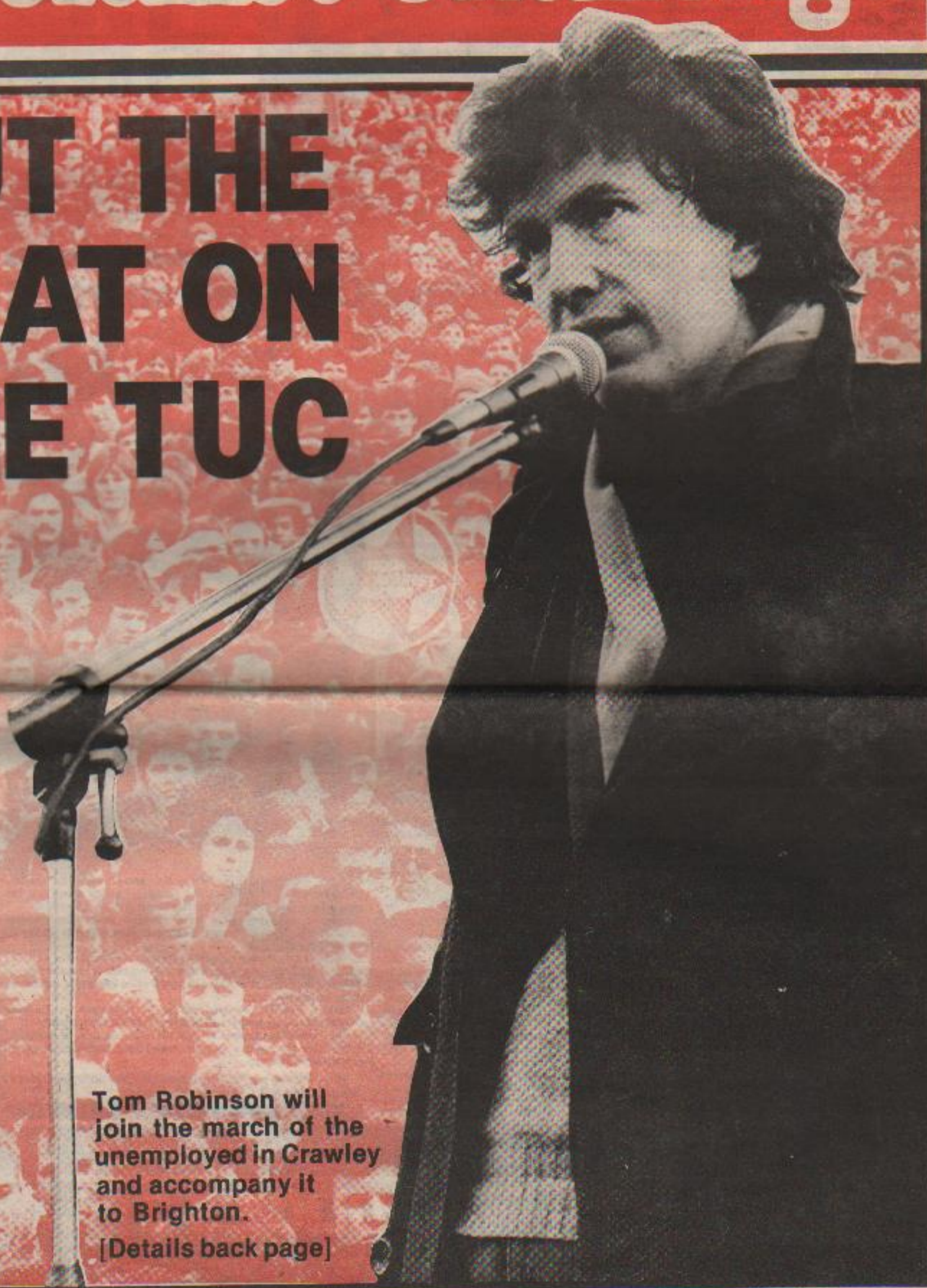


Socialist Challenge

PUT THE HEAT ON THE TUC



Tom Robinson will join the march of the unemployed in Crawley and accompany it to Brighton.

[Details back page]

Photo: MARK RUSHER (IFL)

Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

No Phase 4 — 35-hour week now

LOBBY TUC 6 SEPTEMBER

EDITORIAL

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The Shah's poodles

THREE HUNDRED and seventy people died in a cinema in the Iranian oil town of Abadan. The Shah's government claimed that the cinema had been set on fire by 'treasonous elements' inspired by the religious opposition leaders. What is more likely is that it was an act of provocation by the Iranian Gestapo, SAVAK, to discredit the opposition.

The British press has been at pains to stress the religious character of the opposition. The aim is to portray the Shah as a liberal fighting against obscurantist oppositionists.

The truth is simpler. The struggle against the Shah was sparked off by spontaneous mass mobilisations, which brought together all those fighting for democratic rights (including sections of the clergy).

The reason for continuing demonstrations is not difficult to understand. The Shah has presided over one of the most repressive regimes in Asia. His secret police — SAVAK — has acquired a world reputation for unbridled savagery.

It has pioneered a number of new torture techniques which have been greatly appreciated by its admirers in the Chilean DINA and elsewhere. One of these was to toast prisoners alive on an electric iron grill.

For 25 years now the Shah has maintained his rule through naked coercion. What we are seeing in Iran today is an accumulated response to a brutal dictatorship.

Chalfont's apologia for the Shah in the Times of 21 August propounded the now familiar line of liberalism (Shah and friends) versus obscurantism (the opposition). Furthermore the latter were suggested to be in the pay of either Moscow or the Libyans.

However there were some crumbs of comfort for the Shah's admirers in Britain. Tehran was still normal: '... in the Hilton Hotel up on the cool heights of Shemiran the oriental dancer in the Persian Garden and a lively pop group in the Cascade restaurant continue to play to packed houses'. And in New Printing House Square political contortionists continue to be given acreages of space to do a PR job for the Shah.

The record of the Labour Government on Iran is atrocious. Successive Labour ministers have kow-towed before the Shah and continued to provide him with advanced weaponry. Labour supporters can now see the use which is being made of these weapons. The tanks 'keeping order' in Iran have been supplied by the Labour government.

The strength of the opposition to the Shah's government has forced the dictator into making a number of concessions, but as experience elsewhere has shown this is only the beginning of the slippery slope. The ultimate aim of the demonstrators is the overthrow of the Shah and a dismantling of the SAVAK and other repressive bodies. Despite the uneven and even confused nature of the struggle the chances are that the Shah could well be overthrown in the near future.

His removal would not only mark an important step forward for the oppressed masses in Iran, but would destabilise imperialist planning in the region. The Pentagon considers Iran as one of its most important relays in the Near East. The Iranian army has been considered as a potential police force for the whole region.

Marriage matters

IN AN attempt to co-opt the womens liberation movement and to deflect it towards traditional bourgeois politics, a number of capitalist states have appointed advisers or ministers on 'Womens Affairs'. The American ruling class has probably been the most demagogic in trying to harness the energies of the womens movement for its own uses.

In Britain the social crisis is so advanced that the ruling class cannot afford such luxuries as a token nod in favour of womens rights. Accordingly the Labour Government is attempting to combat the impact of the social crisis and the womens movement by appointing a Minister to preach the virtues of marriage.

In a number of speeches Callaghan has placed a stress on the importance of the family as a unit which could resist the shocks of a crisis-ridden society. The Government is reportedly extremely worried by the growing number of divorces, single-parent families and the growing refusal of increasing numbers of young women to be legally tied and subordinated to men. It is also worried by the continuing alienation of youth from all forms of traditional politics and values.

This reactionary offensive by Labour is an attempt to curry favour with the forces mobilised by the Festival of Light and the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child. It is an electoral ploy designed to demonstrate that Labour is every bit as 'traditional' as the Tories on this question.

Meanwhile the victims of Labour's offensive will be women. It is they who are expected to pay for the crisis of the system by continuing to be domestic slaves, with a little help from Vallium if the going gets rough.

There are many feminists in the Labour Party. A number of them are even Members of Parliament. They must make it clear that they will fight Callaghan all the way.

HOME NEWS

Grumbles at the TUC Lobby for an alternative

by RICH PALSER

'THIS CONGRESS affirms the support of the trade union movement for the return of a Labour Government at the next General Election with a working majority.'

'In so doing, Congress congratulates the present minority Government on its achievements since 1974 which have been made possible by the spirit of co-operation within the whole Labour Movement.'

This motion to the Trade Union Congress from the Engineering Union sums up what we can expect of the union leaderships when they meet in Brighton on 4 September. With a general election on the cards, the rallying call is loud and clear: 'All shoulders to the wheel', forget the sins of the Labour Government. Any idea of head-on collision with the Government — like the Post Office Engineers dispute — is out of the question. Let's close ranks and show a 'united movement'.

Unity is vital, but around what policies? The public employees' union, NUPE, gives the 'left-wing' answer to the AUEW's cringing endorsement of Callaghan's policies.

MANIFESTO

It calls on Labour to adopt a manifesto including increased public ownership, controls over private investment, price controls and public ownership of the land.

The unions certainly should demand Labour adopts socialist policies and fights for them the general election. But Callaghan's government has no intention of adopting — let alone implementing — such measures.

It's up to the unions to wage an independent campaign for a Labour Government, promoting policies in its own interests, instead of backing the class collaboration of the minority Labour Government.

NUPE's suggestions for a Labour manifesto are unobjectionable — as far as they go. But more worrying is the silence on unemployment and incomes policy. These are the issues which will dominate the Congress, yet NUPE isn't making any proposals for these issues to be included in a new manifesto.

APEX, the Clerical Workers Union, goes all the way in backing the Government's incomes policy. Its motion to TUC 'recognises the value to the trade union movement of the reduction in inflation' and argues 'these trends need to be continued by further policies aimed at reducing inflation'. More of the same — wage limits.

Most rank and file union members don't welcome such brazen support for wage cuts so the motion from the G&MWU,

and 'those improvements must be built upon and sustained by the operation of voluntary collective bargaining within an improving economic climate'.

It politely warns the government that 'responsible voluntary collective bargaining is best achieved by the government refraining from direct interference in negotiations'.

The trade unions, through the TUC, 'should itself establish bargaining priorities

for the coming wage round'. In other words, the TUC should responsibly moderate their wage claims.

A more honest balance sheet of the social contract is drawn by the Civil Servants' Union. 'Congress believes that the current problems of relativities, of the failure to maintain living standards, and of low pay, cannot, as the past three years have shown, be resolved by government guidance or interference, direct or indirect, in the usual process of industrial bargaining.' A vigorous campaign against any wage limits including practical support for workers fighting such restrictions is called for by the CPSA resolution.

WEEK

The SCPS, another civil service union, explicitly 'regrets' the General Council decision not to support the firemen, and 'urges' the Council to aid such workers in the future.

The most popular policy to deal with unemployment is the reduction of the working week to 35 hours. Motions range from the Steel Workers' Union's call for a three-year phased introduction of the shorter working week to the Transport Union's motion for 35 hours without loss of earnings to be top priority in subsequent negotiations. Such resolutions are familiar. They have been passed at the TUC before, only to be forgotten.

Democratic rights will be another area of concern for TUC delegates. The Journalists' Union wants the charges dropped against Aubrey, Campbell and Berry and it calls for the introduction of a 'Freedom of Information' Act.

Another motion welcomes the formation of the Anti Nazi League, and the white collar union, the ASTMS, backs the Women's TUC resolution for a TUC demonstration before the final vote on any future restrictive abortion legislation.

POLICIES

These are the policies around which the TUC should be conducting its own independent campaign in support of the return of a Labour Government. It could best lead the fight for them by throwing its weight behind all workers taking action for those objectives.

Instead, we can confidently expect the trade union leaders to fall behind the Government and its present policies. The 'lefts' will grumble, but refuse to 'break ranks'. The lobby of the TUC on the 6 September is important. It can show there is a socialist alternative to Labour's class collaboration.

Drop the charges!



EARLY last Wednesday, 500 police armed with riot shields, sledgehammers, truncheons and grappling hooks drove out 160 people from their homes in Huntley Street in central London.

Thirteen squatters have been charged under the criminal trespass law. Their next court hearing at Bow Street is set for 21 September.

Without a doubt this massive operation — estimated at a cost of well over £50,000 — was used as a training exercise for the Special Patrol Group and other police in preparation for future attacks on other occupations.

Sixteen families involved are to be re-housed by Camden Council but single people will be left to fend for themselves.

The Campaign Against a Criminal Trespass Law immediately condemned the police action and called for a campaign to get all charges dropped.

