

# Socialist Challenge

## CALLAGHAN DEFIES THE LABOUR MOVEMENT



Photo: BOB MURPHY (Socialist Challenge)

AS WE went to press the apparent determination of the leadership of the Labour Party and trade unions to defy the wishes of their rank-and-file on pay policy took on more and more sinister tones.

■ **MONDAY:** the union leaderships of the public employees, following talks with the employers in London, declared themselves satisfied that the unions had received no offer. Ron Keating, Assistant general secretary of the National Union of Public Employees, explained to an angry lobby of his members that any such offer would be an embarrassment while talks on the pay policy between the TUC and Labour Government continued.

■ **TUESDAY:** Ron Todd, chief union negotiator at Ford, told a shop stewards meeting that he was not rejecting the company's offer of 12½ per cent. He and other union leaders implied that the £20 claim and the demand for a shorter working week were as good as dead.

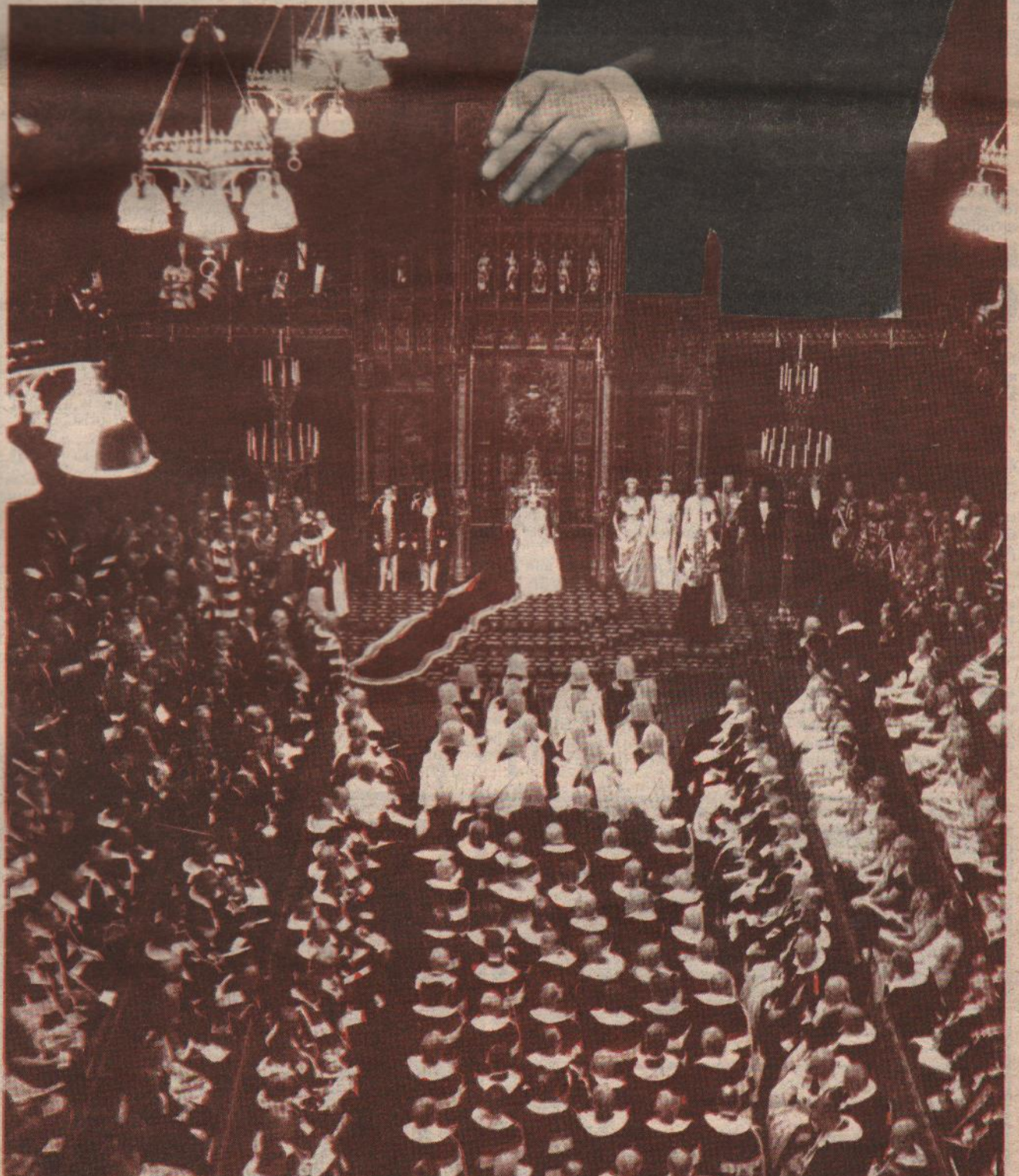
■ **WEDNESDAY:** Callaghan's Queen's Speech made clear the determination of the Labour government to ignore the Labour Party conference's opposition to all forms of pay policy.

What all these attitudes have in common can be summed up in one word. Defiance. Defiance of the wishes of party and union conferences and the rank-and-file.

Just as the TUC leaders have no mandate to engage in their secret talks with the Labour Government, just as the local government union leaders have no mandate to wait until the outcome of these talks, so too Ron Todd has no mandate to barter away the full Ford's claim.

But the striking Ford workers now seem likely to be joined by other strikers. If the public employees made it a trio it would be resistance so strong that the 5 per cent policy would really be a thing of the past.

And if Callaghan, Len Murray, Ron Keating, and Ron Todd don't like it, let them be pushed aside for others who do.



### Don't let him get away with it!

# EDITORIAL

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## The problem of Labourism

THE POLITICAL situation in Britain today is characterised by two dominant features: the inability of the Tory Party to offer a coherent and united alternative to Callaghan, and the revolt against the 5 per cent norm.

The Tory Party leadership is seriously divided on the question of an incomes policy. The provocative statements by Heath and the publicity he has been given by the Tory press indicate that sections of the ruling class are worried by the petty-bourgeois frenzy demonstrated by Thatcher and other Tory leaders. When this frenzy fails to win by-elections then it can be easily transformed into a power-struggle within the party.

In reality the real debate is between those sections of the ruling class [at the moment extremely small] who favour letting unemployment rise, and those who prefer to keep living standards down via incomes policy. The Tory dilemma is that Heath represents the latter and Joseph and Thatcher the former.

In this situation Callaghan and Healey appear as capable and effective bourgeois leaders. Their real links with the trade unions make them even more valuable. They demonstrate, once again, what an important pillar social-democracy is for the British ruling class.

Within the organised working class there is by no means universal or even majority consent for industrial action to defeat government policies. The Ford workers have undoubtedly paved the way for further actions, but the mood of the Vauxhall workers at Luton should not be lightly dismissed.

Lots of workers have accepted some of Labour's arguments. The notion that if we tighten our belts there will be more for all has been accepted by some as true. This view has been enhanced by the temporary economic stability and the rise in real take-home pay for those at work.

The Queen's Speech will clearly see Squire Callaghan, enormously boosted by the by-election results, declaring his intent to carry on regardless of Labour Conference decisions. 'We serve the nation and not any one class' will be the refrain, which will be widely applauded by the ruling class and its press. The public sector claims will pose the big test for the Callaghan regime this winter. The success at Fords will make it more difficult to treat the public sector as the Fire Brigades Union were treated last Xmas.

There is, however, an increasing problem for those who believe that calls for more, more and yet more militancy are sufficient in this period. This is understood by many workers. That is why the fight for a global socialist alternative remains a vital task. Transforming trade union militancy into a political assault on Labourism is the problem which has dogged revolutionaries in Britain ever since the Labour Party was formed.

It is by no means an easy task. However the precarious condition of British capital necessitates a comprehensive struggle to fight within the labour movement for alternative socialist policies which break with the logic of the market economy. A useful first step could be for local Labour parties to insist that conference decisions are put into effect and demand the removal of leaders who refuse to do so.

The breakthrough at Ford has to be consolidated. But it will need more complex and more political tactics than simple exhortations for more militancy. That is the real task which confronts all socialists.

## Owen must go

IT IS a sign of the times that left-wing Labour MPs have not mounted a campaign to demand that Dr Owen be instantly sacked. Foreign policy issues have not caused much dispute amongst Labour MPs since the rows over Wilson's support for the Americans in Vietnam.

