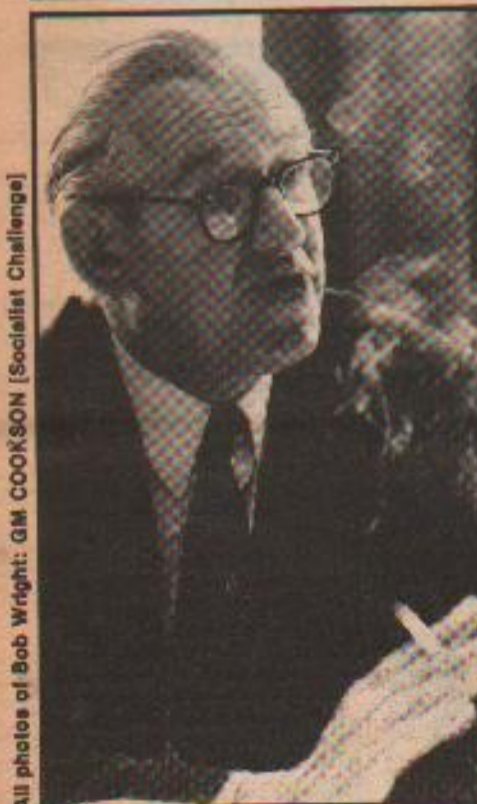
A DAY OF ACTION, organised by the Aubrey, Berry, Campbell Defence Campaign and the Peace News/Laveller Defence Campaign. ASSEMBLE: Corner of Benhall Ave and Whittington Rd, 12.30pm. TRANSPORT: Coaches from London and lift exchange system. Contact Campaigns office for coaches from other towns. ACCOMMODATION: Limited. Fri/Sat nights near Cheltenham. Contact office.

Cheltenham is the base for Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), the hub of the secret and illegal SIGINT electronic eavesdropping network. 'Colonel B' is a former SIGINT officer, and Aubrey, Berry and Campbell face up to 14 years in prison for investigating SIGINT activities.

CHELTENHAM	May 27th	TRANSPORT BOOKING FORM
I wish to travel on the coaches from London (Fare £3.00)		
Name	_____	
Address	_____	
Phone	_____	
I will be bringing _____ friends. I enclose deposit of £1 per person. (Reservations will be notified)		
Lift exchange scheme		
Complete this side if you need a lift	Complete this side if you can offer a lift	
Name	_____	
Address	_____	
Phone	_____	
I would like to bring _____ friends		
I have _____ seats spare and will be leaving at _____ (time)		

ABC DEFENCE CAMPAIGN, 15, James Street, WC2. Tel: 836 4411.

How the AUEW



All photos of Bob Wright: GM COOKSON [Socialist Challenge]

The Economist bluntly headlined its report on the AUEW's presidential election: 'The engineers' new Scanlon is a right-wing Duffy.'

The pun on his name is not an oversight. Terry Duffy was the phantom candidate who last week beat Bob Wright, the Broad Left's candidate, by over 40,000 votes.

The right wing is now firmly entrenched in the leadership of Britain's second largest union.

On these pages, JOHN GRAHAM — an Engineering Union shop steward in Birmingham — examines the reasons for this disastrous defeat, and GEOFFREY SHERIDAN questions Bob Wright on the implications and the performance of the Broad Left.

The editorial on page 2 argues that engineering militants must waste no time shedding tears.

A decade ago, militants celebrated what they saw as the end of the era of the arch right-wingers Deakin and Carron that came with the election of Jones and Scanlon. But the 'terrible twins' were to join with the present Labour Government in slashing living standards to an extent unprecedented since the '30s.

It is this class collaboration of the 'lefts' which underlines the need for Socialist Challenge's trade union conference to be held in Birmingham on 1 July.

The conference is not designed to establish a new body in opposition to other organisations of the left,

such as the Broad Left and Rank and File, but to provide a forum where militants can exchange experiences.

Discussion will centre on how to fight for a united democratic organisation in the unions to struggle against the right wing for socialist policies in the interests of workers and for a leadership prepared to carry these out.

Copies of a four-page perspective, already published in Socialist Challenge, are still available.

If you are interested in attending the conference, fill in this form and mail it to: SC Trade Union Conference, PO Box 50, London N1.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

TRADE UNION.....

Labour movement position[s] held.....

Bob Wright interview

'You personalise things, we don't'

What are the immediate effects of Duffy's and the other right-wing victories?

The immediate effect is the ascendancy within the union of right-wing thinking and politics. Their influence will be felt in the TUC, the Labour Party — one could speculate on a lot of possibilities.

John Boyd will be a very clever instrument in manipulating that. He's the power that will be behind the throne.

Boyd is very experienced, with years of knowledge of the union and the movement. He knows how to organise the machine. He's the man with the power who will consolidate the right-wing moves.

Duffy has said he is in favour of amalgamation with the Electricians Union and would like to greatly reduce the number of elections in the AUEW. What impact would such an amalgamation have?

The root of our union stems from the branch and the district. Every district has a district committee of rank and file activists, and they have quite clear prerogatives and powers. Whether this structure is perfection when you're dealing with large national companies is arguable, and it is being used as an argument for the diminishing effectiveness of districts.

But what you've got to do is build on the districts. It's a very clear counter-balance to autocracy and bureaucracy.

The EETPU's structure has been

centralised. All officers have been appointed. The executive is elected. They have the power of appointment. They deal with appeals against their own judgements. We have a final appeal court of elected rank and filers.

All these counterbalances are in jeopardy from what we know as the trend of discussions with the EETPU.

What are the main factors that lie behind the right wing's success?

Their machine, the press, and organisations such as Truamid; a mass of invective literature that's circulated inside the union, financed from doubtful sources — these are major factors and will have a traumatic effect on the thinking of the members.

Couple this with the right wing; the emergence of the NF, and organisations like NAFF and Truamid. We underestimate them at our peril. They've got well-paid organisers behind them. If the election had been largely activist members, I would have walked it.

How effective has the Broad Left been in the last couple of years?

No more and no less effective than all elements of the Broad Left movements — and that doesn't include all the left by any means. The left tend to be divisive among themselves. I don't think certain left groups can attack me in the first ballot and then suddenly say, as the lesser of two evils, support him in the second. It's seen as nonsense. It doesn't have

any impact at all.

I've attempted to bring about what I call a left unity movement in the union because of the challenges and the belief I have that if we don't the right wing will come together and massacre the left. Now they've cracked it at national level, they'll move into the localities.

We would argue that the Broad Left has not been active in support of such struggles as there have been against the Social Contract or actively campaigning against the policies. Do you think there have been weaknesses in the Broad Left?

I don't agree with the presumptions. Last April we had a conference in Birmingham and the lads decided to launch a paper called the *Engineering Gazette*. There have been five issues. We've certainly projected opposition to wage control and on unemployment — the central industrial issues.

What we've tended to do is to hold off the pure political alternatives, because which one do you put? That can be fragmented. But we've certainly spelt out the challenges industrially and why.

We've tried to produce a journal aimed at the middle band of workers to bring them over to positive strategies. We're not aiming it at the left itself, because there are sufficient journals that project their own slant and argument.

The Broad Left's conference in November adopted a policy of national support for the wage claim, with a planned national conference of convenors to mount a struggle on the

claim. But nothing happened.

This failure of open campaigning and organising has surely been a big weakness.

What we said in November was that the national committee had adopted a policy that the union convene meetings of shop stewards in every district to further the campaign on the policy. We said we would press for that policy, to get it implemented in every district, with the shop stewards quarterlies and so on — which we did.

We're not looking to set up a union within the union. If we did, in my view we would run into a fatality, because the union's constitution provides the basis of doing it within the union — and that's where the battle has got to be.

We have had Broad Left meetings in almost every district. I've insisted in my election campaign and in the broad campaign that we shouldn't have restrictive meetings. They should be open to any activist in the union — right, left, or bloody centre. We won't win support on a mass basis by creating a narrow cell of perfection. This is a movement we must develop, and in a number of areas we've been able to do it with some effect.

Hugh Scanlon's role — most recently supporting the 12-month rule at the TUC against the decision of the national committee and the whole AUEW delegation, and his vote against the firefighters on the TUC General Council — has placed him firmly on the side of the Government.

Do you think the Broad Left has sufficiently dissociated itself from him, and campaigned against him?

was duffed up

You personalise things, we don't. We fight the policies. Scanlon and the union for the past two years has pursued a policy of support for the Social Contract. Whatever we argue about what happened at the TUC on the 12-month rule, it was endorsed by the policy conference in November.

One thing we don't recognise, and certainly the ultra-left doesn't recognise, is that Scanlon isn't a personal free agent. There's an executive which decides. There's no doubt — Hugh Scanlon gave his full support to the TUC and Labour Government's economic strategy, including the various phases of incomes policy.

I don't agree with Hugh Scanlon or anyone else who argues that the strategy that's been pursued is in the interests of the working class. And if it's not, then it's not in the interests of the country in my opinion.

The alternative to even lower living standards and higher unemployment — without saying it's socialism; of course that would be beautiful, but taking what we have — the alternative is a challenging economic strategy of decent wages based on cutting out some of the rot in our society.

But you won't do this by condemning Scanlon. That's the mistake the ultra-left made. They want to personalise everything. Attack that bloody policy, and if

Scanlon is part of it, then you're attacking him and all those who go with him. It always amazes me, Boyd produces the union journal, the editorials, and so on. I never see them attacking Boyd... But they attack Bob Wright. Let's attack the real right wing.

The opposition by the Communist Party to the Leyland toolmakers strike must have been very confusing to those hostile to the pay policy.

Don't you think that the failure to support this action against the Social Contract has weakened the general fight against it?

I only wish it were true that the toolmakers fought the Social Contract. The statement they made at the beginning was: We are not opposing the Social Contract. We are not opposing Government policy. All we want is a separate negotiating machinery.

It might have ultimately been about pay. They had the presumption that if they could break away from the mass of workers involved, they could negotiate from a position of sectoral strength.

I understand their problem on differentials. Only some 45 per cent of the Leyland toolmakers were

involved. I went to see them and asked if they really believed that if they had a separate negotiating group then the rest would say that was alright, because they're separate they can have something different — you get £10 increase; we'll get £5.

If the company had settled, the rest of the plant would have sat back — as they did in Chrysler a few years ago — and said: We want £10 and that's it. That diffuses the battle. It won't be won by differential arguments, but ultimately by a real challenge to wage controls.

Would you agree that the acceptance of the Edwardes' plan by the Communist Party shop stewards at Leyland, and particularly Derek Robinson, has been a big set back?

It's always dangerous to comment on something you haven't been involved in, and I can only see the Leyland developments from the fringe.

I led the whole of the trade unions in the original issues on Leyland, Ryder and all that flowed from that. It wasn't perfection by any means, but one thing we did succeed in achieving: a clear commitment that no plants would be hived off and none closed.

There's no doubt that the strategy

we fought for has been lost. The Edwardes' plan has been imposed over the head of the consultative machinery: it's a step away from the principles we fought for. I'm not arguing that the participation arrangements were workers' control — I never have done. But what we had was a tremendous victory.