There will be a meeting in defence of Huntley Street on Friday 25 August, 7pm, at 8 Chenies Street, London.

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.

[Delete if not applicable]

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

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

OUR POLICIES 2

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 unified and democratic revolutionary socialist organisation which can, through an application of united front tactics, begin to be seen as an alternative by thousands of workers engaged in struggles. Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

'Now the only hassle is with the police'

D, we will call him, is 18. One of a family of seven. Black. He was arrested after the arrest of Dave Stevens on the 11 March demonstration in Wolverhampton. He is charged with 'malicious wounding'.

At his committal proceedings, some 40 pickets protested his arrest — further angered because the Wolverhampton police force has managed to arrest him yet again on charges of 'theft'. Let's hope such pending charges won't influence the jury. We're sure it's the last thing the police would want!

CHRIS ROSEBLADE interviewed D for 'Socialist Challenge'.

Tell us about yourself.

Well, I've got three sisters and one brother. One of my sisters has her own house. Two live at home. I'm the fourth oldest. I left school in 1975 or 1976 — one of the two. Since then I have had about three jobs — de-greasing; loading and loading off, and that; then I was on the Council picking up paper and stuff in tin bins — you have to get up really early in the morning.

There just weren't any good jobs. I didn't get the sack. I just couldn't stick the jobs, so now I am on the dole. I go out in the day to my friends, to my sisters or my girl's because she doesn't work either. Then at night there's discos, blues, and some dancing.

What people say about black kids hanging around on the streets just isn't true. There aren't enough jobs around but they mainly just drop in in the day time.

Some of them just give in. They just don't want to work anymore because they think it's impossible to get a job.

But even if the kids aren't on the streets, being out of work must lead to some hassles with the police. Have any of your mates had trouble with them?

Well, yeh, they've had hassles. In fact they are always having hassles. That happened to me, you know, I was just walking down the street and they came and hassled around me. They wanted to search me, and all that business.



It's their job, you know, but they go about it the wrong way. The way they talk to you, and that. They're always trying to scare us. They just don't like the blacks and that's it. The hassles are in the town centre. They just pick you up and then they say you've done this, and they say you've done that, and you've got no choice; you just got to say you've done it. And sometimes you manage to stick it out and say you haven't.

haven't.

I was at the bus stop the other night. You know it's very heavy in town at the moment. And six cops suddenly piled out of this van and took off a black kid who was walking down the road. Ten minutes later he was walking down the street again. They just decided to scare him. Is that the sort of thing that made you go on the demonstration?

Well, I heard about it from my friends. Everyone was talking about it, so I said I would go. They said they were just going to defend the people, to show what's right. So there I was on the march, talking to them.

It was the first march I had ever been on. It was great. I liked it. Except for the fact I got arrested. I didn't think I'd get arrested.

Dave Stevens interjects: I didn't either.

Well the march was against police harassment, but it followed a lot of racist attacks. Is that still going on?

Lots of my friends have been in borstal. Some of the screws — not all of them, but most of them — were National Front. My friends say they pick on the black kids. That's why I don't want to go to prison. I'm scared. Well, not scared, I just don't want to go.

In Wolverhampton, I haven't heard of any attacks for a bit. That's cooled down. That part has. The wise lads — the big white lads — they've cooled down a bit.

The black people — the only hassle we have at the moment is with the police. That's all. It's like in Handsworth. I've got a lot of friends there. It's just the same.

As I say, now the only hassle is with the police.

Have you heard about the march in Handsworth on 2 September?

Is it going to be a march by blacks? Great!

You shouldn't be on it!

Photo: ANDREW WARD (Report)

Talking blues

THE FAILURE of the police to defend black communities from racist attacks; the use of the now notorious 'sus' laws, and other examples of racist treatment from the law have all encouraged blacks to avoid and fear the police.

LEROY GORDON reviews 'Talking Blues', a pamphlet about blacks and the police.



Talking Blues is a collection of interviews with black youths, black parents and some Church people. The best section is where the youths speak of their experiences up against the law.

Young blacks are seldom given the opportunity to speak directly about their experiences.

In this pamphlet they talk about harassment and brutality. They show how — in the eyes of the police — to be black is to be a suspected person.

Many of them express the growing militancy in the black community. 'We can't stand this oppression any more, we can't stand this pressure. We either get out or we fight back and a lot of us born here. So the only thing we know is to fight and we will fight'.

Or as another said: '...or else war a go hot in a Babylon, black against white. Just like people in South Africa, Rhodesia; black against white, you know.'

ORDEAL

Young blacks cannot trust the police. One told of an encounter with a police officer. He was riding his cousin's bicycle past the police station. 'A police walk out, like him never have nothing to do, so him call I and I being innocent didn't run anything, I just went to him.'

That was the beginning of an ordeal which ended with the youth being pushed about in the police station.

If you are poor or unemployed and black you are



Southall Youth Movement contingent on last Sunday's Brick Lane march.

Photo: G. M. DOORSON (Socialist Challenge)

more likely to be harassed by the police.

'As far as I can see the more down and out a black man is, or the black youth is, the more advantages the police will take of you, if you happen to look dirty or scruffy, or walking around mid-day when you should be working, the more the police harass you.'

ILLUSIONS

Many of the parents interviewed, although aware of the racism of the police, maintain illusions in the goodwill of the police, and hence in its willingness to change itself. Some felt that the young blacks ought to stop rebelling and adjust themselves to the realities of life in this country.

But one parent's words expressed what increasing numbers of black parents have to admit: 'Years ago, when we used to hear about the police attacking black youths we could not believe it.'

'We believed that the youths were making it all up. But after years of experience we have come to realise that it is true,

that the police are setting out to terrorise our children.'

This same parent went on to say: 'We must make sure that the state realises that we have no intention of sitting back while we are being victimised and beaten up.'

All in all the pamphlet gives an encouraging view of increasing black militancy and desire for organisation.



Talking Blues, from AFFOR, 1 Finch Road, Lozels, Birmingham B19 1HS. Price 60p, plus p&p.

IN BRIEF

Notting Hill Carnival

THE BLACK Youth Movement (BYM) has called on black youth and all sections of the black community to attend the Notting Hill Carnival on 27/28 August rather than the rival Finsbury Park Carnival. The latter is organised by Pastor Morris with the support of local Community Relations Councils and three London boroughs.

The BYM point out that the Finsbury Park Carnival has also been endorsed by the Greater London Council with the aim of getting as many black youths as possible away from the Notting Hill Carnival.

And they note the heavy police involvement:

'To look after us at Finsbury Park with the help of the "stewards" will be police from Hornsey, Wood Green, Hackney, Tottenham, Stoke Newington, and Holloway. All the local police. Their presence is a formula for violence.'

'In the enclosed area of Finsbury Park the police will have no trouble in surrounding it. There will be no escape. At the Notting Hill Carnival we will have the freedom of the streets, not a fenced-in enclosure surrounded by police.'

In prison for being black

It's good to breathe fresh air

ON 2 August, Saeed Rahman walked out of Armley jail in Bradford. It was the end of what he has since described as 'a bad dream'. For six weeks Rahman had been held in prison awaiting deportation.

Apart from a two year gap he had lived in England for 11 years. In the end, the threat of expulsion was lifted and the Asian had 'indefinite leave to remain' stamped on his passport.

But Saeed Rahman was one of the lucky ones. He was one of the few who has survived and can now talk about the ordeal of facing deportation in a crowded prison cell. JOHN SALMON reports.

Saeed Rahman was thrown into prison on 14 June. He had gone to Bradford Town Hall for what he thought was an interview about an application he had made for UK citizenship some five years previously.

Instead, after a short interview he was taken to the cells in Bradford Central police station on suspicion of being an illegal immigrant. A couple of hours later he was driven handcuffed to Armley prison.

When he arrived at the prison he was immediately confronted with the regime of mindless bureaucracy and overt racism, that he was soon to accept as

normal.

'I was called to sign for my personal property, asked questions relevant to my detention and fingerprinted. I was told to sit in a room where there were other people going through the same procedure.

'I was called to another room where I was told to remove my clothes and then given a towel. I was told to wash myself and when I came back I was issued with prison clothing.

'The trousers did not fit so I complained to one of the reception officers who replied by telling me to sit down again. I was taken to another room

where I was given something to eat.

'After this I had to sign another form. I was called by the words "Come on black bastard, what are you waiting for?" This was shouted from a room where there were three prison officers'.

Rahman and another immigrant detainee were taken to a cell 13 feet by seven feet. There were three bunks in the cell but as well as the two, there were six more prisoners. Rahman's description of the conditions is nauseating:

'We had to eat seated on our bunks. In fact conditions were so bad that if everyone stood on the floor space there was no room to move.

'If someone wanted to go and excrete in the plastic pan the smell was terrible and lingered. In fact it was so bad that we didn't use the pan.

'There was a bell in the cell which was meant to summon the officer on duty. The problem was that you could ring the bell for hours before an officer came. It was sometimes two or even three weeks before



Scene from last Sunday's demonstration in defence of Brick Lane.

Photo: G. W. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

you could clean the room. We were kept in these cells for 23 hours a day. If the weather was bad, 24 hours.

What made the situation worse was the attitude of the prison officers. Rahman described how he was frequently subject to racist abuse. One

incident in particular stood out in his memory:

'There was a place in the prison known to everybody as the bloc. This was where the prison officers took trouble-makers to be beaten up.

'One day after being away seeing the assistant governor I came back to find the cell door locked. So I went to this prison officer and asked him if he could open the door.

'He cursed at me calling me a "black bastard" and an "Indian cunt". I went straight back to the assistant Governor's office but he was not there. I talked to a senior officer and told him what happened. He said I would have to make a formal application in the morning. After going back to the cell I was approached by another prison officer.

The warden asked Rahman if he was going to report the incident. Rahman told him he was.

'Then he hit me, saying, "You bastard, if you go down there you will face the

consequences".'

After being approached and threatened by another warden Rahman decided to drop the complaint.

Then, quite suddenly, the attitude of the prison authorities changed. There was a large demonstration outside the prison to demand Rahman's release.

'The whole attitude of the prison officers totally reversed. They moved two people out of the cell I was in. Everything I could not normally get I got when I asked. I got immediate attention when I rang the bell.'

The only 'request' the wardens had of Rahman was he should tell any visitors that he was being treated fairly.

The protests about Rahman's arrest — he is a well known militant in the local labour movement — also won his release. But there are at least 25 others facing deportation in Armley prison. Few of them are likely to be as fortunate as Saeed Rahman who now says simply 'It's good to breathe fresh air'.

Black Liberation and Socialism 4

Everyday problems can't be forgotten

In the final article in our series on the anti-racist movement and the left, COLIN TALBOT from the Central Committee of the International Marxist Group spells out the fundamental aspects of a revolutionary strategy for black liberation.

In only three years, 1974-77, unemployment amongst black people went up by over 300 per cent — more than twice the overall rise. Thousands of black people have been harassed, detained and deported under the immigration laws. Hundreds of black youth have been summarily convicted under the 'sus' laws.

Yet these sorts of issues have tended to get lost in the concentration of the growing anti-racist movement on the problem of fascism and the rise of the National Front. And 'institutional' racism, backed by the hysteria of the press and the covert racism of the political establishment, poses more of a direct and immediate threat to black people's rights than the thugs of the NF.

That's the first thing socialists have to get right: the need to fight the racism of the state, employers and landlords, as well as that of the fascists. We can learn a great deal from the black movement in the USA. It has fought for — and on occasion won — programmes of 'positive discrimination' in favour of black people in jobs, education and housing. 'Affirmative action', as it's called, has become a real focus of struggle between

racists and the blacks, Chicanos (Mexican-Americans) and anti-racists.

Reformists hold up the Race Relations Acts as the solution to the problems confronted by blacks. But the discriminatory rise in black unemployment speaks for itself — these laws don't solve anything. Only action by black people and the unions will force employers to end discrimination and institute programmes to employ black people.

Trade union leaders are, or course, prepared to make all sorts of noises about racism and fascism. But when it comes down to organising concrete actions — well, that's something else. That's why the self-organisation of black people is so vital.

Black caucuses inside the trade unions can help black people organise themselves to fight the inaction of the bureaucrats and can make sure their white sisters and brothers take their responsibility fighting discriminatory practices and attitudes which weaken the class as a whole.

Naturally, the reformists are opposed to any idea that black people should organise themselves and take the initiative in the fight against racism, inside

or outside of the unions. Although the Communist Party, for example, has been forced to drop its outright opposition to 'self-defence' it still attacks 'black self-defence' as divisive.