In the past there was a tendency for left-wing Labour MPs to go along with Soviet foreign policy. Today's new wave of left-wingers — Kinnock, Litterick, Skinner, etc — simply don't seem to be interested in foreign policy issues. It is time they woke up. Owen's craven support for the Shah of Iran is the most scandalous development since Michael Stewart's grovelling before the Americans in Vietnam.

A campaign against Owen needs to be mounted inside and outside Parliament. When the noble doctor visits university campuses his record should be subjected to serious scrutiny. In Parliament he should be hounded till he either resigns or withdraws his justifications for the murders currently taking place in Iran.

Labour activists and socialists outside the Labour Party have tended to neglect the need to develop a socialist foreign policy. The result of this is clearly to be seen on demonstrations against the Shah or against apartheid. The mobilisation of the labour movement or the larger groups of the far left has been little short of pathetic. A campaign against Owen and Labour's foreign policy should be a priority.

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

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

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

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ADDRESS

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

# THE FIRST WORD

## The fight for democratic rights

# IGNORE THIS AT YOUR PERIL

OUR rights as British citizens are supposedly enshrined in a long and healthy democratic tradition. But three developments in the past week show how fragile those liberties really are.

RICHARD CARVER reports.

★ The Suppression of Terrorism Act came into force on 24 October. One of its effects is to broaden the grounds for extradition to include those charged with political offences and British citizens wanted abroad.

★ Joe Edwards, an Irish trade unionist, was detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. He had been in Britain to speak at a meeting opposing the British presence in Ireland. He is likely to be served with an exclusion order.

★ The 'ABC' Official Secrets trial continues. The defendants are two journalists and a former soldier charged with communicating and receiving official information.

### MASS

The British working class gave the world its first mass movement for democratic rights — the Chartists. This makes it all the more sad that the British labour movement, for one reason or another, has been so lax on the issue recently.

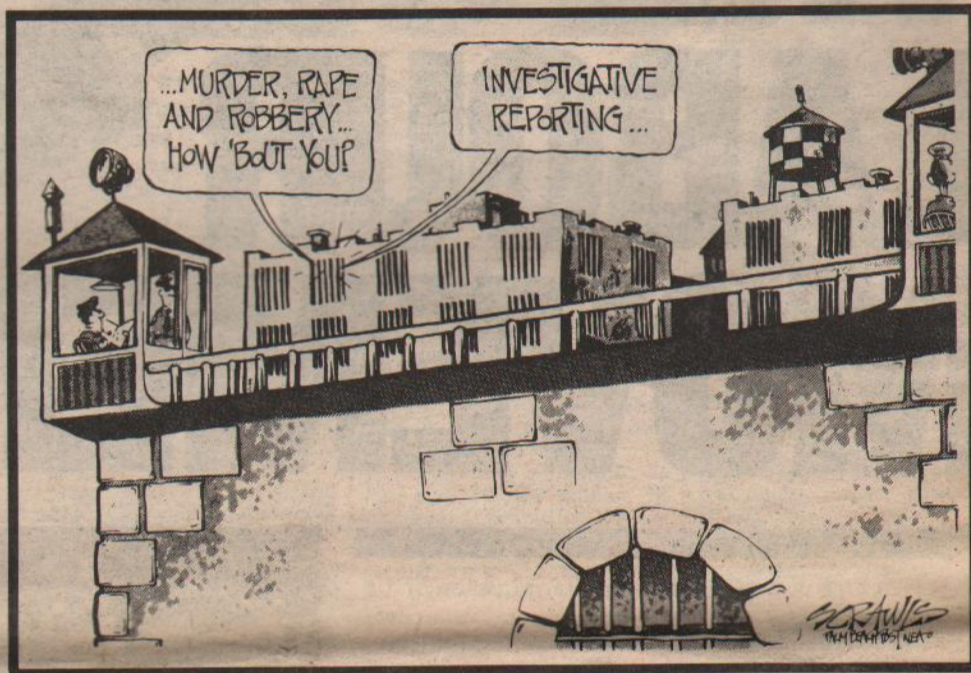
The militant left of the movement has buried its nose in the factory. Its outlook obscured by a sort of super syndicalism, the left wing has not known what the right was doing.

Meanwhile the right wing — ably represented by the present Labour government — has been up to all manner of nasty tricks.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act is a case in point. The failure of the bulk of the left to defend the Irish revolution left it defenceless against legislation which struck nearer home.

According to official figures 3,375 people have been detained under the PTA in its four year history; 132 have been served with exclusion orders; only a handful have been charged with any offence.

And still only a tiny minority



dares to raise opposition to the PTA in the unions and Labour Party.

The Suppression of Terrorism Act has been a carbon copy of the PTA — at least in the manner of its introduction.

The Act, which effectively removes the right of political asylum in Britain, is the product of the Suppression of Terrorism Convention — an agreement between European Interior Ministers for combatting 'terrorism'.

The British state is a world leader in 'anti-terrorist' expertise and technology. Anyone who has a problem with internal opposition calls on the Brits to deal with it.

Even the highly expert West Germans hired the SAS to deal with a plane hijacking last year.

It is typical, therefore, that the British Act actually goes further than the Convention in denying the right to asylum. A number of countries have refused to apply the agreement to political offences. Not so good old Britain, which is now pressuring Dublin to follow suit.

Our third example, the ABC trial, has been more thoroughly exposed. The whole world

knows who 'Colonel B' is and the unsavoury practice of official jury rigging has been uncovered.

This doesn't mean that the problem will go away, but it is a step in the right direction.

Most importantly, all the most serious ABC charges were dropped last week, leaving only those under Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act (which the Labour government, incidentally, is pledged to repeal!).

The publicity around the case allows us to show the complicity of the entire Labour leadership in these anti-democratic moves. For example, who would have thought that the nice Dr Owen had anything to do with ABC? But as nominal head of Britain's overseas spy network it was he who approved the prosecution.

So what is the difference between ABC and the other cases?

### CAMPAIGN

Simply, AB and C have behind them a substantial campaign — some of them journalists (who are always good people to have on your side), but more importantly many of them within the labour

movement.

The ABC campaign has organised openly and democratically in defiant contrast to its opponents.

It is a lesson that other such campaigns could take to heart — the defenders of the West German Astrid Proll, for example, who may be the first victim of the Suppression of Terrorism Act.

Or Persons Unknown, the defence campaign for a group of anarchists on bomb charges. So concerned are some of them to remain unknown that they only surface to launch physical attacks on their potential supporters!

Their caution in the face of state harassment is understandable. But the unwelcome attentions of Special Branch will not be avoided by going 'underground'.

Each of these campaigns has an irrefutable case. Every reason, then, to take the issues out into the labour movement.

That is the only way we are going to win — the only way too that we can persuade the movement that these political questions, far from being irrelevant, are central to its interests.

## OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

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

2 Our socialism will be infinitely more democratic than what exists in Britain today, with full rights for all political parties and currents that do not take up arms against the socialist state. The Stalinist 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.

# FORD

## Secret documents reveal

# Ford in league with fascists in France

IN 1938 Henry Ford was decorated by Hitler for supplying trucks to the Nazi armies.

In 1978 Ford is again working with fascists — this time at its factory in Bordeaux in southern France. MARTIN METEYARD reports.

The fascists in question are involved in a bosses' union called the CSL (Confederation of Free Trade Unions).

It used to be called the CFT (French Confederation of Labour), but changed its name late last year in an effort to alter its image.

This face-lift became necessary after an embarrassingly high number of CFT members had been caught red-handed in acts of open thuggery. These included shootings, the breaking up of factory occupations, and so on.

The CFT itself was formed out of an 'independent union' at the Simca car plant, with the aid of Italian 'foremen' drawn from ex-members of Mussolini's guard.

It specialises in the car industry. From Simca it moved on to Citroen and Peugeot (all three are now part of the same thug-ridden firm after Peugeot's takeover of Chrysler's European operations).

Its most recent interest, with the active assistance of management, is the Ford factory in Bordeaux.

This factory was opened in 1972 — typically, for Ford, in an area of high unemployment. It has two units.

One, called C3, makes automatic gearboxes — 70 per cent of them for the US. The other, BOP-CAT, makes gearboxes for the Fiesta, 90 per cent of which go to Ford-Spain.

The workforce is mostly very young. And not much is left to chance in its hiring.

### IMMIGRANTS

One example: as in its operations elsewhere, Ford has tried to split the workforce by taking on a lot of immigrant workers.

In France most of the latter come from North Africa. But they've become a bit more organised and militant lately. So Ford has played extra safe: its immigrant workers are mostly refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia!

