

Socialist Challenge

House of Commons makes it official
**BRITAIN IS NOW A
 PLUTONIUM STATE**



THE HOUSE of Commons voted on Monday to give planning permission for the new Windscale nuclear reprocessing plant.

An unholy alliance of Labour Government and Tories pushed the measure through, with a raggle-taggle opposition from the Liberals, and a few Scottish Nationalists and left Labourites.

The same newspapers which reported the parliamentary debate also told of the case of a former Windscale worker said to have received the highest ever dose of plutonium contamination in this country.

Raymond Miller has been told there will be a £53 fee

for the necessary medical tests! The National Radiological 'Protection' Board refuses to pay: 'We see it as a case of civil litigation and not one involving an important matter of health.'

That's the sort of concern our rulers have for our safety in the plutonium state!

Leo Abse, one of the few opponents of the Commons order, warned that plutonium could easily fall into the hands of 'psychopathic terrorists of the Red Brigades ilk.' He was way off beam. The real danger comes from the state.

Already the Atomic Energy Authority constables have incredible powers: to carry arms at all times; to

enter premises at will; and to arrest on suspicion. Even the Parker report from the Windscale Inquiry admitted that 'innocent people are certain to be subject to surveillance.'

And this is only the beginning. If the plutonium state goes ahead militants of all kinds will be 'potential terrorists'.

The legal channels for stopping Windscale are exhausted.

As Arthur Scargill has warned: 'If it is necessary to go and sit at Windscale and stop it physically, so be it.'

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EDITORIAL

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Italy after Moro

PRESS REACTION to the killing of Aldo Moro, the Christian Democrat leader kidnapped by the Red Brigades, has been predictably hysterical. In death the most cynical and intelligent capitalist politician has become the Mr Nice of Italian politics.

This touching humanitarianism would be more convincing if it had applied to all those killed in Italy recently — student demonstrators murdered by police for example.

Nevertheless, if the kidnapping of Moro and the slight of the Italian state being made monkeys of for two months was a show of strength by the Red Brigades, the final killing was a sign of their weakness and lack of perspective.

Recovering from their hysteria the bourgeois media tried to find 'sociological' explanations for the Red Brigades. They came up with the standard cliché: children of bourgeois homes revolting against their parents. They then give this a Mediterranean flavour with a few remarks about political instability, rural poverty, the legacy of fascism, and so on.

But the Moro kidnapping has far more specific roots in Italian politics. It took place on the very day when the new government, backed by the Communist Party (PCI), was to have been inaugurated. Moro himself was the architect of centre-left coalitions, and his corpse was left in a 'street' between the two major party headquarters. The symbolism was deliberate and obvious.

The government agreement signed by the PCI includes an austerity programme that makes the Social Contract look mild and gives the police sweeping new powers of search and arrest and almost unlimited use of firearms. The Red Brigades grew up in a decade of closer class collaboration by the traditional party of the Italian working class, as well as utter chaos on the far left.

The Red Brigades were disgusted by what they saw. The irony is that their solution only makes things worse. If the PCI was worried that it would have problems selling the new governmental package to its supporters it can now rest assured. The Moro affair has cemented an unholy and sickening national unity, strengthened the government, and legitimised a quasi-military police presence on the streets. The growing opposition to the PCI within the unions has been isolated and only the most courageous dare to march on the streets.

The whole affair has been a massive defeat for the Italian working class. What's more, this is a conscious strategy on the part of the Red Brigades. Instead of projecting a political alternative to the reformist leaders, they direct their energies towards provoking a strengthening of the state in order to 'radicalise' the working class. This can only spell disaster.

But we still refuse to join the PCI and the Italian state in their witch-hunt. However disastrous the Red Brigades' policies, we utterly condemn the barbarous spectacle of their leaders caged and chained together by the capitalist state.

The party leaders chose this course rather than negotiating for Moro's release. They deliberately and cynically provoked Moro's death. Moro himself made this point in his letters — which have not, for the most part, been published in Britain. They are the ones who must have his death on their consciences.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

A special commemoration of May-June 1968 with articles by Tariq Ali, Alain Krivine, Eric Hobsbawm and Sheila Rowbotham.

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

I am interested in more information about activities in my area.

I would like additional literature and enclose 50p to cover costs.

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ADDRESS

Send to Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper St, London N1.

HOME NEWS

Racism in the unions

Rail Against Racism?

Many people active in the railway trade union movement — whether National Union of Railwaymen, Transport Salaried Staff Association, or ASLEF, the train drivers union, are expressing increasing concern at the spread of racist ideas on the railways. The National Front now has an NF Railwaymen's Association, with the aim of fighting the left in the unions, in addition to their usual role of spreading racial hatred.

How are we to view these developments, and what action do we take to combat them?

The growth of racism in these unions can be explained as part of the spread of racism in the country generally (for example, the Thatcher speech) and as a consequence of the particular situation on the railways.

The specific problem on the railways has arisen because of the general decline of the industry since the last war. Staff levels have been slashed and we have had closures on a vast scale. The response of the trade union leaderships up to now has been inadequate: during the Beeching period many of the cuts were accepted with token opposition and more concern for good redundancy benefits!

COLLAPSE

This has led to a collapse in morale and general feelings of bitterness. In the wages sphere the relative position of railway workers has declined drastically compared with other industries (such as coal, engineering and so on).

The railway industry has a highly centralised bargaining system which institutionalises sectionalism, and a history of paternalistic management involving strict discipline and a rigid grade hierarchy. Thanks to this, and the mentality it gives rise to, a strong left force has never really taken root on the railways.

Perhaps the one exception was the period between 1916 and 1919. Then the newly formed NUR was at the forefront of the militant syndicalist movement. Since that time, there have been strong structural pressures militating against the left: the best terrain for trade union militancy is during periods of prosperity. Since 1926 the rail unions have been constantly on the defensive, despite a minor surge of prosperity after the last war.

FAILURE

The lack of a strong socialist tradition has been aggravated because Labour governments have presided over some of the biggest cuts on the railways. The chronic failures of British Rail have been seen not as a result of the subordination of nationalised industries to monopoly capital, but as a failure of nationalisation itself.

The effect has been general disillusionment with Labour and socialism in general.

GOLDEN AGE

The organisations further left — the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party and so on — have not been beneficiaries. Instead, the

fight is not taken up against racism, we will have only ourselves to blame if the NF establishes itself on the railways.

COROLLARY

The corollary of this is to present a positive programme built around expansion of the industry, better wages and conditions, and industrial unity. To leave the issue at fighting racism alone would be looking only at the effects, and not the cause, of the present problem.

The fight against racism, and all this entails, must begin at the depot, station, yard, and signalbox: we need to challenge racist ideas not let them go by default (as we all have done at one time or

the National Front. The key issue is racism. As yet fascist ideas as such have no influence amongst railway workers and the Front's only claim to support is through its racism.

While we should expose the Front incessantly as a Nazi organisation and show that's where racism can lead to, it is more important to challenge the racist assumptions that many people accept as natural truths.

The impetus for forming such a group — it might be called 'Rail Against Racism' — will inevitably come from the union's left. However, it would be folly to limit

by PAUL SALVESON, a Socialist Challenge reader and secretary of the Bolton branch of the NUR [personal capacity]



situation provides a happy hunting ground for the National Front, particularly in those areas where there has been a big influx of black labour. The NF can hark back to a mythical 'golden age' before nationalisation, the betrayal of the railways by Labour, and mix that with a hatred of the blacks and red 'agitators' in the unions. For some, given the previous analysis, it's a very attractive programme.

At the moment the National Front is weak on the railways: its presence is confined to a handful of activists in the south east and a couple of other areas. However, racist ideas are very prevalent. With the present state of the industry and the country generally, the Front could easily expand. If a vigorous

another). The branch room is also an important arena of struggle, and we should not underestimate the strength of racist feeling among even some 'good' trade unionists.

ACTIVE

The union leaderships must also take a more active stance — paper resolutions achieve very little. And simply expelling fascists from the unions won't get us very far: it could even create a noose for our own necks! The media could seize on it as an instance of trade union 'tyranny' versus human rights (like the recent Sunday Express article did) and thus side step the issue of fascism.

We need a broadly based action group for railway workers opposed to racism and

ourselves to a left wing pressure group. A much wider orientation is needed and sponsorship from union leaderships would be essential to win credibility among broad sections.

What would be the role of such a body? The most important activity could be of a propagandist nature: producing leaflets, pamphlets and posters directed at railway workers. Speakers could be provided for branches and District Councils (these could also affiliate) and articles and others could be sent to 'TSSA Journal', 'Transport Review' and 'Locomotive Journal'. Even BR's magazine 'Rail News' could be tried. (Last year it carried a recruiting ad for the NF Railwaymen's Association).

OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

ANTI-RACIST NEWS

5000 march for Altab Ali

'No more racist murders'

5,000 PEOPLE, the overwhelming majority Asian men, marched last Sunday through torrential rain from the East End to Hyde Park to protest the racist murder of Altab Ali on Thursday 4 May. The demonstration was organised by the Action Committee Against Racist Attacks.

After listening to speeches in Hyde Park and joining up with militants from the Southall Youth Movement and elsewhere, the demonstration moved off to Downing Street following the hearse containing Altab's body — quiet testimony as to where the final responsibility for Altab's murder lay. JAMES GOSLING reports:

The Tower Hamlets police were determined to maintain their reputation for petty vindictiveness. Three Socialist Workers Party stewards were arrested at the assembly point and the whole demonstration was kept waiting in monsoon-like conditions while the police waited for noon — the time for which the permit for the march had been granted.

Such meticulousness has not been demonstrated in the search for Altab's killers. Witnesses coming forward to offer evidence have been just as likely to be questioned about their passports as about the murder.

Police prejudice was underlined by a spokesperson on Monday morning radio who described the demonstration as 'hysterical' and the proposals for vigilante groups as 'very worrying'.

TRADITIONAL

Not surprisingly one of the more popular slogans on the march was 'The British police are the best in the world — Black self-defence!'. There was none of the traditional kow-towing to 'respectable' community leaders from the speakers in the park.

Altab Ali's murder wasn't the first, but the most recent in

a series of racist killings stretching back to the murder of Gurdip Chagger in Southall and two Iranian students in Woodford in the summer of '76.

No one proposed deputations to the police to ask for protection. Instead the emphasis was on organisation and action.

As one Asian speaker put it, if it is only the revolutionaries who are with us today then we must welcome their help with open arms. Unfortunately this was the case. There were only a handful of banners from the trade unions and Communist Party.

Speaking from the Anti-Nazi League, Paul Holborow laid the blame for Altab Ali's murder squarely at the door of Thatcher and Callaghan and all those politicians, Labour as well as Tory, who have recently been involved in a disgusting squabble over who can be 'toughest', that is, most racist, on black immigration.

Socialist Challenge editor, Tariq Ali made a blistering attack on the one time 'left' MP Sydney Bidwell who signed the recent all-party Select Commit-

tee report which could mean the introduction of identity cards.

Ali went on to say that black self-defence was vital, but had to be understood as above all a political struggle which had to be waged throughout the labour movement.

'It's no use just retreating into our communities and thinking we can defend ourselves there. We must join with all those prepared to stand up to racism and fascism. In future we must come out on events like the Anti-Nazi League Carnival. Our strength lies in a fighting unity.'

WEAKNESS

But despite the fighting speeches the demonstration was not without its weaknesses. Large sections on the march took up religious slogans and there were virtually no Asian women present.

Nevertheless it was the militant slogans of the Asian youth that were dominant in the final leg to Downing Street. 'Who Killed Altab Ali?' — 'Racists! Racists!' 'What do we want, what do we want?' — 'Action! Action!'



Part of the demonstration, protesting the death of Altab Ali, on Sunday

IN BRIEF

Students

STUDENTS are planning a national day of action against the Nazis on 28 June. REDMOND O'NEILL, IMG representative on the steering committee of the Student Campaign Against the Nazis, reports.

SCAN was set up following the affiliation of the National Union of Students to the Anti-Nazi League at its Easter conference.

At the campaign's first meeting, the discussion was mainly concerned with whether to include the no platform position in its policies. This proposal was defeated, but the statement of policies that was finally agreed included opposition to racism.

The second meeting was more productive in terms of

planning action. With virtually every political tendency represented, together with the NUS executive, it was decided to hold a national day of action.

On 28 June, a hundred thousand SCAN leaflets will be distributed, as well as local teach-ins on racism and fascism, Rock against Racism gigs, and a host of other activities.

The aim is to take the campaign into every college, especially the Further Education sector where the National Front has been active in recent months.

Such an action campaign represents a real step forward for fighting racism and fascism in the NUS. It is now up to activists in the colleges to build a large student wing of the ANL, by setting up SCAN groups locally and planning local activities.

SCAN will be holding a national conference in October. In the meantime it is an

open democratic structure that offers the best possible means of organizing the student movement against the fascists.

Order badges, leaflets, speakers or RAR bands from: Student Campaign Against the Nazis, 12 Little Newport St, London WC2.

Birmingham

WHEN the NF held a youth rally in Birmingham on 18 February, the local youth came out onto the streets to oppose the Front and the cops who protected them.

Before the day's events were over, 35 people had been arrested and nine singled out for the charge of 'causing an affray.'

Committal proceedings start on 2 June, and the cases will then go to a jury trial in the Crown Court where sentences of up to two years may be handed out.

Anyone who witnessed the

arrests should write to Socialist Challenge urgently.

Preston

PRESTON Trades Council has called a picket of the Waterloo Hotel, where the National Front meets in the town.

The Front in Preston has never been large, but in the local elections it stood a record of 15 candidates in the 22 Preston wards.

The results were not good — influenced no doubt by allegations published in the local press that the Front had tricked people into signing nominations forms by not telling them what they were signing.

It is feared that the bad election results may provoke the Front to take up a vigorous campaign against the trades council and the local ANL. The picket of the Front's meeting is at 6.30pm on 18 May.

News from nowhere

The Spider's Strategem

IN A speech in Chatham on May Day, Harold Wilson pointed out to Margaret Thatcher that her obsession with communists was somewhat absurd. The real enemies of the state were the Trotskyists.

This statement caused immense irritation in these offices. The Editor dashed off a spur-of-the-moment missive to the former Prime Minister. It is reprinted here with the reply — a clear sign of the way in which socialist disunity and sectarianism is utilised by top people:

"Dear Harold Wilson, I was astounded to read your statement attacking Thatcher for concentrating her fire on the communists rather than Trotskyists.

It is absurd to encourage a Tory leader to embark on a witch-hunt against anyone on the left. I was also somewhat surprised to read that you believe that Trotskyists offer no positive solutions to the present crisis. This is an absolute travesty.

I enclose our manifesto for one borough in London for your perusal. I would be interested in your comments on the same.

If ever you are passing Upper Street do drop in. I am sure we could convince you that our alternative is much more practical than what is being currently offered by your successor and his Tory opponents.

I hope you are keeping well. Yours, etc. Tariq Ali."

"Dear Tariq Ali, Thank you for your letter of 2nd May.

I am, of course, well aware of the emanations of views of policy put forward by those that rather loosely have been called by me — and yourself — Trotskyists.

I suspect we would both feel that this is a rather general phrase and that those who proclaim the relevance of his views to present national and world problems are themselves sharply divided one from another as to what they would suggest, often operating under different names with presumably differences of approach. This fact was certainly highlighted by the action of the such groups in nominating candidates for the Lambeth by-election. The votes received by each did not suggest to me that the electors felt, as you do, that Trotskyists have positive solutions to put to the present crisis.

Despite your courtesy in sending me a copy of an election address by two candidates in the recent local government elections, I cannot feel, having read it, that it changes the views I expressed in the Rochester and Chatham Constituency on May Day.

Yours sincerely, Harold Wilson."

Men Only and Atlas

HILARY DRIVER, a socialist feminist and SC supporter in Southall reports: The Atlas Bookshop in Southall has moved into newer and bigger premises on the Broadway. Its packed with really vital books on astrology.

That on its own would not be so bad. But there are, in addition, the following magazines prominently displayed: Forum, Men Only, Playboy, Fiesta and Knave. There is also a shelf of political literature with books by Gramsci and the new British Road to Socialism. Yes, you've guessed it! It's the bookshop of the local Communist Party.

When I asked one of the shop staff why such disgusting sexist magazines were on sale, he replied: 'We just get it sent from W.H. Smith's.' 'Why don't you send it back?' I asked. 'Oh, we will,' was the reply. 'When?' 'Soon'. Many feminists in the area, I assured him, would be back 'soon' to check.

In any event it still doesn't explain why these magazines have to be displayed and sold.

Getting Fonda of Property and Religion

TOM HAYDEN was one of the best-known antiwar activists in the United States in the Sixties. Eldridge Cleaver was a leader of the Black Panther Party and author of influential books such as 'Soul on Ice'.

Hayden married Jane Fonda, actress and peace activist some years back. A few weeks ago they bought a ranch in California. The ranch had a dozen sitting tenants. Hayden evicted them all. One of them, Ms Michelle Segal protested rather sharply and reminded Hayden of his past. In her words: 'He said he could sympathise with me because he was a renter all his life and he could never afford to own his own home until he married Jane.'

Cleaver became a convert to Christianity two summers ago. He told a meeting of the Evangelical Press Association in California last week: 'The American challenge is not to undergo a forced mixing of people to make a bouquet, but to sincerely make applications to the principles of Jesus Christ.'