We advocate an urgent meeting of all your supporters to discuss how to respond to the right wing's victory and the threat to democracy in the AUEW. Would you agree with this?

Yes, I think we need to assess this. I suspect that a lot of the lads (and lassies? — ed.) who attend meetings — and I've had some smashing meetings with left lads and uncommitted people — feel a satisfaction that they've had a good debate, go away and forget that if they don't harness 50 votes each in support of what they're doing then we don't win.

Our only strength is through the shop stewards movement and the activists in the union. Little enclaves of convinced members won't do this. This is the gap we've got to close.

More than just calling a national meeting, in every region and area we've got to have an active force working for the left.



All photos of Bob Wright, GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

Victory for the right The Broad Left sowed the seeds

Can the left in the Engineering Union survive? What future does it have? What went wrong?

These are the questions posed by the trouncing that the Broad Left in the AUEW received in the latest round of elections. JOHN GRAHAM, an AUEW shop steward in Birmingham reports.

Bob Wright, the favourite to win the position of president and succeed Hugh Scanlon, lost by a margin of nearly 47,000 votes. Communist Party member Les Dixon's seat on the executive went to a right winger, leaving Reg Birch as the sole left winger on the powerful 7-person executive. Ron Halveston, a leading Broad Left member, was defeated in a ballot for one of the national organiser's positions.

Overall the right-wing machine run by John Boyd triumphed in 23 out of 26 elections. They succeeded in taking full-time positions ranging from president to district secretary of the new Birmingham South District.

The results of these elections, announced at the AUEW national committee last week, are a massive consolidation for the gains the right wing in the union has been making since the return to office of the Labour Government in 1974.

The argument that it is necessary, above all else, to keep Labour in power through support for the Social Contract and successive stages of incomes policy and the conversion of Scanlon to such arguments has allowed them to now recoup all the ground they lost following the formation of the Broad Left in the 1960s.

But the impact of Terry Duffy's victory over Wright cannot simply be measured in terms of electoral results. As the employer's pundits in the 'popular' press have been quick to point out, Callaghan and Healey will undoubtedly see the election result as a green light for another round of



wage restraint. Within the working class as a whole, the results will be seen as a further indication of the Labour Government's ability to stymie any opposition to its policies.

Within the Engineering Union the effect will be equally immediate and telling. Not only will the policies of the right wing — working with the employers and the Labour Government — receive a big boost as

having the seeming stamp of rank-and-file opinion, but the right wing will be encouraged to steam ahead with its plans to attack union democracy within the AUEW.

Through the planned amalgamation with the Electricians' Union, Boyd and Duffy hope to link up with Frank Chapple with the aim of wrapping up the two main skilled engineering unions under right-wing control for good.

UNDERMINE

In the process they will attempt to undermine the fundamental democratic rights of the membership of the AUEW where the right to elect all full-time officials is still enshrined in the rule book.

They will only be too happy to see the amalgamation with TASS, the Engineering Union's white-collar section, fall by the wayside. In short the rank-and-file is in for a rough time in the AUEW with Boyd and Duffy in control. The only question left unanswered as yet is whether the Broad Left can meet that challenge and lead a fight back or fall into disarray by the wayside.

At the moment, going on its past record, the latter must be on the cards. The elections last week were merely the reaping of the whirlwind, the seeds of which were sown by the Broad Left leadership itself. When Bob Wright is reported as saying that the election results 'indicate a rejection of the left socialist alternative to present policies', he simply places the blame for the defeat at the door of the union membership, instead of the inability of the Broad Left to make any headway among the mass of rank-and-file in recent years.

And when one considers the record that is not so very surprising. It has been the failure of the Broad Left to mount any serious campaign in defence of the union membership in

the last four years in particular that has led directly to its present isolation.

So it is not easy to campaign for support for Bob Wright as a successor to Scanlon when no explanation is ever given of how Scanlon came to actively support the Social Contract and wage restraint when he had been elected to office following a massive campaign by the Broad Left who had argued that he would oppose such policies. It was not without justification that Duffy was able to claim: 'I had great difficulty in differing from Mr Scanlon.'

When that silence on Scanlon's defection to the right wing is compounded by attacking the Leyland toolroom strike and the Heathrow engineers, as did Dixon when he voted with the right wing on the executive, then the position of the Broad Left can only become thoroughly compromised in the eyes of the membership.

INCOMPETENT

And when these facts are combined with the picture of an organisation which was set up to campaign for union democracy, defending the fact that TASS officials were not subject to election; which in many areas of the country only appears out of cold storage every six months for an election; which failed to mount any campaign around the recent national pay claim other than a purely verbal one, then it becomes comprehensible how Bob Wright could lose to a candidate such as Terry Duffy.

Add to this the fact that Duffy was careful to use the full weight of official Labour Government and TUC policy without too closely associating himself with the more obviously unpopular aspects of its policies and the end product is last week's election results.

Defend Republican News

THE BRITISH Government is now doing all it can to shut down the most popular left-wing newspaper in these islands, and to outlaw its political organisation.

This what lies behind the charges brought against 12 people in Belfast last Thursday. After raids the previous week, the 12 have been charged with membership of the IRA.

Even by the standards by which the British Government operates in the North of Ireland, some of the names on the list are extraordinary. They include:

*John Joseph Kennedy — a member of the Socialist Democratic and Labour Party and the printer of the Provisional Republican newspaper, *Republican News*.

*Alain Frilet — a photographer on the staff of the French daily left-wing paper *Liberation*.

*Tom Hartley — press officer of Sinn Fein.

The entire officer executive of Sinn Fein has been arrested and charged with IRA membership. Tens of thousands of copies of *Republican News* were confiscated by the Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary during the raids.

Republican News, with a weekly circulation in excess of 50,000, has a higher readership than say *Socialist Worker*.

Socialist Challenge and *Newsline* put together.

Provisional Sinn Fein has always had a separate identity from the Provisional IRA, but now as well attempting to shut down *Republican News*, the British Government is aiming to make membership of Sinn Fein a political offence.

So yet further basic freedoms — freedom of the press and to politically organise — have been abolished in the North of Ireland by Britain.

Urgent solidarity with *Republican News* is vital in this country, and *Socialist Challenge* learns that plans are under way to organise action to show that solidarity. More news next week.



Prisoner writes Isolating the Irish

'THE Irish prisoners are in British prisons because British troops are on Irish soil. If that is not political what is? I have been told that I will spend the rest of my natural life in prison. I am 21 years old.'

So wrote Paul Hill in a previous letter he had written from prison. Hill is one of many Irish political prisoners currently serving long terms of imprisonment in British jails.

Like many of these prisoners he has suffered long periods in solitary confinement. In this article PAUL HILL writes of his experiences.

Having read several articles on solitary confinement and its effects I feel compelled to say something. Unlike most writings on the subject this is not written by a psychiatrist or some such person; it is written by someone who has endured a long period in solitary.

Solitary to most people means being alone. To prison governors it means prisoners' isolation. They state that in cases of prolonged solitary (rule 43) the prisoner needs to be isolated for the purpose of 'good order and discipline'.

They also say there are no after effects of long solitary because the prisoner who is isolated will sooner or later be returned to the main prison. But if it has no effect on the prisoner, why is it used in the first place?

SCARRED

The truth of the matter is that most people who have endured long periods of isolation are mentally scarred for life. Only the very strong willed suffer no after-effects, for the aim of solitary is to break the subject mentally and bodily.

Because of the lack of food and proper exercise, breaking the body is the easiest. After they've done that they go to work on the mind.

Anxiety is one of the main weapons they use. Create a state of anxiety, and depression, worry and fear follow. Minor worries become exaggerated as the mind has little to occupy it. This induces intense bouts of depression.

HANGING

At the end of last year one prisoner, Joey Day slashed his wrists and was later found hanging in an isolation cell. He had spent six months in solitary and had in front of

him another long spell.

ROUTINE

Almost all segregation units are white and very quiet, so the prisoner loses his/her sense of time. Everything is done by routine; when you eat, sleep, slop out and exercise.

Almost every spell outside your cell is confrontation with the screws. When you slop out they space themselves behind you, beside you and in front. The same at exercise time. They never speak, not that we'd want to converse with them, but by these actions they hope to make the prisoner paranoid. It's enough to make the strongest mind crumble.

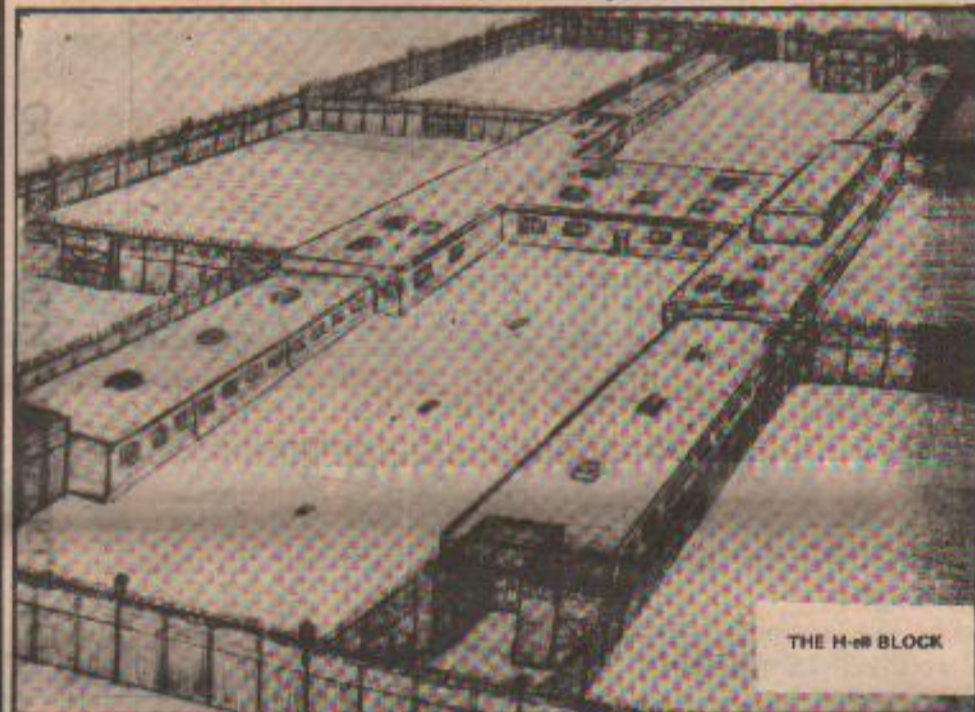
It is impossible for me to go into as much detail as I would like and I don't think it is possible to relate accurately what happens to a person's mind in solitary.

I'll just say that a battle is fought every day by Irish political prisoners who despite everything continue to resist. And why shouldn't we? After all the screws try to break your mind for the sake of their pay packets, but we resist for the sake of our sanity.

They cannot isolate what they cannot see, Our spirits remain free.