How did the CSL enter the picture? Many of the details were recently revealed with the publication of a series of confidential documents in the French Trotskyist daily *Rouge*. The documents consist of

notes of telephone conversations and reports drawn up by a Michel Touzet in 1975-6.

Touzet is the local representative of a bosses' organisation in the engineering and mining industries called the UIMM.

Touzet is no local freelance. His reports were sent to the UIMM's national office. And his activities fit in with the UIMM's reputation for dirty tricks.

During the 1974 presidential elections, for instance, it produced 3 million copies of a broadsheet smearing the Socialist candidate, Mitterrand. The headline: 'President of the Republic Francois Mitterrand decides: rationing from Monday'.

### AIM

Touzet's role was to help Ford to counter the influence of the militant Communist-controlled trade union federation, the CGT.

The aim was to build up a strong section of the CFT (now CSL) as well as assisting another more respectable 'moderate' federation, Force Ouvrière (which was set up with CIA funds as a split-off from the CGT in the late 1940s).

Touzet worked hand-in-glove with the personnel director at Ford-Bordeaux, M. Clara. The documents reveal that:

\*The UIMM arranged for Clara to meet the general secretary of the then CFT, Auguste Blanc. The idea was to draw up a list of people 'possessing the required qualities' who could be taken on at Ford.

\*It fixed up meetings for him with other car bosses working with the CFT: Claude Archambault, a director of Peugeot, and M. Melin of Simca-Chrysler.

\*The UIMM also brought in a student leader named Dominique Pionat, connected with a far-right university organisation called UNI, to work in Ford's personnel department. Touzet's memos spell out his role:

'M. Blanc could suggest three qualified people and Pionat lets them in... Pionat has the card-index. To refuse doubtful employees (CGT).'



TWO CFT thugs at Citroen are paraded with placards denouncing their fascist sympathies in 1972. They were caught during an attack on an immigrant workers' dance in which two women were kidnapped, one of whom was raped.

This operation still continues as far as one can tell. And its effects inside the factory can be seen in what happened to a young worker, MK, on 22 September 1977 (the incident is described in more detail in a recent book, *Les Truands du patronat*, by Marcel Caille).

It was just after 6am when MK went to report to the factory guards that his locker had been broken open. A guard went with him to see.

Having only worked there a few days, MK went into the wrong doorway. The guard immediately assaulted him — then, when he ran off, another guard fired a shot at him.

MK was caught, beaten unconscious, and then dumped in the parking lot in the morning cold. Only after more than an hour did other workers manage to get the local police to take him to hospital.

Management claimed that he'd simply had an epileptic fit! When this didn't wash, the CFT

jumped in to the bosses' rescue, circulating a leaflet describing the victim as a drug addict.

As for MK himself, his subsequent condition was described as follows:

'His condition doesn't improve. While he has regained consciousness, he remains continually agitated, feels himself threatened, no longer says anything and still doesn't recognise his parents. The shock was too much.'

That is Ford for you. The multinational behind whose smiling exterior lies a continuing history of attempts to smash militant trade unionism.

Ford isn't yet strong enough to try in Britain what it is doing in Bordeaux. But it would like to. In every struggle it aims to shift the balance of forces a little bit more towards that kind of situation.

Because Ford know as well as we should that in the end it's them or us. Every time, in every place.

## News from nowhere

### Popes Against the Nazis

THE KIND and smiling people's pope (the late John Paul I) made at least one positive contribution to the workers movement in Bristol.

Philip Gannaway, a plumber with the city council and one-time EETPU delegate to the Bristol Trades Council, was chairperson of the local National Front. But on his return from a visit to Rome, where he heard John Paul preach on racial tolerance, Gannaway announced his resignation from the NF.

Gannaway told the local *Evening Post* how he had been impressed by the pope's 'sincerity'. His brother Gerald, who organises private hire-cabs in the city, also resigned.

This dramatic conversion has opened the way for Raymond Pearce, notorious for advocating white vigilante patrols in the inner-city area, to become the new chair. These events coincide with the prosecution of two well-known local allies of Pearce, responsible for several attacks on blacks and socialists, for criminal damage to the office of *Bristol Voice*, the city's socialist community newspaper.

Perhaps the resignation of Gannaway, the trade unionist and 'nationalist', and the re-emergence of Pearce, who was disciplined last year by Tyndall for his ultra-right approach, are linked more to infiltration of the NF by the British Movement than to the power of God. But a new badge is certainly called for in Bristol. Its theme: 'Popes Against the Nazis'.

Our religious affairs correspondent writes: Ho, Ho, What's all this then? Remember Pius and the concordat with Mussolini?

### In memory of Fred Bower

WHEN THE Queen 'opened' the huge pseudo-gothic monstrosity of Liverpool Cathedral, just completed some seventy-five years after the laying of its foundations, probably no-one present at the ceremony had the bad taste to mention the legend of Fred Bower, if any of them knew it.

Bower was a well-known syndicalist stonemason of pre-World War One days. He worked on the cathedral foundations and is said to have buried in them a tin box containing the following message to future generations: 'Within a stone's throw of this building there are dwellings not fit for animals to live in.'

This is still as true today as it was then. The only difference is that the slums now belong to the Liverpool City Council, famous for its 'Piggeries'. Roll on demolition day!

### In life as in death...

ON HEARING of the death of our comrade Neil Williamson, the Features Editor of *The Scotsman* in Edinburgh commissioned George Kerevan, a close collaborator and friend of Neil, to write an obituary. 'How many words?' asked George. 'About 600' was the reply.

The obituary was duly written and sent. But it never appeared. To the horror of the Features Editor the Editor refused publication. His excuse: how could you have 600 words for a revolutionary when the paper only prints a few paragraphs on

the death of Establishment worthies?

Neil would have been both amused and gratified...

### Turning a new leaf?

ANY DAY now we should be hearing from the press about a new threat to humanity from callous trade unionists. Stories of old people liable to broken limbs because of autumn leaves left in the streets; of cars carrying young children skidding to calamity.

The culprits? The road-sweepers employed by Lambeth council in South London. They are demanding a weekly bonus of £10 to deal with the autumn windfalls. The council, led by Ted Knight, a supporter of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, has offered the roadsweepers £4.50.

The result: a boycott of leaves.

### Farewell, 'Socialist Commentary'...

WE HAVE heard the sad news that *Socialist Commentary*, the journal of the 'intellectual' right of the Labour Party, is to cease publication for lack of funds. Its luminaries have included Shirley Williams, David Owen, David Marquand, Hugh Gaitskell, Roy Jenkins, Antony Crosland, et al.

It has, in the past, survived because of donations from 'Friends of Socialist Commentary'. Some of these were reputed to be not a million miles away from the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. We pen these lines in tribute:

So farewell then, *Socialist Commentary*. We had only one thing in common: Our initials.

Are you really dying for lack of money? Or lack of ideas? Dave Wax laughed when we told him: 'Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! 'Surely', he said, 'Owen can get them money From the Shah.' Cheers anyway.

### Short stories

THE success of last year's special Xmas number of *Socialist Challenge* has still been universally acknowledged. Nonetheless we soldier on.

Readers are invited to submit short stories for this year's Short Story Competition. Maximum length of stories should be 3,500 words.

They should arrive at our office by 24 November. The judges will be: Mervyn Jones, Emma Tennant, and Francis Mulhern.

All stories should be sent to: 'Short Story Competition', *Socialist Challenge*, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XQ.

### NEIL WILLIAMSON MEMORIAL MEETING

Friday 3 November, 7.30pm Assembly Rooms, George St., Edinburgh

Speakers: Tariq Ali (Socialist Challenge) Mick Napier (SWP) Gordon Brown (Labour Party) Brian Wilson (Editor, 7 Days)

For further information, contact: Memorial Fund, c/o Scottish Socialist Books, 64 Queen Street, Glasgow.



ARMED thuggery is an important weapon in the French bosses' armoury: here goon squads are seen patrolling the

Gervais-Danone factory in Marseilles in January 1978 after evicting the workers in occupation.

FORD

# Danger! Productivity at work

RON TODD, chairperson of the union negotiating committee, responded to Ford's latest offer by saying that the unions were not prepared to accept 'penalty clauses' but were prepared to discuss productivity and absenteeism 'in tandem with greater improvements in basic pay'.

In doing so he ditched the fight for the full claim, explains BRIAN GROGAN.