Waiting for Monty

LAST WEEK we published an appeal in the form of an open letter to Erich Honecker, the top person in East Germany, calling for the release of the imprisoned Marxist writer, Rudolf Bahro. The appeal was signed by a broad range of intellectuals and Labour MPs.

There were, however, no signatures from leading members of the British Communist Party. We had approached various CP members such as Monty Johnstone, Geoff Roberts, Eric Hobsbawm, Sue Slipman, etc., to sign the appeal. We contacted some of them to remind them of the urgency of the matter. We are still waiting for a reply.

It is obvious that the involvement of CP members with the Bahro Defence would enormously aid in building a campaign to ensure his early release. We fail to understand why not a single member of the CP we have approached has so far signed the appeal. If this is a party decision, then it should be published in Comment, where the issue can be debated. If it is simply an 'informal instruction', then surely it can be ignored.

OPEN FORUM

What price popularity?

THEY DID PASS

On May Day, International Workers Day, there was a major setback in the building of the anti-fascist, anti-racist struggle. One thousand fascists under the banner of the National Front marched from Portland Place in London's West End to Cornet Square, Hoxton in the East End with not a glimmer of opposition to them.

While bewildered ANL supporters who happened to be in the West End asked, 'What's happening, where is the opposition?' the National Front marched by with flags waving, shouting 'The National Front is a fascist front, join the National Front, Reds out.'

How did this take place given the recent increase in the growth of the anti-fascist anti-racist struggle? In what direction is our movement being led?

The fascists have never marched through East London since the war without a major opposition mobilising against them and yet, 24 hours after the biggest anti-fascist event seen in London since before the war, anti-fascist forces were unable to mobilise to oppose this march.

We first heard on Wednesday that the Socialist Challenge had received an anonymous telephone call saying that the National Front were trying to get police permission for a London march.

The London Co-ordinating Committee informed the SWP, the ANL

and Searchlight of the rumours and endeavoured to cross check information. On Friday we became aware of rumours from other sources that the National Front were definitely planning a march on Hoxton.

On Saturday night Searchlight informed one of us, the Communist Party, the Anti-Nazi League, the SWP and the London May Day Committee that the National Front were mobilising their members from all over the country for a march starting in London's West End.

Members of the Hackney Committee Against Racism then tried to get the organisations participating in the Carnival to produce a leaflet calling for a mass mobilisation on May Day, and to use the Carnival to organise mass opposition to the NF march.

We met with a virtually blank wall. When we made approaches to the platform to get an announcement made from the platform at the Carnival the organisers refused to do so on the grounds that there wasn't time to organise a counter demonstration that they could effectively control.

Since the growth of the ANL there have been a number of mobilisations against fascist meetings particularly in London where the opposition has been passive and shrinking rapidly. At the Ilford by-election the picket was about 2,500; at Brixton the

opposition was less than 1,000.

On May Day the opposition was nil. Does this mean that we can no longer count on the mobilising ability of the SWP and other militants within the ANL to go along with a militant opposition to openly fascist and racist organisations in this country?

All organisations concerned, including ourselves, should look at where we are going.

Was mobilisation possible? On Sunday 30 April in excess of 80,000 people were mobilised in London. If we had tried to mobilise sections of this large crowd for a demonstration the following day how many people would have responded? To what degree could such an event as the Carnival have been used to increase the political awareness of people who do not normally take an active part in politics?

We do not decry the idea of holding such events as the Carnival but the organisational energy needed must not drain our resources so that it becomes impossible to mount large scale immediate mobilisations against the National Front when it takes to the streets.

Lewisham may not get the positive publicity that the Carnival has received but that in itself is a good reason for asking who benefits from diverting protest off the streets, into the parks and away from direct confrontation with racists and fascists?

We must not neglect the political tasks needed if events such as the Carnival are to be used to increase people's awareness and generate specific local responses to anti-fascist, anti-racist campaigns. Membership of a national anti-fascist body must not become a ticket to inactivity that absolves the anti-fascist, anti-racist movement from the political and moral obligation to oppose racism and fascism wherever and whenever it appears.

Sunday's Carnival through the East End was a great national success. But on Monday we in the East End had the shame of watching the fascists

march unopposed through an area with a large black population and an area of historic opposition to fascism.

Brian Smith, Hackney Committee Against Racism, Mary Smith, HCAR; Hackney Teachers Association; Judith Hinman, HCAR, Hackney Socialist Feminists; Kevin McDonnell, HCAR, East London Big Flame; Pat Wooding, Hackney Socialist Feminists; Richard Kirkwood, HCAR, Hackney Workers League, International Socialist Alliance; Natasha Sivanandan, HCAR, ANL; Ron Hebler, Hackney councillor; Sue Loewenstein, HCAR; Ernie Greenwood, Communist Party; Mike Martin, HCAR; Brian Nicholson, Transport and General Workers Union; Peter Lewis, HCAR; Derek Kotz, National Union of School Students; Frances Webber, Demonstration Defence Unit; Bell Harris, Tower Hamlets Movement Against Racism and Fascism; Alan Lenton, HCAR; Jon Duveen, Hackney North and Stoke Newington CLP; Tim Hall, Hackney Teachers Association and IMG; Mark Douglas, Agent, Hackney North CLP.

All signatures above are in a personal capacity.

NO MORE SOUR GRAPES

THE BRIAN SMITH et al letter can be precisely characterised as one thing: political sour grapes. Behind all the 'facts' regarding the NF demo on May Day lies one thing — a sectarian attack on the Anti-Nazi League and its principal builders, the Socialist Workers Party.

But let's start with the facts. Socialist Challenge was telephoned on Wednesday, 26 April, about the possibility of an NF demo on May Day in the East End. We were told it would probably start from Portland or Portman Square and go to the Hoxton area but exact times and places we were not informed of. We immediately rang both the ANL and the Anti-Racist Anti-Fascist Co-ordinating Committee (ARAFCC) to inform them and see whether they had received similar information.

CONTRADICTION

We suggested to the League that if adequate information was received an announcement should be made from the Carnival to call a counter demo. No more was heard until the Saturday night when Brian Smith rang to say that ARAFCC had been able to confirm the NF demo.

A meeting was suggested early Sunday morning to discuss a counter-mobilisation. Only a Socialist Challenge comrade turned up. This informed the ANL of the NF demo, but as we had not been given details and no one else had informed us of them, the ANL decided that an announcement would be of no use. If the comrades of the Hackney Committee Against Racism or ARAFCC had the detailed information why didn't they inform everybody of it?

If they did not have the information, how could they complain that the ANL — who say they received numerous contradictory factual reports — was not prepared to make a hopeless announcement for anti-fascists to mobilise sometime, somewhere, somehow in London to counter an NF demo the following day? (Remember how we criticised the SWP for the ridiculous farce that occurred in Stockport at the time of the 8 October Tameside mobilisation?)

Indeed, one wonders why ARAFCC off its own bat could mobilise absolutely nothing for May Day but had to rely on the League? Why, instead of berating the ANL for not calling a counter-demo on which it had no hard information, didn't the leading comrades of the ARAFCC go to the organisers of the London May Day demo (5,000 strong) and get them to re-organise their route to the East End to counter the NF march, or at least encourage anti-fascist and left groups to join an anti-fascist picket? Of course, one only has to ask these questions to know the answers.

In any case this isn't the real point of the comrades' letter. Of course it's a bad thing that the NF marched unchallenged. But how can any politically sane person say that a semi-secret NF march of 1,000 at the most, protected by 5,000 police, the day after an 80,000 strong anti-fascist demonstration, is 'a major setback in the building of the anti-fascist, anti-racist struggle'?

How would the mass of people, nationally and locally, black and white, have seen events on Sunday and May Day? As a massive victory for the left and the anti-fascist



'THE Carnival was the most successful anti-fascist event we have seen in this country since the 1930s. No amount of sniping can erase that fact from the consciousness of thousands of anti-fascist activists.'

movement, and not the NF. You can bet the NF feels the same, which is why there has been a spate of vicious racist assaults and even a murder in Spitalfields since.

More disturbing though are the insinuations against the ANL and the organised far left. In particular, to suggest that the failure of the League and the left to mobilise on May Day indicates a decision to steer away from open and militant opposition to the NF.

We are keen to see the ANL committed from its conference to a policy of mass action to stop the fascists by any means necessary and to democratise its structure. The Carnival is an indication of the enormous potential the anti-fascist movement has, not an example of

POSITIVE

'diverting protests off the streets, into the parks and away from direct confrontations with racists and fascists'.

Existing anti-fascist committees and ARAFCC have a positive role to

play if (and in the case of ARAFCC it is becoming an increasingly big 'if') they see their job as winning the new forces brought into action by the ANL to a more conscious anti-racist and anti-fascist stance, e.g. taking up 'no immigration controls', 'black self-defence', etc.

The truth is that a large section of ARAFCC is at the moment choosing to marginalise itself through a sectarian attitude to the League. At recent meetings it has gone so far as to oppose having an ANL speaker at its June conference. It is also opposed to sponsoring the ANL.

We have criticised, and will continue to do so, the real weaknesses of the ANL, as well as the sectarian antics of some of its SWP supporters. But the essential question the anti-racist movement must answer is this: Can we consider the problems of the ANL outside the framework of the enormous contribution it has made towards building an anti-fascist movement? Or do we regard the ANL as a diversion from some supposedly real struggle which is taking place?

The Carnival was the most successful anti-fascist event we have seen in this country since the 1930s. No amount of sniping can erase that fact from the consciousness of thousands of anti-fascist activists.

UNITED

The task of anti-racist committees should be to help build the ANL and politically influence the new forces being drawn into it. We have pointed out that the gap between the anti-racist committees and the new ANL activists was potentially counter-productive. Unless the ARAFCC comrades understand and combat this they will marginalise themselves.

We will be arguing for building a united movement at both the ARAFCC and the ANL conferences. Sectarianism is a grave disservice to the overwhelming majority of activists, who want to be involved in concrete struggles against racists and fascists.

Socialist Challenge Editorial Board.

Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

The Claridges strike

Learning from failure

Why did the two-week strike by 150 workers at Claridges Hotel end so abruptly? The 150 General and Municipal Workers' Union members came out on strike for the first time in the hotel's 163-year history.

The workers were demanding reinstatement of a shop steward — sacked, ostensibly, for 'incompetence' — and union recognition. Their dispute was promised complete union backing. They were determined to win. But the strike collapsed.

CLAIRE SALISBURY takes a look at the lessons which can be drawn from the strike's failure and urges support for the 20 May 'Day of Solidarity' with Garners Steak House strikers.

The Claridges workers had talks with their GMWU Regional Organiser Gerry Tilston before coming out on strike. Tilston promised them official backing and full supporting action. Yet after two weeks the strikers had received no strike pay; nor had there been supporting industrial action in other unionised hotels.

Furthermore, the stopping of supplies to Claridges was only partially successful. John Bruce, GMWU London catering branch chairperson, was sceptical about the union's promises of concrete support when they were made. The

absence of strike pay confirmed his doubts.

Despite the frequent presence of Regional Organiser Tilston on the picket line, the strikers were sufficiently demoralised after nearly two weeks to make approaches to management. After talks, the chefs, the waiters and then the chambermaids returned to work.

In the light of the failure of the Metropole strike, John Bruce has said 'Rank and file catering workers must form their own network throughout the industry...to help each other, and put pressure on their union'.

Certainly the Claridges



GARNERS strikers. See What's Left for details of pickets and Day of Action.

DAY OF SOLIDARITY
MAY 20
 SUPPORT OUR FIGHT AGAINST SLAVE LABOUR IN THE CATERING INDUSTRY

FIGHT UNTIL WE WIN
 TGWU OFFICIAL STRIKE for TRADE UNION RECOGNITION
 4th MONTH
GARNERS STEAK HOUSES STRIKERS

strikers could have done so much more to help themselves had they known what to expect. They could have recruited more members before coming out, organised their own strike fund and liaised with branches in other hotels for supporting action.

Once on strike they could have insisted on union assistance with broad pickets, the production of strike bulletins, and more effective organisation of boycott.

The collapse of the Claridges dispute must have had a demoralising effect on the Garners Steak House strikers, whose struggle for union recognition drags on in the West End despite real determination by the 100 or so strikers (mass pickets, demonstrations, strike bulletins, strike pay and benefits).

Restaurant chain owner Cyril Margolis is no ordinary employer. It seems he would rather go bankrupt than recognise the TGWU as his workforce's union. Effective picketing and public support are crucial to the strikers' morale, and hence to their success.

Of the three major catering disputes over the last half-year, two — at the Metropole hotel and at Claridges — have foundered.

As for the present — it is up to all of us to make the Garners Steak Houses strike for union recognition a success. A trio of failures could do incalculable damage to the faltering progress of hotel and catering unionisation.

the action committee. 'We're shattered and disgusted that he's taken this decision without reference to anyone and totally ignoring all the people who've made it plain they want us to stay.

'Ennals has already stopped the emergency bed service bringing in patients, which is really threatening. It's vital that pickets begin again.'

The Support Committee meets in the EGA every Tuesday at 7pm. Its immediate tasks are to build a regular picket and to rebuild local support. If you want to help contact Arthur Churchley at the EGA, 01-387 2501.

is a 'well woman clinic' which the hospital is ready to open and requesting money for. The clinic would not only provide general health check ups, including breast and cervical cancer screening, but would give women an opportunity to discuss health problems without the need for a letter from a GP.

The AHA refuses to finance this, but the hospital has held meetings about women's health anyway and is planning to hold a 'women's health fair' locally.

Much of the press has given the impression that the battle for the EGA is already lost, simply because that is what the authorities have decided. But they will find it difficult to close the EGA. The staff are united in their determination to fight on.

Myra Trevelyan adds: Ennals' announcement on Tuesday brought a furious reaction from the EGA staff.

'We're now more determined than ever to fight back,' said Vera Wagstaff, a member of

Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital

EGA stays!

HEALTH Minister David Ennals' announcement on Tuesday that the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital is due to close on 21 July means that action is vital.

The work-in at the women's hospital in London has been going on for two years, with outside support tending to slip away. But 60 attended a supporters' meeting on 9 May.

ROBIN WHITE, a NUPE shop steward, reports on the campaign.

At a meeting on 24 April, the NE Thames Regional Health Authority put the boot into the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson. It agreed overwhelmingly to support the recommendations of its team of officers that:

'The EGA was surplus to the requirements of the Camden and Islington population.

'There was insufficient need for a hospital for women to justify the high expenditure, and therefore;

'Subject to the approval of the Secretary of State, the hospital should be closed as soon as possible.

The recommendation to close the hospital lies in the

face of promises made by two supporters of the EGA. There are rumours that if the EGA is saved it will be as a private hospital — apparently there are buyers around.

This would be a total betrayal of the hundreds of people who have fought to save the hospital. The EGA shop stewards committee, with the backing of all their Secretaries of State, and relies upon facts that were vigorously countered by staff and supporters, are completely opposed to any such deal.

The EGA stays as part of the Health Service or not at all. The struggle is not only to save the hospital, but also to extend its facilities. One such facility

Journalists angry

THE Journalists Union called off the strike action against Thomsons last week, but the Hemel Hempstead journalists are still on strike.

In negotiations with management the NUJ settled on full back pay for the period of the dispute, and no dismissals pending arbitration.

However the day following the agreement a letter was received from Thomsons, which stated that journalists who left prior to any decision in arbitration, would have to refund all the back pay.

This was unacceptable to the Hemel journalists. They decided to continue their strike action. In other areas there has been a return to work. In Cardiff, journalists were incensed at the decision.

It came at a time when their own newsletter was selling well and the local Thomson newspaper was beginning to lose advertising. The usual lack of solidarity between the newspaper unions was shown when the print unions instructed their members to cross the picket line.

But many South Wales trade unionists had been giving their support — including the South Wales miner's conference. And many press officers and union representatives were refusing to give information to the Thomson papers.

Despite the instruction to return to work the journalists don't believe they are defeated. The original issue, the Hemel Hempstead journalists' refusal to sell jobs, has not yet been settled.

Other grievances over pay and conditions have come to the fore, and Thomsons may yet find that hard-line lockout tactics have only increased the militancy of provincial journalists.

Oxford nursery

A RALLY is to be held on 27 May in Oxford to develop the scattered but growing resistance to cuts into a national fightback. Despite the eviction of the nursery class by the Council's bailiffs, the class continues, and support is growing for a fight to prevent further closures.

The rally will be addressed by speakers from the Hounslow Hospital Occupation Committee and from other groups of militants active against the cuts.

Everyone active against the cuts, concerned about them or facing them is welcome to this meeting. Information from: Chris Young, 38 Harst St, Oxford.

NALGO meeting

A NATIONAL meeting of Socialist Challenge supporters in NALGO is to be held on 20 May.

It is not confined to supporters of Socialist Challenge — all those who agree with the ideas recently presented in the paper by NALGO members about the impasse of the left in the union are also invited, irrespective of other political differences.

The meeting will be from 11 am to 5pm next Saturday at the Argyle Community Centre, Argyle St, London WC1.

A pooled fare will operate. Anyone requiring childcare facilities or overnight accommodation should contact the organisers, National NALGO Meeting, PO Box 50, London N1.

Abortion demo

AT ITS conference last month, the National Abortion Campaign decided to throw its weight behind a campaign for day-care abortion facilities. SARAH ROELOFS and TERRY CONWAY report.