These ideas are echoed by the ultra-lefts who counter-pose 'workers self-defence' — something which doesn't exist and isn't likely to in the near future — to black self-defence — which can and does exist.

The second, and vital, aspect of any revolutionary approach to black liberation is the need to encourage each and every manifestation of black people organising themselves. It is natural and inevitable that part of the radicalisation of black people will be a growth of black nationalism.

Again, sectarians and reformists denounce this as divisive and even 'reverse racism'. Socialists should welcome the growth of black nationalism because it has an enormous progressive effect on the morale, organisation and willingness to fight of the black community. And it's this determination which can force sections of the white working class to come to terms with its own chauvinism.

Both these questions — a programme to fight 'institutional' racism and black self-organisation — have hardly surfaced in the anti-racist movement. Yet they are part and parcel of the existing fight

against the National Front taken up by the ANL and anti-fascist committees.

The growing militancy in the black communities is beginning to counter-pose these two aspects of the fight — partly because of the failures of the white-dominated anti-fascist movement to get to grips with the problems that black people have to face every day. So this is not some abstract theoretical debate, but it's the essential and practical questions the anti-racist movement has to resolve to go forward.

Only a few of the far left groups — the IMG, the International Socialist Alliance, and Big Flame — have seen the need to build the existing movement and begin to tackle these vital questions. We do not pretend to have all the answers, and so Socialist Challenge and Socialist Voice have organised a school. We hope to discuss these problems further and have invited a number of black socialist organisations and individuals to participate. Our school will be the modest beginnings of this much-needed discussion.

* Socialist Challenge/Socialist Voice joint school on racism and black liberation is at the Polytechnic of Central London on 2/3 September. The school is open to all supporters of the two newspapers and begins at 11am on Saturday 2 September.

IN BRIEF

National Bengali Convention

A NATIONAL convention held in Leicester on Sunday 15 August, attended by all the Bangla Deshi organisations in Britain, created a national ad-hoc committee to represent the Bangla Deshi community in all national and local meetings.

The committee will also be drafting a constitution and policies. Furthermore it has the job of organising all Bangla Deshi organisations in the UK for a forthcoming national conference in London where a national council will be elected.

The meeting passed a resolution condemning recent speeches by Margaret Thatcher and Enoch Powell, and the deaths in the East End of London were emotionally condemned. In light of continuing attacks it was argued at the conference that the time was right for organised self-defence by members of the community.

Reports reached the con-

ference which showed that fascists are attacking Bengali restaurants in many cities. Conference aimed to oppose this by all means possible and called upon the British working class to help in this.

HOUNSLOW Anti-Racism Committee 'Festival Against Racism', 30 September, 11am-11pm. Cranford Community School, High Street, Cranford. Films, rally, debate, RAR in evening.

BIRMINGHAM Anti Nazi League is organising a rally and march against the Nazis on Saturday 2 September. It assembles at Handsworth Park at 12.30pm and will march to Victoria Square in the city centre. Speakers at the rally will include Tom Litterick MP, Paul Holborrow, and Tariq Ali.

Post Office dispute

Making concessions that aren't

THE POST Office Engineers' claim for a 35 hour week would kill two birds with one stone, as the saying goes. It would increase the leisure time of workers, and — with the new technology which threatens jobs — it would be one step towards sharing the work available, and so preventing redundancies.

RICH PALSER looks at the wheelings and dealings behind the McCarthy report.

The McCarthy report is the result of 'mediation' between the Post Office and the POEU. 'Mediation' is not as complicated as it sounds. Really, it's just another name for making concessions that are not really concessions at all.

Any POEU member who has had the luck to see a copy of the report will have seen how the union leadership came to accept its proposals in principle. Furthermore, union leaders have been attempting to avoid a real fight for the 35 hour week from the beginning.

The first 'concession' to the union which McCarthy proposes in his report concerns the finances of a reduction in hours. The Post Office says to treat it as a normal productivity deal: savings in manpower (sic) productivity should be calculated, then any savings split to benefit management and union on a fifty-fifty basis.

The union conceded the principle immediately. It stated that cut hours should not result in any loss in average productivity, as the same work would be done in less time. In other words there would be no work-sharing, no more jobs saved.

The union leaders argued theirs was no 'normal'

productivity deal: a 35 hour week could be achieved without loss in productivity, and so there would be no extra costs for management. Once the union conceded this principle, McCarthy easily 'conceded' that hours should be cut on a 'nil cost' basis, instead of 'sharing' benefits of increased productivity proposed by management.

HOURS

The second concession of McCarthy's report concerns the number of hours to be reduced. Management argued in the negotiations that hours should be cut one stage at a time. After each stage, the productivity could be monitored and if increases in productivity failed to keep pace with the reduction in hours, the reduction in hours could be halted.

With the concession of a 37½ hour week in hand, McCarthy 'conceded' that the second stage in reducing hours should not be dependent on how the first stage goes. He wants to guarantee that the cut in hours can be matched by increased productivity.

That's why he can 'concede' that there should be no delay in implementing the second stage

of the 37½ hour week, so long as it stops at 37½ hours.

Measures needed to increase productivity will include more flexible lunch times, eight or nine day fortnight working, and starting a half hour later.

What if the required productivity increases are not achieved? This still has to be negotiated. McCarthy confidently thinks these matters can 'ironed out' once agreement is reached on the main issues.

McCarthy has given some 'concessions' for the union leadership to sell to their members. But they came only

once the union leadership had thrown away the main points of the claim.

As he says in the report: "...this is a deal...where it may truly be said that, in the words of the White Paper (on wage restraint), benefits are being shared between 'the workers, the enterprise and consumers'."

In short, the engineers will get a cut in hours, the Post Office will maintain productivity, and the Government will maintain its wages' limit. The Secretary of State for Industry is well pleased with McCarthy.

'Branches are rebelling'

POST office engineers — angry with the sell-out by their union leaders — lobbied the national offices of their union in Ealing, West London, on Tuesday.

'Socialist Challenge' asked DAVE WARD — of Horsham POEU — about the next steps in the dispute.

What is the situation facing postal engineers today?

Last Wednesday, we were informed by letter from our union that we were to stop our action — the work-to-rule and the overtime ban. The union leaders have basically accepted

the McCarthy Report.

The 37½ hour week — and not the 35 hour week we've been so close to winning — is to be implemented from 1 December.

What has been the response of the rank and file?



Angry Post Office engineers picket their union offices last week.

I don't think you'll find one member who isn't furious. It's a blatant sell-out. The union branches are rebelling. In the City of London branch, a mass meeting voted on Wednesday to comply with national instructions, but to continue their action by calling for a work-to-rule and an overtime ban on a local basis.

And Tuesday's lobby was the result of telephone calls made by Coventry branch members. What will the union leaders do next?

Their action is really a stab in the back. They are bound by a national conference decision to call a special union conference in a month's time to have any agreement ratified by the members. I don't think they'll get through the deal they've made in mediation.

But if the conference throws

out the settlement we'll be back to square one. We'll have to start all over again to build up the pressure. Our action was just beginning to bite. At Shepherd's Bush, for example, our members made it quite clear that there would be no election broadcasts as long as our demands weren't met.

And now lots of the equipment which has been withheld from the Post Office and others have been released.

Obviously the union leaders have been under enormous pressure from the Government and from the City. But our action put them in a strong negotiating position, and they've thrown it away.

However, regardless of the action of union leaders, the rank and file are not ready for defeat. The end of the dispute is not at all in sight.

Social workers

Striking for the underprivileged

IN NEWCASTLE and the London borough of Southwark social workers have been on indefinite, all-out strike since 14 August. On Monday they were joined by 220 social workers in London's Tower Hamlets, where 84 per cent voted for the action.

Other social workers in such areas as Liverpool and Lewisham are expected to come out soon and are already taking selective industrial action. A London NALGO member explains the background.

At the NALGO annual conference of 1977 the local government group passed a resolution which called on the union to 'negotiate the abolition of the national social worker scale since it has in the past kept the gradings of social workers below those of comparable local government jobs'.

Behind the resolution was the growing dissatisfaction of social workers with both the

grading system which covers their pay, and the low pay itself.

The union leadership showed little enthusiasm for the 1977 conference resolution and was censured for its inaction at this year's conference. It was not until 8 August that they finally met the national employees to request the abolition of the national scale and the opening of local negotiations on wages. The employers turned the

request down flat in less than ten minutes.

There's been no improvement in social workers' gradings for over ten years, although the job has expanded enormously in that time. Re-organisation, new legislation and the social problems created by unemployment, falling living standards and the cuts in public spending have all added to the work load of social workers.

Ironically it is the very policy of cuts in social expenditure which explains the resistance of the employers to agreeing to the social workers' demands. Given that social services are labour intensive, the cost in meeting the social workers' claims would be outside the budget allocated to the local authorities.

For the Government there is the added difficulty that any significant cash increase would be embarrassing during a period of pay restraint. A successful outcome of the social workers' strike could also unleash a wave of similar claims from other grossly underpaid workers.

Just how underpaid the social workers are is illustrated by the claim submitted by the strikers in Tower Hamlets. They are asking for a net minimum of £60 per week rising to £100 for qualified workers with seven years' experience. By any standards this could hardly be described as excessive.

But the Government's determination to impose a rigid pay policy on all workers — apart that is, from such 'worthies' as the police or the bosses of nationalised industries — ensures that the social workers' claim will not be won easily.

Already the ruling class press is starting to pour out horror stories of how people will die as a result of the social workers' action.

INCREASE

At this stage the important point to stress is that without a substantial increase in pay and without an increase in public expenditure the whole future of the social services is threatened. Already Tower Hamlets staffing levels are 20 per cent under strength.

In this sense the social workers are not just striking for themselves, but for the unemployed, the mentally ill, the elderly and all the underprivileged. They deserve maximum support from the labour movement.



Photo: NEWS LINE

IN BRIEF

Leyland Charter



Housing Action

THE first issue of 'Leyland Charter' — put out by a group of Leyland workers from Birmingham, Cowley, Preston, Coventry, and Southall — is now available. It aims to organise an 'open democratic opposition to the disastrous policies of the union leadership in Leyland'.

The bulletin also announces a national meeting open to all Leyland workers on 16 September, 11am, at the

Digbeth Civic Hall in Birmingham.

'Leyland Charter' costs 10p. Further information from 6 Salisbury Road, Moseley, Birmingham.

A HOUSING Action Convention will be held at Sheffield Polytechnic on the weekend of 8-10 September, writes STEVE PLATT.

The first of its kind in this country, it will bring together squatters, short-life housing groups, housing co-ops, housing rights activists, tenants, and others to discuss the way forward in action over housing.

The non-residential charge is £3; fees to include main meals and accommodation are £15 for paid group workers and individuals on or above the average wage, or £5 for poorer groups and individuals. Bookings should be sent immediately to: Self Help Housing Resource Library, Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove, London N5 2AD (tel. 01-607 2789, ext. 5027).

Classical Marxism and Contemporary Politics

The Crisis of the Far-Left in Europe

A NUMBER of articles have recently appeared in left-wing journals claiming that 'classical Marxism' — as developed notably by Lenin, Luxemburg and Trotsky — should be abandoned as the starting point for developing a revolutionary strategy adequate to today's conditions.

JOHN ROSS points out that this does not correspond to the real changes which have been taking place to the left of the Communist and Socialist parties. What the last years have in fact seen in Europe is a big strengthening of those forces which base themselves on classical Marxism, and a marked crisis and decline of those forces which reject it.

The ten years since the General Strike of May 1968 in France have seen the definitive end of the post-war period of relative class peace in Europe. Major events and shifts in the class struggle have taken place.

As always, such developments have brought about significant changes not only in the reformist Communist and Socialist parties but also among the forces to their left.

In the years after May 1968, the situation appeared simple to large sections of the 'extreme left'. The ruling class had suffered defeats at the hands of mass working class struggles — May 1968 had been followed by the 'hot autumn' of 1969 in Italy, the big strikes against the Tories in Britain, the death agony of Francoism in Spain, the class struggles in Portugal, etc.

New movements — of women, immigrant workers, in the communities — had developed. The mass reformist parties had frequently been by-passed by such struggles.

This also made the question of revolutionary strategy seem very simple to many organisations of the left. Forward from strikes and autonomous movements, to much bigger strikes and autonomous movements, to even bigger strikes and autonomous movements, and so on to the revolution — that was a widely held model, implicitly or explicitly.