'White is right, Irish is wrong'



THE H-BLOCK

by RG McAULEY, Political Prisoner, Long Kesh

SHORTLY, or so we are led to believe, the BBC intends showing a play — which has already been postponed on one occasion — entitled Willie.

It deals with the case of a young man from Strabane who is presently serving 12 years here in Long Kesh for a political 'offence' he had nothing at all to do with.

The play is based on the transcript of the 'trial' which Will Galagher received and which, as with all such 'trials' held under the special Diplock non-jury courts, was a farce.

However, perhaps most significant of all were the remarks made by Margaret Mathison who produced the play: 'I was aghast at my own ignorance of the manner in

which political offences are handled in the Diplock Courts in Northern Ireland.'

This ignorance, which includes the 'Irish problem' in general, demonstrates the immense lack of media coverage which the conflict in the 6 Counties receives in Britain.

The British media have 'more important' topics to discuss.

On 13 April *Nationwide* spent most of its time shedding crocodile tears over the fate of seven British mercenaries imprisoned in Angola for their part in the indiscriminate slaughter of Angolan men, women and children. The programme presenters spent a great deal of time questioning relatives and detailing the alleged inhuman conditions under which the convicted war criminals are being held.

MOCK UP

Indeed, the BBC's eagerness to drum up sympathy for these paid white mercenaries went so far as to build a mock up of the type of cell which the

mercenaries are held in. In the H Block here in Long Kesh there are 350 Republican political prisoners held in 8 by 6 concrete cells. They are naked; permitted no books, papers or magazines to read; have been denied access to radios; and they never leave their grey drab concrete coffins.

ILLEGAL

Unlike the paid British mercenaries in Angola, these men, in spite of British claims to the contrary, took up arms against an establishment which they believe to be foreign, oppressive and illegal.

In the two years now in which the men have languished in the H Block, only one British documentary programme of any worth dared to mention it, while the British press has totally ignored it.

EVIDENCE

Yet there is an abundance of evidence, well documented and substantiated by many independent parties, to prove that almost every International Human Rights Convention ever devised is being deliberately and blatantly ignored by the British Labour Government and the prison administrations in Long Kesh and Armagh.

It is typical of the political hypocrisy and corruption which now pervades the British establishment that the well-being of seven highly paid professional mercenaries should take complete preference over the treatment of 350 Irish Republican political prisoners.

Irish revolutionary held

A CAMPAIGN is being launched by Peoples Democracy and the Movement for a Socialist Republic (Irish Section, Fourth International) in support of PD member Denis Murphy.

He was arrested in March 1977 after a major army swoop on the Dermott Hill area of Belfast where he lives. The army alleged that a rifle and pistol were found in his home and, after spending a year on remand, Denis is shortly to come to trial on an arms possession charge. He first received a trial date

over a month ago. The trial was then postponed, but at that time a group of his neighbours drew up and circulated a petition supporting Denis.

The petition pointed out that on several occasions in the past there had been a grave danger of civil war in the Six Counties, and that there was a long history of attacks on the area by Loyalist paramilitaries.

In a few days over 300 in the Dermott Hill area signed the petition in support of Denis.

Peoples Democracy and Movement for a Socialist Republic have now decided to launch a broad campaign around the petition in support

of Denis Murphy. The petition is being made available to anti-repression groups in the Six Counties. It is being circulated among trade unionists and civil liberties supporters in the 26 Counties. In Britain, members of the Labour movement are being asked for support.

PD and MSR believe that many important issues are bound up with Denis Murphy's case. There is the issue of internment by remand — a system that leads to prisoners serving the equivalent of two and three-year sentences before coming to trial.

Even more importantly there is the British policy of

repression based almost exclusively on military domination of the anti-unionist areas, coupled with discrimination within the legal system leading to disproportionately high sentences for anti-imperialist prisoners.

Finally there is the issue of the defence of Catholic areas, given the history of British collaboration with Loyalist paramilitaries and the many cases of dual membership of the RUC and UDR and Loyalist paramilitary groups.

Copies of the petition are available from: Connolly Bookshop, Avoca Park, Andersonstown Rd, Belfast 11.

French Communist Party crisis

Sounding the knell for Eurocommunism

NEW JOURNALS

THE Paris weekly Nouvel Observateur reports plans to launch a new left-wing weekly discussion journal in September. This would involve Jean Elleinstein and other PCF intellectuals; the CERES wing of the Socialist Party; the Unified Socialist Party (PSU) and Revolutionary Communist League (L.C.R.) on the far left; the editorial team of the journal Politique-Hebdo; and possibly also Regis Debray and Nicos Poulantzas.

Last week we reprinted an article by Louis Althusser on the crisis in the French Communist Party. On this page are two further contributions to the debate — this time from outside the party.

JORGE SEMPRUN writes on the report presented by general secretary Georges Marchais to the recent Central Committee. Semprun is a former leader of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE), expelled in 1965 after he and Fernando Claudin had presented a devastating attack on the party's Stalinist practice.

Semprun is best known as an author and screenwriter. His films include Z and L'Aveu. He was the only journalist to be refused press credentials at the recent PCE Congress.

The other contribution is from ALAIN KRIVINE, editor of Rouge, the daily paper of the Trotskyist Revolutionary Communist League.

by JORGE SEMPRUN



Three times in little more than twenty years the Central Committee of the French Communist Party (PCF) has helped to block the possibility of opening and renewal inside the Communist movement.

First in 1956, when Khrushchev's secret report to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union — in spite of its gross theoretical deficiencies — objectively opened the way to destalinisation, to the achievement of a new autonomy and a new relationship with the masses.

Then in 1968, when the movement of May opened up the possibility — through an undoubtedly complex process of prolonged democratic rupture — of an overthrow of the political and social hegemony in France.

On this occasion the attitude of the PCF leadership not only consolidated the power of the capitalist state, it equally outlawed any concrete support to the democratic and socialist forces which were at work in Czechoslovakia.



How a PCF pamphlet was censored: the left-hand page in the spread on democratic rights at the top shows Pierre Juquin, on behalf of the PCF, greeting Soviet dissident Leonid Plyushch. But hard-line Stalinists in the apparatus protested, and so a million copies were pulped! The final version [below] played safe with a picture of the party's 22nd Congress instead.

Democratisation or liberalisation?

by ALAIN KRIVINE

From Elleinstein to Althusser, including other critics such as Jean Rony and Gerard Molina, all those who have had the chance to express themselves publicly challenge the bureaucratic functioning of the French Communist Party (PCF) and centre their fight on the demand for permanent discussion forums in the party press.

in the party who are against it for fundamental reasons connected with a gradualist, electoralist and reformist conception of the way forward to socialism. That is one option, it hangs together.

Others are against it solely because the word inspires fear after the tragic caricature of its application by Stalin. They continue nonetheless to endorse the entire revolutionary content embodied in this term, to the same extent as the militants who want to retain the formula.

as many posts as candidates. Above all, a majority vote is required for delegation.

There could be 49 per cent of militants in all the cells opposed to the nuclear strike force; yet the present mode of representation would give them 0 per cent at the Congress.

In a democratic party, minorities should be able to get together and be represented in proportion to the number of votes. Otherwise the discussion is purely literary.

The existence of tendencies poses many problems. But it did not prevent the Bolshevik Party from making a revolution — quite the reverse.

The banning of tendencies, however, can only culminate in the Stalinist model, in bureaucratisation, and thus in the abandonment of any revolutionary objective. It is because the PCF leadership has abandoned any revolutionary strategy that it is not prepared to accept democratisation, and only a very limited liberalisation.

Wouldn't it be logical and help to clarify things if these two currents could meet up just before a congress to see if there was a possibility of presenting a common text against the reformist current? In what way would such a practice be unhealthy?

In actual fact the function of democratic debate is not solely to define political orientations. It involves a struggle to convince, to improve, or even to win and change the line of the party. If the means for this do not exist, then democracy becomes formal and is transformed simply into the right to have ideas.

In a communist organisation, the defeated minority applies the line of the majority. Through this experience it can either be convinced that it was wrong or, on the contrary, it should be able to convince the majority at the next congress that it was right.

If the PCF leadership were to grant open forums in the party press to militants, that would be a step forward. But to stop there would be ridiculous except for those who only question the slowness of the party's Eurocommunist evolution, and who are only the advance guard of what is an irreversible evolution in spite of the various tactical detours it takes in.

With discussion forums and nothing else, the 23rd Congress would threaten to be nearly as unanimous as the previous one.

Today all elections are screened by the 'cadre commission'. There are often

RETROGRADE

To 'reject' or 'disapprove' of the Russian intervention in Prague was only an empty phrase, since the national strategy of the PCF had the same retrograde significance as the armed diplomacy of the USSR.

Today, for the third time, by unanimously approving the incredible report given by Georges Marchais, the PCF has confirmed its arrogant blindness, its bureaucratic complacency, its historic choice of a strategy of disunity, fragmentation and demoralisation of the left.

The historians will not fail to remark how the lasting nature of its political choice is revealed in a continuity of language.

'Certain people', said Thorez from the rostrum at the 14th Congress in July 1956, 'have called for permanent discussion in the party on all questions without exception: as if we were a club, a debating school, and not a vanguard detachment of the working class, a party of action which is preparing itself for revolutionary tasks'.

There is certainly room for

irony on these 'revolutionary tasks', for which the party is so constantly preparing itself that it tends to forget about them once they are realisable.

But the key thing to note is the point at which Marchais' wooden language blends in with that of Thorez from more than twenty years ago:

'It is clear' says the present General Secretary of the PCF, 'to anyone with common-sense, that permanent discussion amounts in the end to a paralysis of decision making and action. We are a democratic party, we are not a discussion club...'

And Marchais goes one better: 'The Communist Party is a revolutionary party, a vanguard party, and there are tendencies towards a cult of spontaneity, anarchist tendencies to which we cannot yield without renouncing the very existence of a party capable of playing its vanguard role.' (Those who specialise in such signs will note in passing this kind of tautological reasoning: we are a vanguard party and that is why we must play a vanguard role!)

Thus, and contrary to the strategy sketched out in the articles by Louis Althusser (see last week's Socialist Challenge) — and which are worth a more extended analysis for their radical novelty: the philosopher finally understands that the real theoretical problem today is that of the Communist Party's practice, that it is at this level that it is necessary to establish the 'line of demarcation' and proceed to the 'epistemological break' the PCF leadership has chosen to shut itself up in the fortress and constantly patrol it to preserve 'right thinking'. But could one expect anything else?

Did not the strategy of the PCF lead inevitably to this conclusion, to this freezing of the possible dialectic between the leaders and the militants, the party and the masses, the organisation and society?

Did it not include already this reproduction of the capitalist division of labour between the knowledge of the (small time) leaders and the daily practice of the base?

Be that as it may, the decisions of the PCF Central Committee will have repercus-

sions — serious ones — not only on the evolution of the left in France, but also in Southern Europe; and more concretely, on the Communist parties of this region.

In fact, the choice made by the PCF tolls the knell in the long run for 'Eurocommunism'.