Day care allows women to have an abortion by the quickest and easiest method available. Until recently, women in Tameside had the choice of opting for menstrual extraction as an abortion method. But this is no longer the case.

The 1967 Abortion Act requires that a woman has to be certified as pregnant before an abortion can be performed. Menstrual extraction is a method that is best used when it is too early for reliable pregnancy tests.

It is the extraction by suction of the contents of the uterus, and can be used as a treatment for heavy or painful periods, or as an abortion method between 10 and 18 days from the first missed period.

It is far superior to the usual vacuum extraction or curettage methods. It takes only 10 minutes and there is no need for an anaesthetic.

A doctor in Tameside is being prosecuted for using this technique.

The pernicious use of a legal technicality has deprived Tameside women of access to the best early abortion method available. Women everywhere should have the right to choose menstrual extraction.

NAC is asking everyone who supports women's liberation to go to Manchester on 20 May and join the demonstration that has been called. For details of transport etc. contact: NAC, 30 Camden Rd, London NW1. Tel: 01-485 4303.

**Every child a wanted child
 Every mother a willing mother**



Women in the Tameside Area have been deprived of the abortion by Menstrual Aspiration Service because of a legal technicality.

Demo. May 20th 1.00 pm. West End Centre John St. Ashton-u-L.

Grunwick

THE WAKE BEFORE THE DEATH

'The Grunwick strike is over. Let's be realistic. Let's face it.'

With these words, Kent miners' leader, Jack Dunn, summed up Saturday's national conference in support of the Grunwick strike.

Dunn had chaired the 300-strong delegate conference. His remarks were in tune with the general theme taken up by most of the platform speakers. Strike committee secretary, Mamoud Ahmed, said 'The strikers will never call off the strike. If it's called off, the APEX leaders will be responsible'.

TRADES COUNCIL

The Trades Council executive committee's assessment of the Grunwick strike was given by its chairperson, Tom Durkin: 'The Grunwick strikers were not beaten by Ward and his Tory and NAFF allies... What defeated them was the weakness that has been a fundamental one within our movement since 1926. That is the domination of the right wing.'

This acceptance that the strike was already lost brought criticism from a number of delegates. The engineering convenor at British Rail's Acton Works said he hadn't anticipated coming to a wake. A delegate from Southampton Trades Council said that if he'd known he was coming to a funeral, he would have donned a black suit!

Alan Thornett, deputy convenor at British Leyland's Cowley plant, said that the strike was no easier and no more difficult to win today than it was when they'd walked out in August 1976.

Jonathan Silberman, NUJ Magazine branch delegate at the conference, agreed that it was the right wing trade union leaders that had brought the strike to such a low ebb. But how were they able to do



JACK DUNN chairing the Grunwick solidarity conference in Wembley last weekend

Photo: LAURENCE SPARKHAM (IFL)

so after 11 July when it was out of their control? he asked. Can the strike committee wrest control back from them now? Preston GEC APEX secretary

John Parkinson said that without the Trades Council the strike would never have taken off. But the strategy of Trades Council leaders of more

pressure on trade union leaders to act was useless. The leaders had refused to do so.

Worse, they had acted as open strike breakers when they suspended the hunger strikers. In such a situation, we have to be prepared to build a movement independent of them, he said.

Brent Trades Council Secretary, Jack Dromey denounced the criticisms of Brent Trades Council leaders. He said these sort of criticisms were only

made for sectarian purposes. They opened up divisions on the left to the advantage of the right wing.

Jack Dromey answered none of the points raised — he simply argued that the strikers and the Trades Council were united even when they disagreed. Criticism of the Trades Council leaders was a disgusting attempt to divide the strikers and Trades Council, he said.

Civil servants WHAT WERE THE REAL GAINS FOR THE LEFT?

THE moderate majority of the executive of the Civil and Public Services Association has admitted that some of its activities have been financed by the employers-sponsored Truemed outfit.

Union members responded by throwing them out, and returning an overwhelming majority of Broad Left supporters to all the main posts in the union. This includes three Socialist Challenge supporters, one of whom is on the NEC itself.

The atmosphere in Brighton was euphoric. But what gains have the left really made at the conference and what are our tasks for the year ahead? A CPSA delegate reports.

REJECT

On pay, while the conference voted unanimously to reject all forms of incomes policy, it endorsed the Pay Research Unit, that iniquitous system of assessing civil servants' pay on the basis of so-called 'fair comparison' with industrial clerical workers.

A proposal was defeated for a delegate pay conference where members could democratically decide upon their own pay claim and what action to take to win it. Socialist Challenge supporters will continue to campaign actively amongst the

membership for the rejection of the present system.

On racism and fascism, the conference voted to affiliate to the Anti Nazi League, and to set up a sub-committee of the NEC to campaign against racialism.

Socialist Challenge supporters will campaign for 'Civil Servants against the Nazis' committees in union branches to keep the NEC in line and make sure it supports the initiatives of the ANL.

On women's rights, the conference passed a motion rejecting the employers' proposals for nurseries which amount to little more than child minding. It instructed the NEC to campaign for properly-financed nurseries provided by local authorities.

Delegates also supported the principle of creche facilities at union conferences.

We will be campaigning in branches around such needs as abortion on demand — something so far neglected in the CPSA, despite its support on paper for the demands of the Working Women's Charter Campaign.

One positive step was a

meeting called by women delegates to fight the rampant sexism at the conference and to prioritise campaigns for women's liberation.

There was a good attendance at the meeting, but it was

somewhat marred by the presence of unsympathetic men protesting against the right of women to organise separately.

The meeting elected a committee to convene a

SC Trade Union Conference 'UNITY IN ACTION AND POLITICAL DEMANDS'

TESSA VAN GELDEREN, a member of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education, and of Brent Trades Council explains why she will be coming to the Socialist Challenge Trade Union Conference.

The recent pay settlement for teachers such as myself in higher education was in line with that of other public sectors, and showed the bankruptcy of the NATFHE leadership's policy.

We failed to recover the money that we have lost over the past few years, and the very important demand to merge the bottom two pay scales has

been dropped without so much as a whimper.

This demand affects the majority of the membership, and particularly women who are, of course, mainly to be found in the first grade. It was a valuable step in breaking down the huge differentials imposed by Houghton, which are hierarchical and divisive.

WAGES

And it is not only on wages that the union has failed us. Little action has been taken on cuts in public expenditure, which affect our jobs and our standard of teaching. Nor has a

fight been launched against the racist quotas on foreign students and the immigration controls which buttress these quotas.

FIGHT BACK

There is an urgent need to fight back with class struggle demands across the trade union movement. That is why the forthcoming Socialist Challenge Trade Union Conference will be important. It will be a forum to discuss these vital questions facing all militants in the unions, but it must lay the basis for beginning the fight-back.

This need becomes even more urgent when we look at struggles such as Grunwick. As a member of Brent Trades Council, I have been involved with the strike from the beginning in August 1976. It has been evident that the spontaneous response of the labour movement — magnificent as it was, and an essential pre-requisite for any successful outcome to the dispute — was not enough.

What was required was unity in action and political demands that would carry the struggle forward, in spite of the bureaucracy of APEX and the TUC.

Such unity can only come about by militants in the labour movement being prepared to work together and not subordinate the class struggle to the needs of their own



TESSA VAN GELDEREN

Photo: MARK RUSHER (IFL)

individual organisation. That is why I welcome the conference and hope that other tendencies in the trade union movement will respond to it in a positive way.

A victory at Grunwick would not just have aided the struggle at Garners and Sandersons, but would have been a victory for the whole working class. The conference must learn the lessons of Grunwick and take it back into the labour movement. With all the recent defeats we've suffered, the need for a class struggle tendency was never more urgent.

Public employees WHICH HORSE WILL THE EXECUTIVE RIDE?

'WHEN the firemen lost, all the public service unions lost too'. That's what Alan Yates, President of the National Union of Public Employees, said when he opened the union's conference on Sunday. RICH PALSER reports from Margate.

On Monday the debate on pay brought a different attitude from the union leadership.

Then Alan Fisher tried to defend union policy on wages by claiming that the firemen had scored a victory!

The turn-around came when the executive supported a resolution calling for public employees' wages to be linked to the average industrial wage — as the firemen had been promised before. At the same time, conference endorsed a 'union wages strategy' to win a 35 hour week and a £60 minimum wage.

Which of these two horses the executive chooses to ride in the next wage negotiations will depend on whether delegates

supporting an alternative approach can have an effect in the union. Such an alternative approach was set out in a resolution, defeated at conference, which called for a £65 minimum wage; a 35 hour week; and for a one per cent rise in wages with every rise in the cost of living; as well as a number of other benefits.

To win this, the resolution called for a common claim and settlement date for all NUPE members, for action alongside other public sector workers and for a special union conference to decide on action should the

management fail to meet the claim.

As the bulletin of the Campaign for Action in NUPE commented on last year's claim: 'Instead of fighting alongside the firemen, the Executive was content to give them money and await the outcome of their strike'.

It will be up to CAN to organise to see that the union pursues its objectives for a £60 minimum wage and does not leave its members like the firemen whose fates were tied to increases in the average industrial wage.

HOME NEWS

17-18 June Charter Conference Labour's rights for women are hollow!

'THE Equal Opportunities Commission was not set up to lead the womens liberation movement. We were set up by the Government and we are a creature of the Government'.

With these words, Eric Robinson of the EOC defended its 1977 Annual Report.

This creature performed again last month. Its annual offering is further proof of how empty Labour's equal rights legislation really is.

On the EOC's own admission, the progress towards equal pay has slowed down markedly since 1970. Between 1970 and 1976 average hourly earnings of women increased from 63 per cent to 75 per cent of male earnings. The following year saw an increase of only 0.4 per cent.

The EOC report stated there was little chance of women achieving equal pay 'in the near future.' Indeed in order to prevent the progress towards equal pay stopping completely, it suggests bringing in the aid of the Sex Discrimination Act.

But will the SDA make any difference? Even in the area where it is supposed to be

prepared to fight these. Its cuts in nurseries and fertility control, in education and training have the opposite effect and compound women's oppression in the family.

The trade union leaders haven't proved any more helpful. Women workers in Liverpool's Fashion Design Centre have occupied the factory in defence of their right to work — they have been denied any real active support of the national labour movement.

The Labour leaders mouth worthy phrases from the sidelines but fail time and again to offer real support. Clearly women cannot rely on the courts, tribunals or the goodwill of the Labour leaders. Women have to organise themselves, together with others prepared to fight back.

The Working Women's Charter: Where do we go from here?

June 17th and 18th 1978

Manchester Polytechnic Students Union, Cavendish House, Cavendish Street, All Saints, MANCHESTER

effective, it has done little good. By September 1977 it had heard only 141 cases of discrimination in employment — and of these, only 25 were successful.

Its biggest weakness is that it does not tackle the material conditions of the inequality and oppression of women. As the Act itself says, the law does not apply to differences of treatment on other grounds 'e.g. because a potential employee is not sufficiently qualified for a particular job or because a potential borrower lacks financial standing.'

This means that the Act can only be of real help to women who have already overcome unequal education, financial dependence on men, and the burdens of childrearing and domestic responsibilities.

The Labour Government has made it quite clear it is not

Women are prepared to fight, and maximum support should be given to the struggles of women like those at Grunwick, the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, Hounslow Hospital and the Fashion Design Centre in Liverpool.

A campaign aimed at the labour movement around the demands of the Working Women's Charter is particularly important. The Charter demands highlight the material pre-conditions for women's liberation.

The 1978 national conference of the Working Women's Charter Campaign will attempt to ensure that this potential is fully met. All those committed to a real fight for women's liberation should be sure that they are there.

I.L.P.

SQUARE ONE PUBLICATIONS

Recent publications for labour movement activists

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Leeds LS11 9LW

send for details of all our literature

Socialist Challenge Conference

Don't dilute the politics

PAT WARD, a Socialist Challenge supporter in Crawley, a member of her local women's group, and an activist in a parents' liaison committee fighting education cutbacks, joins the debate on the paper.

Richard Kirkwood started his contribution to the Socialist Challenge debate in last week's issue by asking about the vanguard which we are trying to reach. His conclusions annoyed me!

He seems to have the same approach as the Socialist Workers' Party. Its biggest weakness is the idea that the paper has to 'go down' to the level of worker militants. That's not what revolutionary politics is all about.

It's wrong on two counts. First, I think, Comrade Kirkwood is patronising towards working class people. Take me. I have never been out to work. I've been isolated in the home with four children. By all accounts, I should be a reactionary.

Yet I don't have any problems relating to Socialist Challenge as it is. And what's this about jargon? Richard Kirkwood talks as if political language is a foreign language. I think we need to understand political words, and to get militants used to using them in their everyday language.

We need political language to understand revolutionary politics. If we water down the paper, we won't reach first base. Just think of the implications of what Comrade Kirkwood says.

If militants can't understand Socialist Challenge as it is, then what's going to happen when we demand that companies open their books to the workers? The conclusions I would draw from Comrade Kirkwood is that we shouldn't raise the demand

because if we ever won it, the workers wouldn't understand the books anyway!

We do need to repeat basic political ideas. On that point I agree with Richard Kirkwood. But that's quite different from making Socialist Challenge simple. We don't want a Daily Mirror. A 10 year old can read the Mirror in two minutes. We have a different job to do. We want to win people to revolutionary socialism.

The length of articles in the paper are just not the big problem that Kirkwood claims! Militants do have a lot to learn if they are to become revolutionaries.

We want to encourage them to develop their theories. And if they can read the longer articles in the paper, they will find it much easier to read Trotsky or Lenin. I find that myself.

The other disagreement I have with Richard Kirkwood's article is about the political control of the paper. He wants

to throw out the baby with the bathwater. He seems to be saying that if other groups became involved in the editorial board then the International Marxist Group should hide its politics and only what can be agreed upon by all should appear in the paper.

STRENGTH

This is rubbish. That's not the kind of united paper we need. We want sharp political debate. The IMG should put across its politics, and so should other groups.

The great strength of the paper is that it's the only one on the left that is open to revolutionaries to put their ideas. But let's not water down its politics to only what can be agreed upon.

I think that there are also problems about Socialist Challenge becoming the paper of Socialist Unity. Socialist Unity is an electoral platform. It involves many different kinds of people — even social democrats and Stalinists in some cases.

PROBLEMS

Obviously Socialist Challenge can support Socialist Unity and give it a platform. But it's not the case that either the supporters of Socialist Unity or even the candidates are all necessarily revolutionaries. And they won't become revolutionaries overnight.

So to make Socialist Challenge the paper of Socialist Unity has real problems.

The job of a revolutionary paper is clear in my mind. We don't want to say that what's needed is just more, more, and more wage claims. We want to get militants involved in politics at every level, and to participate in every campaign.

I don't think Richard Kirkwood's ideas about the paper will take us towards that aim.



Conference resolution

'1. 'Our Common Ground' summarises policies on the main features of today's international working class struggle which divide revolutionaries from reformists. Conference endorses 'Our Common Ground' as the sole basis for participation in Socialist Challenge.

Clearly Socialist Challenge will take up other questions beyond those posed in 'Our Common Ground'. However, any minorities in the paper will have the possibility of expressing differences on these questions in a way determined by the paper's National Committee.

2. Socialist Challenge will continue to campaign for a unified revolutionary organisation in Britain. It will promote and support all steps which aid this process of principled unity.

In particular, the paper will back the electoral campaign of Socialist Unity, as well as the activity of local Socialist Unity groups which allow joint work and collaboration to test out the possibilities of working towards a common organisation.

Socialist Challenge supporters will thus fight to win support for the paper's Trade Union Conference on 1 July. The Conference aims to begin to group conscious fighters for the paper's policies. Of course, neither the conference — nor future meetings are counterposed to existing groupings in the unions.

4. Conference urges Socialist Challenge supporters to join or set up local readers groups. In the coming months the groups prioritise activity around:

i. anti-racist and anti-fascist actions, including support for the ARAFCC Conference on 3/4 June and the Anti Nazi League Conference later in the summer.

ii. actively building the Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland.

iii. seeking sponsors for the campaign to release Rudolph Bahro, the East German dissident.

5. Conference agrees to a 20-person National Policy Committee (NPC) to determine the direction and overall policy of the paper, to meet quarterly. This body will elect the Editorial

Board which will not necessarily be drawn from its ranks, thus enabling the involvement of new groups in the paper between conferences.

The NPC to reserve 10 places for proportional representation of different political groups or tendencies which support the

paper. The NPC rapidly plans a series of journalist schools, regional supporters meetings, and local correspondents."

This resolution will be presented to the SC Conference on 27 May by the Editorial Board.



THE UNFINISH OF SIR JUL

by GEOFFREY SHERIDAN

SIR GEORGE Thomas, Speaker of the House of Commons, was visibly upset by an MP's remark during what is known as Business Questions in Parliament last Thursday afternoon.

Dennis Skinner, angered by the catcalls he received while attempting to ask a question about the Windsor Safari Park strike, and riled at the Speaker's interruptions, was moved to suggest:

'Let's have a debate then about who's got shares in Julian Hodge.' Thomas turned several shades of crimson. Parliamentary business rapidly returned to normal.

The reaction of Mr Speaker is understandable. Thomas and the Prime Minister, who both represent Cardiff constituencies, were midwives to Hodge's Commercial Bank of Wales. It is unlikely that the multi-millionaire merchant banker would now be the largest private employer in Wales if he had not found favour with these Labour leaders.