## BONUS

As we predicted last week, the basis of Ford's productivity deal is an 'attendance payments plan.' Its intention is to undermine shop floor organisation by tying bonus payments to 'continuity of production'.

Now, although the press has given greatest prominence to the absenteeism, the real aim of the plan is actually to prevent the possibility of unofficial action aimed at remedying grievances.

The idea is to penalise workers in one part of the plant for unofficial action elsewhere, thus setting one group of workers against another. This is completely contrary to one element of the claim: the call for 80 per cent rates for layoffs caused by internal disputes.

The same is intended by

raising the absenteeism question. The claim calls for one hour off the working day. The aim is to get more workers doing the same job.

The management's proposals will cut jobs. This is what productivity is all about.

For Ron Todd to say that he will be prepared to discuss the question of productivity and absenteeism is to give up in advance the fight for the full claim.

Ford workers are in a tremendously strong position. Last week's stewards committee got a report that all Ford's European production would be brought to an end by 6 November. £250m and 62,000 vehicles have been lost because of the strike.

## RECALLED

Mass meetings should now be called in all the plants to explain the stage of the negotiations and the massive possibilities for the full claim. The national shop stewards conference at Coventry should be recalled to elect a national strike committee.

This is the only way to win the full claim. Reliance on Ron Todd and the other officials spells one thing — a productivity deal.

## Productivity in disguise

THE latest offer from Ford of a £3 attendance allowance means an increase for those workers who clock in for 40 hours.

But for those workers who clock in late or have to take time off, it will mean losing the £3, writes TOMMY HEALEY.

## POOL

Ford is not offering this as a 'phony productivity deal', but as a serious attempt to cut down on jobs.

Ford runs a 'labour pool' in all its plants. This pool covers absenteeism, which generally runs at about 10/15 per cent among production workers.

This pool is what Ford hopes to cut back on.

The attendance allowance will also affect night shift workers. They have been engaged in a fight to get rid of the Friday night four hour shift.

With the introduction of the allowance, any workers who do not go in for the Friday shift will lose money.



FORD wives say: we back the claim!

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

## The British motor industry

# Behind closed doors

NO WAGE rises for Leyland workers. The only way they can increase their earnings is through a productivity deal.

This is what Leyland boss, 'Mick the Knife' Edwardes has in store, writes JONATHAN SILBERMAN.

Edwardes might be forced to concede the odd per cent. But his intention is to defend the Government's five per cent to the hilt.

## DECLINE

Edwardes will have at his disposal the full force of the capitalist press to prove that Leyland can afford to pay no more.

There is no getting away from this very real crisis-ridden state of British Leyland — or BL as it's now called.

Its market share dropped from 50 per cent in 1968 to 30 per cent in 1974 and 24 per cent in 1977. Edwardes's confident prediction that this figure would be raised to 27 per cent this year was dashed when the figures for the first nine months of 1978 were published. They showed a further decline to 22.74 per cent!

Mick the Knife and Sunny Jim have a plan to deal with this situation, called the Edwardes plan. It involves breaking BL down into its constituent parts, sorting the profitable from the unprofitable sections, and chopping the latter.

## MOUTH

Leyland Bus and Tracks division, for instance, made a profit of £43 million in 1976 and the market is booming this year. Rover and Jaguar are still healthy.

The idea is that these will be concentrated upon while others — like the ill-fated Standard plant at Speke — will be closed.

Even within the profitable sectors, the Edwardes axe will fall: the AEC bus and truck factory in Southall is due for closure by 1980.

The Callaghan Government



intends to put its money where its mouth is. Ten days ago came the announcement that there would be no more state aid unless BL dramatically improves its performances.

Altogether, some 30,000 Leyland jobs are at stake. But BL is so much at the heart of

British industry, with factories in all the major industrial centres, that perhaps ten times this number are ultimately threatened.

Today's motor industry is international. Even if the BL bosses' problems of producti-

vity were to vanish overnight, they would still face the problem of lack of overseas markets, foreign competition and the like.

## BL = NO FUTURE

To attempt to deal with BL's problems through 'internal' mechanisms without confronting these 'external' problems is not on. There is no future for BL as a capitalist enterprise.

That's why Edwardes considers such draconian measures. That's why rumours abound about a link up between BL and

the French nationalised car firm, Renault, following the link deal involving Chrysler and Citroën.

That's why hand in hand with the present wage demands of the Leyland workers, there is a pressing need both for full information about the precise nature of Edwardes' plans and for an alternative trade union plan for the nationalisation of the motor industry as a whole without compensation and under workers control.

Such an alternative plan would involve the protection of living standards against the effects of inflation through

automatic wage increases.

It would involve cutting the length of the working week on full pay rather than cutting the workforce.

If there is a problem in the market for cars, the trade union plan could look into alternative products along the lines of the Lucas Corporate plan.

Such a plan would provide the basis for uniting all car workers rather than have the bosses try to divide them with talk of profit of this firm, precarious state of that.

Such a plan would provide a real alternative to the schemes of Mick the Knife.

# Fords solidarity

PUBLIC SUPPORT for the Ford strikers continues to be displayed up and down the country.

HULL saw two Socialist Challenge meetings last week on the Ford strike which attracted 80 militants, including shop stewards from engineering, building and the docks.

The main speakers were Billy Ross from the Ford Workers Group, Keith Dennison, General & Municipal Workers Union convenor at Fenner's Engineering, and Mike Power, a shop steward from the Transport and General Workers Union branch 10/64.

Ross explained: 'No way are we going to abide by the 5 per cent norm. We're fighting for a £20 increase that will restore wages to the 1974 level.'

Power, after saying that 'the Ford strike is central in leading the fightback', went on to argue: 'We must fight to transcend all the divisions in the labour movement, particularly racism, sexism and the divisions between higher and lower paid workers.'

Power's advocacy of unity was taken up by a speaker from the Black Socialist Alliance,

who proposed the formation of a Hull Liaison Committee against the 5 per cent. The suggestion was agreed by the meeting.

HACKNEY in East London was the venue for a meeting on 23 October which attracted an audience over 100 strong.

Speakers included Joan Maynard MP; Ernie Roberts, local Labour parliamentary candidate; Ray Varnes, secretary of the Inner London Education Authority district of NUPE; and Alex Gungi and Gordon Davy from the Ford Workers Group.

LEAMINGTON in the Midlands is the home of one of the smallest Ford plants. It has no great record for militancy, but support for strike action among the workers has been overwhelming — so much so that workers on the night shift walked out leaving metal in the furnaces.

Despite such enthusiasm the local plant leadership has made no attempt to involve the rank and file in organising the strike or the picket line. So it's been

left to others to do the work.

Last week a public meeting organised jointly by the Socialist Workers Party and the International Marxist Group was attended by over 50 people, including about a dozen from the local plant.

BRISTOL is the venue this Thursday (2 November) for another meeting on the 5 per cent organised largely through the efforts of the SWP and IMG. There will be speakers from the docks, hospitals, the Transport and General Workers Union, and local refuge workers. The meeting is at the Shepherds Hall at 7.30pm.

## PEOPLE'S FESTIVAL 78

12 hours of culture, politics and fun + children's festival/creche

Sun. 26 Nov., 11am-11pm  
Belle Vue, Manchester

Tickets £2 — reduced for non-earners

Details: 28 Hathersage Road, Manchester 13 (061-224 5378)

Organised by Manchester Area CPGB

## HOME NEWS

### Leyland say:

# Not a penny on your pay

IN A move of startling audacity, British Leyland have made their position on pay abundantly clear, reports **JOHNNY HAINE**.

In answer to their workers' annual claim of a £27 across-the-board inflation-protected increase, a 35-hour week, and other benefits, the company has offered...precisely nothing.

As a cover-up, Leyland's boss Michael Edwardes has attempted to sow confusion by introducing discussion on 'parity'.

This highly contentious scheme proposes that the workers accept the proposed five grade corporate structure, accept redundancy-creating productivity schemes, and accept the plant closures, previously outlined in the Edwardes plan.

In return, British Leyland will 'give' parity in November next year — providing the whole scheme is self-financing by 'improved efficiency'.

### FRAUD

This is not an offer, it is a raffle ticket. And not only has it a high price and long odds, but the draw doesn't take place until November 1979, and if you win you have to buy your own prize!

The whole thing is a fraud intended to divert attention from the annual review.

Edwardes conveniently forgets the company-engineered ballot last year, which stressed that the reviews now due should be conducted on a plant basis.