Undoubtedly the latter had not yet gone beyond the stage of rather lazy formulations, of declarations of intent. However, it constituted the theoretical project — whose real practice remained to be worked out — of a new road avoiding the impasses of Social Democracy as well as those of Stalinism.

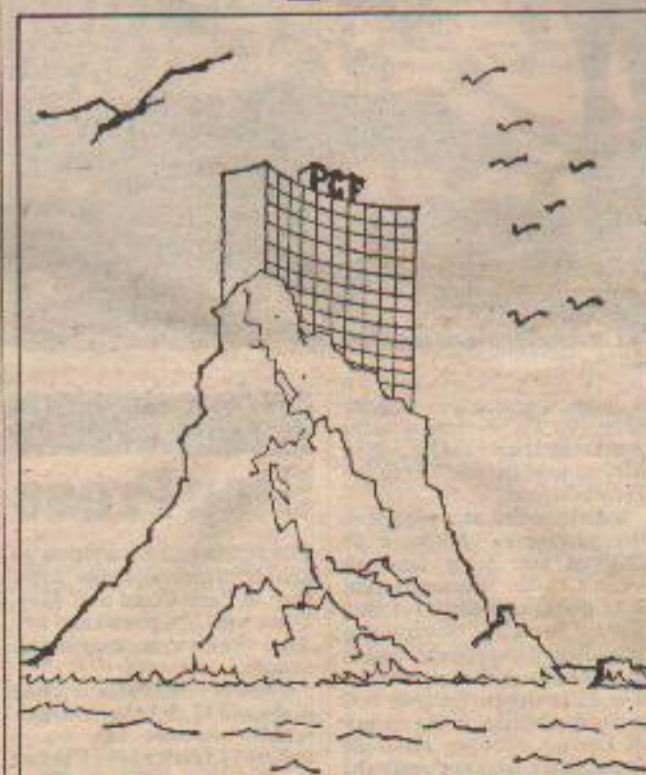
To survive as a practice of the masses, rooting itself in their real movement, 'Eurocommunism' had to pose clearly the historic problem of the revolution in the West, a problem which it has rather tended to dodge up to now.

The blow delivered by the PCF will undoubtedly check the present movement. One can foresee that it will turn in on itself and become crystallised into set attitudes of 'right' and 'left' — both probably isolated from the real social terrain of the class struggle.

But, on the other hand, the leading group of the PCF has just clarified the situation, dispelling a number of illusions and possible 'wrong readings' of the Communist strategy in Western Europe.

Beneath the understandable tactical (and historical and cultural) differences, which run from the Italian 'historic compromise' to the breaking of the Union of the Left in France, by way of the 'democratic concentration' of the Spanish Communist Party, there exists in effect a common basis for the policy of all these Communist parties: that of the maintenance of the status quo, that of the concrete rejection of any attempt to overthrow, in the end, the existing social and political hegemony.

Faithful to an already long tradition, the PCF has just reminded us once more that the revolution is not its concern, that the transformation of society is not its objective. That is its message for those who know how to listen to it.



'The PCF has chosen to shut itself up in the fortress.' — Semprun

INTERNATIONAL

Struggle in southern Africa Racists strike at Angola

South African soldier on Angolan border



FOR the second time in three years South Africa has invaded Angola. Although early reports suggested that this was a Rhodesian-style hit and run raid, Angolan government statements, confirmed by journalists with good South African sources, claim that racist troops are still in occupation. **RICHARD CARVER** reports.

South Africa claims its troops were on a search and destroy mission against SWAPO, the Namibian liberation organisation.

Their powers of search leave something to be desired: they did not encounter SWAPO forces.

Their destruction is second to none: more than 500 civilians were killed, according to Angolan Government estimates.

DELIBERATE

This was deliberate. Paratroopers and infantry were flown 180 miles into Angola to hit a refugee camp.

The South Africans know the area well. Their biggest military concentration in Namibia is along the Angolan border and they have been

frequent, if unwelcome visitors — both during and since the Portuguese colonial occupation of Angola.

They knew where the SWAPO bases were and deliberately avoided them.

CLEVER

So it was not a case, as some commentators have suggested, of the South African military overriding the Pretoria politicians. The decision to invade was taken at the highest political level. Why?

Only days before the raid South Africa had announced its acceptance of the Western plan for the 'liberation' of Namibia. The country is presently under a South African occupation condemned by the United Nations as illegal.

The imperialist scheme was a clever one. It proposed the maintenance of a reduced South African military presence until elections were held under UN supervision.

This would be acceptable to the South Africans and possibly to SWAPO too. What SWAPO had rejected was South African supervision of the elections.

If SWAPO compromised the way would be open to a neo-colonial Namibia. If they refused, SWAPO would be seen as the party disrupting a

settlement.

SWAPO fell for it. Had the raid not happened they would almost certainly have accepted a compromise.

The timing of the invasion indicates that South Africa wanted to force SWAPO into rejection of the settlement, leaving its multi-racial puppets in the Turnhalle Democratic Alliance in control.

At the same time the attack was aimed to demoralise the civilian population and gnaw away at SWAPO's support.

But it won't work, and that is why the Western powers are so furious with South Africa. They feel, rightly, that their

original plan had far more finesse.

The fighting power and popular support of SWAPO has never been greater. But the imperialists understand that SWAPO's leaders are not the uncompromising Marxist cutthroats the South Africans make them out to be.

They have no programme to wrest Namibia out of imperialist control. At the negotiating table that would be a crucial weakness.

But now they are back in the bush with guns in their hands. And no capitalist would like to bet on the outcome.

The disappearing Bishop

Anyone who thought Ian Smith's 'internal settlement' had sorted everything out in Zimbabwe is getting some rude shocks, writes **ROY ALEXANDER**.

The deal started to show its cracks two weeks ago when the black representative in the Ministry of Justice, Byron Hove, stated that the 'internal settlement' should result in a few better jobs for black policemen.

Not the sort of language that you would expect to give the ruling class restless nights, but it was too strong for Rhodesia's hyper-sensitive racists and their black allies.

Hove was denounced for having 'violated the spirit of the internal settlement' and was given the boot.

FRANK

This frank admission that the settlement holds hardly a trickle of benefits for the black majority was too much for the United African National Congress of Bishop Abel Muzorewa, the only organisation with mass influence involved in the 'interim Government'.

The UANC denunciation of Hove's sacking led to a farcical discussion over whether the Bishop was at the meeting

which decided to sack his Minister.

The Bishop denies that he was there. Every one else says he was. One is left with the unavoidable impression that no one ever really knows where Muzorewa is — including the Bishop himself.

DEEPER

After this unseemly row, has come an even deeper division. A statement by the interim Government [apparently with the Bishop there] called on the Patriotic Front guerrillas to lay down their arms.

However, the UANC Executive promptly issued a statement charging that such a call was premature, and criticising the Government's failure to release political prisoners and improve conditions in the tribal trust lands, the guerrillas' main stronghold.

What this shows is that there can be no mass following for a deal which only patches up racist rule. Either Smith and the white minority will have to come up with some concessions, in which case the confidence of the black masses will start to threaten the roots of racist domination, or the whole 'internal settlement' will fold up like a house of cards.

Anyone in the market for a well-used disappearing Bishop?

France moves against Chad rebels

Unnoticed by the British press, the former French colony of Chad has become the target for European imperialism's latest African adventure. **RICHARD CARVER** reports.

The word 'former' is used out of sheer politeness. French President Giscard seems blissfully unaware of the 'winds of change' in Africa, and regards any challenge to its client states as a personal affront.

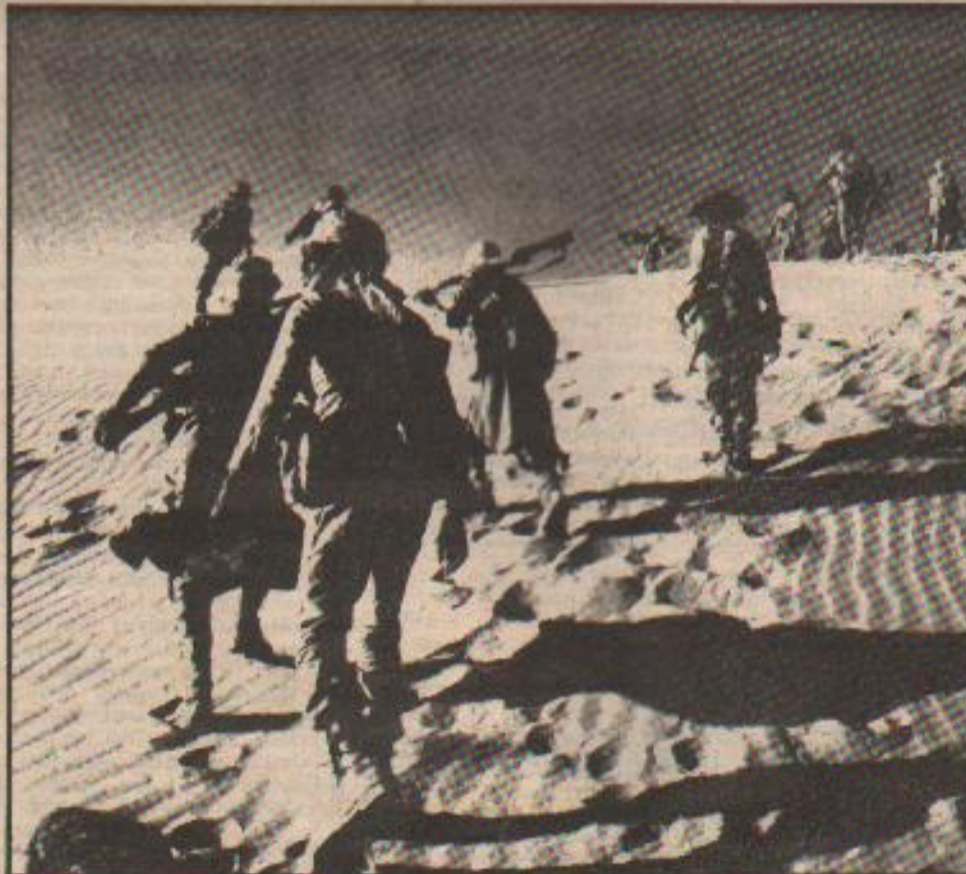
The Chad intervention involves 1200 troops — paratroopers and legionnaires — and ten Jaguar fighter planes, plus transports.

They have moved in on behalf of the government of Felix Malloum against the rebels of the Chad National Liberation Front (Frolinat).

THRUST

The occasion for the French intervention was a military thrust by Frolinat against government garrisons in the centre of the country.

Although French troops have seen combat against the guerrillas, Frolinat's military



Frolinat guerrillas on the offensive

position remains unchallenged. The Salal garrison to the north east of the capital of N'Djamena remains in rebel hands. So do Arada, Biltine and Abeche in the east.

Frolinat's strength flows partly from the sophisticated weaponry supplied by the radical Muslim regime of Colonel Gaddafi in Libya.

But Libya has retreated in the face of the French presence. It has called on Frolinat to call off hostilities and refused to issue a statement of condemnation of the invasion.