The favours have been mutual. The founding of the Commercial Bank of Wales in 1971 brought Thomas and Callaghan on to its board of directors — a position they retained until they took office in the present Labour Government in 1974. Both MPs each hold £5000-worth of shares in the bank.

In fact, the bank's share register reads like a roll-call of Labour Party officials. It has included more than a dozen Welsh Labour MPs, numerous councillors, and has featured six Ministers who held office in the 1964-70 Labour administration.

INTERESTS

Labour's attention to the interests of industrialists and financiers is not a secret. The Social Contract attests to that. But the closeness of these interests on a personal level is another matter. The books have yet to be fully opened on Labour's connections with Julian Hodge and the very Commercial Bank of Wales (CBW), but enough has been uncovered by Rebecca, a radical Welsh magazine, to warrant a host of 'business questions' in Parliament and elsewhere. The articles on these centre pages are based on material published by Rebecca over the past two years.

For George Thomas, the launching of Hodge's bank ranked with the Second Coming. It was, he said, 'the biggest event for Wales in my lifetime... I believe Sir Julian has done more for Wales than David Lloyd George and all of us politicians put together.' Some of the evidence of the politicians' achievements can be found within a mile of the headquarters of the CBW in St Mary's Street, Cardiff — the decay of Riverside in Thomas' constituency, and the squalor of Roath in Callaghan's.

CUT-THROAT

Julian Hodge's customers also have a lot to be grateful for. Among them are the victims of the notorious pyramid-selling and second-mortgage operations, which brought ruin to thousands of working class people. At the peak of this cut-throat financial scheme in 1973, Hodge had over three hundred brokers sending him business from the West Midlands alone.

Literally millions of people have borrowed money from Julian Hodge in the form of highly expensive second mortgages on their homes. Between

September 1974 and February 1976 the Hodge Group made £225m worth of what it calls 'installment credit business' — the larger part of which were second mortgages. One operation to be taken to the courts was managed by Commercial Credit Finance Ltd, whose directors were jailed for fraud.

BUSINESS

Hodge had accepted £114,200 worth of business from CCF, and at the trial it emerged that Hodge received interest on loans at a rate of 25.2 per cent a year, while home owners were obliged to pay as much as 54 per cent. The trial judge observed: 'I must say it — it is absolutely appalling.'

Julian Hodge received a knighthood in 1970; yet another commendable entry in Harold Wilson's beknighted Birthday Honours lists. For George Thomas, then Secretary of State of Wales, this award to Brother Julian was evidently not sufficient. He decided that the knighthood merited a present, and he wrote on House of Commons paper to mutual friends seeking donations.

It was a stray copy of the letter Thomas sent to Bill Bevan, principal of University College, Cardiff, which has just brought to light this epic moment in Labour history.

'The well deserved honour that has been bestowed on Julian Hodge has brought enormous pleasure throughout South Wales,' wrote the Secretary of State. 'There is little that we can do for Julian, but at least we can give him a present that will be a permanent reminder of the pleasure his friends feel that the great distinction of Knighthood has been conferred on him by the Queen...'

GOLD WATCH

Bevan was told to send his contribution, towards a gold watch, to Thomas at 31 Windsor Park, Cardiff, marking the envelope 'strictly personal'. The address happens to be that of the Hodge Group's 'chairman's office'. The chairperson of the group is Julian Hodge. When the Labour Government fell a few weeks later, Hodge provided George Thomas with office accommodation.

Last summer, Mr Speaker — whose gentlemanly management of Commons debates will be familiar to those who listen in to the broadcasts of Parliament accompanied Mr and Mrs Hodge on a week's holiday to Saudi Arabia, where the group were the guests of the Saudi oil minister. The visit, said Thomas, was private.

When Jim Callaghan became Prime Minister there were murmurs about his links with Hodge. Callaghan was unmoved. 'He was and is my friend,' the premier announced. That friendship may have begun nearly 30

years ago. In 1950 and '51, Callaghan was Parliamentary and Financial Secretary at the Admiralty. His boss was Lord Hall, who went on to become chairperson of Gwent and West of England Enterprises, then the most important of Hodge's companies.

ELECTIONS

In any event, by the mid-'60s Jim and Julian were well acquainted, with the latter actively assisting the election campaigns in Callaghan's constituency (see 'The helping hand of Brother Julian'). As a director of over 60 private companies, Hodge was already a millionaire on paper, and his developing links with the party that dominates Welsh politics were to fill his coffers even more.

In the mid-'60s the Hodge Group relied on a buoyant hire purchase sector to keep profits on the increase. Hodge was greatly relieved at the 1965 Budget. 'I am astonished,' he said, 'that the Chancellor did not do something about purchase tax and that he did not increase down-payment interest on hire purchase.'

As it happens, the Chancellor of the Exchequer who presented that Budget was Jim Callaghan. His 1967 Budget also chanced to benefit the Hodge empire. In spite of vehement opposition from Transport Minister Barbara Castle to any boost for three-wheeled vehicles, because of their accident record, Callaghan decided to relax downpayments on these particular vehicles, together with motorcycles. There were only two manufacturers of three-wheelers, and the largest — Reliant — was part of...the Hodge Group.

IMF GUEST

In the same year, Callaghan invited Hodge to be his guest at the annual conference of Labour's favourite bankers, the International Monetary Fund. The compliment was to be returned. When Callaghan was no longer Chancellor he still attended IMF conferences — as the guest of Brother Julian.

The two men had ample opportunity to discuss matters of mutual interest, and in the early '70s — when Callaghan was Treasurer of the Labour Party — this relationship nearly resulted in party workers doubling as agents for Hodge's car insurance. As Hodge representatives explained it to a meeting of party executives in Cardiff at the beginning of 1971:

'In South Wales we have a voting strength of 650,000 giving a premium income of £195,000. Labour would gain £91,000 annually in commission, they said, omitting to mention that the company would collect over £100,000 a year. Callaghan was enormously keen on the scheme, as he declared during the private session at the Labour Party conference later that year. It was thrown out by 4.3m votes to 1.6m.

DIRECTORS

Callaghan's disappointment was shortly to be relieved when he and Thomas became directors of the Commercial Bank of Wales in May 1972 on a salary said to be £1,000 a year. Their shareholdings — £5,000-worth each — were much larger than those that could be obtained by ordinary investors to the heavily



JULIAN HODGE

The helping hand of Brother Julian

ELECTION POSTERS adorning the walls of business premises can generally be assumed to be the work of eager campaigners making a tour with a bucket of paste in the dead of night. Even the Tory business owners are reluctant to reveal their colours to their customers.

It must therefore have come as some surprise to the electors of Cardiff South East to find that the Labour posters displayed at local garages and cinemas in the 1964 and 1966 General Elections were not hastily removed.

The garages and cinemas in question are owned by the Hodge Group; Brother Julian was offering a helping hand to Labour's campaign. He also provided office equipment and, on election day, cars owned by the company were made available to ferry voters to the polls.

The enthusiasm of the millionaire merchant banker for the mass party of the working class has showed up in other ways.

AGENT

In 1966, Jack Brooks became the Labour agent in Callaghan's Cardiff SE constituency. Brooks, a plasterer by trade, needed a job. He was taken on as a sales representative with Sound Ltd., a subsidiary of Hodge's cinema chain.

In spite of his relatively good salary for those days — between £1,200 and £1,300 — and a new

Austin 1100 purchased for his use, the company saw little of Jack Brooks. It was, ex-Sound employees considered, a 'job for Callaghan's boy'.

When Brooks became leader of the South Glamorgan county council in 1973, he was entitled to expenses of up to £60 a week. He told the *South Wales Echo* last year: 'That's why I still did plastering and painting a couple of nights a week and at weekends to make up my money.'

ARRANGED

Most of this work was arranged by Julian Hodge and took place in buildings that he owned. There is no doubt that Brooks needed extra cash — he has twice been fined for non-payment of national insurance contributions.

Hodge wasn't simply doing Callaghan a favour. Brooks is worth cultivating. Former chairperson of the Cardiff SE constituency party, Labour chairperson on the South Glamorgan council for three years, candidate (unsuccessful) for Barry in both the 1974 General Elections, Brooks is shortly to take office as chairperson of the Wales Labour Party.

Just before the October '74 election that swept Callaghan into office, Julian Hodge told a *Western Mail* journalist: 'I am not afraid of a Labour government...'



GEORGE THOMAS, then Labour's Secretary of State for Wales, presenting Hodge with a gold watch in 1970. Thomas wrote to close friends seeking donations for the gift.

ED BUSINESS AN HODGE



The houses that Jim's built

JIM CALLAGHAN's life began in poverty. His father, a Royal Navy officer, died in 1921 at the age of 44 and it wasn't until 1924 — with the election of the first Labour Government — that his widowed mother was granted a pension. It amounted to 10 shillings [50p] a week.

Jim wasn't to forget Labour's benevolence or his early years. He said of his wife Audrey, the daughter of an engineering company director: 'She added an essential element of middle class stability to my working class insecurity.'

Needless to say, that insecurity has never been lifted from the lives of the constituents of Cardiff South East, whom Callaghan has represented in Parliament for 33 years. A survey carried out by the *South Wales Echo* graded 41 Cardiff districts according to their amenities. Four of the bottom six places in the table of decay and dereliction were awarded to areas in Cardiff SE.

Number 10 Downing Street is a little more palatial. But Jim and Audrey do like to get away from it all. There's the flat in Cardiff, now worth about £8,000. And there's Upper Clayhill

Farm, near Lewes in Sussex, which offers a few amenities: 138 acres plus a house with six bedrooms and three reception rooms.

The farm was purchased 10 years ago for £22,600 — jointly by the Callaghans and their friend Gordon Dennis, a chartered surveyor. The arrangement was that the Callaghans would live in the house while Dennis looked after the farm.

Jim and Audrey weren't altogether satisfied. They spent £8,000 on renovations which included two new bathrooms and three additional lavatories. The local council did not take kindly to the Callaghans' application for an improvement grant. Robert Street, chairperson of the committee that gave them the maximum grant of £400, said: 'Mr Callaghan was legally entitled to a grant. But surely it's morally wrong for a man earning £8,500 to seek a subsidy towards improving his weekend country home.' Ms Street added: 'It's a case of the poor subsidising the rich.' (The Prime Minister's salary is now £23,208 — £5,000 of it tax free.)

publicly denied Stonehouse's remarks.

If the Welsh people harboured the idea that the CBW was to be different from the London-based banks, they were shortly to be corrected. In February 1972 Hodge proclaimed: 'It will be an independent bank with no company or group of companies holding more than 10 per cent of the shares.' Within eight months it was to emerge that the First City Bank of Chicago had cornered 20 per cent of the shares, and the Hodge Group itself 16 (now 22) per cent.

CONTACTS

When Jim Callaghan spoke to his constituents following his appointment as Shadow Chancellor in 1961, he told them: 'One of my first tasks will be to renew contracts with Welsh trade unionists, industrialists, and business undertakings.' The trade unionists have been none too delighted with the results of their 'contacts'.

It is unlikely to be the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the House of Commons, nine of the Welsh Labour MPs, or numerous local councillors and Labour Party officials in Wales who will open the books on Sir Julian Hodge's unfinished business.

Rebecca — a radical magazine for Wales, scrutinises the activities of politicians and business.

It is available price 35p plus 10p p&p or £2.25 for a subscription from: The Hosts of Rebecca, 15 Windsor Esplanade, Docks, Cardiff.



over-subscribed share offer.

Hodge had a lot to be grateful for. The CBW — generally referred to by its managers and staff as simply the Bank of Wales — pulled together the varied activities of the Hodge empire, and enhanced its opportunities to fund and profit from diverse enterprises.

It was George Thomas who was most instrumental in midwifing the birth of the CBW. When the idea of such a bank was suggested to him in 1968 by a London financier, who had in mind a Liberal Party version, Thomas stepped outside the Cardiff restaurant in which they were dining, and mentioned: 'What about Julian Hodge?' He swept his arm along the James Howell department store and added: 'He owns all this, you know.'

Almost no sooner said than done; although the full details of the bank's formation have yet to be revealed. In 1968, Hodge was appointed by Thomas to the Welsh Council. A report prepared by the council's finance panel recommended that 'a financial institution with a commitment to Wales... is urgently required.'

The panel had heard five witnesses—two were against the idea, two were for (but could provide little evidence to support their view) and the only witness to put forward a serious argument in favour (it remains confidential) was Julian Hodge.

It didn't seem to bother Thomas, Secretary of State for Wales, nor Hodge's other friend Sunny Jim, that apart from being the best witness Hodge also happened to be a member of the panel and was actually in the process of setting up such an institution. It was left to former Labour Minister John Stonehouse to declare in the Commons shortly before he was jailed for fraud that the head of the Civil Service had 'named Sir Julian Hodge as a person who couldn't be appointed to the Bank of England Court — although he was nominated by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer (Callaghan) — because he was not a worthy person for the appointment.'

The civil servant concerned, Sir William Armstrong, now chairperson of the Midland Bank, has never

WHAT'S LEFT

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

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

FOUR SOCIALISTS looking for 4 roomed flat/house in North or East London. Phone Mick 01-359 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; 56 Whitcombe St (Leicester Square). Mass picket every Saturday at noon, 399 Oxford St. Donations are urgently needed as strike pay is only £8 per week. All donations to Garners Strike Fund, c/o TGWU, Rm B4, 12-13 Henrietta St, London WC2. 01-240-1066. Day of Solidarity Action, Sat. 20 May, Assemble 2pm Speakers Corner for march to rally at Trafalgar Square.

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

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 stabilizing 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: 01-226 0571.

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 8992/01-730 5396.

A SOCIALIST CENTRE for West London? Public meeting and discussion with speaker from Brixton Socialist Club, Thurs 18 May, 8pm

Seven Stars and Half Moon, Goldhawk Rd, W12.

JEWES AGAINST ZIONISM SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINIANS

BADGES 22p each by post, discount to any anti-Zionist group. Please write for details to Red Badges, c/o PO Box 82, London E2 8DS.

BRITTON Socialist Club: by popular acclaim we have got the Irish traditional band Real Union once again. Fri 19 May at 8pm. The Canterbury, Canterbury Crescent, Brixton, Adm: 50p.

FLAT SHARE: socialist feminist women to share comfortable North London flat with two others. Available July for about a year. Approx £500m inclusive. Please write to: Margaret Hickman, 97 Colborne Rd, London W10.

PUBLIC MEETING: WSL Split — Spartacist League founded 7.45pm Fri 12 May, Labour Party Social Club, Bristol St, Birmingham.

THE COMMUNIST UNIVERSITY of Feminism which was to be held in Leeds in May has had to be postponed. We hope it will now be at Bradford College in September. Apologies to all. For further info, contact: Clare Wigzell, 30 Methley Drive, Leeds 7 (Leeds 623678).

WEDGE magazine readers' meeting to discuss the recently published second issue and future perspectives. Owl House, 54 Kennington Oval, London SE11 (Oval tube), 21 May, 2-6pm.

NEWHAM TEACHERS group presents Lella Berg, author of *Nippers* series of children's books and *Rising Hill — Death of a Comprehensive*, speaking on literature for working class children at Forest Gate school, Forest St, London E7 [25 or 88 bus to Princess Alice; Forest Gate British Rail] 25 May, 7.30pm.

OWING to popular demand the play *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Mwangi Mugo produced by the Sussex African Students Association is being brought to London on 21 May for one performance only. Tickets £1. Proceeds to Ngugi Defence Committee, 4pm, Keskidee Centre, Gifford St, London N1. Tel: 01-869 4262.

WALTHAM FOREST Socialist Unity. Public Meeting: What We Stand For. Speakers: Tariq Ali, editor *Socialist Challenge*, and Chris Flores, President Waltham Forest Trades Council (personal capacity). Thurs 25 May, 8pm. The Chestnut Tree Pub, 757 Lea Bridge Rd, London E17. [43 and 34 buses stop outside].

HARRY MESHANE — a public meeting to mark the publication of *No Mean Fighter*, Harry's memoirs of the early socialist movement in Glasgow and the unemployed struggle between the wars. Principal speaker Harry McBan; others include: Eric Heller MP, Stan Shipley (History Workshop), Thomas Bergen (Liverpool Right to Work members), Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC2. (Hoborn tube) 22 May. Meeting starts 8pm. Refreshments beforehand. Sponsored by Bookmax Club, History Workshop, Right to Work campaign.

PUBLIC Conference on the Prague Spring, Charter 77 and the British Labour Movement at Central London Poly. Sat 27 May, 10am to 5pm. Speakers include Jill Pelikan, Jan Kavan, Eduard Goldschmidt, Stan Newton MP and speakers from the CPandIMG. Further details from: 49a Talbot Rd, London N7.

MANCHESTER and surrounding areas — ex IS/SWP comrades interested in meeting to discuss working together and experiences

since leaving IS/SWP. Open meeting on Thurs 25 May, 7.45pm at the Ancoats Hotel, Ancoats St, Manchester. Everyone welcome.

THE BRITISH Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign meets every first Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in 8 Endeligh St, London WC1 (near Euston Station). All welcome.

LATIN AMERICAN comrade urgently needs room in London. Phone 01-228 1759.

BRITISH OUT of Ireland. It is time that the basis is laid for a serious movement to end British rule in Ireland. To do this it is essential to clarify our understanding of all aspects of the Irish war. With this aim, the Revolutionary Communist Group and the Prisoners Aid Committee are organising a series of forums on the Irish question. First forum — *The Crisis: 1968 to Today* — on Fri 28 May. The meetings are open only to those who are committed to active work on this issue. Those interested should write for details to either RCG Publications Ltd (SC), 49 Repton Rd, London SE24 or PAC, 182 Upper St, London N1.