What it hides is that, in terms of cash on the table for this annual review, Leyland is offering nothing!

### CONFUSION

In some plants this confusion has worked, often with the encouragement of union officials. There are plants where the claim — agreed by the combine committee — has not even been submitted.

In others, no information — or worse still, confusing information — has been given to the stewards and the membership.

But the parity fraud was completely knocked on the head at last Friday's top level meeting when British Leyland refused to consider bringing forward the introduction of the scheme from next November — much to

the dismay of the union officials present.

Now these officials cannot wriggle off the hook and the literally threadbare Leyland offer cannot be covered up.

Cowley assembly plant stewards have seen through the con trick. Last Thursday's mass meeting carried (with only a handful against) a resolution to give the company seven days to put cash on the table in answer to the claim.

This kind of well prepared action provides an effective answer to the company's obstinacy and the filibustering of union officialdom.

A group of stewards determined to see action on a company-wide basis, the 'Leyland Stewards Committee for the Annual Review', is meeting regularly to propagandise and push for a fight over the review.

### APTLY

One of their leaflets aptly sums up the situation: 'Get the claim moving with the full backing of the membership. Fords did it; so can we'.

For further details write to: Stewards Committee, 6 Salisbury Rd, Moseley, Birmingham 13.



Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (JFL)

## British Oxygen workers

# Gassing the five per cent

IT TOOK 3,200 British Oxygen workers just four weeks last year to blow a hole in Phase 3 of the Government-TUC pay policy, winning an increase which worked out at 25 per cent.

Now BOC is entering the pay fray again. Management were due to reply yesterday to the union's rejection of a 7.7 per cent offer.

Mick Gosling and John Ross spoke to **JOHN WALSH** and **MICKEY BOULTER**, Convenor and Deputy Convenor for the Transport & General Workers Union at the Hackney depot, about this year's claim.

What are you asking for this year?

**John Walsh:** The claim is for a substantial increase on the basic with the company's profitability to pay, consolidation of the £5 back productivity and 10 per cent we got last year, increases in shift allowances, night-out and subsistence allowances, and a 35-hour week. It's worth about 30 per cent in all.

Have you been offered a productivity deal?

**Mickey Boulter:** They wouldn't offer productivity to us. We couldn't do any more work under the present manning unless they gave us more workers.

Wasn't there a productivity deal last year?

**JW:** There was no truth in that whatsoever. We gave no productivity, we lost no hours, and we lost no workers.

We learnt our lesson under Phase 1 and 2 of the Work Study Review (WSR) system at the beginning of the 1970s. We lost 800 workers nationally (20 per cent of BOC's entire workforce).

I never agreed with it but we had to abide by the majority decision, and at a price of £3 per

worker per week Hackney lost 30 per cent of its labour force. After WSR 2 there will be no more productivity dealing because people realised what a fraud it was.

How did you recover from that to winning what you did last year?

**JW:** We will have to go back a long time to explain that. Ten years ago the union in BOC was just being organised.

There were no lay delegates on the national negotiating committee. We eventually got five on from the four regions in 1970/71 representing the T & G and General & Municipal Workers.

At the same time we led a fight from Hackney for a national meeting of delegates from all 46 BOC depots. The first took place in 1974.

Now in the event of a pay claim being prepared it is taken to a meeting of two representatives from all 46 depots where a resolution is adopted and taken back to the branches where it is endorsed and submitted to management.

Last year's victory shows what a powerful set-up this is. How has the company responded?

**MB:** The company is trying to break the union set-up in BOC

from national officers downwards. The weapon is overtime.

The union officers signed an agreement with the management in 1969/70 for 48 hours. But what the company does indirectly through different departments and individuals is to let some people go over the hours, as there are no strict controls.

So at some depots you have people working a guaranteed 60 hour week. We shouldn't allow management to try and break the strength of the unions in this way.

You work in a very profitable industry. Do you see yourselves as a 'special case' because of this?

**JW:** We don't class ourselves as a special case.

**MB:** Nor at Ford's. How can you be special at Ford's! They are poorer paid than us.

They are entitled to everything they are claiming and more and it would still be inadequate for the work they are doing. And there's no way they can give more productivity.

Has the Ford strike encouraged BOC workers?

**MB:** It must do, mustn't it. We stood on our own last year. This year's marvellous for us.

**JW:** Unfortunately there is not a great deal we can do. We're the main supplier of gases for Ford Dagenham, but by virtue of the fact that they are closed we are supplying nothing.

What we are doing in Hackney is that all supplies which were destined for Dagenham are blacked and so are the vehicles which would have carried them. We won't even let management use the vehicles inside the depot.



BOC workers in Manchester during last year's dispute

How do you see yourself linking up with the low paid?

**MB:** Well, we used muscle last year and I'm almost embarrassed by it! Firms like BOC are making massive profits, carrying explosive materials on the roads all over Britain, and what do they contribute, what does any firm contribute, to the firemen or the national health? We pay for these services but

firms claim they are putting their profits back into machinery and so on and get government grants as well. The private sector should be made to put money into the public sector.

You say 'use your muscle', but have these workers got it?

**MB:** I reckon they have, but what happens is that the press

turns all the people against them.

If the dustmen come out I'll be going round the flats telling people not to leave black bags on their balconies for the flies and rats.

Take them down to the main road and leave them there — not on the kerb, in the middle of the road. They've got to show that it's the councils and government who are responsible for the mess.

What about Callaghan's argument that anyone who breaks 5 per cent is a big threat to the Labour Government?

**JW:** Well, I don't know and I don't particularly care. I do know that anyone who gets less than 12½ per cent this year will automatically be taking a reduction in wages.

I want the workers to get their fair share of the cake, and 5 per cent is no fair share.

## Workers sacked over productivity

SOME 60 members of Grundfos Manufacturing in Newcastle have been sacked because of their refusal to accept arbitrary management instructions on productivity, reports **GEOFF RYAN**.

With productivity much in the air these days, what has happened to the Engineering Union members at Grundfos is a lesson to all workers about what these deals really mean.

Four months ago the workers rejected a bonus system on

productivity. They argued the scheme was confused and payment under it was uncertain.

Following the union rejection, management attempted to step up productivity in other ways. But the workers resisted and reverted to the previously agreed levels of production.

A furious management then suspended the workers, and when they refused to return to work on the basis of the productivity levels stipulated by the management they were sacked.

The strike and now lock-out at Grundfos involves mainly women workers. It may be a small local dispute, but when productivity deals are such a central issue in Callaghan's pay policy the Grundfos struggle takes on a particular significance.

The strike committee have made an appeal for financial support and this can be sent to Ms SE Starkey, 37 Donvale Rd, Donwell Village, Washington, Tyne and Wear.

Photo: JOHN SMITH (JFL)

# NUPE claim: 1979 is a long time away

**IN A FEW days local government manual workers will receive a reply to their claim for a £60 minimum basic wage and a 35-hour week.**

**Whatever the package it's wrapped in, 5 per cent is almost certain to be the content. So what will happen now?**

**RICH PALSER reports.**

If the union leaderships get their way, nothing will happen — at least until January.

Already the strategy of the National Union of Public Employees leadership is clear — put back any action till January, by which time the water and sewerage workers will have their claim in.

If no better offer is forthcoming by then, they plan to stage another 'dirty jobs' strike. Those sections with 'economic muscle' would come out, with a levy on the rest of the union membership to maintain the strike.

**FLAWS**

This is a serious approach on the face of it, giving plenty of time to prepare. But it has two major flaws.

The first is that the main reason for delay has little to do

with preparing the membership for action.

**TALKS**

It has more to do with gaining further time for talks — talks between the TUC and Government to find some room for compromise which makes the low paid 'a special case'. Further time to try to pressurise the Government to be more 'flexible'.

At best this is misguided. Callaghan has made it clear that wage cuts are a central part of his economic strategy — all that the Government is willing to talk about is how best to achieve this.

The second flaw in this approach is the reliance upon trade union muscle — the dustcart workers, water and sewerage workers, and others similarly placed.

All-out industrial action by

these sections is vital to show the determination to win the claim. But the decisive thing will be the political impact of the strike — in other words, the degree of support from the rest of the labour movement.

Even the weakest organised workers, like the nurses in 1974, can win if they are seen to have wide backing.

That's why a 'special case' plea is dangerous. Far better for low paid workers to say: 'To end our low pay we are fighting with all workers against wage cuts and the 5 per cent limit.'