A definite view of the further development of the class struggle was advanced here. The traditional reformist organisations would decline. The extreme left would become massive.

No major political problems and choices would be faced in the ongoing advance. Revolutionaries could simply link up with the masses who were rapidly, and semi-spontaneously, moving towards revolutionary positions.

Periodic modifications of particular aspects of this strategy were made. For example, much more emphasis would be placed on the women's movement today than was ten years ago. Nevertheless the basic framework was retained intact.

It guided the theory and practice of organisations such as Lotta Continua and Avanguardia Operaia in Italy, through the 'vacuum on the left' concepts of the current which became the Socialist Workers Party in Britain,

to similar organisations in France, Portugal, and many other countries.

Now this 'strategy' was based on one real fact — and one that has to be constantly pointed out and defended against those in the Communist and Socialist parties who attempt to deny it.

This fact is that the class struggles in Europe following 1968 were not mere hiccups and 'disturbances' in the normal functioning of capitalism. They were authentic mass upsurges which are the harbingers of even bigger struggles to come.

The movements against social oppression mushroomed on a scale never seen in the 1920s or 1930s, representing a really important potential for undermining the historic bases of bourgeois power and furthering the struggle for human liberation.

Ten million strikers in France in May 1968, 15 million in Italy in the summer of 1969, the class struggles of 1975 in Portugal, the huge strike wave of early 1976 in Spain — these were some of the biggest working class struggles in history.

The present state of capitalism means there will be no long term 'return to normal' following these events. Every single extreme left organisation was correct to emphasise this fact against reformism.

But to grasp one fact of the situation is not enough in politics. It is a basic principle of Marxism that a political line cannot be derived from the condition of the working class and oppressed alone, but only from the inter-relation of all classes in capitalist society.

As Lenin put it, Marxist politics 'demands that account must be taken of all the forces, groups, parties, classes and masses operating'.

Those who simply projected the tremendous upsurge of the working class following 1968 on into the future also failed to grasp a second key fact.

This is that the ruling class in the advanced imperialist countries possesses colossal reserves, resources, and defences of its power. These are not merely much greater than in any colonial country, but also far more formidable than those faced by the revolution of October 1917 in Russia.

Chief among these defences are the bureaucratic leaderships of the mass reformist parties of the working class

and the mechanisms of bourgeois democracy.

Lenin, in fact, had already pointed this out when he stated that it would be far more difficult to conquer power in Western Europe than in Russia. Since Lenin's time the experience of Stalinism, and its effect on the consciousness of the working class, has multiplied many of the problems.

The level of development of politics which could conquer power in Russia, let alone China or Vietnam, is too low for the tasks of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal or Britain. Against primitives of the extreme left who fall far below even the political development which had been achieved by the Bolsheviks in 1917, the ruling class and reformists have few serious problems.

Against even the biggest purely spontaneous upsurge of the working class and oppressed, the huge political resources of ruling class power in Western Europe will win every time.

DEFEATS

From 1975 onwards the working class and 'extreme left' throughout Europe collided head on with this fact. Its most dramatic expression came in Portugal, where a powerful working class movement, facing a weakened state apparatus, was defeated by a Socialist Party which was certainly prepared to use the army but which had essentially utilised the weapon of bourgeois democracy to isolate the extreme left and militant workers.

The 25 November 1975 coup was merely the mopping up operation of an already achieved political victory.

Developments in other countries since 1975 took place which had different forms but essentially the same content.

In Italy the working class fought a seven-year struggle from 1969 on a level without parallel elsewhere in Europe. Yet after the elections of June 1976 the reformist Communist Party was able to use the 'historic compromise' to throw the working class on the defensive and impose setbacks on it.

In France the split between the SP and the CP led to a victory by the parties of the bourgeoisie in the March 1978 elections.

In Spain, too, the ruling class managed to contain the situation following the death of Franco. Its parties won the first elections, and the developing trade union struggle was weakened by the signing of the Moncloa Pact austerity programme and the divisionist line of the CP and SP.

In Britain the Labour Government inflicted significant defeats on the working class through the imposition of its incomes policies from 1975-78.

Although the bourgeoisie has nowhere in Europe succeeded in pushing back the working class to the situation before 1968, nevertheless

setbacks have been suffered by the masses.

The fact that the ruling class possesses powerful political defences and agents in the working class movement has been clearly shown, giving a major insight into the problems and complications of the future development of the class struggle in Europe.

The effect of these events on an extreme left which had completely failed to understand the extent of the defences possessed by the ruling class and its agents was traumatic. These defeats were brought about not by repression — which would not have surprised the extreme left — but through the utilisation of the political strength of the ruling class, and in particular its reformist agents in the workers movement.

What caused the crisis of so many of the organisations which had emerged out of 1968 was not that defeats were suffered — which unfortunately will only too often occur — but the fact that it was blatantly obvious that large sections of the 'extreme left' had no answer at all to the political resources of the bourgeoisie and reformists.

In Portugal, organisations such as the PRP and MES attempted to confront the offensive of the Socialist Party, waged under the banner of 'democracy', with slogans such as 'Soviets without parties', 'Down with Parliament', 'Social-democracy is fascist'. They were totally defeated, discredited, lost most of their influence, and were reduced to shells of their former selves.

In Italy, the 'extreme left' was probably the largest in Europe — with tens of thousands of members, three daily papers, and even its own radio stations. But its main organisations had no answer to the policy of the 'historic compromise' because they failed to distinguish between the class base of the Communist Party and Socialist Party on the one hand and the Christian Democrats on the other.

So they either became left critics of the CP, by raising the slogan of 'Government of the Left' — which avoided ruling out a compromise with the Christian Democracy on principle; or they declared that the question of who formed the government was irrelevant.

Either way they were totally unable to deal with reality and were literally torn apart. Two major organisations, Avanguardia Operaia and PDUP/Manifesto, both split while Lotta Continua disintegrated as an organised force.

The large publicity drawn by the politically suicidal policies of the 'autonomists' and the terrorist organisations can easily be turned to the advantage of the ruling class by itself and the Communist Party.

In France, the fact that the chief organisations to the left of the Socialist and Communist parties are Trotskyist

allowed them to take up the problem of the Union of the Left without making disastrous errors.

But the largest non-Trotskyist organisation, the OCT, lost 40 per cent of its membership in a split, because it had no answer to the policy of alliances of the CP and SP and the counter-offensive of the ruling class.

In Britain, the change was not so dramatic. The class struggle had not reached the same level as in Southern Europe, and the largest extreme left organisation, the IS/SWP, maintained far greater elements of the 'traditional Marxism' of Lenin and Trotsky in its politics.

From 1968-74 the International Socialists were almost completely dominant to the left of the Labour and Communist parties. The IS contained not only by far the largest number of individual Marxist political cadres, but also a modest but increasing number of militants with influence and a base in industry. In particular it was almost completely unchallenged as a



Milan students resist police occupation

significant force to the left of the Communist Party in the trade unions.

Four years later the situation has significantly changed. At the time of 1968 the IS was developing towards Leninist and Trotskyist positions and away from those it had held in the 1950s and early 1960s. But important elements of syndicalism remained in its politics.

By 1974/75 these were lending it to a line with considerable similarities to those of organisations such as Avanguardia Operaia, the OCT, the PRP, etc — with whom it also developed organisational links. These provided an alternative to the positions of classical Marxism, and one which the SWP embraced.

The result was a profound transformation of the SWP. It was unable to draw the lessons of the events of 1975 in Portugal. It underwent a series of purges and splits which altered its composition in a profound way. A



analysed by Marx and Engels. Previous 'classical' analysis wasn't an obstacle but an aid in analysing new realities.

Those like Kautsky and the Mensheviks, who urged 'new critical thinking' towards the state, in reality wanted not to use the new developments to extend, develop and concretise what Marx had analysed, but instead to use all the new features of the situation to obscure the fundamental nature of the state as it had been correctly analysed by Marx.

Marx and Engels were relevant not because they represented holy orthodoxy, but because the basic concepts they had developed expressed the real fundamental social relations.

The fact that *State and Revolution* is at one and the same time a tremendous creative guide to action in the completely new and unparalleled situation of the Russian Revolution and an extended orthodox dissertation on literal quotations from Marx and Engels is merely a reflection of the way Marxism itself really develops.

What applies to *State and Revolution* applies to every single major work of Lenin and Trotsky. Take *What is to Be Done?* Few works of Marxism have been more radically innovative and creative. The starting point of an entire new development of the Marxist party and Marxist politics is contained in its pages.

Yet what is the starting point of *What is to Be Done?* It is a savage defence of orthodoxy against precisely those who raised the slogan of 'Freedom of Criticism'.

Its theory of the party develops out of fundamental observations of Engels on the questions of Marxist theory — observations which are themselves based on conclusions of the even earlier *Communist Manifesto*.

It is impossible to say where orthodoxy ends and innovation begins in *What is to Be Done?*, precisely because in real Marxism, as opposed to dogma, there is no counterposition between the two. On the contrary, strict orthodoxy is precisely the condition for radical innovation.

It is on the basis of this understanding that we can see how developments since 1968, or since 1940 for that matter, relate to 'classical Marxism'.

Have major changes taken place which require new analyses and new developments by Marxism? Absolutely. Are the answers to all these problems contained in previous Marxist positions? Definitely not.

We can go further. We can point out, as Lenin and Trotsky did, that the whole development of Bolshevism, not to speak of Marx and Engels, only reached a point too crude and inadequate for the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries.

But where can the tools be found to build a Marxism which is adequate to this task? Precisely in Lenin and Trotsky, just as they found theirs in the even 'cruder' Marx and Engels!

The politics which will lead the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries will be simultaneously the most radical and innovative, and therefore the most orthodox and classical, which has ever been seen.

What the ten years since 1968 have shown is that it is those who reject 'traditional dogmas' who have become the most old-fashioned and out of contact with new realities. Those who base themselves on classical Marxism are actually the most up to date and in touch with the real changes which have taken place.

To those who think in terms of 'dogma' versus 'objectivity' that will seem an impossible paradox. To Marxism it is merely the most natural thing in the world and the foretaste of the future.

very large part of the accumulated political cadre was lost.

Its base of militants with influence in the trade unions actually contracted despite its numerical growth. Alternative currents, both political and in new social movements, began to develop outside the SWP.

Ten years after 1968 the SWP is still very much the largest organisation of the extreme left in Britain, but it is no longer completely dominant as it once was.

The net result of the shift in the forces to the left of the Communist and Socialist parties has therefore been to bring about a major recomposition of the 'extreme left' on a European scale.

In 1968, and immediately afterwards, those whose politics were based on classical Marxism (and that does not include degenerate offspring such as Healyism) were a tiny minority everywhere in Europe except France. In countries such as Spain they didn't even exist.

Those who announced their rejection



of the state university.

of the 'dogmas of traditional Marxism' were overwhelmingly dominant. Ideas of an international 'non-Stalinist Maoist' current, and of a trend represented by the link up of the Portuguese PRP-Italian Avanguardia Operaia-French OCT-British SWP, could be seriously floated.

Today the Maoist and 'movementist' forces have undergone massive decline. Those forces starting off from classical Marxism are far bigger, and those rejecting it far weaker.

Only in one country, Italy, where forces basing themselves on Lenin and Trotsky are very weak, has that change been brought about solely by the decline of self-defined 'new currents'. It has not been classical Marxism but those rejecting it in favour of 'new thinking' who have already been increasingly by-passed.

The reason why this shift in the relation of forces in the extreme left in favour of classical Marxist currents

took place is in fact very clear. Marxist ideas and categories are not arbitrary 'dogmas', magic words on pieces of paper, but encapsulations and reflections of, or failures to reflect, gigantic social forces involving hundreds of millions of people.

The classical Marxist analyses of the state, imperialism, Stalinism, parties of the working class, only become redundant — mere dogma in the real sense — when the social forces they encapsulate no longer exist.

Naturally it is not the case that nothing has changed since 1924 when Lenin died, or 1940 when Trotsky was assassinated — organisations which believe that are well on the way into the historical dustbin along with the other centrists.

But on the most fundamental questions, the central forces analysed by the classical Marxism of Lenin and Trotsky are still very much with us. This is true even though these forces are now frequently combined in new ways, and new developments have taken place within them.

Contrary to what was anticipated by those rejecting 'traditional Marxist dogmas', questions such as the united front of workers organisations, the difference between Socialist and Communist parties and parties of the bourgeoisie, the fact that it is not irrelevant whether the workers live under bourgeois democracy or fascism, that the trade unions cannot be by-passed but must be worked within, that coalitions with parties of the bourgeoisie are a deadly threat to the working class, etc, have turned out to be very relevant indeed.