HANDS OFF Ireland Number 4. Articles in this issue include: 'British Terror, statements and reports from relatives of Irish prisoners of war'; 'The British Left and Irish Republicanism', Diane Fox; 'Solidarity Works both ways', Jim Reilly; 'Connolly and Irish Freedom — Part 1', Roy Spring. Price 20p plus p&p from RCG Publications Ltd (SC), 49 Repton Rd, London SE24.

SOCIALIST UNITY Steering Committee, Sun 4 June, 1pm, Other Books, 308 Upper St, London N1.

MANCHESTER Revolutionary Communist Group public meeting, 'Defend Irish Prisoners of War — Hands Off Ireland!' RCG & PAC speakers. Fri 26 May, 7.30pm, Basement Theatre, Town Hall Extension, Albert Square.

SHEFFIELD Revolutionary Communist Group public meeting, 'The

Crisis intensifies. Which Way Forward for the Working Class?', Speaker David Yaffe. Wednesday 24 May, 7.30pm, Sheffield Polytechnic, Room 3106 (Cent. Room 1), 3rd Floor, Pond St, Sheffield 1.

REVOLUTIONARY Communist Tendency public meeting 'Ireland — Its Revolutionary Significance', speaker Phil Murphy. Fri 26 May 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn Tube, Adm 20p.

COLONEL B affair: 'Fighting for the right to know', Joint Lawless-Peace News meeting with speakers Jo Richardson, John Berry, Ron Knowles. Thurs 18 May, 7.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London WC2.

REVOLUTIONARY Communist Papers No 2, Theoretical Journal of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency — Special Issue on Ireland: articles on British Imperialism and the Irish Crisis and the revolutionary position on National Self-Determination. Available from BM RCT (SC), London WC1V 6XX. Price 50p plus 15p post. Cheques and postal orders payable to RCT Association.

HISTORY of the Communist Party, conference 20/21 May, Central London Poly, 115 New Cavendish St London W1. Speakers include Martin Jacques, Don Sessoon, Stuart MacIntyre, Monty Johnstone. Workshops. Tickets £1.25 from CP History Group, 15 King St, London WC2.

FOUND on ARAFCC bus to Tameside demo September 1977. Knapsack and polythene bag full of clothes, dairy

shop. To reclaim ring 01-802 0911 (day).

PLANNING meeting for Midlands Ireland Conference. Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham. 11am Sat 20 May.

TEMPORARY CARNIVAL — Rock Against Racism's special souvenir of the Carnival. Full size poster of the Clash, TRB, Steel Pulse and Pony. A few copies left. Send 10p plus stamp and your address to RAR, 27 Clerkenwell Cross, London EC1.

IRELAND — After the murder of Brian McGuire. Public meeting called by the South London United Troops Out Movement. Mon 22 May, 7.30pm. Poly of the South Bank, Students Union, Elephant and Castle. Speaker — Geoff Bell, author of *The Protestants of Ulster*, and member of *Socialist Challenge* Editorial Board.

HUMPTY DUMPTY racism psychology magazine — latest issue on childcare. With articles on Gender Roles, OKY, 'Whoas problem, whose rights?', 'Ideology of childcare' and much more. Copies 45p plus 10p&p from: 5 St. John's Terrace, Belle Vue Road, Leeds 3.

'FIGHT RACISM' badges and T-shirts (badges black on white, shirts black on red) available for all anti-racists. Show where you stand during the long hot summer. Order yours now. Badges, 15p each plus 7p p&p, or 11p each for orders of ten or more. T-shirts, £2 each plus 15p p&p. From J Wilson, SC Badges, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

ANTI-RACIST, ANTI-FASCIST CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

Box 53, 182 Upper Street, London N1

CONFERENCE 3/4 JUNE

The national conference is to be held in London. Delegate fee £2.50. Visitors £2. Details from: ARAFCC, Box 53, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

IRELAND

Brian Maguire's death Castlereagh claims its inevitable victim

SOONER OR LATER it was inevitable that someone would be found dead in a cell at Castlereagh interrogation centre, reports TOM MARLOWE. In this sense the discovery of the hanged body of trade union official Brian Maguire last week comes as no surprise.

For over a year, protests about what is taking place in Castlereagh have been an almost daily occurrence.

Among those who have complained about 'interrogation' methods are the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, the Association of Legal Justice, the Protestant paramilitary Ulster Defence Association, and even the Police Surgeons Association and a group of lawyers who work in Northern Ireland's special 'Diplock' Courts.

METHODS

A doctor who has treated some of the victims of Castlereagh, Dr Seamus Mc-

Ateer, recently became so disturbed by what he saw that he wrote a public letter outlining the methods used by the interrogators: 'They try to unnerve their prisoners with foul language,' Dr McAteer wrote.

PRETEND

'They make an arrested person pretend that he is sitting on a non-existent chair with his hands out. Should he fall he is pulled back into position by his hair.

'They make him do press ups until he collapses, then they kick him up again.

'They spread his feet out on his toes, hands out resting his

fingertips and leaning against the wall with his head back. Should his head come forward, it is yanked back by a fistful of hair or a karate chop or a kick on a bare ankle.

DOCUMENTED

'They make him 'run on the spot' and if he does not lift his knees high enough they will thump him in the stomach.

'They will shake him by the hair 'to soften up his brain'. They will threaten to shoot him.'

A lawyer and member of the SDLP, Paddy Duffy, has commented:

'There are a number of well documented cases of persons being brought into police stations for interrogation in Omagh, Cookstown and Castlereagh and of these persons ending up in hospital.

'In several of these cases indeed, persons ill-treated have been brought to the hospital by the police themselves after being ill-treated by the CID.

'There are detailed medical

reports from eminent consultants giving details of the injuries which they found and there are photographs showing the actual results of the injury and bodily bruising that was inflicted.'

What is most important about such methods of interrogation is that it is not simply a case of a few sadistic interrogators. Such methods are necessary because in the vast majority of cases the only way the police can hope to gain 'terrorist' convictions is through confessions. And it is to gain such confessions that these methods are used.

One recent estimate by the law department of Queens University Belfast estimated

that nearly 90 per cent of the convictions obtained in the non-jury courts for 'terrorist', that is political offences, are gained through confessions.

INADMISSABLE

On three occasions in the last month, judges in the North of Ireland have declared statements inadmissible because of police methods used during interrogation.

In this respect, the decision of the RUC to release part of an alleged confession by Brian Maguire to conspiracy in murder has been described by SDLP spokesperson on law and order, Michael Canavan, as 'simply outrageous'.

Protests at Maguire's death blocked off main road in Belfast for a number of days, and in Britain the Maguire case is the type of evidence which the International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland is expected to hear later this year.

As for the RUC who rule over Castlereagh, let it just be noted that in May 1976 the Police Federation in Northern Ireland placed a public demand on the British Government for the hanging of 'terrorists'.

When the demand was rejected the Federation's chairperson, Donald Milliken, said 'our campaign will continue'.



Socialist Challenge visits parliament Ask me no (Irish) jokes and I'll tell you no lies

GEOFF BELL reports from the House of Commons

YOU AREN'T allowed into the press gallery in the House of Commons until after the Honourable Members have said prayers.

Why this should be so is difficult to work out, but anyway journalists wait in a long narrow room until after the Commons has sought divine guidance.

In this room there is a number of framed pictures. The largest is of the Commons itself and has the title 'The Parliament House of the Empire'. If you think the Empire doesn't exist anymore, the first proceedings of 11 May were a reminder that it does.

It was Question Time on the North of Ireland. It was also the day after Brian Maguire had been found hanged in Castlereagh interrogation centre. So what would be the reaction of the Government and the 632 MPs?

AFFAIR

Well actually the entire 632 didn't manage to make it. Twenty-eight were there when the questions began. Still, that was enough for someone to raise the affair of Britain's very

own Steve Biko. Enoch Powell got in first, 'To ask the Secretary of State of Northern Ireland if he will now approve the proposal of the Housing Executive to offer the alternative of solid fuel heating to tenants with all-electric heating systems.'

PAISLEY

Powell likes to ask such questions; his way of saying that what concerns the citizens of the North of Ireland is exactly the same as concerns the citizens of Manchester or Bradford.

Following the Government reply, Ian Paisley was on his feet to denounce electric heating systems and to demand more Government assistance for his constituents unfortunate to possess them.

This brought howls of protest from Labour MPs who argued that Big Ian had no right to demand more public expenditure after he had voted for tax cuts the previous night.

For a while Ireland, including its heating systems were forgotten; after all the Government defeat on tax cuts was much more exciting than boring old Belfast, Derry, or wherever. And as Roy Mason pointed out: 'We've been very generous to Northern Ireland.' Hear, hears all round.

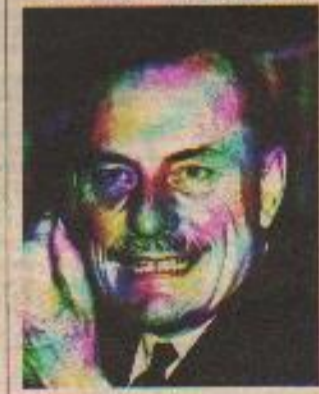
The next question was on what a Unionist MP called 'the co-operation between the

Provisional IRA and international terrorists'. Mason replied there was no 'significant' co-operation.

West Belfast SDLP MP Gerry Fitt reminded the House that the IRA had existed long before the Red Brigade or the PLO.

This brought an interesting response from Mason. 'We are not talking about the IRA,' he insisted. 'They called a ceasefire some time ago. We are talking about the Provisionals.'

In effect, Mason was taking a clear position on the split in the Republican movement in 1969-70. For him the reformist



ENOCH POWELL

Official IRA was the real IRA. This position is not even held by the Officials anymore — they disbanded their armed wing at their last conference.

Obviously a great student of the Republican tradition is Mr Mason.

But still Brian Maguire hadn't been mentioned. There was an opportunity when Tory MP John Biggs Davison asked Mason to 'make a statement on the security of the Province' — security which, as Mason spoke, was being threatened by numerous protests over

Defend Press Freedom!
Defend
Republican News!
Picket Downing Street
Sat 20 May 11.30am

Maguire's death.

Mason replied how the 'security forces' were having all manner of successes and defeating the Provos. He didn't mention Brian Maguire and in the supplementary questions neither did any MPs.

So it was on to James Lamound, MP for Oldham East, who wanted 'To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will order an inquiry under section 7 of the Prison Act (Northern Ireland) 1953 into the conditions of prisoners in the H Block of the Maze Prison.'

Back came Mason's reply, quick as a flash: 'No.'

Even the House of the Empire was a bit embarrassed at that. A supplementary was asked and it was time for Mason's phrase of the afternoon: 'The Maze enjoys the best prison conditions in the UK.'

HUBBUB

By now the House had filled up a bit and the members were beginning to show their impatience with Ireland. It was difficult to make out the remaining questions above the general hubbub.

Then, relief all round, the Speaker announced 'Prime Minister's Question Time' and Ireland was forgotten for a few more days, weeks, or months. By then it will probably be too late to raise the death of 'Brian Whatshisname'.

In 1970 Frank Roache mounted his protest about the British Parliament and Ireland. He lobbed a canister of CS gas into the Commons. Shocking, shocking.

Glasgow's Irish rally big success

150 people attended a rally on Ireland in Glasgow's Woodside Halls on 7 May, reports MARTIN O'LEARY.

The rally had been built by a broad-based committee supported by Glasgow socialist feminists, the Socialist Workers Party, International Marxist Group, Sinn Fein, and the Irish Defence League.

A speaker from the Belfast Relatives Action Committee told of the plight of Ireland's political prisoners.

She outlined the brutal interrogation techniques used by the British Army and RUC, the abuse of prisoners by screws and police harassment of the Relatives Action Committee.

Peter Bain, convener of Chrysler Linwood and a member of the Socialist Workers Party, also spoke. He emphasised the spineless attitude towards Ireland of trade

union leaders and stressed the importance of building an Irish solidarity movement.

He pointed to the International Tribunal as an effective means of doing this.

The rally heard a message of support from Jim Reilly, national organiser of Sinn Fein (Britain), and a Socialist Feminist speaker talked of the important role women were playing in the Irish struggle.

The size and comradely tone of the rally suggested real opportunities for building an Irish solidarity movement in Glasgow and members of the organising committee proposed a continuance of the type of co-operation which made the meeting possible.

This suggestion, together with a proposal to take action on Army recruitment among Glasgow's unemployed, were enthusiastically backed by the meeting.

INTERNATIONAL

Spanish Communists criticise Carrillo

'A fascist use of communism'

Santiago Carrillo himself summed it up in a strange verbal slip which had the carrillologists of the Spanish press rushing for their telexes.

'We, the ex-communists,' he announced in his introduction to the recent Ninth Congress of the Spanish Communist Party [PCE]. He quickly corrected himself.

But what of the oppositionists — asks RICHARD CARVER — the 25 per cent who opposed the leadership line?

The dissidents were ill-served by their spokesperson at the Congress. 'It is possible to be Leninist and monarchist,' was Francisco Frutos' helpful suggestion in his speech against the removal of the word 'Leninist' from the party statutes.

There was a hint of irony behind this argument but the opposition's confusion was shown by Frutos' contention that 'nothing in the policies of the PCE in recent years justifies this change.'

This echoed almost exactly the argument of Simón Sánchez Montero, speaking for the other side: 'The abandonment of the word Leninism changes nothing in reality.'

Manuel Azcarate, Carrillo's theoretical brains, had a slightly different (and more honest) interpretation: 'The

term "Leninist" has obvious connotations: armed insurrection, dictatorship of the proletariat, alliance of workers and peasants, party of iron discipline, etc. To keep this adjective would be to maintain an ambiguity.'

Frutos' speech showed the variety of different viewpoints which had coalesced around the defence of 'Leninism'.

FAR LEFT

In some areas, such as the Basque country and the Canaries, the opposition simply reflected the party's problems in a minority nation. In the Basque country this is compounded by the strong political challenge from the far left, which won 40 per cent of the delegates at the recent Workers Commission Congress.

In Málaga, another opposition centre, it was the question of the statutes and the lack of self criticism which concerned the dissidents: 'The absence of self criticism from the leadership, the transformation of notorious defeats into victories, the abandonment of areas of struggle and the transformation of the party into a bourgeois-style electoral organisation.'

Many of the same criticisms were voiced in Asturias and Madrid, but there the opposition is more disparate, ranging from pro-Moscow, through dissident Eurocommunists, to supporters of Fernando Claudin, the PCE leader expelled in 1964.



ALVAREZ ARECES

All dissidents opposed the lack of democracy in the pre-congress debate and at the Congress itself. 'They are Stalinists and only know how to use Stalinist methods,' one party member commented.

One problem was the election of delegates. A Madrid delegate pointed out that Simón Sánchez Montero was president of his delegation without having been elected: 'There's no Sánchez Montero on the list of delegates elected.'

Delegates are not elected



'Up with the PCE, against Carrillo's opportunism'. — PCE opposition poster.



'Marx is dead'

WHILE they're slugging it out in the Communist Party, the Socialist Party [PSOE] has its own problems. General Secretary Felipe Gonzalez last week announced that he would propose the abandonment of the word 'Marxist' from the party statutes at the next Congress!

Presumably the proud possessor of a hotline to Highgate Cemetery, he explained that 'Marx wouldn't like the word Marxism if he was alive today.'

He added: 'To the left of the PSOE the electoral space is occupied by the Communist Party, so it's on the right that our party must gain votes. People'll say I'm an electoralist. I don't deny it. Everyone is. What I want to do is to win the eight million votes necessary to form a government.'

Gonzalez said he was not ashamed of being called a social democrat. His tone changed when he heard his party's reaction.

All of a sudden he denied being a social democrat. This may have been connected with the revelation by the new party president, Tierno Galvan, that he had not been consulted over the statement.

Executive member Pablo Castellano said that 'Renouncing Marxism today is like renouncing the law of gravity or nuclear physics.'

The powerful Catalan federation pointed out that the 1976 Congress had defined the party as Marxist and that these positions were binding on the leadership as well as the rank and file.

The Madrid Federation demanded an emergency congress and rather pointedly held a massive celebration of the 160th anniversary of Marx's birth.

proportional to numbers (not on the basis of political positions).

For example, in Catalonia the delegation consisted of all the Central Committee members plus one delegate for each branch of more than 300 members. Since the opposition tended to be in the larger branches it was underrepresented at Congress.

It was the issue of democracy above all which led 113 delegates to walk out of the Asturian regional conference before the Congress. This was the first open show of opposition and one of its leaders, Vicente Alvarez Areces, a Central Committee member, threatened to resign from the party if there were any sanctions.

So the 113 were able to meet to formulate a common platform. But one miner, who was not one of the 113, warned that 'They have distributed to us a list of delegates who must not under any circumstances be reelected or go to the National Congress.'

PETTY

Areces has been subject to continual petty harassment. In his capacity as head of Culture in the Asturian party he wrote to the East German embassy for some posters of Bertolt Brecht. The reply, with the posters, came back through the national office in Madrid.

Areces was accused of factional activity and corresponding with a pro-Moscow government!