Such an attitude would involve bringing the claims forward in order to fight alongside Ford's and other workers.

**SOLIDARITY**

Similarly, in addition to all-out action by water and dust workers, rolling strike action in the hospitals would free workers there to go out in flying pickets and win solidarity action by factory workers — just as the nurses did.

The union leaderships have every interest in waiting if they think they can avoid having to lead a fight. The membership



Copies of this bulletin can be ordered from: Campaign for Action in NUPE, c/o 47 Leyland House, Poplar High Street, London E14.

have no interest in waiting if they want to win their claim.

Already the London Divisional Council of NUPE, representing over 100,000 members, has called forward its divisional delegate rally to plan action, and called for all-out action to win the claim. This is the lead to follow everywhere. To fight for this, members of

the 'Campaign for Action in NUPE', a group of rank-and-file NUPE members who are organising in the union to commit it to a militant fight, have produced a bulletin

arguing for action now. This is being distributed nationally in NUPE. Socialist Challenge supporters in NUPE are urged to give it their fullest support.

## Socialist Challenge sales drive Winning new readers — and keeping them

**THE NEXT National Sales Day for 'Socialist Challenge' is 18 November. So every reader should be considering how much time and energy they can give the paper, writes distribution manager STEVE BRIGNULL.**

We are hoping that these collective efforts will result in a big increase in papers ordered — and more importantly, actually sold.

But it's not just important to win new first time readers. We have to keep them.

Many occasional readers will gladly buy Socialist Challenge 'when they see it'. But that's not often enough.

We want to turn casual readers into consistent readers. That's why we've set a target of 500 new subscribers.

**BENEFIT**

If we are successful in our fight to win a broader regular readership, the paper will benefit in a number of ways. First, more readers strengthen the paper politically.

New readers bring the possibility of increasing the number of active fighters for the paper's policies; more critical minds can only help improve the paper; a wider network of correspondents can be developed; and, importantly, new potential sources of financial commitment are opened to Socialist Challenge.

**CASH-FLOW**

Furthermore, new subscriptions help us in a very immediate sense. The money they bring in helps to solve our perpetual cash-flow difficulties.

To encourage our supporters to get out and win consistent readers we have taken a number of steps:

★ Set modest and realistic targets for our supporters in every town and city where the paper is sold. We have asked supporters to tell us if the targets are too high, but we have had only optimistic replies. For most comrades, a subscription drive is a new venture and they'll give it a try.

★ Printed special introductory subscription cards offering a 3 month subscription for £2 or a six month one plus a 1979 diary for £5. Each returned card sold through the effort of a supporter will be notched up to targets set for that town.

★ Printed special gift subscription tokens. This is to encourage supporters to give a subscription for birthday or Xmas presents. The token costs £5, and the recipient will receive a six month subscription to the paper and a 1979 diary upon presenting it to our offices.

**XMAS**

If you are going to give a token for an Xmas present, why wait till then? Help us out today by doing your shopping early.

The target of 500 new readers has been set in addition to the regular subscriptions we get each quarter through readers renewing their subscription, from overseas readers, or from readers who decide on their own to subscribe.

We want these 500 readers to come through the personal efforts of each and every supporter of the paper. Can you help us? Would you like to

receive some special order forms?

We would especially welcome supporters from towns not listed below! Just fill in the form and we will rush every bit of promotion material we have to help you out.

Aberdeen	10	Canterbury	5
Basingstoke	10	Cardiff	10
Bath	10	Chelmsford	2
Bedford	4	Colchester	5
Birmingham	30	Coventry	10
Brent	10	Dundee	5
Brighton	10	Durham	5
Bristol	10	Edinburgh	10
Cambridge	5	Falkirk	5
Camden	10	Glasgow	10

Hackney	10	Norwich	7
Haringey	10	Nottingham	15
Harrow	10	Outer West	10
Hemel	10	London	10
Hempstead	10	Oxford	15
Hull	10	Portsmouth	10
Inner West	10	Preston	10
London	10	Reading	10
Islington	10	Sheffield	10
Leeds	10	Southampton	10
Leamington	10	SE London	5
Leicester	10	SW London	15
Liverpool	10	Stirling	5
Manchester	25	Swansea	10
Middlesbrough	10	Walford	10
Newcastle	10	Woking	2
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Newport	5	Worcester	5
Northampton	2	York	10

Please send me promotion material to help Socialist Challenge in its Subscription Drive.

Name.....

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Fill in and return to: S. Brignull, Distribution Manager, Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP



## New threat to student union autonomy

**THE ISSUE of autonomy has been a recurring one in the discussions of the National Union of Students and an everyday problem in a number of colleges up and down the country, writes PAMELA HOLMES.**

In the last year, college interference in the functioning of student unions has become more common.

★ Sabbatical leave has been refused to elected officers.

★ Principals have maintained a tight grip on some unions' funds.

★ Anti Nazi League posters, badges, leaflets, meetings and everything else you care to mention have been banned.

★ Disciplinary procedures and expulsions have been enforced.

★ Facilities for mass general meetings have been denied. The Department of Education and Science and the Public Accounts Committee stepped into this situation in the autumn of 1977 to produce a discussion document aimed at changing the whole basis of union financing.

**PROPOSALS**

The central proposals of their new scheme turned out to be based on establishing a two-tier system along the following lines:

1. There would be a maximum subscription fee of between £15 and £20, established on an annual basis by the interested parties and paid in the usual manner.

2. Unions requiring a greater income than this would have to negotiate an additional amount (a subvention) from their local education authority.

3. A 'memorandum of agreement' should be established between the interested parties which specifies the right and proper concerns of a students'

union. 4. The DES advises LEAs to introduce a minimum fee of £1.25 per full-time student and 50p per part-time student.

There is agreement within the NUS that these proposals are unacceptable. A request was therefore sent to the DES by NUS President Trevor Phillips asking for a year's delay to allow for full discussion.

**CONFERENCE**

The DES have yet to reply, which means that the above proposals might be implemented in the academic year 1979-80. So arrangements are going ahead for an emergency conference of the union on 2 December.

This is only five days before the ordinary national conference. But the unions which called for an emergency conference want to ensure a full day's discussion on what reply to make to the DES, and the executive said that an extra day at the ordinary conference wasn't possible.

The DES are expected to reply in mid-November. If the year's delay has been agreed to, then a number of colleges say that they will withdraw their calls for an emergency conference.

As one student pointed out: 'Another year gives us time to organise'.

But if there is no delay, it is urgent to build united action from all sectors of the student movement with the support of the labour movement to make sure that the NUS remains independent from the state.

**Unnatural history**

# Abortion lesson among the dinosaurs

EVERY DAY parties of school students are taken on a visit to a special exhibition on the human body among the dinosaurs at the Natural History Museum.

Of particular interest is a display which puts paid to the myths about the 'birds and the bees'.

Using photographs taken inside a woman's womb, the exhibit follows conception through to childbirth, showing in detail the development of the foetus.

Yet from the moment of conception onwards, the recorded commentary refers to 'the baby'. GEOFFREY SHERIDAN examines some of the basic arguments about abortion.

Consciously or otherwise, the organisers of the exhibition at the Natural History Museum in London are reinforcing what the guardians of morality and of women's role in this society want us to believe.

GP or hospital consultant who is opposed to abortion and whose religious or social views therefore dictate that she must continue with her pregnancy.

This enforced suffering does not go far enough for the powerful anti-abortion lobby.

The present law allows for abortion up to 28 weeks of pregnancy. The anti-abortionists want to reduce this time limit. They want tighter controls over the doctors who decide.

They want to bring in crippling restrictions against the charities which provide cheap abortions for the many thousands of women turned away by their NHS doctor.

**EMOTIVE**

That an egg once fertilized has an existence and rights of its own, entirely independent of the woman in whose womb the foetus grows and — nine months after conception — from which it is expelled.

Describing the foetus as a 'baby' clearly has an emotive impact; one which aids the guardians in their determination to prevent women securing the right to control over their own body.

If, contrary to the biological facts, the foetus is assigned an independent existence (not to mention a soul), then someone has to be allocated the power to decide the fate of the foetus.

Under the Abortion Act of 1967, two doctors can decide on medical, psychological, or social grounds that a woman shall be entitled to have a pregnancy terminated.