Those who turned their backs on such positions succeeded not in escaping 'traditional Marxist dogma' but in avoiding reality.

Perry Anderson, although he draws the wrong political conclusions, put it very well in an article on Gramsci in *New Left Review* 100:

'The international disputes which united and divided Luxemburg, Lenin, Lukacs, Gramsci, Bordiga or

Trotsky...represent the last great strategic debate in the European workers movement...The classical debates...still remain in many respects the most advanced limit of reference we possess today.

It is thus not mere archaism to recall the strategic confrontations which occurred four or five decades ago. To reappropriate them, on the contrary, is a step towards a Marxist discussion that has the — necessarily modest — hope of assuming an "initial shape" of correct theory today.

Regis Debray has spoken, in a famous paragraph, of the constant difficulty of being contemporary with our present. In Europe, at least, we have yet to be sufficiently contemporary with our past.'

Does this mean, however, that those forces basing themselves on classical Marxism believe that we may now sit back because all significant problems have been solved? Do we need now merely to read more carefully the 45 volumes of the collected works of Lenin?

Not at all. First, no matter how right they were on general issues, it is axiomatic that Lenin and Trotsky were wrong on particular questions. Where this is the case, revolutionaries must not be afraid to say so — just as Lenin or Trotsky were prepared to say where they considered that Marx or Engels had been incorrect.

CREATIVE

But generalised innuendoes against 'dogma', designed merely to undermine previous positions without putting anything positive and coherent in their place, merely replace thought with demagoguery. To reject certain specific positions with clearly defined alternatives is one of the ways Marxism has always made progress.

Secondly, the Marxist principle that reality is in constant change means that major shifts have necessarily taken place since the deaths of Lenin and

Trotsky. These require new analysis and new work.

It is impossible for revolutionaries today to limit themselves to the positions of Lenin or Trotsky — any rarer than the latter could confine themselves to merely repeating the positions of Marx and Engels. What Lenin, Trotsky and others achieved was not a mere repetition but a gigantic development of Marxist theory.

Any new wave of successful revolutionary struggle will have to go beyond what they accomplished and solve a whole series of new problems — to which they did not provide any full answers but, at best, outlined some of the contours and particular issues.

However, the very example of Lenin and Trotsky's development of Marxism shows the relation between new political and theoretical problems and 'classical' analysis. Precisely because Marxist concepts aren't just arbitrary ideas floating around in mid-air, but are the expressions of real social forces, the previous positions of Marxism, insofar as they express forces which continue to exist, are not redundant but are built on.

Lenin, in writing *State and Revolution*, for example, was able to base himself on Marx and Engels not because he was unaware of the many concrete changes and developments since Engels' death, but because those changes had taken place within the fundamental forces Marx had analysed.

The state had changed in many respects, but its basic core, the 'bureaucratic military apparatus' based in the last analysis on 'armed bodies of men', has not qualitatively altered.

Lenin understood perfectly well the need not to content himself with repeating old truths. The necessity to understand new developments such as soviets, the importance of new tasks in fighting the bourgeoisie, etc, flows right through *State and Revolution*.

But he showed how new developments were related to, and based in, the fundamental forces



SURPLUS VALUE

I work in the press shop which stamps out the various components to make up the windscreen-wiper blades and the other wiper parts Trico turns out.

My job is to set up the tools that form the pressing, and then feed the materials through.

I've worked in the same shop for eight years. It's a really boring job, and very noisy.

It's not as boring as some jobs because there's a bit of flexibility. Once you've set the job up you can sit down for a bit, and you have to fiddle around on the machine. It's a bit of a skilled job.

There are no women setters in the press shop. There's only one woman setter in the whole factory, and she's a trainee who just got the job. The only other woman in a skilled job is an inspector, who is also just now being trained up.

ARGUMENT

Management's usual argument is if women want these jobs let them apply and we'll treat them like anyone else. It was a big step forward when the woman who was an operator applied to train as a setter, took a test, and passed.

There is still hostility from some of the setters who say they won't train her. But others were, well, patronising. 'We'll train you, luv'.

No other women had applied. It's so ingrained, the consciousness of women's traditional role. 'Women don't apply for skilled jobs.'

Management's line is that they want people who will stay in the factory for a long time, and women aren't the sort of people you can depend on to do that... etc. Trainees are in effect cheap labour.

I earn £70 for a 40-hour week, taking home £47. Tool-makers are on £86, then it gradually goes down in grading. Most of the women will be taking home £35-£40 a week. They're on piece rates, and with the drop in production waiting time has shot up.

Trico wasn't well organised before the strike. Union membership was 75 per cent but there was no trade union consciousness in the factory. Obviously the union was strengthened by the strike.

After it there was a tendency to sit back; an attitude of 'That's over, let's all get back to normal'. Of the decisions made at the end of the strike — to bring out a factory bulletin, to hold monthly mass meetings, and a regular levy of 5p a week — the only one carried out was the levy.

EQUAL PAY

The strike was over equal pay. Women machine operators were being paid less than men doing the same job. The men had come off night shifts to work on days and they were given a special allowance; that was the excuse for the pay differential of about £6 a week.

The strike began in May '76 and went on for 21 weeks.

One of the most important things to come out from it was the feeling that you could take on the management. Before the strike it was unbelievable — you couldn't argue with the management about anything.

The union was strengthened, with some departments achieving hundred per cent membership, with the feeling that the union is us. That's a very positive step. There was a definite growth in confidence.

'One of the most important things to come out of the strike was a feeling you could take on the management.' The speaker is B, a worker at Trico, the West London factory where two years ago workers won a historic equal pay strike.

Wiping out discrimination on the shop floor



A lot of organisation took place during the strike — the picketing, producing a bulletin, speaking at meetings.

After the strike there was a regular attendance at the evening branch meetings, with 30 or 40 going along, but then the old pressures reasserted themselves. That women couldn't go out at nights because of their families and so on.

There weren't any moves to change the time of the meetings.

We're in the Engineering Union's Brentford No. 2 branch, which is predominantly Trico. One development of the strike is that we have invited speakers at the branch meetings: safety at work, East Germany, local anti-racist work, the trades council.

But the attendance has fallen off to an average of a dozen. There are 1,300 workers at Trico.

The branch leadership is, I guess, fairly typical. Older workers who are just going through the motions. Very routine.

It's only since the strike that we've been able to get other issues discussed in the branch. In the past it was: 'We don't talk politics here.' In the shop stewards committee the formality is a little different.

If something on racism, for example, comes through from Hounslow Trades Council it will be discussed, but not if it comes from a non-union body.

When we were discussing the annual wage claim on the stewards

committee, the convenor introduced it by attacking the Government's wages policy, then the Tories.

One of the stewards said: 'I thought we were discussing the wage claim. This is political.'

In West London, unemployment was not a problem until a few years ago and there was a big labour turnover at Trico. The union wasn't that well established.

But when jobs became scarce and people stayed on, the factory began to be more organised. The strike, of course, sped this along.

Immediately after the strike, all the departments in which women work elected shop stewards. Half the stewards now are women — twice as many women stewards than there were before the strike.

LACK OF WORK

Left forces are very weak in the factory. There are two Communist Party members, who have decided not to bring out their own propaganda, two Socialist Workers Party members and me in the International Marxist Group.

A big problem at the moment is the lack of work in the factory. At first management said we'd be over it by last April, then it was September, then October, now it might be early next year. After the strike there was a false boom because they had to catch up on all the orders.

A lot of overtime was being worked. Once they stockpiled,

management cut back on production. Now we're running at around 30 per cent capacity. It's really bad.

Definitely we should be taking up the demand for opening the company's books, so that we can know the facts and the plans.

I don't find open hostility to me as a West Indian, except from a small number of people who were hostile from the time of the strike.

In my shop there is one person who has been there 30 years; he was one of the first union members. He refused to talk to me. He's racist and everything else — because I'm black and left-wing.

Most of the West Indians at Trico are middle aged. A lot of young West Indians wouldn't work in a factory on the jobs they're offered.

They think it's beneath them. Unlike their parents; they consider they have more pride in themselves.

I had no alternative! All my family went back to Jamaica in '69 when I was 15, so I had to get a job to live. That was it.

In the canteen, the West Indians sit together, so do the Asians. Most of the West Indians are planning to go back; I do as well.

They're caught in a contradiction. At home they wouldn't get a job because there's so much unemployment, but they prefer the whole social atmosphere, as opposed to here.

During the strike, strikers went to speak at the local Sikh temple in Southall, the IWA raised money for

us. Unlike the West Indians, the Asians see themselves as being here — they've come to England and they have to make a living here.

It's a problem that if they find something wrong in the factory they complain among themselves, but they won't take it to a white shop steward or anyone else.

West Indians are more forceful. There are five West Indian shop stewards out of 25 in all, but no Asians.

There are various reasons for this. Black people are not all that active in unions unless there is an issue which directly affects them and also if they see the union is doing something for them. This is something we're fighting for at the moment.

The workforce at Trico is 25 to 30 per cent black, predominantly women and almost entirely unskilled. Most of the black men are labourers.

'BLACK BASTARD'

The women operate machines and work on the line. When you look at the skilled areas, such as the toolroom which has over a hundred workers in it — there are just two black workers there, and they are both apprentices who have only been taken on in the past couple of years.

The more skilled the job, the fewer the number of black workers doing them.

We don't have open racism in the factory. An individual might say 'Black bastard' to someone, but that rarely happens.

I know in the toolroom there are at least two or three NF members or sympathisers, but they don't say anything.

There are others on the shop floor. They don't openly come out and say they are Front members. But they act in a very patronising way, especially to the black women.

They talk and joke with them — the usual talk you get in every factory, very sexist. And then these racists will say 'We're not going to talk to you'.

We're beginning to do some work on this, letting the women know who the NFers are.

The union has never taken up racism. There was an article in the bulletin on racism, about the Hounslow Anti-racist, Anti-fascist Committee, and there was a big debate on the shop stewards committee because they didn't want that issue distributed because of the anti-racism article.

'NO RACISM'

They were saying we've got no racism and if the article went out there would be a big stir in the factory. If people are not bothered about racism at work, let's leave it as it is.

The convenor was good on this. He said that he personally would give it out. All the stewards in the toolroom refused to handle it, and the convenor went into the toolroom and handed out the bulletin.

The workforce isn't openly racist, but if you come in and say this or that is racist, they'll say you're bringing politics in or trying to stir up the workers — and we're all one big family.

*This contribution by B is taken from a conversation with GEOFFREY SHERIDAN. It is part of our series on socialists (and others) at work. If you know someone — perhaps yourself! — who would make a good subject, let us know.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