Even worse was the experience of Málaga dissidents who wrote an internal document. Next thing they knew it was quoted in the bourgeois press and denunciations were heaped on them from the party leadership.

But they insist it was not they who leaked the document. The penalty was three months suspension from the party.

But they were disciplined under the new statutes, which had not yet been passed by Congress!

Alfredo Martinez Robles, spokesperson for the group, commented: 'The purges have

started, like in the good old days of Stalinism.'

Many delegates remarked on Carrillo's Stalinism. They were also surprised at the low level of debate from the leadership.

'The workers can't understand this jargon,' was all Carrillo could tell his Madrid opponents. 'The fucking rank and file is much more theoretically prepared than the leadership,' one Madrid delegate remarked.

Another suggested that: 'Stalinism is not just the Gulag

a torn away from the working class towards the bourgeois parties.

And the Asturians add that, contrary to the leadership's assertions, this has had a dire effect on party membership, which has fallen from 10,000 to 7,000 in their region. Málaga and Madrid dissidents tell a similar story.

It is generally felt that the virtual majority gained by the opposition in Catalonia rules out the possibility of a full-scale purge.

LIQUIDATE

But the Asturians explain the leadership's objective: '...to liquidate politically a series of middle cadres formed in clandestinity, who have a greater prestige among the rank and file and a better theoretical and intellectual level than the leadership, and replace them by a personnel from the Workers Commissions apparatus, whose success in the trade union elections is the only trick Carrillo has to give him a certain credibility with the bourgeois parties.'

That was indeed the case at the Congress, which saw the promotion of figures like Gerardo Iglesias, the new secretary of the Asturian party and Workers Commissions apparatchik.

It was also notable that Carrillo's speech made great play of the Workers' Commissions' success with not a word about the chronic electoral weakness of the party itself.

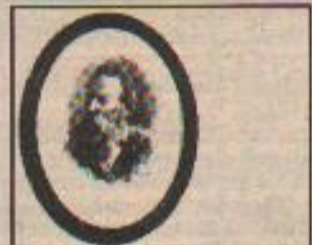
The leadership's strategy of relying on the Workers Commissions apparatus has its problems. In Catalonia for instance it is the oppositionists, including Frutos, who hold the key union positions.

For the moment the dissidents are united around a series of demands for greater party democracy, including free access to the press, the removal of votes from non-elected functionaries, a tightening of the disciplinary procedures, and limitations on the secretary general's powers.

DEVIATED

In the meantime they ponder with wry amusement this comment from Santiago Carrillo's own introduction to Lenin's collected works, published in 1972: 'Of those who have criticised or condemned Leninism most have deviated also from the founders of scientific socialism.'

'From any point of view, it is impossible to separate Lenin from Marx and Engels, still less to oppose them.'



MARTINEZ ROBLES

or the murder of opponents. This is its extreme result. Its basis — which applies perfectly to Carrillo — is the following schema: you've got Stalinism when the interests of the class are subordinated to the interests of the party; when the interests of the party are subordinated to those of the Secretariat; when the interests of the Secretariat are subordinated to those of the general secretary.

'That's the situation today in the PCE.' And he added, 'Stalinism is a fascist use of communism.'

These critics point out that Carrillo's 'democratisation' is

Intercontinental Press

combined with **Imprecor**

THE growing dissent in the French Communist Party is highlighted in this week's issue of Intercontinental Press / Imprecor with a major analysis by Pierre Julien which traces the development of the opposition currents.

Also featured in this issue [Vol. 16, No. 19] are 'Argentina Two Years After the Coup', the Marroquin anti-deportation case in the USA, the election campaign in Peru, the French intervention in Chad, and the struggle for language rights in the Soviet

republics, as well as a report of the IMG conference in London.

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INTERNATIONAL

World Cup in Argentina

Warming up for the kick off

The Argentinian junta's preparations for the World Cup moved into top gear last week. The army has been out on the streets simulating 'terrorist' acts and the security measures needed to deal with them, to 'familiarise' the population. As if they needed familiarising!

Since the military takeover in March 1976 the army's own figures reveal 7-8,000 deaths.

Amnesty International reports 8000 political prisoners, as well as 15,000 'disappearances' — trade unionists and other oppositionists kidnapped by the death squads.

Trade unions and political parties have been taken over by the dictatorship or banned.

On the junta's own admission the World Cup — with a cost now estimated at \$700m — is designed to improve Argentina's decidedly tatty international image.

SUPPORT

But if the junta is warming up for the kick-off next month, so are the regime's opponents internationally. In Britain the British Argentina Campaign has called a week of action for 21-28 May.

General Merlo, the World Cup organiser, has said that he intends to use the football to 'show the Argentine's real way of life'. And that is just what the week of action is designed to do: with pickets, meetings, film shows, and concerts.

We urge readers to support the events in their area. If there's nothing going on it might not be too late to organise an event. Contact BAC on 01-486 4980.

DEMANDS

The campaign is demanding that the British Government: *publicly condemn the Argentinian regime; *oppose all financial aid to the junta; *set up a visa programme for political prisoners; *stop all arms sales to the regime.

The British Government and media are doing their best to make sure that it is the junta's version of life in Argentina which reaches the British

working class.

For example, a British Embassy official accompanied Michael Frenchman of the Times when he was researching an article on 'how the army and navy are fighting terrorism'.

The article turned out to be a whitewash of the regime's

People's football

Generals Videla and Merlo will be relieved to know that their World Cup is going to be broadcast in an apparently unlikely place: at the Communist Party's 'People's Festival' at Alexandra Palace. Already this has drawn an angry reader's reply in Comment.

That is, of course, completely unconnected with the fact that the Communist Party of Argentina gives critical support to the Argentinian regime.

armed forces, but it did accidentally turn up some useful snippets.

NAVY

When Frenchman visited the navy's counter-subversive organisation he was told: 'We would like you not to say too much about this, it is based on your Royal Navy, we have had some help, you know.'

This is called 'showing the Argentine's real way of life'.

The BBC is also being its usual courageous self. The Radio 4 Today programme recently recorded an interview with Celia Guevara, a leading Argentinian oppositionist, and Ian Wooldridge, a sports journalist critical of the regime.

Dick Francis, director of news and current affairs, has decreed that the programme should not be broadcast because it is anti-Argentinian.

But responsibility lies even



ARGENTINAS DIRTY PLAYER

Week of action

LONDON 20 May. Day meeting on Argentina with speakers, film and discussion at St Luke's Library Hall, Lever St E1. Admission 50p. 10-4.
23 May. 7pm. First hand accounts of repression, prison and torture. LSE Class Market Building, Room D018. Organized by Committee for Human Rights in Argentina.
25 May. noon. Delegation of MPs and trade unionists hand in Argentina petition to government. 1pm. Meeting/discussion at Institute of Education, University of London, Bedford Way.
1 June 5.30. Women's march from Westminster Abbey to Argentine Naval Commission, Victoria.
10 June. West London mass leafletting.
OXFORD: 20 May. Delegation to Evan Luard MP on human rights in Argentina. (He is Minister responsible for human rights).
8pm. Social organised by MAPU. Latin American music, food, win, at W. Oxford Community Centre, Heale Road.
21 May. pm. Football Match. LA human rights XI v local celebrities.
23 May. 7.30. Trade union rights in Argentina. Meeting. Ruskin College. (Organized by Ruskin Labour Club).
25 May. 7.30. Repression of Intellectuals in Argentina. Chile Society. St Edmund Hall, Queens Lane.
28 May. Public Meeting: Football Yes, Torture No! Friends Meeting House, St Giles.
HULL: 26 May. lunchtime meeting at university.
LIVERPOOL: 24 May. midday and evening meetings, picket of consulate 25 May. Film. Phone Liverpool 727 3588.
NEWCASTLE: 19 May. lunchtime meeting, university.
WOLVERHAMPTON: 22 May. evening meeting at Poly with State of Siege.
CANTERBURY: 24 May. Speaker and motion at student union meeting. Details from 0227 65224.
For more information and details of events in other towns, phone 01-486 4980.

higher up the BBC hierarchy. Director General Ian Trethowan has instructed that all stories on Argentina should be vetted by senior executives.

The junta is operating its own form of censorship by only giving full press credentials to 'reliable' foreign journalists.

Needless to say, there won't be any native opposition journalists around: 29 of them

have been killed, 70 imprisoned, 40 disappeared and 400 exiled since March 1976.

Crude military repression and good old British self-censorship combine to make it very difficult to get across the truth on Argentina.

Our only chance is our own activity. Support the week of action.

Zimbabwe Good shepherd back in the fold

Where's the disappearing Bishop, we asked last week — a reference to Bishop Muzorewa's habit of never being around when awkward decisions are made. This week we have the answer: back in the arms of Ian Smith and the racist regime in Zimbabwe.

Muzorewa ended the constitutional crisis provoked by the sacking of Justice Minister Byron Hove in the simplest way possible — he backed down.

Hove had proposed that more blacks should be given positions of responsibility in the police force. The British state has been trying to do that for years, but finesse was never Smith's strong point.

Hove had to go and Muzorewa, his party leader, spent a week stomping around making angry noises. He refused to speak at meetings with other internal settlement leaders and gave the impression that the affair was a massive point of principle.

FACADE

Last weekend, however, he suddenly discovered that, 'It would be inconsistent with the integrity of the UANC for us to fail to honour an agreement to which we are part.'

The 'agreement' to which Muzorewa clings with such 'integrity' is nothing more than a scheme to retain all the apparatus of the racist state intact, while creating the facade of black rule.

It is doubtful whether

Muzorewa's black supporters will be so impressed by the Bishop's highly principled stand. When he spoke at meetings last week he was always greeted by chants of 'Hove must come back'.

VICTORY

Muzorewa's return to the fold has been portrayed as a victory for Ian Smith. And so it is — in the short term. The long term effect is more likely to be a further decline in Muzorewa's popularity, and he is the only black leader of any credibility who backs the 'internal settlement'.

SOLIDARITY

*Ian Smith's temporary victory makes solidarity with the people of southern Africa all the more important. The anti-Apartheid Movement has now agreed to back the African Students Union call for a Soweto commemoration demonstration.

The date has been finally fixed for Friday 16 June, at 5.30pm. The march will end at the AAM's rally in Central Hall, Westminster.

Open planning meetings are held every Thursday, 7.30, at the Architectural Association, 34 Bedford Square, London.

Socialist Challenge supporters should be winning sponsorship for the demonstration from their labour movement bodies and organising the maximum number of people to come down to London that day.

Shah cracks down

Yet more opponents of the Iranian regime have been murdered in police attacks on demonstrations. Latest reports from Tehran indicate that more than 2000 troops have taken up positions in the city centre to prevent further protests.

The latest demonstrations, like previous ones this year, have been called by Shi'ite religious leaders. The troubles last week started exactly 40 days after the Shah's police had shot down more than 1000 in demonstrations in the religious city of Qom.

The end of the 40 day period is celebrated by Muslims as a day of mourning. The demonstration and massacre has become a regular 40-day occurrence.

According to unconfirmed reports these protests have also spread to Tehran University. The Shah has used the growing link between left-wing and religious oppositionists to label his opponents 'Islamic-Marxists'.

INACCURATE

The label is inaccurate on both counts. Repression has limited the influence of the left parties, though the first Communist Party demonstration since the 1952 coup was held in Tehran last week. Needless to say, it was broken up by the police and its leaders arrested.

On the other count, although the Shi'ite leaders retain great prestige, especially in the

impoverished countryside, religious festivals have been the occasion rather than the cause of the protests.

Many people have attended the demonstrations for religious reasons, but probably many more were there simply to protest at political repression and to show their solidarity against the lack of religious freedom.

PROGRESS

The 'Islamic-Marxist' label is designed for Western consumption, to show the Shah as the standard bearer of progress and capitalism.

One set of Westerners who don't need convincing are the Labour Government. The same day as news began to come through of the latest killings, an arms protocol was signed by the Shah's Military Industrial Organisation and Millbank Technical Services, the Ministry of Defence agency in charge of arms sales to Iran.

The deal is worth about £750m — on top of the £500m contract with British Aerospace last year. The contract would mean Britain playing the major part in the military industrial complex near Isfahan, which plays a central role in the Shah's plans to develop the Iranian arms industry.

Iran is already Britain's main arms customer. For example the Iranian armed forces have bought twice as many Chieftain tanks as the British army!

Blood on the streets and political and religious repression do not cause the Labour leaders the slightest qualms. It will be up to us to make sure this contract is opposed.

Stop Press

FASCISTS from the 'Warriors of Christ the King' have attacked the offices of the LKI [Busque name for the Spanish section of the Fourth International] in Pamplona.

Armed hoodlums fired more than 20 shots through the door. LKI members and other militants defending the building fought the fascists for an hour and a half.

Eventually the police turned up. They were greeted with cheers from the fascists, who immediately dispersed.

The police then arrested all those inside the building — about 50 — claiming they were searching for arms.

All those arrested were Workers Commission members. A number of factory cells of the union have demanded the sacking of the civil governor and the release of the 50.

The civil governor's reply was simple: 'I have inherited the Francoist police and I can't control them.'



'Two, four, six, eight, we don't want a racist state!' No, not Tom Robinson fans, but the 2000 who answered the Palestine Solidarity Campaign's call for last Saturday's demonstration against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The march was predominantly Arab and in an extremely militant mood. Despite the relatively low turnout from the British left, there was a strong and vocal joint contingent from the International Marxist Group and Socialist Workers Party. 'Three, five, seven, nine, liberate Palestine!'

SOCIALIST EDUCATION

THE WAGE CONTRACT

IF A politician in a slave-owning society were to announce that 'unfair' practices had crept into the institution of slavery and that it was therefore necessary to introduce a code of 'fair' behaviour regulating the relationship between masters and slaves, we would call him a hypocrite.

If, similarly, a rich feudal abbot were to complain that the serfs were slipping up on their corvée (time spent in forced labour for the lord of the manor) and were to deduce that society seemed to be undergoing a moral deterioration, we should also despise him. How could there be any question of 'fairness' or 'unfairness' in the case of slavery or feudalism? For in either case it is the institution itself which is 'unfair' and not its abuses.

For most people nothing in the appearance of capitalism suggests that it shares anything in common with slavery or feudalism. Slavery and feudalism in varying degrees imply forced work without pay; capitalism implies paid work freely entered into. Capitalism is 'free' enterprise. Under capitalism the worker is a 'free' agent. Workers may dispose of their labour as they wish. They are not forced to give it, but they voluntarily sell it at a price. The price of labour is a wage. This price is determined by the result of an agreement reached between the worker and his or her employer.

This agreement is the wage contract. Legally, the wage contract is an agreement between equals, and either party may terminate the agreement if its terms are broken. The agreement itself stipulates that in return for the expenditure of her/his labour for a certain period of time, the worker will be paid an agreed sum of money. No deception is involved, for the terms of the contract are enforceable at law.

EVENED OUT

Of course, the economists, politicians and philosophers of capitalism will concede that the reality of capitalism may not always live up to its ideal image. One party to a wage contract, for instance, may be in an extremely poor bargaining position, and therefore wages may be unduly low, and profits unjustly high.

Nevertheless, it is generally held that any short-term imbalance of strength between the two parties to the wage bargain is, in the long run, evened out. For example, while the small one-person enterprises of early capitalism have been replaced by huge corporations, so the once unorganised workers are now represented by powerful trade unions which protect their interests. The CBI represents capital and the TUC represents labour. Between them a 'fair' division of wages and profits is enforced. Malpractices can be ironed out in the courts.

This is how the world of capitalism appears to itself. It is not the reality of capitalism however, but a system of appearances which makes the reality of capitalism invisible. At the very heart of this system of appearances lies the wage contract itself.

What is the nature of the wage contract? In the everyday world, everything proceeds as if wages buy all the labour provided by the worker. Every hour is paid at an agreed rate. Bonuses, piece rates and overtime are minutely specified. Labour is thus paid its full price, and profit appears as the amount added onto the selling price, by the capitalist, as a reward for effort. Capital then appears to have a power of autonomous growth since labour has been fully paid at the market rate for work done.