Frolinat also appears to have

a large measure of popular support. There were violent pro-Frolinat demonstrations in Moundou in the south after the French arrival.

Initially called as a protest at the government massacre of children and other innocent victims, the demonstration turned violently anti-French.

The French Government continues to issue placid denials of any active military presence. The 1200 troops become '600 military advisers' in the mouth of Foreign Minister Louis de Guiringaud. This is despite the death of at least three French personnel in combat.

SA troops in Zimbabwe

SOUTH African troops are moving back into Zimbabwe to shore up the crumbling internal settlement.

A South African force of 2000 had previously been withdrawn, but is now returning as the political and military situation becomes more and more unstable for the 'transitional' regime.

South Africa's backing for the internal settlement between the white settler regime and nationalist leaders Muzorewa and Sithole has been public for some time.

Less well known are the cordial relations between the black members of the new government and the apartheid state. Muzorewa's top deputy, Gordon Chavanduka, payed at

least two visits to the South African capital last year.

The Bishop himself is not above chatting with top racists. Last summer he proudly announced the measure of agreement he had reached with South African Foreign Minister Botha in talks in London.

When leaders of the internal settlement parties met a South African business delegation in Salisbury recently the deputy chairperson of Anglo-American, the giant mining company, said he was impressed with what Sithole had to say.

It is a measure of the weakness of these would-be popular leaders that they have to rely on South Africa to secure their future.

But it is a threat nonetheless and one that must be resisted.

Solidarity — 17 June

PRESS HYSTERIA about a possible Cuban intervention into Zimbabwe has only hidden the actual interventions in the past few days. There are now South African troops in both Angola and Zimbabwe — as well as the regular quota in occupied Namibia.

The British Labour Government has chosen to say nothing about the Zimbabwe excursion. And it has only shown concern over Angola because the numbskulls in Pretoria had just messed up the British master plan to outfit the Namibian people.

The Labour Government's failure to come up with anything better than this makes the 17 June Soweto

anniversary demonstration all the more important.

The march is called by the African Students Union and there are open planning meetings every Thursday at the Architectural Association, 34 Bedford Square, London at 7.30pm. Argue for local labour movement bodies and Anti-Apartheid groups to sponsor the demo and send someone along to the meetings if they can.

Remember it's not just about repression in South Africa but racist strategy in southern Africa as a whole.

'Smith out or Cubans in', warned the Observer lead headline last Sunday. We'll drink to that!

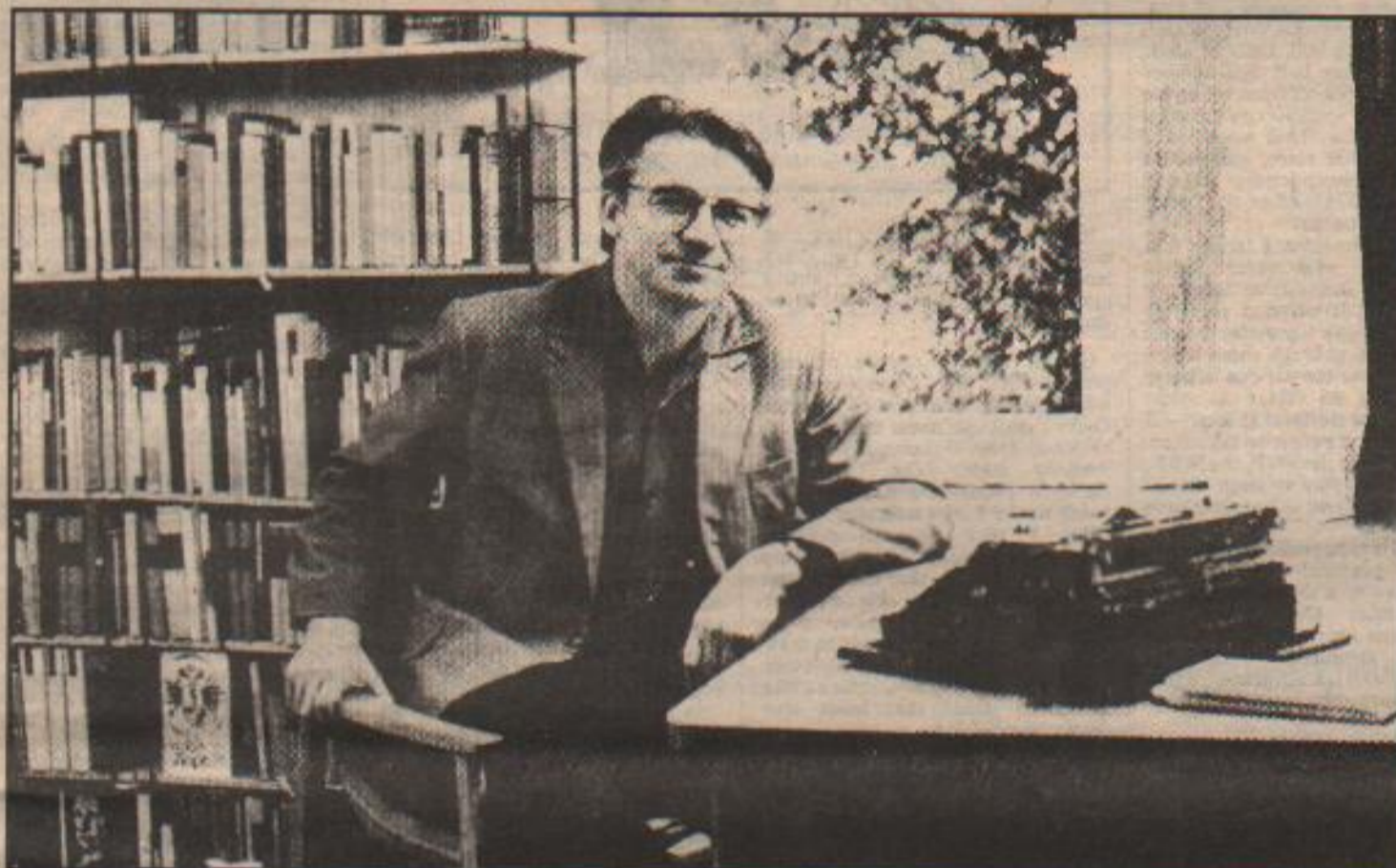
Stop Press

POLICE launched an attack on a peaceful picket outside 'Israel Day' at Earl's Court on 7 May. There were five arrests and two Arab women were charged with assault.

A defence campaign is being organised to fight the charges, which witnesses say are a ludicrous fabrication. Contact the Palestine Solidarity Campaign for details.

RELEASE BAHRO

OPEN LETTER to ERICH HONECKER, CHAIRMAN, STATE COUNCIL OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC



ON AUGUST 23rd, 1977, the state security forces of the German Democratic Republic arrested Rudolf Bahro on a charge of 'espionage', and since that date no further information has been forthcoming on Rudolf Bahro's fate. We, the undersigned, wish to express our grave concern about this case and appeal to you to take immediate steps to secure Rudolf Bahro's speedy release.

What are the facts as known to us West European socialists? Rudolf Bahro's arrest followed the announcement of the publication of his book 'Die alternative. Zur Kritik des real existierenden Sozialismus' by the Europäische Verlagsanstalt, the publishing house owned by the West German trade union federation DGB, and the publication of several interviews with Bahro by various West German news media.

Could it be that this man is an agent of the Federal Republic's intelligence service? We have never heard of 'imperialist spies' openly announcing their dissident views and writing and publishing books which they expect to

result in their arrest. And the sad fact is that Rudolf Bahro could and did expect his arrest for publicising his political views, since all previous expressions of any criticism of your party's and your government's policies have been met by immediate police action resulting in long prison sentences or the expulsion from the German Democratic Republic.

Article 20 of the Constitution of the GDR states that 'Every citizen of the German Democratic Republic has, irrespective of his nationality, race, his philosophical or religious convictions, his social origins and position, the same rights and duties. The freedom of conscience and belief are guaranteed.'

Why are Rudolf Bahro and others like Robert Havemann and Wolf Biermann then prevented from submitting their views to an open and democratic debate with the same rights as are exercised by the leaders and propagandists of your party? Rudolf Bahro, at the time of his arrest, was a member of the SED [and has been a member since 1952]. The Statutes of the SED declare that 'the

organisational structure of the party is based on the principle of democratic centralism' and that 'all party organs are democratically elected from the bottom to the top' [Clause 23]. But how can genuine internal party democracy function if party members have to fear arrest before they have an opportunity to submit their criticisms to other party members, if they are jailed, expelled from the party, deprived of their livelihoods or expelled from the GDR for the only 'crime' of holding critical views?

We believe that, far from 'defending socialism', such repressive measures only serve to discredit and therefore weaken it, in both East and West. Socialism is not only the nationalisation of the means of production and a centrally planned economy, it is also a higher form of political freedom than the political freedom even the most liberal bourgeois democracy can offer its working masses.

Unless socialism can be seen to mean the broadest working class democracy, with the freedom of political expression, debate and

organisation at all levels of society, including within the socialist and communist parties, the Western working classes will continue to prefer bourgeois democracy as the devil it does know to socialism, the devil it does not know, and dissidents in Eastern Europe will continue to be forced to look to phoney defenders of human rights such as President Carter in their despair over the absence of meaningful socialist democracy in their countries.

As is clear from the printed evidence, Rudolf Bahro wrote his book as a communist militant committed to genuine socialist democracy. We may not all agree with every aspect of Bahro's views, but we agree that every citizen of the German Democratic Republic should have the right to form his or her own opinion and discuss it freely and openly with the author's participation in such a public debate.

We therefore demand the immediate release of Rudolf Bahro from prison, the publication of his book in the GDR, and a public discussion of his views in the mass organisations, the political parties and the media of your country.

- Robin Blackburn
- Ken Coates
- Tamara Deutscher
- Ferenc Feher
- Trevor Griffiths
- Quinton Hoare
- Agnes Heller
- Tom Litterick, MP
- Denis MacShane [President NUJ]
- Ralph Miliband
- Stan Newens, MP
- Tom Nairn
- Bruce Page, Editor New Statesman
- E.P. Thompson
- Raymond Williams

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

WE WANT as many signatures on this appeal as possible from trade unionists, Labour and Communist Party members and socialist activists in general. We hope to present the 'Open Letter' and the signatures to the East German embassy to coincide with the publication of Rudolf Bahro's book in English this autumn.

We want all Socialist Challenge supporters to help get at least several thousand signatures, starting with your local Labour MP.

Printed appeal forms are available from Bahro Defence, c/o Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1, but you can print your own with the above signatures.

Readers willing to sign our appeal should sign the form below and return it to us. I agree that my name should be appended to the OPEN LETTER TO HONECKER.

NAME.....
 Address.....
 Position.....
 Signature.....

WHAT'S LEFT

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

FLAT SHARE: socialist feminist woman to share comfortable North London flat with two others. Available July for about a year. Approx £55pm inclusive. Please write to: Margaret Hickman, 97 Galsworthy Rd, London W10.

WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER Campaign national conference, Manchester Poly, 17 and 18 June. Further info from: Pat Gross, Flat 2, 49 Spring Bank, Hull. Tel: Hull 443 243.

FULL-TIME worker preferably IMG member, wanted by Birmingham IMG to be trained in screenprinting and offset litho printing and to run our expanding print department. Further info from: 76b Digbeth, Birmingham, B56DY. Tel: 01-643 8209.

CHRISTIANIA benefit with films, disco, bar and food at Ladbrooke House, Highbury Grove, London N5. Friday, 12 May from 6.30pm. Adm. 50p.

FOUR SOCIALISTS looking for 4 roomed flat/house in North or East London/Phone Mick 01-358 8301.

GARNERS' STRIKERS— support them! Main pickets everyday, noon to 3pm and 5.30 pm to 11pm at 399 Oxford St, London W1 (opp Selfridges); 243 Oxford St (Oxford Circus); 40-41 Haymarket; 58 Whitcombe St (Leicester Square). **Mass picket** every Saturday at noon, 399 Oxford St. Donations are urgently needed as strike pay is only 66 p/wk. All donations to Garners' Strike Fund, c/o IGWS, Rm 84, 12-13 Henrietta St, London WC2. 01-240-1065. **Day of Solidarity Action**, Sat. 20 May, Assemble 2pm Speakers Corner for march to rally at Trafalgar Square.

NOISS Rally: 1968 — 1978, Ten Years on, speakers include Chris Harman, (Students at the LSE in 1968); Judith Condon (ed. board Women's Voice), and Robin Blackburn (ed. board New Left Review) Band: Limousine, Theatre: Case — Confessions of a Socialist. All for 70p. Friday, 12 May, at the LSE, Houghton St, London WC2.

OXFORD and surrounding area: ex IS/STP comrades interested in meeting to discuss work and experiences since leaving IS/STP phone Oxford 43541.

WOMEN'S DAY School 'Socialist feminism and the revolutionary party'. Organised by women from the Coordinating Committee for an International Socialist Alliance, 13 May, N London Poly, Holloway Road, London N7. Cheque available. Further details from: Leni Sellinger, 142 Hunter House Road, Sheffield 1.

REVOLUTIONARY Communist Tendency Public Meeting, Ireland — Its Revolutionary Significance. Speaker: Phil Murphy, Friday, 12 May, 7.30pm, Trades Council Club, 21 Seville Mount, Leeds. Adm: 20p.

THE OTHER BOOKSHOP is looking for a part time worker to look after the pamphlet and newspaper sections. Hours are by negotiation but will include one Saturday in three, the wages aren't particularly good, but the company is stimulating and the job is interesting. Positive discrimination will be applied. Anyone interested should apply to Sarah or Alan at the shop, 328 Upper St, London N1. Tel: 01-225 0571.

GRUPOS COMBATES, Discussion group around revolutionary Marxist perspectives for Latin America, based on the newspaper Combata, 17 May, 7pm at the LSE, Room B101A, St Clements Building, London WC2.

DAYS OF HOPE, new bookshop of the Tyndale Socialist Centre opens on Sat. 13 May at 115 Westgate Rd, Newcastle.

CHILE SOLIDARITY Campaign and LSE Latin America Society films, Tues 18 May, 'Battle of Chile Part 2: The Coup d'Etat' by Patricio Guzman, 7pm, The Old Lecture Theatre, London School of Economics, London WC2.

SCOTTISH SOCIALIST Feminist Conference: Rosevale Centre, Partick, Glasgow, 19-14 May. Details from Mary Grant, 131 Montgomery St, Edinburgh, Tel: 01-661 7315.

A SOCIALIST CENTRE for West London? Public meeting and discussion with speaker from Brixton Socialist Club, Thurs 18 May, 8pm Seven Stars and Hall Moon, Goldhawk Rd, W12.

SPANISH LCR comrade wishing to learn English wants comrades to stay with for the summer. He is disabled and needs assistance in walking. Prepared to pay lodging, food, etc. If you can help, please ring Mike at 0272-586264 or write to: 23 Fairview Rd, Bristol 6.

LEGAL WORKERS for A Woman's Right to Choose an Abortion welcomes new members. Contact Gill Butler, c/o NAC, 30 Camden Rd, London NW1. Tel: 01-455 4303.

BRIXTON SOCIALIST CLUB, An evening of pub poetry and funny stories with John Gorman (formerly with Scaffold), Pete Brown, Pete Hill and a poet from the black Keskidee Company in Islington. Organised in conjunction with the London Poetry Secretariat (Poets in Public plus the Greater London Arts Association), Fri 12 May at 8pm, The Canterbury, Canterbury Crescent, Brixton, SW9 6PP.

BROADSIDE Mobile Workers Theatre requires: 1 versatile musician (acting ability an advantage), 2 versatile actors. Both full time. Both must be socialists. Long term commitment. Write: 58 Holborn House, Holborn

Place, London SW1. Phone 01-450 8982/01-730 5386.

IRELAND — HOODED MAN SPEAKS

NATIONAL SPEAKING TOUR organised by the Planning Committee for the International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland. **SPONSORED BY THE NUS EXECUTIVE:**

- Speakers include WICKY MONTGOMERY, one of the fourteen HOODED MEN;
- Dates include: Monday May 15 North London Polytechnic
- Wednesday May 17th Teeside Polytechnic
- Friday May 19th Leicester Polytechnic
- Monday May 22nd Birmingham Area NUS
- Tuesday May 23rd Manchester Area NUS
- Thursday May 25th Brighton Polytechnic/Sussex University.

See your local college for further details.

Shallow coverage

I MUST criticise the coverage that you have given to student union politics over the last six months. It has been totally shallow. It has not equipped non-members of the IMG, let alone non-members of the Socialist Students Alliance to argue convincingly against ultra vires limitations, to get elected to conference, or to come to a personal position on the SSA.

Questions that should have been answered (admittedly they should also have been asked!) include:

• What was the meaning of the affirmation of NUS's charity status? If it was simply a reaffirmation how could the situation be said to have been changed by it? What extra pressures were to be put on individual unions to enforce ultra vires? Why have, despite these pressures, many colleges simply disregarded ultra vires and remained in NUS?

What is ultra vires and what is the constitutional (legal) definition of payments which are 'beyond our powers'? Why wasn't it mentioned that there has never been a court room verdict or prosecution of a union said to be making ultra vires payments. (I have heard that disputes of this sort have always been settled out of court)? It should have been pointed out that the NUS executive was setting up itself, and individual union executives as interpreters of the law — over and above general meetings and conferences.

Also, is 'No Platform' ultra vires? If it was simply linked to autonomy and the enforcement of the constitution more generally, why was it enforced? Could the NUS executive glibly consider expelling NUS Wales simply so as to be constitutionally consistent?

I have found the answers to most of these questions, though they are not all very clear to me and have often arrived too late. I did not find these answers in Socialist Challenge and too often found them through being embarrassingly out argued by Broad Lefties.

In short I do not think that Socialist Challenge has done anything to present the policies and real battles of SSA to independent socialist students in a convincing or usable way. I don't recall any clear setting out of the unifying demands or founding document that SSA is based around.

When I walked into the NUS conference I saw a Socialist Challenge seller, having already read a copy, he seemed completely incongruous as there was nothing in it with which he could sell the paper to an average delegate. In contrast Militant the 'Marxist paper for Labour and non-Labour students', had a two page article on the conference!

The reports in SC so far have been written by people in the know who think that everybody interested in SSA is also in the know. Thus they write reports that are of interest only to non-students. People often meet opposition groups like SSA (particularly as SSA is strong at conference, and little known at grass roots) through the paper. This is an important role of the paper. These people must therefore get something from the paper otherwise they may suspect that the group's general

analysis is just as shallow. Finally I would like to say that it is not too late to answer these questions — the autonomy debate still rages.

LES HARTOP (Cardiff)

Off-putting competition

I AM writing to you because probably only Socialist Challenge among the leftwing papers is likely to even consider publishing this letter. What a shambles the by-election in Lambeth Central was! There were five different leftwing candidates. No wonder the press and TV made fun of such a situation.

Despite a low turnout, and the farce of so many competing leftwing candidates, the revolutionary socialists polled nearly 900. Let's be kind, and say that only half that number may have been put off from voting for a revolutionary socialist candidate by such competition. That would have made some 1300 votes, and would have put a revolutionary socialist candidate third, ahead of the fascist NF and the Liberals.

To be more realistic, I reckon that for everyone who voted for a revolutionary socialist, at least two others were put off and probably abstained. I know my mates where I work had a good laugh about it.

It's about time the various leftwing groups made an effort to come together — for elections at least — if they really want people to take them seriously. Or are the SWP, the WRP, and others only playing some kind of selfish game, aimed at boosting their own egos?

The IMG is to be praised for its more sensible, practical and serious approach — as is shown by the fact that Socialist Unity candidates usually come out at the top of the leftwing candidates. Ordinary Labour voters and trade union militants want unity in action at least.

L MILLER (Norwich)

Reply on Brixton

SINCE I now feel like the most battered journalist since Carl Gardner, the time has come to stagger back into the ring and try to defend myself. I'm going to leave aside punk and Italy — since those were rather a long time ago — and concentrate on Nick Davidson's letter in last week's issue.

First, my feature on Brixton was based on fairly extensive interviews with local people and my own experience — I've lived in the area for several years. So any mistakes were not those of an outsider writing about what he thought he ought to see, but were based on misconceptions of people in the area.

Are Brixton people proud of where they live? Nick thinks not. My interviewees said the opposite. More importantly I was trying to reflect the opposition felt by most blacks at the (abortive) attempts of Lambeth Council to disperse the black community.



Is there a visible sign of homelessness in Brixton? You don't have to see people with empty bedrolls under their arm, Nick. Just look at the empty houses!

On the more important political point I admit that I was (partially) wrong. Along with most of Socialist Unity I underestimated the latent — or not so latent — racism in the white working class. The substantial National Front vote and the high swing to the Tories indicated this.

But I stick by the political assessment which underlay my argument. That is, that the National Front is not generally able to recruit among the white population in heavily black areas and tends to draw its support from predominantly white areas on the fringes of places like Brixton. I think that holds true despite the NF vote.

It also remains true that, despite the importance of the anti-NF pickets during the election campaign, the first task in Brixton is to take up the various forms of state racism which permeate people's everyday lives: immigration controls, nationality proposals, police harassment and so on.

That was what the article said and I stand by it.

RICHARD CARVER (Lambeth)

NUR and the NF

J ADAMS and S Bell (SC, 20 April) are mistaken in thinking that the National Union of Railwaysmen is calling for the expulsion of all card-holding NF members from the union.

The executive committee (which is a rank and file body not a 'bureaucracy') made the following decision, worth repeating in its entirety:

'That we instruct the general secretary to issue a circular to all

branches and district councils reiterating the union's complete abhorrence of the anti-union policies of the National Front and other racist organisations which seek to divide workers on the grounds of race, colour, or creed.