- NORTH WEST**
 - WARRINGTON** Socialist Challenge group meets regularly. Ring Manchester Socialist Challenge offices for details. 061-235 2352.
 - GREATER MANCHESTER** Socialist Challenge. School students who support the paper and would like to get involved in anti-fascist activity, please contact Chris (273 5947, day) or Steve (238 4287, evening), or write to Manchester SC Centre, 14 Piccadilly.
 - PRESTON** Socialist Challenge public meeting. No Phase 4, for 36 hours now — speaker Pat Hickey (British Leyland, Rover Solihull). Wednesday 30 August, 7.45pm at Windsor Castle pub.
 - LIVERPOOL** Speke Socialist Challenge Group meets every Wednesday at Greb's Ark pub, Speke, 8pm.
 - SOUTH MANCHESTER** Socialist Challenge group meets every other Thursday at the Albion Inn off Winstanley Rd. Help sell Socialist Challenge between 11.30am and 1pm at Moss Side shopping centre or Longsight Market, Dickenson Rd.
- SALFORD** Socialist Challenge supporters can be contacted at the Manchester Socialist Challenge offices, Tel 061-235 2352 or, by writing to Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre, c/o 14 Piccadilly, Manchester with a view to forming a Salford Socialist Challenge group.
- LEIGH** Socialist Challenge group will be holding regular meetings shortly. For details ring Roy on Atherton 85 2810.
- NORTH EAST**
 - NEWCASTLE** Socialist Challenge local supporters are active! If you want to join them, phone Pete on (0632) 28067.
 - DURHAM** Socialist Challenge Supporters Group. For details contact: Dave Brown, 2 Pioneer Cottages, Low Pitington, Durham.
 - MIDDLEBROUGH** Socialist Challenge sales on Saturdays outside entrance to Cleve and Centre (opp. Woolworths), 11am to 1pm. Socialist Challenge is also available from Harbours (newsagent) in Linthorpe Road.
- LONDON**
 - HARROW** Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly, details from Box 56, London N1 2XP.
 - TOWER HAMLETS** Socialist Challenge supporters sell the paper every Sunday in Brito Lane. Meet at the Nando Restaurant at 10.30am.
 - SOUTH WEST** London Supporters' Group meets next 30 August to discuss Socialist strategy in the trade unions, 7.30pm, St Anne's Community Centre, Vaux St. (near Clapham Common tube). The next meeting will be 20 September at Clapham Library. Keep the change — venue in mind!
 - WALTHAM FOREST** paper sales every Saturday, 11am-noon outside the post office, Hoe St, Walthamstow, London E17.
 - TOWER HAMLETS** Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly. Next meeting: Redmond O'Neill (IMG Youth Organiser on 'Youth in Revolt'), Tues. 22 August, 7.30pm, at Oxford House, Deroy Street, E2. All Socialist Challenge supporters welcome.
- GAMDEN** Socialist Challenge supporters sell papers every Saturday at Inverness St market in Gamden Town from 11am-5pm. Join us every Saturday 12-3 on the Gamden pocket at the Oxters Circus branch.
- HELP SOCIALIST CHALLENGE** Greenwich and Lewisham supporters are organising a jumble sale. If you have any jumble to be sold please ring Jo on 258 8571 or drop it into the paper's offices at 325/9 Upper St.
- YORKSHIRE**
 - HULL** Socialist Challenge supporters need lots of jumble for a sale soon. We can arrange collection. Offers at jumble to Annetta 443243. Have a clear-out and help build the paper!
 - HUDDERSFIELD** Socialist Challenge Group meets next on Thursday 3 August, 8pm at Friendly & Trades Club, Northumberland St (opp. station). Discussion on 'Youth and unemployment'.
 - HUDDERSFIELD** Socialist Challenge sales regularly Saturdays 11am-1pm in the Piazza.
- YORK** Socialist Challenge (also sale at the York Community Bookshop, 71 Walmgate, or from sellers on Thursdays (12.30-1.45) at York University, Vanburgh College; Saturdays (11.30-3.30) at Coney Street.
- MIDLANDS**
 - For details of activities of local supporters throughout the Midlands contact the Socialist Challenge Centre, 76B Digbeth High Street, Birmingham (021) 643 9209.
- SOUTH WEST**
 - SOUTHAMPTON** Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday from 10am-1pm across bar, Post Office, Bargain.
 - PORTSMOUTH** Socialist Challenge sales, Saturdays, 11.30am-1pm, Commercial Road Precinct.
- SOUTH EAST**
 - COLCHESTER** Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly. For details phone Steve on Wivenhoe 2945.
- CRAWLEY** Socialist Challenge public meeting with Tariq Ali speaking. At the AJEW Hall, Robinson Road, Monday 18 September, 1976.
- BRIGHTON** Socialist Challenge sales regularly on Saturdays at the Corn Market, London Road, from 11am-1pm.
- SCOTLAND**
 - For information about the paper or its supporters' activities throughout Scotland please contact Socialist Challenge Books, 54 Queen St, Glasgow. Open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday afternoons. Phone for alternative arrangements (221 7451). Wide range of Fourth International publications.
 - EDINBURGH** Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-366 0468 for details.
 - DUNDEE** Information about Socialist Challenge activities from 54 Queen St, Glasgow. Join in SC sales outside Boots corner of Reform St each Sunday, 11am-2pm.

COMMENT

Workers plan

Steve Potter's argument for a 35 hour week to cure unemployment was well put.

But by itself, the 35 hour week does not always sound feasible to workers as a real solution. We must look at the reasons for this. Otherwise, the campaign will not inspire the workers movement as a whole.

Firstly, as Steve stresses, the demand for a 35-hour week is a national demand. It must operate throughout industry. On this basis, it would certainly be possible to absorb the unemployed.

A quick bit of arithmetic shows this. If there are 20 million workers in Britain today, and 2 million unemployed, the working week must be reduced by roughly one-tenth to absorb the two million. That means if we reduced the average working week from 40 to 35 (that is 12½%) we would more than absorb the unemployed.

At this level, the demand for a 35 hour week is a concretisation of the idea of work sharing with no loss of pay. Take the total number of workers and share out the available work among them.

However, here is where the snag arises. Some industries could absorb extra workers. Others would go bankrupt quickly. Still others are already on short working weeks of perhaps 20 or 30 hours. Clearly they cannot absorb more labour easily.

This is why the demand for a 35 hour working week must be accompanied by

the idea of a Workers Plan for the Economy.

The Lucas Aerospace workers have pioneered the way here. Just as Steve argues that technology potentially releases workers from toil and potentially means more leisure and time for cultural and political activity, so the workers at Lucas argue that, if society no longer needs to spend so much of its work time producing Concorde, Chieftain Tanks and bombs, then that frees society to turn to other tasks — such as producing better equipment for hospitals, schools, and so on. Hence the plan for alternative production at Lucas Aerospace — a plan worked out in concrete detail by the workers themselves.

The advantage of the Lucas Plan is that it frees workers from a 'fetishism of the product'. If there is no more demand for ships or planes, then something else can be produced instead. Redundancy need not lead to unemployment. Yet, many workers, faced with the bosses telling them that there is declining demand for their product, all too often see no reply and acquiesce to the dole queue.

What is needed is for a plan along the lines of the Lucas Plan on a national scale. This could be drawn up by groups of workers throughout the whole of British industry and adopted as a platform by the trade unions. Millions of workers would then see the irrationality of unemployment and the technical simplicity of the solution. The political responsibility for continued unemployment would devolve squarely on the capitalists.

Trotsky put forward something similar for Germany in 1931. Faced with several millions unemployed, he urged the workers movement to draw up a plan for the re-tooling of German

industry to meet the needs of Soviet agriculture. He even went to so far as to say that such a plan could form the basis for the seizure of power by the working class in order to organise its implementation.

DAVE BAILEY (East London)

Back with a vengeance

THIS IS an open letter from one Socialist Challenge supporter to all other readers and supporters of the newspaper. As you know there is a fund drive afoot to maintain and expand our paper, and among various ideas put forward is the crucial one of bankers' orders.

The editors sent an appeal to all subscribers to give at least £1 a month, and the results have been encouraging. More than £250 will be received this month, so the paper is on its way to its target of £450. From the paper's point of view the steady income of a known amount is an ideal form of financial support because it allows for proper planning.

From our — the supporters' — point of view it is the easiest form of contribution because it is painless: you will not notice £1 deducted monthly from your bank account. £1: the price of three beers, two cigarette

packs, one cinema seat. We don't hesitate when purchasing any of these, so why should we hesitate donating £1 to an organisation we would far rather support than Allied Breweries, Imperial Tobacco or the Rank Organisation?

But there is more to it than this. Comrades, it is our socialist duty to build our paper into the most effective and offensive weapon in this country. While a newspaper cannot replace militancy and agitation 'in the field', it plays an indispensable role in coordinating that militancy, propagandizing it and giving it critical theoretical stiffening.

Some comrades might object that they don't have a bank account, O.K. None of us likes to deposit money in these authoritarian and moribund capitalist institutions with their Hollywood interiors of marble and gilded metal (a palatial bourgeois fantasy). But now you have a good reason to open an account, consoling yourself with the knowledge that every time Nat. West forwards your contribution it is nibbling away at its own foundations.

For those recalcitrants or purists who still won't deal with a bank or Post Office giro, why not purchase three £1 postal orders every quarter and send them one by one on the first of each month.

While it is our collective duty to support Socialist Challenge, there is also the individual satisfaction of knowing how vital our contribution really is; without it the paper would cease to exist, full stop.

I have used the figure of £1 because every reader and supporter is capable of donating this. If everyone did donate this, the target would be

exceeded each month. But why stop here? Those who are able to contribute more should do so.

If we use Marx's maxim — 'From each according to his/her means' — and what better occasion to practice it — then there is neither stigma attached to those for whom a £1 contribution is their limit, nor is there glory for those who can well afford £2 or £3.

There is probably a large number of comrades who have now been paying a bankers' order for some time without having bothered to increase it. Yet in the past year many comrades must have received a pay rise or an income tax allowance which would enable them to slightly increase their contribution.

And for those who are pressing their bosses for an increase in wages, remember that socialists bear a disproportionate cost-of-living burden, because we always have to calculate our Socialist Challenge contribution as a standard extra. So press harder.

The Fund Drive column of the paper will keep us informed of the progress of their bankers' orders. I am sure we can surpass the target; but if the pace slows down I will be back on this page with a vengeance.

PAUL RUSSELL, (London)

Fill in your bankers order immediately! [That means NOW!] Turn to back page....

UNDER REVIEW

The works of Allen Jones A feeble comment but it stands

THERE HAS been fierce opposition from some feminists to the exhibition of Allen Jones Graphic Works 1958-78 presently on at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London.

Opinion is divided as to what our response ought to be: to welcome the exhibition as an expose of male erotic fantasy; to demand that such rank sexism be shut down; or that an alternative, women's exhibition also be put on [which the ICA has nominally agreed to].

PAUL TICKELL contributes to the debate.

Those on the left who call for the banning or picketing of Allen Jones' work side with petty-bourgeois radical moralism, and not Marxism. For Marxists, any action should spring not from the debate 'to ban or not to ban', but from a historical-materialist critique of the social relations which load Jones' work.

Any other approach means the attitude of the left looks like that of the Festival of Light

towards censorship — whatever the difference in intention.

At their most naive, Jones' 'girlie' images are part of the traditional way in which artists under capitalism have depicted women: as passive objects, strictly for consumption by the male gaze. As John Berger says, the nude poses in Ingres are the same as those in soft porn.

A crisis faced this artistic tradition in the '60s. Then the

women's movement emerged and, contradictorily, the use of the female image in advertising expanded, the erotic element in films increased and pornography spread.

A questioning of the family and sexual relations under capitalism and the arrival of a politicised feminist consciousness was paralleled by 'permissiveness'. Permissiveness was how capitalism tolerantly blocked this emergent consciousness and how it reified female sexuality in order to sell more commodities.

As if threatened, Jones' response to this was to simplistically invert the artist's traditional image of women. Women now became strong and menacing — potential castrators: hence Jones' fascination with boots, whips, masks, and so on. But if Jones' women are active, they are not free; they have swapped their customary bondage for the kinky one of leather, rubber and plastic.

Another of Jones' inversions is to use stark colours and hard

edges in his lithographs. This 'pop' style is the exact opposite to the soft focus of most porn. He even makes connections between the 'commodity' of female sexuality and other commodities by dismembering the female form or by isolating some of its fetishistic attributes like shoes.

But these inversions and connections remain largely uncritical. They are 'images' in the superficial sense. In the lithographs especially, the figures have no real background or context: they exist in front of a blank space. This is what Jones means by his 'exploration of spatial ambiguity'.

By reducing his work to the problematic of space without time (that is, without history) and by insisting on the primacy of the solitary image, he takes refuge from history in aestheticism.

The first chapter of Capital says how under capitalism the relations between people become like those between commodities; become fetishistic. Jones only comprehends fetishism in its 'naughty', most deviant aspects. He leaves untouched the real implications of his subject-matter, that is, the way in which the public world of commodities effects the private personal one. Overt sexual fetishism is only one part



The designer of this page says: Allen Jones is a sexist pig.

of this wider fetishism, but it is the part where the transformation of women into commodities is most blatant.

Jones' work is voyeurist and sexist but I hope the analysis has shown that some of it — in spite of its apolitical aestheticism and its parasitism upon images drawn from advertising porn — is enough removed to be a comment on sexism. For all its feebleness, this comment should stand.

But it should not stand the way it does at the ICA. Just inside the exhibition is a piece

of typical bourgeois art criticism: totally uncritical belles-lettism. If the ICA is to be more than a bourgeois art-house, its task should be to give a critical direction to its exhibitions.

This means more than leaving crucial questions for some discussion group: they should be posed in ICA handouts and publicity, and met head on in the 'criticism' which leads the viewer into the exhibition. The ICA must think that the sexism in Jones' work is extraneous.

WHAT'S LEFT

5p per word. Display £2 per column inch. Deadline: 3pm Saturday before publication. Payment in advance.



TO-DAY IN N IRELAND...

THE ABOVE, and other badges in red, black and white, available from: Just Books, 7 Winterton Street, Belfast. 25p plus 7p postage. Cheaper bulk orders on request. Tel. Belfast 22626.

TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Unity is holding a media 'jumble sale' (books, tapes, records, posters, etc.) in the autumn. Bring anything suitable to The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, N1, or phone 247 2717 for arrangements to collect.

ARE YOU a Socialist Challenge supporter in London who is reliable, committed, and maybe short of cash? The paper needs a comrade to work every Tuesday evening starting at the end of August. The only skill required is reliability, but own transport or ability to drive an advantage. Pay £5 if needed. If you have a free evening and want to help the paper, please apply to Dodie Weppier on 01-269 8371.

REVOLUTIONARY Communist Pamphlet Under a National Flag: Fascism, Racism and the Labour Movement by Frank Richards. This second edition of the pamphlet which sold out in two months contains a new afterword. 30p plus 13p p&h. Cheques and POs payable to RCT Association. Write to: BM RCT14, London WC1V 8XX.

INTERVENTION No. 2 out now. Revolutionary politics as a hobby —

Jim Masters and the unmentionables of the left: An essay on the irrational in politics — the left as a subculture. Copies 52p (inc p&h) per Intervention, 639 Battersea Park Rd, London SW11.



NEW BADGE available. Defend Direct Works in three colours: from J. Wilson, 50 Badger, PO Box 50, London N1. Cost: 10p each plus 7p p&h or 11p each for orders of 10 or more.

HELP Socialist Challenge. Greenwich (Lewisham) supporters are organising a jumble sale! If you have any jumble to be collected ring Jo on 329 8371 or drop it into the paper's offices at 328/9 Upper St.

PICKET GARNERS: Mass pickets every day, noon to 3pm and 5.30 to 11 pm at 340 Oxford St, London W1 (opp. Selfridges); 243 Oxford St (Oxford Circus); 40-41 Haymarket; 55 Whitehorse St (Lancaster Sq.); Mass picket every Saturday at noon, 388 Oxford St. Donations urgently needed as strike pay is only 56. All donations to Garners Strike Fund, c/o TGWU, Rm 54, 12-13 Henrietta St, London WC2, 01-240 1268.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE supporters in NATPHE are meeting to discuss the situation of the left in the union and the proposed industrial action. 12.30 Saturday, 2 September, Manchester Socialist Challenge offices, 14 Floodilly Further details. Tel. 061-442 7904.



Saturday, 25 August, Epworth Hall, Nicolson Square, 12 noon till 8pm. See all the best in feminist, radical and socialist publishing. Adm. 20p.

'CAPITAL' fortnightly reading group (just started in Hackney, next meeting 30 August. Details See 01-249 8361).

LONDON accommodation wanted for quiet Latin American couple 485 5300.

SINGLE parent, fatherless would like to share house or flat in West London.

Reply to Socialist Challenge.

BRICK Lane Public meeting organised by West Hampstead ARL, Thursday, 31 August, 8pm, Methodist Church Hall, Quex Road, NW6.

NATIONAL Abortion Campaign Steering Committee re-convenes after summer break. Discussion on the new union abortion conference, national day of action for day care facilities, international activities and the forthcoming general election campaign. All women welcome. 7.30pm, NAC office, 30 Camden Road, London NW1.

NAC Nations: Planning meeting in Manchester. All NAC groups and individual supporters of the campaign are urged to attend to discuss current activities. Further details from NAC office, 01-485 4300 (after 23 August).

UNITED Troops Out Movement Forum: 'The War Struggle — British Racism'. Debate and discussion followed by planning activity. Open to all supporters of the movement to get Britain out of Ireland. Friday, 1 September, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, WC1.

Crisis in Iran

A tarnished Silver Jubilee

LAST Saturday the Shah celebrated the 25th anniversary of the military coup which put his dictatorship in power. It wasn't a very happy Silver Jubilee, for lurking at the back of the dictator's mind must have been the question of whether he would survive to see another anniversary.

The Shah's army wasn't able to celebrate the anniversary with its usual military parades. Instead the troops were in action enforcing martial law in Isfahan or standing by in or around other major cities in their attempt to ensure the survival of the regime they brought to power.

HOPE

For the Iranian masses there is at last hope after a quarter of a century of ruthless repression and despair. For the first time they are on the offensive and the dictatorship in retreat.

The wave of protests which began towards the end of last year in the universities and spread throughout the country at the beginning of this year has grown at a speed which has surprised the regime.

Anti-regime demonstrations have become almost a daily event. Despite all its armoury of repression the regime is no longer capable of suppressing opposition.

Violent police and army actions against demonstrators, which have left hundreds dead

and thousands injured since the beginning of the year, have only led to further protests.

The regime's attempted political manoeuvres and propaganda campaigns have proved even less successful.

The Rastakhiz Party, created in 1975 as Iran's sole legal political organisation, has failed to gain any popular support.

The Shah's promises of 'liberalisation' are not likely to have much effect either. They are difficult to believe when at the same time one of the country's largest cities is put under martial law and tanks are brought onto the streets of Tehran.

VAGUE

Although the promises made so far are rather vague and do not amount to much, it is nevertheless significant that the regime has been forced to make them.

At a press conference in June the Shah told reporters quite firmly that the one party system was to stay.

Only two months later he has

been forced to promise that next year's parliamentary elections will be '100 per cent free' and that political parties other than Rastakhiz will be allowed to participate.

He has even had to say that he considered legalising the Tudeh (Communist) Party but decided that it would be unwise because of 'geopolitical' reasons.

OBSCURE

In its usual way the regime has also attempted to hide the real reasons for the unrest behind obscure explanations. Having gone through the full list of the usual conspirators — foreign agents, communists disguised as religious fanatics, etc. — it has now discovered that the Palestine Liberation Organisation is to blame!

Hatred of the regime built up as the result of 25 years of ruthless oppression and deep discontent arising from enormous inequalities and growing social and economic problems are the real motivating forces behind the demonstrations.

The oil boom was a very short lived blessing for the Iranian regime. It didn't solve any problems but only gave rise to unfulfilled expectations.

The Shah promised a 'Great Civilisation' but instead delivered a Great Barbarism: inflation, shortages of food



Iran is the largest buyer of Chieftain tanks. This one is going into Isfahan last week to restore 'order'.

and other basic necessities, shortages of housing, shortages of electricity, collapse of agriculture, corruption and most of all a growing gap between rich and poor made glaringly obvious by the conspicuous luxury consumption of the rich and the desperate situation of the poor

in the shanty towns.

Now the oil boom is over. The limited benefits which it brought are gone and only the problems remain. The Iranian economy is entering a recession and the problems can only go from bad to worse.

The Shah's promised 'Great Civilisation' looks further away than ever.

The Moslem clergy has played a prominent role in the recent struggles.

The religious establishment is the only large organised force that the Pahlavi dictatorship has neither been able to destroy nor bring under its own control.

ASSEMBLY

The mosques are the only places of assembly which the regime has not been able to close down. The pulpit is the only place where freedom of speech hasn't been completely destroyed.

But what is most significant is that the clergy hasn't mobilised the masses by raising religious issues but by taking up some of the important political

questions: by speaking out against repression and social inequalities and by calling for democratic rights etc.

Despite major advances serious problems still face the mass struggle in Iran. The demonstrations have been largely spontaneous and lacked a clear direction.

ROUGH RIDE

The demonstrators know what they do not want — their most popular slogan of 'down with the Shah' clearly expresses their rejection of the present regime — but they are far less clear about which way they want to go.

Another problem is that so far the working class has not entered the struggle as an organised force. Its entry would undoubtedly change the situation considerably.

But whatever the immediate outcome, given the growing radicalisation of the Iranian masses and the serious economic problems ahead, the Iranian regime faces at least a very rough ride in the coming period.

The march the press ignored

SCENES from Sunday's labour movement march to the Soviet and Czechoslovak Embassies calling for the removal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia and for an end to the repression of Charter 77 activists in that country.

The march followed a rally at Speakers Corner, addressed by Ian Mikardo [for the NEC of the Labour Party], Jiri Pelikan, leader of the Czechoslovak Socialist Opposition abroad, Bob Wright of the AUEW and Tariq Ali of the International Marxist Group, amongst others.

The demonstration was



organised jointly by the Committee to Defend Czechoslovak Socialists and the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, and officially supported by the Labour Party, the Young Communist League and the IMG — the Communist Party leadership refused its support.

Despite the fact that the demonstration by about 300 people was the largest labour

movement protest against repression in Eastern Europe since 1968 it was still far smaller than it should have been, even though it coincided with the Brick Lane demonstration. The reason is that the Labour Party and trade union leaderships still refuse to take repression in Eastern Europe seriously.

They remain content to let the Tories, whose demonstration on Sunday was some 2,000

strong, use Stalinism in Eastern Europe as a weapon against the labour movement in Britain.

On Saturday evening 100 people attended a meeting organised by the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign in London with films of the events in Czechoslovakia and speeches from Jiri Pelikan and the Russian socialist exile Zhores Medvedev.



JIRI PELIKAN

Bahro appeal rejected

RUDOLF Bahro's appeal against his eight year prison sentence for 'espionage' has been turned down.

An East German court told the opposition economist that the sentence 'corresponds to the gravity of this crime'.

Under the East German Criminal Code 'espionage' is defined as the communication of 'facts, articles, research findings or other news to be kept secret in the political or economic interest of, or for the

protection of, the German Democratic Republic' to 'imperialist secret agencies or other organisations, institutions, groups or persons whose activities are directed against the German Democratic Republic or other peace-loving peoples'.

The vagueness of this definition — as well as the fact that the trial would be in secret — made this an ideal charge against Bahro.

His actual offence was to

write a book — *The Alternative* — which subjected the bureaucratic regimes to the most searching critique since Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*.

And then he had the temerity to get it published by a West German trade union publishing house!

Bahro's sentence hasn't exactly been plastered all over the bourgeois press, but still there has been a strong campaign in his defence

throughout Western Europe: from trade unionists, social democratic MPs, even Communist Party leaders.

There is still a chance to sign *Socialist Challenge's* Open Letter to East German Party leader Erich Honecker. The letter will be handed in to the East German Embassy to coincide with the publication of *The Alternative* in English in the autumn. Copies are available from *Socialist Challenge*.

Peru Strike adds to government woes

SINCE 2 August, the Peruvian miners and metalworkers have been on unlimited strike.

The government has just declared this strike illegal and gave until 11 August for the miners to go back to work. It is hardly necessary to add that the ultimatum had no effect.

The Peruvian government faces particular difficulties now.

It hasn't yet been able to attack the miners but has hit at the banks: nine leaders of the Peruvian federation of bank workers have been arrested, while strikes for wage rises are developing in the banking sector.

At the same time the government is continuing its negotiations with the International Monetary Fund.

Latest news is that they have reached an agreement which would give Peru new credits. At what price?

The Morales Bermudez

government has reaffirmed the need to reduce public spending as inflation is running at 80 per cent.

Who one remembers that in 1977 prices rose by 50 per cent and that in May oil went up 120 per cent and bread and flour 100 per cent, it becomes clear how dramatic will be the measures the Peruvian government is certain to propose.

In this context the strike of 35,000 health workers and 45,000 metalworkers, miners and bank workers immediately takes on the character of a central confrontation with the government.

*This report is from the special correspondent in Peru of Rouge, the French Trotskyist daily. In coming months we will be able to bring you up to the minute coverage of Peru from this source and from the correspondent of the US paper *The Militant*.

INTERNATIONAL

Despite jail threats

'Spirit of Black Consciousness lives on'

'ELEVEN members of the Soweto Student Representative Council [SSRC], aged between 18 and 23, are coming up for trial on 18 September in South Africa. They each face possible death sentences or life imprisonment.'

Exiled SSRC member Majakathata Mokoena talks to a 'Socialist Challenge' correspondent about the latest wave of repression in South Africa.

'They have been accused of so-called crimes such as distributing "petrol bombs", "forcing" workers to stay away from work, and demonstrating for the release of prisoners, but these are just excuses by the regime to try to crush the students and to demoralise those who are still outside the jails.'

Chairperson, Sechaba Montsitsi.

'I am sure that other former members of the SSRC will be mentioned,' said Majakathata. 'If I was in South Africa today, I would probably be number twelve on the list!'

'Since the banning of the ANC and PAC, the Black Consciousness Movement has been and still is in the forefront of the struggle against the racist and fascist Vorster regime. They thought they could stop us by banning us: they can ban organisations such as SASO and so on, but they can't ban a mass movement.'

Black consciousness is a movement — not an organisation. The spirit of Black Consciousness lives on!