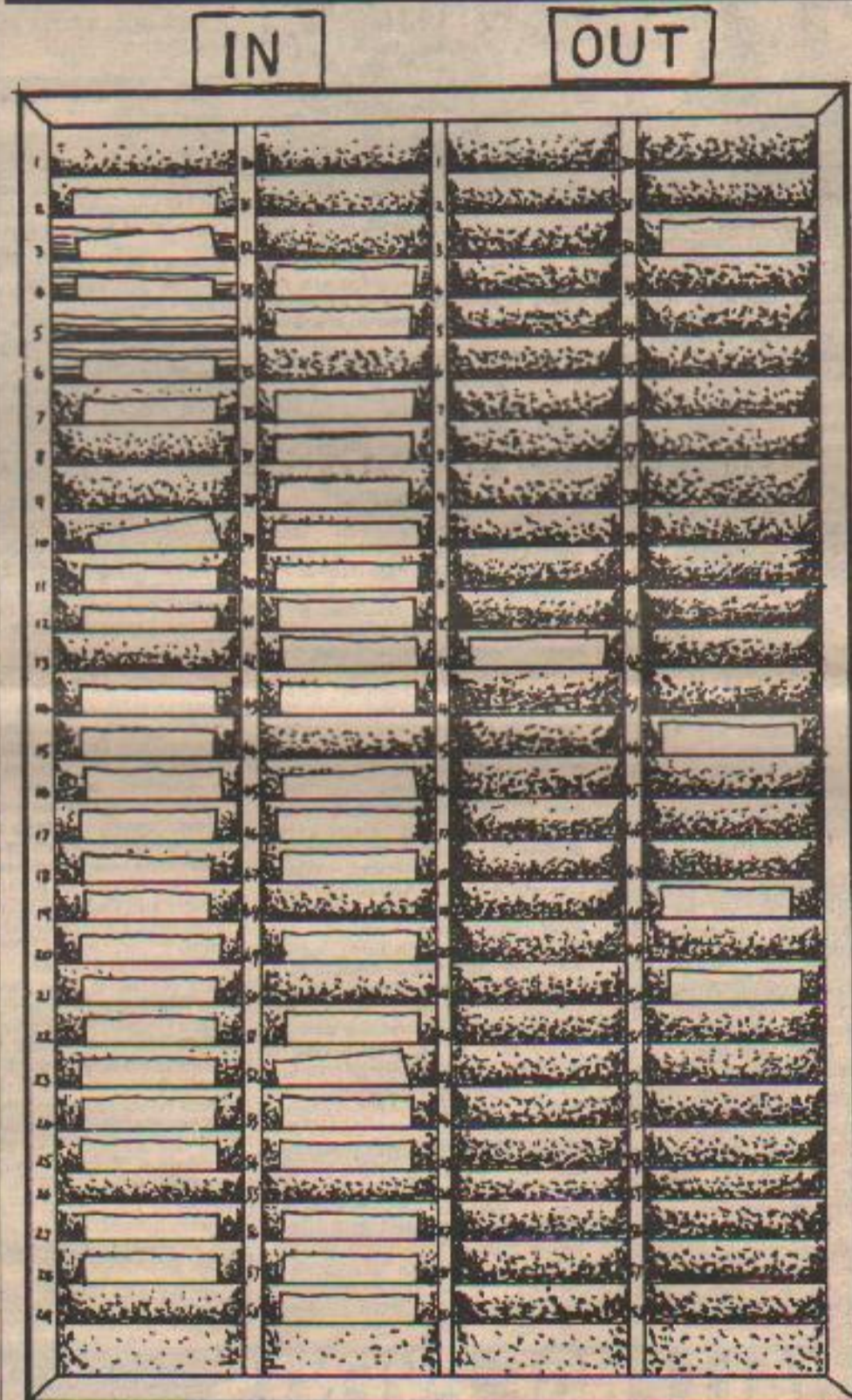
DISGUISED REALITY

It was to uncover the disguised reality which lay beneath this apparently self-evident relationship between labour and capital that Marx elaborated the theory of surplus value which is the most important achievement of his central work *Das Kapital*.

The starting point of Marx's theory was to ask the question: what is the source of the capitalist's profit? To answer that question, he had to find a satisfactory solution to an even more basic problem: what is it that commodities have in common that enables them to be exchanged at agreed ratios? To put it more concretely, what is it that enables us to say that x tons of sugar = y oz of gold = z 100 pencils etc. The commonsense answer to this question is supply and demand. But only a moment's reflection will suffice to show that while supply and demand may explain variations in the prices of pencils or gold, they can never explain how it is in normal conditions that 1 pencil is never worth 1 oz of gold. The only quality in fact that sugar, gold and pencils share in common is that they are all products

IN THE first of our new series 'Socialist Education' GARETH STEDMAN JONES looks behind the everyday appearance of the capitalist economy and explains that workers today continue to perform unpaid labour although this is disguised by the wage.

Future articles in this series will deal with other fundamental questions of Marxist analysis, as well as articles on working class history.



of human labour. Marx concludes that what determines the relative values of different commodities is the relative amounts of socially necessary labour necessary to produce them.

Once this is understood, it then becomes possible to explain the real nature of the wage contract and the source of the capitalist's profit. For what the worker actually sells to the capitalist is not her or his labour i.e. an actual expenditure of brain and muscle, but rather her or his capacity to work; what Marx calls **labour power**.

To put it another way, the capitalist hires a worker to come to the factory on a certain day and be prepared to perform whatever tasks are put in front of her/him; the capitalist does not hire an agreed expenditure of physical or mental energy.

Having looked at the wage contract from the point of view of the worker, let us now look at it from the position of the capitalist. The capitalist possesses money and wishes to

manufacture a commodity. The purpose of manufacturing the commodity is not for personal use for the capitalist but only in producing it to sell at a profit. Therefore the capitalist goes to the market with money and buys the machinery, raw materials and labour power requisite to produce the commodity. For each of these requisites of production — the machinery, the raw materials and the labour power — the capitalist pays the 'equilibrium value'; that is to say, he or she does not rely upon striking lucky bargains, but in each case pays the going market rate.

He or she then combines these three components to manufacture a commodity. The commodity is then sold. Again, the capitalist cannot normally rely upon a sudden boom in the demand for this commodity; he or she therefore sells it also at its equilibrium value. And yet, despite this limitation, at the end, the capitalist has more money than he or she started out with.

Where has this surplus come from? It can-

not have come from the general circulation of commodities, because every commodity has been paid for at its equilibrium value. It cannot have come from the machinery, because no machine can create more value, than it itself costs. It must therefore have come from the labour power. It is only labour power which possesses the unique property of creating more value, than it itself is worth: or to put it another way, labour power is the sole source of surplus value and thus of profit.

We are now in a better position to understand the crucial importance of Marx's distinction between labour and labour power. For, as he wrote, 'the value of the labouring power is determined by the quantity of labour necessary to maintain or reproduce it, but the use of that labouring power (i.e. labour itself) is only limited by the active energies and physical strength of the labourer.'

If a capitalist hires a worker to work a day of eight hours, it may be that the worker will have laboured sufficiently to reproduce her/his value (i.e. earn her or his keep) in four hours. But if the worker then stopped work, the capitalist would make no profit, and the entire basis of capitalist production would be removed. **The worker therefore goes on working for the four remaining hours solely for the benefit of the capitalist.** So the last four hours is wholly unpaid labour which constitutes the profit of the capitalist.

FULL PRICE

But this is not how matters appear either to the worker or the capitalist. For wages will not be paid until the end of the day and will be evened out over all the hours of the day. It will therefore seem to the worker that she or he has been paid for every hour of labour performed, and to the capitalist, that labour has been paid at its full price.

If this idea is difficult to grasp, it is because every scientific concept appears contradictory insofar as it denies the world of everyday appearance and exposes a different level of reality beneath it. In the case of capitalism, the mythical appearance of the wage contract gives the worker's unpaid labour the appearance of paid labour.

Once this myth is exploded, once it is understood that profits are nothing but unpaid labour, then the whole capitalist mythology which derives from it also collapses to the ground. For if profits are unpaid labour, then all talk of a 'fair' distribution between profits and wages becomes ludicrous. The sanctimonious phrases of Henley and Callaghan, the pompous earnestness of Keith Joseph sound as hollow as the bleatings of the slavery politicians. Pious concern about the restrictive practices of the worklets carries about as much ethical charge as grumbings about the laziness of slaves. If profits are unpaid wages, then to talk of the CBI and the TUC as if they were powers of equal magnitude is nonsense. By a similar token, it follows that for the state to masquerade as the impersonal arbitrator between capital and labour is a sham. The state under capitalism not only condones the extraction of surplus value from the working class, but exists to ensure its continued and orderly flow.

EXPLOITATION

Is then the analogy between capitalism and slavery or feudalism so far-fetched after all?

Not at all. For all class societies are characterised by the **exploitation** of labour by a class of non-producers. In all such societies a division is rendered between necessary labour (production for one's own wants) and surplus labour (labour which is appropriated to sustain the non-productive ruling class). What is specific to capitalism is not the fact of exploitation, but the **form** it takes, namely the production of surplus value which is a process of exploitation deeply concealed within the production process itself. As Marx put it, 'this false appearance distinguishes wage labour from other historical forms of labour. On the basis of the wages system even the unpaid labour seems to be paid labour. With the slave on the contrary, even that part of her/his labour which is paid appears to be 'unpaid'.'

Similarly, 'whether a man works three days of the week for himself on his own field and three days for nothing on the estate of his lord, or whether he works in the factory or the workshop six hours daily for himself, and six for his employer, it comes to the same, although in the latter case the paid and unpaid portions of labour are inseparably mixed up with each other, and the nature of the whole transaction is completely masked by the intervention of a contract and the pay received at the end of the week'.

1.

IN HIS letter attacking Tariq Ali's article on the Morning Star John Ross proposes an utterly sectarian response to the possibility that this paper may cease daily publication. Nowhere does comrade Ross acknowledge that, in the absence of an alternative, the disappearance of the Morning Star would be a setback for the workers movement in this country, just as, in the past, the transition of the Daily Herald from being a trade union paper to being an ordinary capitalist paper was a setback. Those responsible for such losses bear a heavy responsibility for them before the movement as a whole.

So far as John Ross is concerned the Morning Star is a write off because it reflects the politics of the CPGB which are 'very well worked out'. Consequently: 'To try to urge that the party reflects the real interests of the class struggle is no more realistic than expecting the Labour Party to lead the struggle for socialism. What is needed is to build an alternative to the CP and not a futile fight to change it.'

Since both the Labour Party and the Communist Party are working class parties revolutionaries have a duty to argue that they should reflect the real interests of the working class. The only alternative to this is to argue that they should represent ruling class interests, a position which I am sure comrade Ross will see is wrong. Of course revolutionaries would be wrong to suggest or imply that either the Labour, or Communist Party, will lead the struggle for socialism; but Tariq Ali certainly encouraged no such idea in his article on the Star.

The CPGB is, of course, much smaller than the Labour Party and perhaps this is the reason that comrade Ross thinks that it can be ignored or by-passed. If this is what he believes he makes a grave mistake. The CPGB, although very small, hegemonises a vital layer of militants within the labour movement. Most of these militants see themselves as supporters of socialist revolution and class struggle, in Britain and internationally as well.

Comrade Ross writes of the CPGB as if it were simply an organisation for promoting scabbing, and the Star its newsletter. Such notions may go down well in student circles, where the CP has pursued a spectacularly and consistently rightist policy, but they would be rejected as absurd by the majority of class conscious industrial workers. The Star supported the big struggles that toppled Heath and has supported the big national confrontations against the social contract (recently the Firemen's strike and the Miners' claim).

The Star was wrong not to support the Leyland toolmen, but many opponents of the social contract were suspicious of the toolmen's struggle with its demand for separate negotiating rights, concern for differentials and protestations of loyalty to Government policy. Most of the errors made by the Star on the industrial front are similar in that they encourage misconceptions already quite widespread among advanced workers, which would have to be reflected in any authentic workers' newspaper. So far as

DEBATE ON THE ★ Morning Star



THE CHILEAN poet Pablo Neruda's only play, Splendour and Death of Joaquin Murieta, is currently receiving its first English production, by TOCAD — Theatre of Contemporary Arabic Drama — in association with the Chile Solidarity Campaign. The group makes imaginative use of extremely restricted facilities — including a cast of only six in which women members play male as well as female roles.

Performances: 18-19 May, Technis [9 York Way, London N7], 24-28 May, Latin American Centre [17 Hoxton Sq, London N1]. At 8pm.

routine industrial strikes go the Star supports them, in contrast to the capitalist press. It should also be said that the Star was the only daily newspaper to urge its readers to take part in the ANL Carnival — in front page stories for more than a week beforehand.

John Ross is so carried away by his outrage at the many bad positions adopted editorially by the Star, that he only considers it from the standpoint of whether it is a revolutionary newspaper. Evidently it is not. What Tariq Ali proposed in his article is that the Star should also be judged, as should any workers paper, on the extent to which it faithfully reflects the existing anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist struggles, and the extent to which it is open to the real debates within the workers movement. It was on these essential minimum grounds that he found the Star wanting, and it is undoubtedly its failures by these criteria that help to explain its declining circulation.

John Ross seems to have missed the significance of the reference to Newsline. If it is true that this paper survives thanks to the patronage of Libya or Iraq, then there is an obstacle to changing its politics that has nothing to do with the workers movement. The problems of the Star in part reflect the fact that it does not have extraneous support of this sort and so is in difficulties despite a much larger circulation. It must also be said that by the elementary criteria suggested above, the Newsline is exceptionally mendacious and monolithic, often excelling the Star in these respects. Even so we should hope a fight develops inside the WRP to change all this.

Perhaps the most astonishing claim in comrade Ross's letter is that the CPGB is possessed of 'very well worked out politics' and any prospect of change within it is illusory. Has not John Ross noticed that, in common with other European CPs, the CPGB is passing through a very profound crisis at the present time? That it is being forced to re-examine its relationship to Stalinism, its programme for socialism, and its tactics in the class struggle.

One of the worst failings of the Star has been its attempt to muffle, evade or suppress this discussion; Comment is a more lively publication because it allows at least a modicum of debate. It is ironic that John Ross's letter was published in the same issue as the centre-spread devoted to Louis Althusser's critique of the PCF leadership. Would comrade Ross urge Althusser to leave the Communist Party and abandon futile attempts to change it? If so I'm sure Marchais would agree. Althusser's rejection of monolithism, reformism and Stalinism in the politics of the PCF is, so far, incomplete and it is unclear how far he will press it. But what is clear is that the sort of questions he is raising are by no means confined to a few isolated intellectuals. The Congress of the PSUC (Catalan Communist Party) which voted by a majority against dropping the party's commitment to 'Leninism' is one sign of this; the very considerable opposition inside the CPGB to the British Road to Socialism is another.

To aim to build an 'alternative to the CP' is a rather miserable ambition, since the CPGB is, despite the many good working class

militants within it, manifestly a failure, even on its own terms. Building a socialist alternative that will be a force within national politics and at every level of the class struggle is a much larger aim. But it is most unlikely that it can be achieved if the leadership of the CPGB is allowed to maintain a monolithic bureaucratic tutelage over a crucial layer of the most class conscious workers.

ROBIN BLACKBURN (South-West London)

2

FROM time to time some pretty shoddy arguments have appeared in the pages of Socialist Challenge, but John Ross's letter attacking the Morning Star scraped the barrel of political dishonesty. [Socialist Challenge 4 May].

We are told that you can open the Star 'any week', and find the paper singing the praises of a number of regimes John Ross doesn't like, thus giving the impression that the Star grants the same regular, sycophantic coverage to Syria, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka etc. as the Newsline reserves for Gaddafi's Libya.

In fact, I have never seen an article on Syria in the Star (and the Star attacked the Syrian intervention in Lebanon). Nor does Sri Lanka feature much in the paper — the only article I can recall was a report from the last Congress of the Sri Lanka CP.

As for Ethiopia, the most recent article was a sober assessment of the dispute with Somalia by Jack Woddis, head of the CPGB's International Department, which by no stretch of the imagination could be described as simply adulatory.

Ross tries to pull the wool over his readers' eyes by running a number of regimes together which have nothing in common except that they're not in Europe. Bourgeois politicians like Gandhi and Gaddafi hardly belong in the same sentence as the Ethiopian military let alone the Marxist government in Angola.

Of course, if Ross really thinks that Agostinho Neto is the same as Indira Ghandi, then I'd be interested to hear him argue it (and no doubt a debate could be arranged). I doubt if he will, however, since in doing so he would reveal little more than a crass ignorance of both Angola and India.

In an amazing feat of political gymnastics, Ross goes on to attack the CP's 'sabotage' of the campaign following the Labour Assembly on Unemployment and so on, 'not to mention their policies' in France and Italy! But who is 'they'?

Ross knows perfectly well that the British CP does not determine the policies followed by its French or

Italian counterparts. He is also well aware that there are differing opinions inside the British Party concerning the activities of other Western Europe CPs. But this doesn't matter to Ross since what he's doing is pulling the oldest and most disreputable trick out of the Trotskyist hat — substituting a list of alleged 'betrayals' all over the world for any serious political argument.

As for the bland statement that the call for a Bill of Rights does not remotely correspond to the interests of the Irish working people, I'm afraid that a large number of Irish trade unionists would disagree. (But then, perhaps Ross is merely nostalgic for the good old days when the Red Mole would appear with slogans such as 'Victory to the IRA' emblazoned all over its front page?).

And immigration controls? — The only controls the CP or the Star could support would be non-racist ones, (for example, if there were a genuine overpopulation problem, etc.). We are opposed to every control that has found its way onto the statute book, and to all the ones currently being considered. On this issue, for once, we happened to be in broad agreement with the IMG, a situation evidently not to the liking of Comrade Ross.

Although I would strongly disagree with much of what Tariq Ali wrote in his original piece on the Star, at least that was a serious and reasoned contribution to the debate, and indicated a refreshing willingness to engage in political dialogue.

But Ross's letter is quite the opposite — a piece of crude knockabout that evades the real discussion by resurrecting and duly demolishing some very tired old straw men. Ross appears to represent a tendency in the IMG opposed to that organisation's current rapprochement with reality, and intent on dragging it back to the ghetto of the Transitional Programme. I hope that saner opinions will prevail.

PAUL FAUVET (West London)

WH Smith

THE DECISION of WH Smith to stock Socialist Challenge and its acceptance by the editorial board is to say the least very disturbing and unprincipled. At the moment there is picketing of WH Smith by Gays protesting about the firm's refusal to sell Gay News, whilst they would rather sell pin-ups and porn that exploits women.