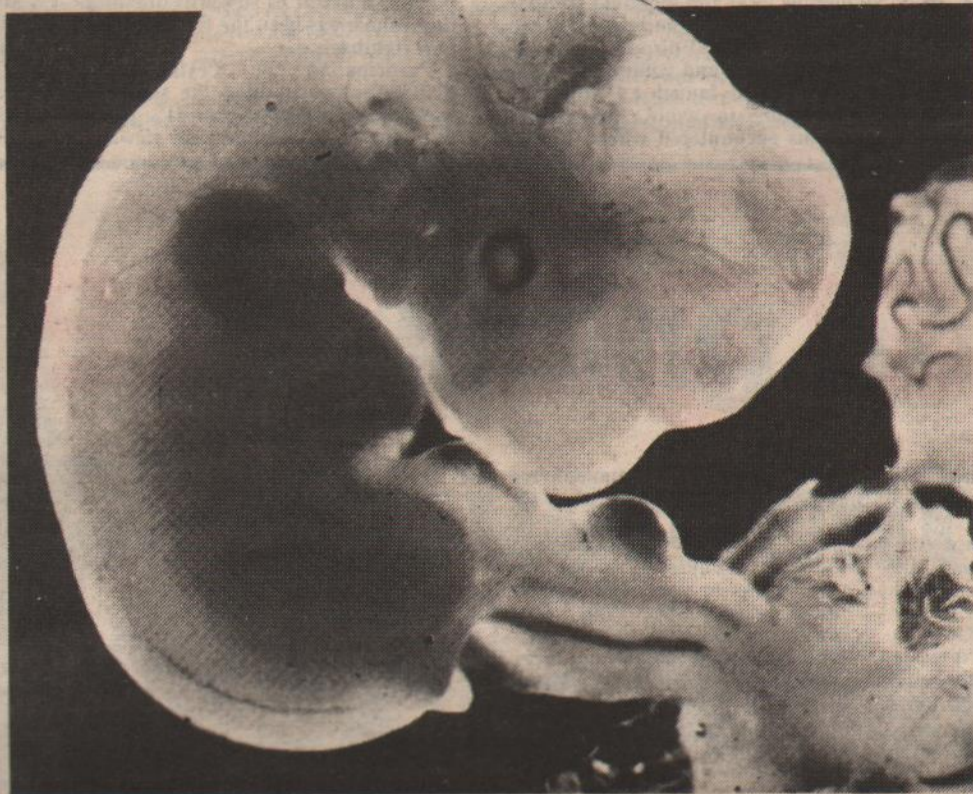
There is nothing automatic about the operation of this law.

Many women seeking an abortion will come up against a

**LAW**

When it comes to abortion, there are numerous pipers calling the tune. While the doctors have 'first refusal', it's the MPs who lay down the law, and their ears are often bent to the tune of the Vatican, and to the hymn of the sanctity of family life.

It's politics, of course. The deeper the mess that capitalism gets into, the louder the praise of the family as the institution best fitted to keep women in their place at the kitchen sink and the youth from



reacting too angrily at the lack of jobs.

Never mind that enforced pregnancy may well bring misery to an unwilling mother. That depressed living standards and the lack of childcare facilities make a mockery of women's equality.

**OBSCENE**

That, whatever the circumstances, it is obscene for someone other than the woman herself to choose whether she should be a mother.

The Labour Government has already spoken of a possible Minister of Marriage. The Tories would be only too pleased. And the mass media never miss a chance to tell women that their destiny is motherhood, willing or otherwise.

For socialists, the right of women to control their own fertility is a precondition for their liberation.

The call for free abortion on demand, which means that it is women who will decide, has been accepted by both the Labour Party and the TUC. So far this policy has remained almost entirely on paper.

Some unions have got moving, however, and the National Abortion Campaign's

trade union conference to be held later this month aims to consolidate these efforts.

The policy of the local government workers' union, NALGO, for example, is to back all NAC's initiatives, and it has circulated its 1,500 branches suggesting they send delegates to the conference.

Yet the National Union of Teachers, like so many other unions, considers that abortion is 'outside the scope of its aims'.

No matter, presumably, the fate of its own women members; what is taught in the classroom, or the effects on school students of those visits to the Natural History Museum.

**Trade Union Conference on Abortion. Will you be represented? Saturday, 25 November, Caxton Hall, London SW1.**

**Delegate form from NAC, 374 Gray's Inn Rd, London WC1. Tel. 01-278 0153.**

## Raid on NAC benefit

**FIVE ARRESTS** and the confiscation of liquor worth £100 followed a police raid on a women-only benefit held by the National Abortion Campaign in South London on Saturday evening.

The five have been charged with selling liquor without a licence, which carries a fine of up to £50.

The raid was well planned.

Two plainclothes police women arrived promptly at the 8pm start of the benefit, held at the Waterloo Action Centre near Waterloo Station.

They left 45 minutes later, to return shortly after 9pm in the company of 15 uniformed cops. Their main concern was to obtain the name and address of all the women drinking, and to find out the organisers of the benefit.

Meeting with little success, the police arrested the five most vociferous women and carted off the liquor from the hall. At Kennington police station, the women were asked why they were participating in a women-only event.

NAC badly needs cash to make up for the booze and arrange legal defence. Inn Road, London WC1.

## ANTI RACISM IN BRIEF

### Defending the defenders in East London

**DURING** the demonstration to defend Brick Lane on 24 September thirty people were arrested, bringing the total number of anti-racists arrested over the summer to more than sixty, writes COLIN TALBOT.

Jail sentences, heavy fines, and severe bail restrictions are now being meted out.

The Hackney and Tower Hamlets Defence Committee and the Anti Nazi League have got together to launch a joint defence campaign for those arrested.

Thirty people, including nine defendants, attended a meeting on Saturday to initiate the campaign.

The meeting, chaired by Ernie Roberts, heard that one SWP militant had already been jailed, while others had received 'banning orders' and 'curfews' as part of their bail restrictions.

An initial picket has been called for 9 November and a demonstration is being planned.

Messages of support and donations to: Joint Campaign (H&THDC & ANL), 245 Mare St., London E8. Further info, ring Caroline 01-247 2717.

### It's an unfair cop, again

**PAUL ADAMS**, a young black supporter of Socialist Challenge, was arrested during an anti-fascist protest in Liverpool's main shopping precinct, Church Street, on 14 October.

The previous Saturday the National Front had been leafletting and selling papers there, insulting and threatening passers-by. The police did nothing, so the Anti Nazi League decided to hold its own meeting there on 14 October.

This time the police did act — to break up the ANL meeting. Adams was arrested and charged with obstruction when he protested at this.

The ANL then decided to hold a further mass picket in Church Street last Saturday, which took place without incident. Leaflets were distributed calling for an end to the harassment of anti-fascists and black people and a campaign to keep the fascists off the streets and out of the communities and workplaces.

### The ovens next time?

**MEMBERS** of the Loughton, Chigwell and District Synagogue in Essex left the Yom Kippur service last month to be confronted by a group of National Front supporters handing out leaflets at the gates of the synagogue.

Fights broke out between some members of the congregation and the fascists, who also threw eggs at synagogue members. When the NF group eventually left, they threatened to return to cause further trouble.

The campaign of the Jewish Board of Deputies against the ANL has led to a vigorous debate in the columns of the Jewish Chronicle. Much of the weekly journal's one-page letter column has been taken up with pro- and anti-League views.



**ANTI RACIST ANTI FASCIST ANTI NAZI CALENDAR 1979**

1979 Anti-Racist Anti-Fascist Anti-Nazi Calendar. 13 stunning poster-size prints — 17ins by 24ins — on historical, international, and contemporary anti-fascist and anti-racist themes.

Posters include: George Grosz's cartoon 'The White General' Heartfield photomontage, Spanish civil war, Nazi holocaust, Soweto, NF, and more!

Get yours now. £1.50 [plus 36p p&p]. Ten or more copies, £1 post free. Rush your order to: SC Calendars, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Cheques to 'The Week'.

## Against racism—students line up

**ABOUT 200** students, representing student unions, SCAN groups and anti-racist committees, attended the first national conference of the Student Campaign Against the Nazis last Saturday.

Perhaps the most significant decision was to adopt a 'Plan of Action'. Put forward by the Socialist Students Alliance, and supported by all but a handful of the conference, the plan takes up the following areas:

- ★ To oppose all discrimination against overseas students,

and support the demonstration in Manchester called by the NUS to oppose the imposition of tuition fees of £1,502 on overseas students for 'O' and 'A' level courses.