'We further instruct the general secretary that any case or cases of officers or members who act inconsistently with the duties they owe to the union and its members who this respect, or who use their membership or union activity to further the racist policies of the National Front, be immediately placed before us under Rule 3 Clause 5. (This rule provides for disciplinary action against members including expulsion).

So in fact, the NUR decision has more similarities with the proposals of Bell and Adams, with the emphasis being on fascists who are actively pursuing NF policies on the railways. AT the present stage a blanket expulsion of all fascists would be counter-productive: the issue would be presented by the bourgeois press as one of trade union 'tyranny' versus individual liberty (as indeed it already has), and could easily provide a precedent for a witch-hunt against the left.

The background of the NUR's decision was the activity of a shadowy group called the 'National Front Railwaymen's Association' which seems to have a small following in the London area. Most of its activity up to now has been peddling its usual racist filth and mounting obscene attacks on long standing trade union activists. The executive decided to take action following several complaints from branches and district councils.

How far does the decision take the trade union movement in fighting racism? It certainly represents a step forward: we can expect other unions to take similar action against fascist activity. Also, it further legitimises the anti-racist work being done on the railways at depot level.

However, it falls well short of its stated intention to 'take a strong line

against' racist activity. A circular was issued to branches, but is likely to reach only a small proportion of the total membership.

What is urgently required is a united campaign against racism and fascism by the three rail unions — NUR, ASLEF, TSSA. The Front feeds on the racist feeling prevalent in some sections of the industry: it is these prejudices which need tackling and overcoming.

PAUL SELVESON (Secretary, NUR Manchester District Council — personal capacity)

Ignoring the facts

IN Socialist Challenge (20 April 1978) you carried a story by one Dave Bailey about the picket of the NF meeting in Brixton during the recent by-election in Lambeth Central. You state elsewhere in the paper that 'Substantial sections had to be laid out in advance (because of the) conference of the International Marxist Group.'

Having read the story of the picket I can only assume that it too was laid out in advance. Indeed it contains a lie of massive proportions.

I therefore, in all fairness, waited for a correction to appear in the following week. Despite a story by Bob Pennington on the campaign no such correction appeared. This is claimed the fact that Bob Pennington despised an intimate knowledge of said campaign.

In the article in the same issue you state 'the Labour Party, including the LPYS were not present'. Well as a Labour Party member who was indeed present I can state that I saw a very large number of my fellow members. Indeed looking round the picket the most obvious badge was 'Vote Bogue's' and the second most obvious badge was 'Vote Tilley'.

Indeed I saw at the picket the Lambeth Central Labour Party Chairperson Mary Nevitt, the candidate John Tilley and the agent George Catchpole among many others including many of the council candidates from throughout Lambeth. Indeed you may not know, since you were at your Conference, that the LPYS had a day of action 15 April and after a morning in the constituency the LPYS generally came down to the picket in the afternoon.

Indeed I would say that about a third of the pickets were Labour Party /LPYS. I would also say that the size of the whole picket was nowhere near 1500 but that fact is incidental, is it not?

It is of course possible that you chose to ignore these facts as they do not tie in with your preconceptions about politics in Lambeth Central. Another fact worth mentioning is that Lambeth Central Labour Party is affiliated to the All Lambeth Anti-Racist Movement (ALARM). I must say that printing lies is a tactic that helps the movement generally not at all.

I hope that your paper will have a truthful policy and as part of that truth policy will make sure that its stories tie in with the facts not your politics.

ALAN CRISP (Brixton)

Socialist Challenge EVENTS

NORTH WEST

WARRINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets regularly. Ring Manchester Socialist Challenge office for details. 061-236 2952.

GREATER MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge School students who support the paper and would like to get involved in anti-fascist activity please contact Chris 273 5947 (daytime), or Steve 226 4287 (evening), or write to Manchester SC Centre, c/o 14 Piccadilly.

PRESTON Socialist Challenge supporters can be contacted by ringing Preston 54616.

LIVERPOOL Speke Socialist Challenge group meets every Wednesday evening at Noah's Arc pub, Speke, Liverpool. 8pm.

SOUTH MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge group meets every other Thursday at the Albert Inn off Wilmshurst Rd. Help sell Socialist Challenge between 11.30am and 1pm at Moss Side shopping centre or Longsight Market, Dickenson Rd. Further information from 061-236 2952.

YORKSHIRE

Huddersfield Socialist Challenge group meets next on 4 May and fortnightly thereafter. 7.30pm. Friendly and Trades Club, Northumberland Street (opp station).

NORTH EAST

DURHAM Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly at Big Jug Pub, Claypath, Durham City. Details from J. Fox, 41 The Avenue.

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

MIDDLESBROUGH Socialist Challenge sales on Saturdays outside Boots at Cleveland Centre, 11am-1pm. Socialist Challenge is

also available from Harrisons (newsagent) in Linthorpe Street.

WALES

SWANSEA Socialist Challenge group meets every other Wednesday at 7.30pm in St Helena Inn, Vincent Street. All supporters welcome. Next meeting 10 May and fortnightly thereafter.

CARDIFF Socialist Challenge meeting 5 May. Speaker: Dudley Wepper from SC additional board, to prepare for SC conference. Four Elms pub, Elm St., off Newport Road, 7.30pm.

SOUTH WEST

SOUTHAMPTON Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday from 10am-10pm above bar, Post Office, Bargate.

PORTSMOUTH Socialist Challenge sales, Saturdays, 11.30am to 1pm. Commercial Road Precinct.

SOUTH EAST

COLCHESTER Socialist Challenge supporters sell the paper every Saturday outside Cates from

10.45am-1pm. Further information of local activities from Mike, 11 Anglesea Rd, Wivenhoe.

BRIGHTON Socialist Challenge sales regularly on Saturdays at the Open Market, London Road, from 11am-1pm.

COLCHESTER Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly. Details from Steve, 1 Abigail Street.

SCOTLAND

For information about the paper or its supporters' activities throughout Scotland contact Socialist Challenge Books, 64 Queen St., Glasgow. Open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday afternoons. Phone for alternative arrangements 1221-74811. Wide range of Fourth International publications.

EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-348 0466 for details.

DUNDEE: Information about Socialist Challenge activities from 64 Queen St., Glasgow. Join in SC sales

outside Boots (corner of Reform Street) each Saturday, 11am-2pm.

LONDON

HAMMERSMITH Socialist Challenge groups fortnightly — details from PO Box 50, London N1 2PX.

BRENT Socialist Challenge Open Forums. Next meeting, Monday 8 May, 7.15pm. Speaker from the Anti-Nazi League, Anson School, Anson Road, NW2. All welcome.

HARINGEY Socialist Challenge group meets next Monday, 8 May, 7.30pm. Robin Blackburn: Labourism and the Labour Party, West Green Community Centre, Stanbury Road, N15.

HARROW Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly, details from PO Box 50, London N1 2PX.

HACKNEY Socialist Challenge group meets next on 10 May, and fortnightly thereafter. Socialist Unity speaker Bob Pennington, 7.30 Britannia Pub, Mars St., near Hackney Town Hall.

GREENWICH/LEWISHAM Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly. Details from Ray on 01-659 1157.

NEWHAM Socialist Challenge Forums occur regularly. Details from PO Box 50, London N11.

WALTHAM FOREST paper sales every Saturday, 11am-noon outside the post office, Hoe St., Waltham-stow, London E17.

LONDON CPISA Socialist Challenge readers: We are establishing a CPISA supporters group to work in the union and Broad Left. If you are sympathetic to Socialist Challenge's ideas, write to London SC organiser, c/o PO Box 50, London N1.

MIDLANDS

For details of activities of local supporters throughout the Midlands contact the Socialist Challenge Centre, 76b Digbeth High Street, Birmingham. [021] 643 9209.

WOLVERHAMPTON Socialist Challenge group meets next 9 May. 'Nuclear power, pollution, and the struggle for socialism'. Speaker: Dave Ashcroft, Labour Party, The Vine, Stafford Street. 7.50pm.

LEICESTER Socialist Challenge supporters meet fortnightly at the Highfields Community Centre. For details ring 0533 25854.

UNDER REVIEW

Art for us

A canvas of another kind

THE ART world is obscure and elitist. Until recently vacuum formalist abstraction still dominated as the leading style promoted by a ruling class 'enlightened' enough to allow artists the 'freedom' to pursue their trivialities, writes PAUL RUSSELL.

Those few artists who attempted to relate their work to their social situation were either ignored or were considered to have abused that given freedom.

In the last year a number of artists and a group known as the 'social critics' (including Socialist Challenge supporter Peter Fuller) have attacked the complacent art world in a series of articles, debates, and exhibitions.

One of the critics, Richard Cork, has now arranged an important exhibition of social-

ist artists at the Serpentine Gallery in London. Cork has selected artists whose diversified approach to creating socialist art shows unexpected possibilities.

Although assembled for display in a gallery space, each of the exhibited projects was designed for outdoor, community, school or trade union purposes.

DOCUMENTARY

Conrad Atkinson is exhibiting documentary evidence about a man who worked for only nine months in the asbestos industry 36 years ago, and has now died as a result of this work from a particularly unpleasant lung disease.

Copies of his medical record, correspondence between his widow and the company for an unsuccessful claim for compen-

sation, company advertisements on the safety of asbestos, all are arranged as a case history along one wall.

Suspended at different heights are plastic bags containing raw or finished asbestos products. In the context of the unfolding drama, these bags might be taken for the lurid evidence in a murder trial — as indeed they are.

Peter Dunn and Loraine Leeson have been conducting a poster and video campaign to save Bethnal Green and other hospitals from closure. Using photomontage similar to Peter Kennard's work in *Socialist Challenge*, Dunn and Leeson create and adapt their posters in quick response to the shifting tactics of the authorities — a guerilla art which should be used more often.

The Islington Schools Envir-

onmental Project is displaying the designs submitted by children to brighten up their school walls, plus photos of the exciting play structures they designed for their playgrounds. Get your children to agitate for this in every school!

QUESTIONS

On a more intimate level, Stephen Willats organised an exercise in political consciousness raising among 50 or so residents from Perivale. These volunteers answered weekly sets of questions — and added their comments — on patterns of social relationships, from authoritarian (employer to employee) to co-operative (spouse to spouse).

The exercise is complex, but its evident success among the participants proves that art

need not be simplistic or patronising to be understood by a non-art public.

SATIRICAL

Finally, two examples of the increasingly popular mural art. David Binnington and Desmond Rochfort are showing sketches and models of their large murals under the Westway flyover at Royal Oak. Many of the murals now being done are guided by the local inhabitants and reflect their concerns, but the Royal Oak murals portray anonymous work conditions.

Binnington has done a quasi-satirical mural about office and white-collar work and Rochfort a skilful eulogy to construction workers.

Rochfort's painting is socialist realist; but representational

painting is as capable of misunderstanding reality as abstract painting and Rochfort's mural illustrates this dilemma. Virtually the whole mural could have been painted in the boardroom of a big construction company: the directors would then own an image illustrating the labour-power commodity of their workers — which they also own!