'This is shown by the formation of the Black Consciousness organisations like the Azania Peoples' Organisation, Soweto Student League (the successor of the SSRC) and others.'

'By bringing these militants to trial the regime thinks it can crush the movement. Certainly it could demoralise it — but the only way to prevent that is for an international campaign to release these and other political prisoners.'

'These people have been charged only for fighting for their rights. All we demanded was justice.'

'If they can find these people guilty, then they can lock up every black person in South Africa because our demands are the same as those of the people; we as the SSRC simply articulated these grievances of the people.'

'But we took action instead of just talking. In any case, we took up non-violent action which was met with the violence of the trigger happy police.'

BLOODSHED

'We asked our parents to stay away from work in order to avoid bloodshed with the people milling around in the streets — making themselves easy targets for the bastards; we asked them to stay indoors, but the police even went into the houses to shoot people down.'

'If the regime tries these people for their non-violent actions and the "legal" actions, then they are no



Photo: ANDREW WILKINSON (Report)

A RECENT picket of South Africa House against the planned execution of 21-year old Solomon Mahlangu.

Mahlangu was a school student in 1976 who joined the African National Congress in response to state repression. He was arrested in June 1977 after a gun battle with police. On 2 March this year he was sentenced to death for murder. Yet his only crime is to have fought against the apartheid system.

On 25 August there will be a Poster Parade in London to protest against the sentence. Assemble 5.45pm at Horse Guards Avenue and march to South Africa House and Downing Street.

different to the Nazi regimes and other oppressive regimes.

'But what is needed now urgently is a mass campaign in Britain and internationally to force the Vorster regime to release these prisoners.'

'We appeal to all people internationally to come out on 18 September to show their solidarity and prevent the child slaughter which is being carried out by the South African repressive system.'

'We need demonstrations and rallies leading up to that

day involving as many people as we can. But we need help in organising the campaign — because in this country we do not have the resources and organisational facilities to mount such a campaign on our home. We appeal for solidarity and for help in mounting this campaign.'

Resolutions of solidarity from trade unions, student unions etc should be sent to Majakathata c/o 1, Cambridge Terrace, London N1.

Those accused in the trial are:

- Sechaba D. Montsitsi, (chairperson SSRC), age 22.
- Sandle Seth Mazibuko (founder member of SSRC), 19
- Wellie C. Twala, 18
- Khotso J. Langaane, 21
- Sibongile S. Mthembu (founder member SSRC), 22
- Mafison Morobe (Vice Chairperson), 21
- Thabo Ndabeni, 21
- Kennedy Mogami, 19
- Teboho Mngomezulu, 21
- Michael Khiba, 20
- George Twala, 23.

BANNING

These moves follow the banning of the SSRC, South African Student Movement and South African Student Organisation, Black Peoples Convention and other organisations of the black consciousness movement.

Others named in the trial as 'co-conspirators' include exiles such as: Tsietzi Mashinini, Drake Koka (founder member of the BPC), Khotso Seatholo, Trofomo Sono (last chairperson of the SSRC before it was banned), and the current

IRELAND

Is victory in sight?

In July the Royal Ulster Constabulary spent £10,000 in a recruitment campaign in the North of England. Lavish advertisements were placed in local newspapers in an effort to tempt men by what the RUC described as the 'whiff of danger'.

But apparently the whiff became a stench; not one suitable applicant was found, writes GEOFF BELL.

That is one small indication of what is increasingly acknowledged as the 'war weariness' in Britain over the entire British involvement in the Six Counties of Ireland. A much larger indication was the three-quarter page editorial in the Daily Mirror of 15 August calling on Britain to 'Bring home the troops'.

Neither is the change of attitude towards Ireland in the media confined to the Mirror. The decision of the BBC to finally transmit the excellent The Legion Hall Bombing on Tuesday; the relentless investigation the Sunday Times has taken into the Army 'graveyard' killing of John Boyle — proving he was unarmed and

shot in the back; the recent publicity given in the Guardian to a number of legal abuses practised by the British in Ireland; all are examples of a greater willingness of sections of the British establishment to criticise more freely what its Government and Army are up to in the North of Ireland.

How deep does this feeling go? When the Mirror's editor Mike Molloy was questioned on BBC Radio he said the editorial did not come from any political pressure, and that he 'had no discussions or consultations' about the editorial.

Nevertheless the unswerving allegiance of the Mirror to the Labour Party, an allegiance which has become more pronounced in the run-up to the general election, is bound to raise suspicions that the Mirror was reflecting the views of an influential section of the Labour Party.

There is other evidence which points in this direction. Early in July Labour's NEC threw out a lengthy report on the North of Ireland which had been submitted by a specially appointed study group. It recommended transferring local government powers in the Six Counties to a top-tier of local government.

Yet any suggestion that the Labour Government — as opposed to sections of the party — is willing to follow the

Mirror's advice and name a date for withdrawal is in conflict with the evidence of the policies currently being followed.

In the past year Mason and other Government ministers have introduced and have had adopted a series of social and political reforms. For instance, laws on divorce and gay oppression are both to be brought into line with the more liberal rules which apply to Great Britain and the 11+ examination is being gradually abolished.

Such reforms have the advantage that they don't cost much. Mason has not had the same success on the economic front. Unemployment remains at 12 per cent, and much higher in Catholic areas, while last week a report from the Child Poverty Action group testified that one in three children in the Six Counties live in poverty.

REFORM

But some of the social and economic policies being initiated by Mason do not suggest any impending withdrawal. On the contrary, there is a return to the policy of the 19th century British administrators in Ireland — a bit of reform on the one hand and a lot more repression on the other.

Yet this is very much the strategy of Mason and the British Army top brass, and Mason is not for the North of Ireland much longer. Whether

or not Labour win the coming election there will be a new Northern Secretary soon.

There is also every indication that provided the protests are maintained and Labour wins the election a new 'Irish Minister' will offer a compromise on political status.

A lot more pressure needs to be applied before this fluid situation is decisively resolved in favour of the Irish people;

IN BRIEF

Glasgow march

DESPITE pouring rain, 700 demonstrators marched, without opposition, through Glasgow streets last Saturday to demand political status for Irish prisoners. MARTIN O'LEARY reports.

A large contingent marched from the Irish Defence League and from the Socialist Workers' Party. Two hundred were in the Socialist Unity contingent.

Also present were the Provisional Sinn Fein and individual Clann na h'Eireann members. The latter organisation originally offered to have a speaker at the rally, but were stopped when the national leadership intervened.

At a brief rally, Matt Montgomery, chairperson of the Irish Defence League, said: 'This march is the first of many in Glasgow. We want to

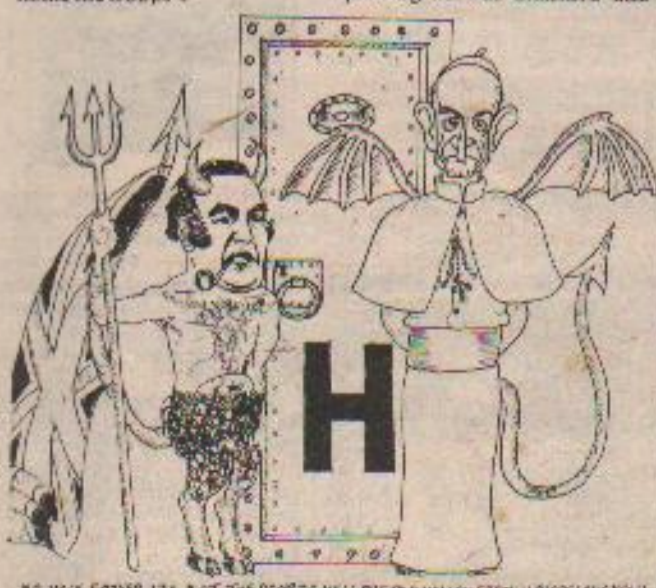
pressure which should seek as its aim to do everything possible to deepen and make more public the divisions in the British establishment, and the Labour Party in particular.

It would be naive to say that British withdrawal from Ireland is now on the agenda. That it is now possible to talk in these terms at all is an indication of what progress has been made in the last 18 months.

Socialist Republic

The recent British Army raids on the Belfast offices of Socialist Republic has meant that the paper has 'lost' its list of subscribers. The Army took the list away and has, as yet, failed to return it.

If you are a subscriber to Socialist Republic please contact the newspaper's Dublin offices at 38 Clanawley Rd, Dublin 5.



NO HALF FAIRER 175 NOT THE DEARER HELL BUT TO HELLGONE WITH A BLOODSHED

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Make Cheques and Postal Orders out to 'Socialist Challenge'.
Fill in the form below and send to: Symposium, 328 Upper St., London N.1.

Name

Address

Anger on the Road

From Brick Lane to Brighton

HUNDREDS and hundreds of unemployed youth are preparing to march from Brick Lane to Brighton on 2 September. The aim is to make the 'Anger on the Road' march to the TUC Congress in Brighton one of the largest manifestations against unemployment.

The most significant development has been the decision to make it a united march. The Campaign Against Youth Unemployment (initiated by the Communist Party) and the Right to Work Campaign (initiated by the Socialist Workers Party) have issued a joint call to all local labour

movement bodies to support the action. Rock against Racism and School Kids Against the Nazis are also supporting the march.

A growing number of trades councils and trade union branches are supporting the march and providing financial aid.

Enclosed 50p registration fee

ANGER ON THE ROAD
2 September-6 September. From Brick Lane to Brighton. If you want to join the march and put the heat on the TUC write to: RTW, 267a Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

NAME

Address

AGE

OUR FUND DRIVE

IT'S BEEN a sad week at the Socialist Challenge offices. At times we have wondered if our supporters are still with us. Last week we estimated that to keep to our fund drive target we

would need £220 each week, until the end of the quarter on 30 September. This week's total of £59.60 brings us up to only £1024.40 — not even half of our £2500

target, yet we are over half way through this quarter. Of course, some supporters set a fine example. But not many followed in their efforts. Charlie van Gelderen's con-

tribution of £40 several weeks ago — £1 for every year he has been a member of the Fourth International — has been taken up by several supporters. One, who signed the letter 'A revolutionary socialist', sent £2 to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Fourth International. This reader has been unemployed for 16 months now.

Mike Tucker, another unemployed supporter, responded to Charlie's appeal with £5 and added a question to employed readers: 'If I can afford £5 on the dole, I hope employed comrades can afford more'.

Finally, an Edinburgh supporter — who is employed — sent in £5 per year for each of the two years he has been a member. Can any readers — including those overseas — match this?

We now have 960 subscriptions. Readers will remember that the Socialist Challenge conference set a target for 1000 by January 1979. We can easily make this on one condition. Over 100 of these subscriptions are a result of the special summer offer. If you have taken out this special offer, we appeal to you to renew your subscription in September. Even if you can buy the paper from street sellers regularly, if you want to help the paper, a subscription renewal is a good way to do it.

If we reach our subscription target we will also be able to

save resources by getting special wrappers printed by the post office. That means many of the boring hours presently put into getting out subscriptions can be done away with!

TICKETS

There is one other way you can help the paper in the next few weeks, and help yourself at the same time. That's by sending today for some of our summer lottery tickets. And if you can sell some for us, so much the better! We can make over £100 just from this source.

When we decided to continue to appear in August we knew it would be a bad month with holidays. But we didn't think it would be this bad! Some supporters' groups haven't forgotten the paper. Hounslow supporters had a social which brought in £15. Write and tell us about your plans.

Our thanks this week to:

Gerald Young	£1.00
Hounslow social	£15.00
Anon	£5.00
'Revolutionary socialist'	£2.00
American visitor	£1.00
Pimlico reader	£5.00
Martin Eady	£5.00
J. Sylvester	£2.00
Jon Spragg	£1.50
Waltoners	£5.00
Bristol supporters	£1.10
Edinburgh supporter	£10.00
M. Tucker	£5.00
A. Tortorella	£1.00
Total	£59.60

Summer lottery



READERS have only three weeks in which to buy tickets for the 'Socialist Challenge' summer lottery. The draw is on 18 September and the big prize is a top quality Yacht Boy (sic) 1100 transistor radio made by Grundig, or if you prefer, a £50 book token.

Tickets are 10p each or £1 for 12 tickets from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1 or by ordering from the paper. The Winner will be announced in 'Socialist Challenge' of 21 September. Organised by D. Weppeler, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XQ.

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Payee: 0179678 [Our account number] at Lloyds Bank, Islington Branch, 19 Upper Street, London N1 0PJ.
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This order cancels all previous orders to the same payee and will continue until written notice to the contrary is received by you.

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