We would like to know the attitude of the editorial board towards the picketing, as it seems a contradiction in terms selling inside and picketing outside. After all picketing is to try and stop people from taking their custom to that shop. If Socialist Challenge does support the Gay Liberation movement they should be selling it outside on the picket. If you have to rely on the minimal sales of the paper in Smiths, rather than on the probability of selling more outside on the picket, it is a sad reflection on the paper. Apart from the fact that you don't build a revolution by selling in capitalist shops, it is far more productive to sell on the streets and be able to talk directly to the buyers.

Socialist Society [Bristol Poly]

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

NORTH WEST

WARRINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets regularly. Ring Manchester Socialist Challenge offices for details. 061-236 2252.

GREATER MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge School students who support the paper and would like to get involved in anti-fascist activity please contact Chris 273 5847 (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 54615.

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

SOUTH MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge group meets every other Thursday at the Albert Inn off Wilmot 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 2352.

YORKSHIRE

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge group meets next on 4 May and fortnightly thereafter. 7.30pm, Friendly and Trade 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 Rock on High Row, 11am-1pm.

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

WALES

SWANSEA Socialist Challenge group meets every other Wednesday at 7.30pm in St Helens Inn, Vincent

Street. All supporters welcome. Next meeting, 10 May and fortnightly thereafter.

CARDIFF Socialist Challenge Forum, 19 May, 7.30pm at the Four Elms Pub, Elm Street. Discussion on '1968—Two Years After'.

SOUTH WEST

SOUTHAMPTON Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday from 10am-1pm 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 Caters from 10.45am-1pm. Further information of local activities from Mike, 11 Angles 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, 84 Queen St., Glasgow. Open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday afternoons. Phone for alternative arrangements: 021-74811. Wide range of Fourth International publications.

EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-346 0495 for details.

DUNDEE: Information about Socialist Challenge activities from 84 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.

HARINGEY Socialist Challenge group public meeting on the struggle in Southern Africa with a speaker from the African Students' Union Monday, 22 May, West Green Community Centre, Stanley Road, N.15, 7.30pm. Nearest tube: Turnpike Lane.

CAMDEN Socialist Challenge Open Forum on 'Socialist Opposition in Eastern Europe'. Speaker: Oliver MacDonald, of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe (in persona capacity). Wed, 24 May, 18 Camden Rd, NWT (SOCH Office).

BRENT Socialist Challenge Open Forum, Monday, 22 May, 7.30pm. The women's movement: its recent developments, the socialist feminist current, NAC and the WWC. Because of the NUPE dispute the group cannot meet at Anson School, its regular venue. Details from Tessa on 965-087. All welcome.

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

GREENWICH-LEWISHAM Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly. Details from Ray on 01-659 1187.

NEWHAM Socialist Challenge Forum meets regularly. Details from PO Box 50, London N1.

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

LONDON CPBA Socialist Challenge readers. We are establishing a CPBA 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 Forum, Tuesday 22 May, 'Racism and Education'. Speaker: Sid Piers, Black Arrow Group, The Vine, Stafford Street, 7.30pm.

LEICESTER Socialist Challenge supporters meet fortnightly at the Highfields Community Centre. For details ring 0532 25854.

UNDER REVIEW

Phil Derbyshire interviews Tom Robinson

'When we sing Glad to be Gay some man always has to demonstrate how masculine he is by raising a limp wrist'

Do you see yourself primarily as a musician?

It's the best job there is for me; something I like doing and which I get paid for. Only about 5 per cent of workers get that sort of job fulfilment...Unlike the job I did before, though — I was a clerk in a music publishers — it has its disadvantages: that was just a job of work that I did for eight hours.

So long as I crawled through the door at 9.30 it didn't matter what the hell I did in my time off. In this job, it's entirely on your own shoulders whether the job is good or not. It's getting better though: if you compare your career to a plane ride, then we've got past take-off, and the question is now how far it'll go; to what altitude and what the destination is.

The previous four years could be compared to hanging about in the airport lounge.

A lot of the songs you're playing now are at least a year old. How easy is it to write new material and what gives you the inspiration?

I'm very anxious to do a second album. We didn't tour with this album because we had been playing the songs for a year and a half, and all last year was devoted to the audience. We gigged solidly from January to December last year, and recorded the EP so as not to take time off for recording.

Come this January we were all set to go off to Germany when Chris Thomas, who produced the Sex Pistols, asked us to do an album, so we cancelled the German dates (though we will go back and do them) and did the album. Doing the EP meant that there was space on the album for two new songs, *Too good to be true* and *The Man you never saw*, which was the last thing I wrote. To give you an idea of the way the music is going I could recite you the lyrics of that...

Have you heard an ugly whisper? Is the rumour really true? Just in time, we're next in line, They're really after you and me.

Since the demonstration Clamping down on every side, Rounding up the kids at random, Army curfew every night. Chorus: Don't repeat this conversation



Don't let on we met before Try and make like I'm a stranger I'm the man you never saw.

Church police were round this morning and the army's on our track Took away my books and papers only just got out the back.

Just flown in to tell you That your place is being watched Don't go into work tomorrow Try and make it down the docks.

Dump your car and burn your letters Smash your glasses, cut your hair Buy a suit and take a raincoat When you go, don't tell us where.

Take a look outside my window Don't recognise that van Someone's standing in the doorway Better make it while you can...

Pretty paranoid, mind you!

A lot of your songs have an air of coming disaster and catastrophe... Rampant paranoia... But is that how you see politics

developing in this country?

It's a bit like a personal superstition: if you say something winter of '79 won't be like the song says it will. But you want to show people how it could happen: *Winter of '79* starts off mild enough. The guy who sings it starts off as a football hooligan, 'blood was running in the drains, yippee' and all that. He opted out of politics, doesn't want to know.

But the government never resigns and gradually it wants to know about him, and you get this image of the SAS coming round one night and waking everyone up in the street and wanting to know what they were doing and gradually personal liberties disappear.

I dunno, but if it makes 5 per cent of the audience have a think about where they stand and why, then it's worth it.

How do you fit into the gay community now?

Really I'm a gay man in a heterosexual's world. One of the management team is gay but the rest of the organisation and the band are heterosexual. I got the band together on the basis of their musical ability. You've got to do that, just as *Gay Sweatshop* used professional actors to get their plays across in the best way. Homosexuality is irrelevant at the level of technique — though it's there, obviously, in what I have to say.

You work in a predominantly heterosexual milieu. Does that affect the way people receive your music?

We play to a rock audience, not a predominantly gay, or feminist, or left one. But it is fantastic when Asian teenagers in the audience get off on the music and come up and talk afterwards and when gay people come up and make constructive criticism. But by and large we're playing to people who like music and that's the one thing they have in common.

But don't you find it difficult to explain why it's important for you as

a gay to be up there and visible? It's been like that in the left until recently and it must be true in the milieu that you work in.

I guess I do. *Glad to be Gay* is just one of the songs that the band does, and it isn't pushing my gay lifestyle. I tend to come over more asexual than anything, 'cos that's the best way of avoiding the inherent sexism and machismo of rock music.

But isn't there a contradiction when your lead guitarist does all that macho posturing on *Right on Sister*?

Come on! He sends himself up rotten at the same time. He's so over the top that it's obvious that he's taking the piss out of himself, other guitarists, the audience and the song. If he was serious, he'd be unbearable.

And if you grant the terms, then he's much more feminine than me. There's an element of macho but also one of ambiguity. He'd be taken for the gay one in the band by a stranger. So we've got a camp, het guitarist, and an asexual, low-key macho gay lead singer.

Do you find that having become a 'rock star' that it is difficult to relate back to the gay community — as though you're unapproachable, or touchable for the wrong reasons?

Give me those wrong reasons! Seriously, most of that is in other people's heads. I'm unaware that it happens 'cos most of my life is spent in hotel rooms, buses, backstage, on stage and in recording studios. You're quite cut off from reality.

Last night at the Albert was the first time that I'd heard any of my own music in a gay place, and I was completely blown away by all those people singing *Glad to be Gay* and dancing together. It was fantastic. Being at the Albert is like renewing old acquaintances. No one lays a big trip on you.

It was the same when we were gigging at the Brecknock and places. There was a real rapport between the band and the people who followed us from gig to gig...No one wanted autographs and to shake my hand

until we got to the Marquee, and then the same people wanted autographs. Maybe it had something to do with it being difficult to get in.

That was a dilemma. At first I wouldn't do it, but then I thought about it and realised I was being more patronising by not giving autographs etc. You just give into the system and I guess I did very quickly.

Do you get snide remarks about being gay?

Behind my back, yes. Paul Burnett on Radio One saying: 'We've had New Wave now we have Blow Wave' for example, titter, titter, and so on. When we sing *Glad to be Gay* some man always has to demonstrate how masculine he is by raising a limp wrist. It's pathetic. If you stare at them and sing 'em a verse they usually shut up, if not then you point 'em out to the audience and say: 'Look a real man. Surprise, surprise' and put it in perspective.

Generally if you meet someone who has no secret longing to go to bed with someone of the same sex, which you occasionally do (though I don't suppose there are many of them), who is secure in their sexuality and who isn't gay, then there's no problem. The ones who hassle are insecure and trying to prove something.

What tedious lives they must lead. I feel sorry for them...maybe they should go and see a doctor!

Next week, Phil Derbyshire's interview concludes with Tom Robinson on: Being a socialist rock star — 'It's about as feasible as being a socialist perfume manufacturer'; Rock Against Racism; youth radicalisation; the organised left. Don't miss it!

Out on 19 May — The new Tom Robinson Band LP: *Power in the Darkness*. Already out: the single *Up against the Wall*. Both on the EMI label.

The Other Bookshop

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Special offer: Ernest Mandel's *Late Capitalism* £5 paperback will be sent post free to *Socialist Challenge* readers.

Socialist Challenge

After the coup in Kabul

CAN ZIA STILL HANG BHUTTO?

THE OVERTHROW of the Mohammed Daud regime in Afghanistan and his replacement by a pro-Moscow Communist has confounded all political analysts. The change-over in Kabul might be the most powerful factor now in ensuring that the life of Bhutto, the former Pakistan Prime Minister, is spared. **TARIQ ALI** explains.

The new government in Afghanistan is that country's most radical regime. Its new leader Nur Mohammed Taraki is a member of a political party which contains large numbers of pro-Moscow Communists.

Taraki is in many ways similar to the late Iranian anti-imperialist leader, Mossadegh, who tried, unsuccessfully, to unseat the Shah in the 1950s. Mossadegh was overthrown by the CIA and the Shah put back on the throne.

The advent of Taraki has frightened both the Shah (confronting growing discontent at home) and General Zia. The latter has recently come under increasing international pressure not to hang Bhutto.

The coup in Kabul could well be the final arbiter. For if there is widespread agitation in Pakistan following the execution then the Afghans could well aid any resistance.

And the Kabul example might find some admirers within the Army itself.

Writing in the Washington Post of 1 May, Bernard Nossiter reported from Rawalpindi how

the generals were preparing for a semi-permanent role in politics.

He described Zia thus: 'Like so many generals who have seized power in the Third World, he has been trained in and admires the United States. Zia has taken the armoured school course in Ft Knox and graduated from the command and general staff school at Ft Leavenworth.'

LONG SILENCE

The implication is that Zia would be susceptible to State Department pressure. The United States has broken its long silence on the issue and its Ambassador in Pakistan, Arthur Hummel, has joined the list of countries asking for Bhutto's life to be spared.

Not so his British counterpart. In a letter to Stan Newens MP, Foreign Secretary David Owen spelt out the cynical British line: an appeal for Bhutto's life 'would almost certainly be regarded as an interference in Pakistan's judicial processes and could do

more harm than good: there is already a body of opinion in Pakistan which is strongly critical of "foreign intervention" in the case.'

No prizes for guessing who that 'body' might be!

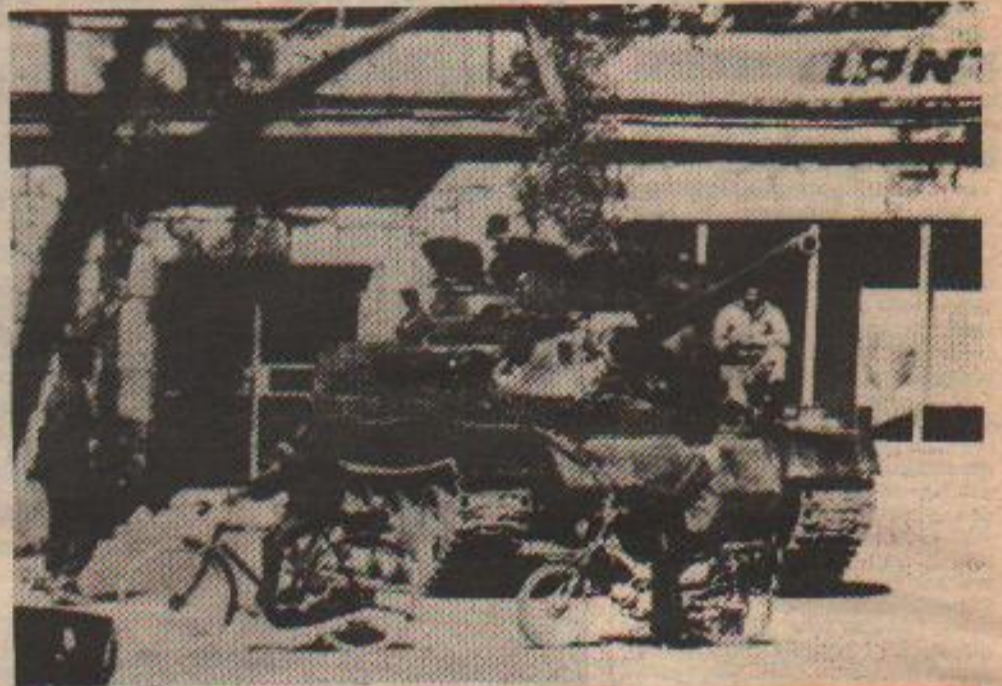
In Pakistan all the left-wing groups, despite their strong opposition to Bhutto's politics, have demanded his release and that of all other political prisoners.

There are at least 5000 political prisoners in the country today. Many of them are regularly flogged.

This barbarism reached new heights when four journalists were flogged on 13 May for going on strike. They chanted 'Long live freedom of the press' while they were being whipped.

Pakistani politics will never be the same again, whatever happens to Bhutto. The uniformed despots have almost ensured that the days of Pakistan as a separate state are limited.

The alternatives are stark: socialism or disintegration.



DEMONSTRATE AGAINST THE PAKISTANI MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

MARCH FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS: FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

END PRESS CENSORSHIP

Sunday 21 May: Assemble Speakers Corner, 1pm

March to Pakistan Embassy

Speakers include: Ghulam Mustafa Khar, Murtaza Bhutto, Tariq Ali, Stan Newens MP, Sibghat Kadri.

OUR FUND DRIVE

Win a Dylan ticket!

THREE tickets have been sent to our offices for Bob Dylan's concert in London next month. The supporter who sent them in said he thought a raffle for the tickets would help fill our depleted coffers!

Would you and a friend like to go to the Bob Dylan concert? If so, send in today for Socialist Challenge lottery tickets! Price: 25p each or five for £1. Just send a postal order

or cheque plus a stamped envelope to Socialist Challenge, 328 Upper Street, London N1. Also on sale at The Other Bookshop.

First prize will be two tickets to the concert; second prize will be one ticket. The draw will take place on Monday 12 June in The Other Bookshop. Organised by D Wepler of 328 Upper Street, London N1 on behalf of Socialist Challenge.

THE slogan under the brick wall seems to have aroused interest throughout the world. Readers keen to obtain more clues as to its content have rushed donations to Socialist Challenge. These have come from as far afield as Japan and Australia.

A little nearer home our Oxford supporters have been maintaining their record as the most consistent fund raisers for the paper. A second hand book sale brought in £30.54. Prior to this there have been socials, film shows, trips on the river, jumble sales and sponsored events.

A delegate from the APEX national conference sent the

paper £5 with this message:

'Here are the remnants of my delegates expenses. It would have gone on beer and food for the journey home, but Callaghan's speech made me too sick to stomach anything except the thought of building the Socialist Challenge conference and an alternative to Labour's reactionary policies.'

This fiver helped us to raise £149.54 this week. Our thanks to:

D Jeckye	6.00
C Parker	10.00
Edinburgh readers	2.00
Oxford book sale	30.54
J Fish	5.00
Wandsworth supporters	10.00

R Eason	25.00
J Warren	5.00
C Pitts	20.00
A Hargreaves	1.00
G Youldon	5.00
Preston readers	5.00
APEX delegate	5.00
Hackney supporter	20.00

This brings the overall total to £676.71. Still a long way short of the £2,500 by the end of June. On average in the next 7 weeks we must now raise £260. This is a stiff task, but not impossible, if all the local groups put their minds to it.

A number of readers have found considerable difficulty in

obtaining Socialist Challenge via WH Smith. This has occurred with both retail branches supposed to be stocking the paper and also where individuals have tried to order Socialist Challenge.

We apologise for this inconvenience. We understand it is the fault of the branch managers, who have been reluctant to implement the scheme.

Last week only a couple of branches who it was agreed would stock the paper were doing so. Smiths head office is presently rectifying this problem.

So keep trying to buy the paper in your Smiths branch.

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

Domestic: 6 months, £5; 12 months, £10

Abroad: Airmail, £16.50. Surface, £10 per annum.

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Cheques, POs and Money Orders should be made payable to 'Socialist Challenge'.

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