Where to see it

All for whom? is at the Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Park until 14 May. Open daily 10am-7pm. Admission free. 72-page catalogue with statements £1. There will be an open discussion with selector and exhibitors on Sunday 14 May at 4pm. Tel: 01-402 6075.



Would these murals of construction workers be out of place in a company board room?

Photo: TONY SLEEP

Take it like a man, ma'am Sex roles inside out

MALE DOCTOR to husband: 'Get her a dog; women of her age often feel superfluous.' JANE CLARKE reviews *Take it like a Man, Ma'am*.

By making the central character a woman in her fifties who is experiencing her menopause, this film deals with the politics of female sexuality in a serious and unsensational way — unlike the recent spate of film glossies which have exploited the 'we are examining female sexuality' interest.

The subject is also important in terms of the women's movement's emphasis that its concerns should be relevant to women of all ages. The 95-minute film was made entirely by women, the Danish Red Sisters Collective, who are active in the women's movement in Denmark.

IMMACULATE

We are shown a woman who does feel superfluous because her sole arena of action is an immaculate flat and a husband to service.

Take it like a Man, Ma'am opens with scenes of her mounting frustration, exemplified at her husband's office party where she is simply ignored because women are automatically excluded from all serious conversations; and she's too old to tank in the flirting stakes.

It is, however, precisely this marginalisation and increasing isolation which makes her begin to examine her life, her roles, and attitudes.

The film moves out to encompass all aspects of female oppression — economic, social and sexual — and it does this in a very funny and effective way by switching from its realist mode into fantasies of the 'if only things were the other way round' type.

REVERSAL

There is total reversal of sexual roles for the central section of the film with man as housekeeper, secretary, sex object — and it's very funny. All the details are there, and this works to de-naturalise and make strange the most everyday oppressions which are usually so 'normal' as to be invisible.

For example, there is a scene in an office with woman as leering executive, than as servicing machine.

After the day's work, the women step out briskly into their waiting cars, unfettered by shopping and worries. The men, however, stand patiently at the bus stop or cycle off laden with plastic carrier bags. The realisation of the sheer difference of economic power between the women and men hits one with impact in this short scene.

Take it like a Man, Ma'am changes back to its realist mode in the last half hour. The woman refuses to take the



advice of her doctor or husband, and seeks employment rather than a poodle. At her workplace she becomes involved in a strike, and is responsible for persuading the office women to support their sisters in the factory; for which she is sacked.

This section is a bit laboured, but it does raise some important issues, as when we see her finding a job only with real difficulty because of her age — a very real discrimination which faces older women trying to return to work.

Take it like a Man, Ma'am is distributed by The Other Cinema, which is making it available to women's groups at the reduced rate of £25. For other groups the hire fee is £36. Posters are supplied. From: The Other Cinema, 12-13 Little Newport Street, London WC1.

Rare coinage

Taking up the discussion of Dennis Potter's TV series *Pennies from Heaven*, I would like to differ considerably in emphasis with the review by Sally Feldman (6 April). I found it full of humanistic platitudes which in no way came to grips with the significance of Potter's plays as programmes working within the confines of mass TV practice.

For me there is a central reason why this extraordinary series is one of the most radical and political we have ever seen on TV — it attempted in a small way to be subversive, both at the level of content and in terms of the structure of the medium itself.

This is rare on TV, fed as we are on an unremitting diet of naturalism, from *Crossroads* to *Days of Hope*.

DISRESPECT

What Potter attempted, not always successfully, but with courageous disrespect for the conventions of TV 'forms', was a fruitful collision between the accepted mode of TV naturalism in drama and the 1930s musical, in a way which was thoroughly disorienting.

He recognised that to puzzle us, to make us stop short and reassess our accepted categories and ways of viewing television, is an indispensable element of a radical TV practice.

In the process of juxtaposing these two forms, Dennis Potter subverted the meaning of both, so that we were forced to reassess the specific ways that TV or film constructs a particular 'reality' for our normally passive gaze. The medium of TV, in a certain sense, became visible — rather than hidden or transparent, as is normal. We were forced to ask questions about TV, rather than accept it.

In short, what the series suggested — as any genuinely materialist, revolutionary drama must do — were real questions about the nature of the functioning of the medium itself, not merely its apparent content.

How specifically was this achieved?

By the simple technique of removing songs and dance sequences from archetypal 'utopian' 1930s musicals (in their original form — same voices and recordings) and inserting them completely 'artificially' into tragic and oppressive situations where they didn't really 'fit' — thus undermining the associations which such tunes normally carried.

In the contexts in which these hopeful 'sunshine' songs could have been previously found (the musical, generally) they would have conventionally helped carry the action to its inevitable, happy, non-contradictory conclusion.

Here on the other hand, located as they were as part of the characters' dream worlds — a collective unconscious, temporarily 'externalised' — they largely contradicted the plot as it evolved.

Yet at the same time as this process helped 'subvert' the meanings of its two elements, it also succeeded in underlining the specific brutality and oppressiveness of the social situation during the Depression in which the characters were located. It did this by revealing the gap between their desires the hopes and their future prospects.

Curiously it was the scenes where Potter tried to use the songs in a most overtly 'satirical' manner (ie. with ostensive political intent) which were least successful.

Song and plot then began to directly complement each other in a rational, conventional manner — a new coherence or 'harmony' was established, where productive contradiction and 'dislocation' between the elements was suppressed for the sake of immediate polemical meaning.

Pennies from Heaven was by no means perfect. Its techniques were in a real sense very 'moderate' — certainly in terms of much radical film or drama practice.

But for TV of this kind, in this situation, it represents a real step forward which hopefully will open the ideas of many socialists to the direction that 'political' television should take.

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Socialist Challenge

March for Palestine 13 May

THE TRAGEDY OF LEBANON



When the Zionist army invaded Lebanon, Socialist Challenge carried many pictures which illustrated the scale of destruction. In a recent discussion with a Lebanese militant, I finally came to understand the human suffering which even the camera had been unable to capture. This article is taken from that discussion, writes NIGEL WARD.

“The first point I would make is about the Syrian Army. Before the Israeli attack they were everywhere in Beirut. When they first arrived they had checkpoints every few hundred metres!

But after the invasion, with the exception of a small group at the airport, the Syrians disappeared from the streets. People came running to Beirut from the south. They would try to find lost relatives whilst looking for somewhere to stay. Well over a hundred thousand refugees, that's one tenth of the Lebanese population, came to the Moslem half of Beirut.

Neither the Syrians nor the government did much to help the refugees; they were forced to wander from one place to another for shelter.

DROWNED

The government did provide tents for ten thousand persons, but Beirut suffered a freak thunderstorm and no one could use this accommodation. In fact, one woman was drowned.

There were some other attempts at aid for the refugees. Some individuals tried to make political capital out of the refugees by

distributing blankets and the progressive forces were unable to mobilise popular support, so they too could do little.

The Israelis had always shelled southern Lebanon when the Palestinians undertook any action, no matter how small.

BODIES

With their invasion they had the chance to kill as many Arabs as they could and they wanted to turn the Lebanese peasants against the Palestinians. They are still finding bodies of the Zionists' victims today.

Often the peasants would have few belongings except their house. When the Israelis attacked, they hid in mosques and schools, as they felt sure the Israelis would recognise these as non-military places and would therefore not attack them...over 100 people were killed in the shelling of one mosque.

Most of the refugees you talk to have lost relatives in the attack. The Israelis have also been quite successful in their second aim.

Confessional and localist divisions, even within the Moslem Arabs, are now acute. The petty bourgeois in Beirut blame the Palestinians for



‘...they had the chance to kill as many Arabs as they could...’

everything; they just want to get rid of the southern peasants.

Reactionaries like Kemal Assad, the leader of the Lebanese parliament, have now been able to mobilise against the Palestinians and fascist groups are growing.

A big part of the Lebanese population is now unproductive. The peasants and agricultural workers of the south have been displaced, forced by the earlier Zionist attacks to try and find a safe refuge.

It was among these people that the most important radicalisations had occurred. Alongside their national aspirations, a class consciousness was developing, reflected in the beginnings of a trade union for these workers.

For example, peasants had been shot by the police and army when on strike. This was the source of the growth of many of the Lebanese leftist groups.

The Israeli invasion destroyed not only whole villages — it has destroyed the whole

population as a social class. In short, the Zionists have destroyed a people; there will be no rapid healing of these deep wounds.

While Lebanon bleeds, the Zionist movement celebrates thirty years of Israel's existence — three decades of war, murder and oppression.

The aim of Zionism is an exclusively Jewish state in Palestine.

This has meant expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs and a never ending conflict between the Israeli state and those it has sought to oppress. Only the ending of the exclusivist, Zionist state will make possible the ending of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

By equating Arab national aspirations with anti-semitism and fascism the Zionists have sought to ensure they can perpetrate any crime against the Palestinians with no international condemnation.

Building the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and its demonstration on 13 May is vitally important!

While the Zionists try to murder Lebanon, join the demonstration and let the world hear:

PALESTINE LIVES!

PALESTINE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

Demonstration

assemble 1pm at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park

March past Israeli embassy to an outdoor rally

SATURDAY 13 MAY

OUR FUND DRIVE

Since last week W.H. Smiths has stocked Socialist Challenge in a number of its retail outlets in London, Oxford and Cambridge. As it is also prepared to supply the paper for individuals, Socialist Challenge can now be obtained virtually anywhere in England and Wales.

Scotland is a little more difficult, as John Menzies has a near monopoly. We are, at present, awaiting a reply from Menzies to our proposal for them to stock the paper. We

have similarly written to Surridge Dawson.

The fact that Smiths has taken the paper caused a stir among certain diarists in the 'quality' press last week. Both Peter Hillmore in the Guardian and PHS in the Times commented on the decision.

Hillmore noted that Socialist Challenge has 'achieved the accolade of respectability... the only journal of the far left to achieve this distinction.'

He came to the conclusion: 'As far as I am concerned this

means that the longed for revolution is almost upon us....'

'Sir Ian Gilmour aligning himself with the Maoist comrades regarding China as our only hope for salvation and W.H. Smith joining forces with the International Marxists, it's a bit difficult to know which side of the barricades to be on.'

In the Times, the affair was treated much more seriously. PHS concluded by quoting Smiths, who stated they were taking the paper for 'economic reasons solely'.

The Times also mentioned that the condition for the paper being taken by Smiths is that it is read each week by a libel lawyer. That is now being done. Needless to say that is costly.

The possibilities via this Smiths deal are tremendous for a small left-wing paper. However, it is also expensive. We do not receive payment at once, nor do we get the full 15p.

We assume our readers recognise the opportunity this represents. So we ask you to help us by sending in donations

to help cover the costs. We need your money urgently.

This week's fund drive total is respectable — revealing a little more of the slogan behind the bricks — but still leaves us way behind in our attempt to make £2,500 by the end of June. We made £153.12 thanks to the following:

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D. Hacker	10.00
J. Bisset	1.00
S. Page	2.00
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TOTAL	£153.12



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