★ To organise with NUS a national conference on racism in education. NUS President Trevor Phillips said that NUS would seek to involve the teaching unions and school students in the conference.

- ★ To take up racism in course content and teaching methods.
- ★ To campaign for student

unions to open up their facilities to all those fighting racism and fascism.

★ To participate in enquiries into harassment and to support defence campaigns like that in Wolverhampton.

★ To organise regional indoor carnivals throughout the winter, using student union facilities and open to all those who are prepared to build them.

If these proposals are acted upon it will be a big step forward for the anti-racist and anti-fascist movement.

# Building a Social

CALLAGHAN has thrown down a political gauntlet — 'How else do you propose to fight inflation and overcome the economic crisis, what alternative is there to a Labour government?'

The TUC has no credible response to these arguments, since despite talk of price control they accept Callaghan's framework. Despite 'differences of opinion' over the 5 per cent limit, talks on economic strategy continue with the government, without a murmur of dissent from the 'left' in the General Council, and the 'unity of objectives' in wanting the return of a Labour

government over-rides all other considerations.

These political obstacles, in the absence of any credible alternative from the left, are preventing a generalised fightback on a national scale.

The problem is not primarily union and shop floor organisation. The numerous local and sectional struggles (such as toolmakers and parity claims, the social workers' disputes), indicate both the ability and willingness of the rank and file to launch a fightback — while trying to avoid the political problems encountered when confront-

ing the Labour government's policies head on.

While we have seen a rise in full-time convenorships, shop stewards' organisation remains intact. Again it has been the ability of the trade union leaders to involve a section of the shop stewards in their political projects, rather than through a defeat of stewards organisation, which has been the main obstacle to a fightback.

Participation in Leyland has politically incorporated the stewards' leadership into management's plans, but failed as yet to undermine stewards

organisation.

Most significant of all was the Engineering Union's climbdown over SU Carburettors, showing that, despite Duffy's political victory in the union elections, he has not been able to break the independence of rank and file organisation in the workplaces.

Thus the main problem is not rebuilding rank and file union organisation as the SWP suggest.

That's why the TUC could not simply accept Callaghan's ultimatum that there must be a 5 per cent limit. 'For us to collaborate with you' they are saying,

'you must collaborate with us — give us something we can sell to our members.'

The significance of the Ford strike should not be under-estimated. Faced with a rank and file walk-out the union officials quickly made it official, to try and regain some control over the situation.

The strike forced them to cast block votes against the government at Labour Party Conference, and prevents them going along with Sidney Weighalls calls to recall the Congress and back the government.

## Scargill interviewed

How do you think the Government was able to get away with Phase 3?

It's not surprising in the sense that we're living in a system where the whole might of the media is directed towards convincing people that if they adopt anything other than Government policy it spells doom and disaster — economically speaking — for them.

But it's also aided, inevitably, by the TUC's collaboration with the Government's policies, and more importantly by the collaboration tactics of the individual trade union leaders.

This has the effect of depressing the whole movement and suppressing any action that rank and file workers may take on their own initiative to bring about fundamental changes in wages and conditions.

At the same time, of course, one should remember they've also had to have a lot of phoney deals and they've had to make separate agreements, including the one with the miners, which has given a number of mine-workers a lot of money and a large number of mineworkers very little money.

In an interview I did with you a year ago, you confidently predicted that the first part of the fightback would be a struggle by the miners and that you saw this as the way to roll back the Government's offensive.

You referred to the part played by the miners in the struggle against the Tories in 1972 and 1974 as an indication of what would happen over this past year.

What balance sheet would you make of your forecast and how would you assess where we are at now?

Quite simple. If you look back at the earlier interview, I think that under the circumstances I was absolutely right.

What happened was that the mine-workers went on record — in fact were already on record — as wanting £135 per week, which would have had the effect of smashing to smithereens the incomes policy and the whole Social Contract.

Second, that the miners in a democratic ballot some two and a half months after that interview effectively defeated the whole concept of an incentive scheme and demanded a reiteration of the claim for £135.

I don't think that you or I or anyone else could have predicted that the NUM executive for the very first time in its history could completely violate the rules and constitution of the union.

That it would ignore all conference decisions and procedures, and ignore every precedent set in the union, allowing their members, with the active support of the Coal Board, to introduce their own incentive scheme and thus circumvent the conference decisions and individual ballot decision which had democratically defined the union's policy.

The projections that I made were absolutely correct. It was only when the NUM executive ignored its constitution, and when the legal system came to its assistance, that it was able to divert the NUM away from a head-on collision with the Government and its incomes policy.

How can such manoeuvres be prevented in the future?

First, the fight for union democracy is now paramount. You can forget wages resolutions in the NUM because it's quite clear that the establishment-oriented leadership of the NUM and the totally collaborationist TUC General Council will go their own way and support Government policy.

Rank and file action is needed. You've got to have action on the scale of the 1969 unofficial mineworkers' strike.

I'm convinced that we'll now have a spate of unofficial action in the mining industry and in other industries that will bring about a change of policy as far as the Social Contract and incomes policy is concerned. If it doesn't, then obviously I'm wrong.

When that struggle takes place is really immaterial — it will come about.

Miners, trade unionists in general, can be persuaded to vote for certain policies that will be harmful to them. But there comes a time when you can't fool all the people all of the time...and I think that that time is rapidly approaching.

We've already seen the example of spontaneous unofficial strike action in the coalmining industry over a whole number of issues and this points the way to the future.

The question is whether this response will be fragmented — individual strikes here and there over particular productivity schemes — or a concerted and organised response led by people like yourself in a fight against the offensive of the employers and the Government and for new policies and new leadership for the labour movement.

Your position is completely contradictory. You cannot have the kind of spontaneous unofficial action that I am predicting will happen — I am not saying that we're encouraging it, but that it will happen — and at the same time have the kind of organised opposition which would not be unofficial.

The thing is a contradiction in terms.

I agree with you that the NUM is not separate from the rest of the trade union movement — it is an integral part of it. We have suffered the same attacks as the rest of the movement.

But in the face of this situation, I am trying to suggest that there will be individual actions. I'm sorry, but I don't agree with you that you will get the kind of co-ordinated action on those issues.

There is fragmented opposition, but among wide sections of the labour movement there is acceptance to a degree of the argument that the answer to the crisis is 'national unity' and the like — all the political arguments of the Labour Government, including such things as the pre-eminent need to keep out the Tories and so on.

The fragmentation that exists can only be overcome by developing an effective opposition to all the policies that Callaghan and the leadership of the TUC have offered.



'I don't want it to go in Socialist Challenge that Scargill says: "Erect a leadership which is alternative to that which already exists".'

Such an opposition is needed both to fight against the right wing and for alternative policies and leadership for the labour movement and to promote and organise support for struggles of workers here and now in defence of their interests.

It's an ideal concept to weld together all the various groupings that exist within the labour movement into a central campaign against Government policy. The theory of that is absolutely correct. The practicality of doing it is a little bit more difficult.

You can't even get unity within Yorkshire on central wages questions.

All I'm saying is that there is now a period of consolidation to be done: there has to be a complete challenge to the bureaucracy within the union. An alternative leadership has to be built up at all levels to the right-wing domination that exists in the union and this comes back again to the democracy question.

An issue will emerge which will appear on the surface to be totally innocuous — maybe connected with some miners dismissed from a pit as they were last week — or with the demand for a shorter working week, or for higher pay — but then an absolutely clear political situation will develop and take on the whole of Government policy.

I'm very interested in this alternative leadership that you say needs to be constructed, presumably for the labour movement as a whole and also in the NUM

I don't want it going into Socialist Challenge that Scargill says: 'Erect a leadership which is alternative to that which already exists'. I'm talking about a leadership being created which will be ready to replace the present leadership when that leadership goes.

I'm not talking about a caucus within because that would tend, in my opinion, to even further fragment the trade union movement and that would be disastrous.

What I'm talking about is a leadership emerging within the mining industry to replace those leaders of the right when they leave the arena.

Whether they leave or they're pushed, what would you say the central policies of this new leadership would be?

The central policies have got to be complete democracy within the union; unity in action on all issues of the day, including wages, shorter working week, working conditions and the rest of it; against the Social Contract.

What I'd like to add is that there does of course exist within the NUM and within the labour movement as a whole both right-wing and left-wing organisations, and so the process is in fact already in operation.

There are a lot of people who are of like mind who see the problem and see their responsibilities for coming against the policies of the right in a positive way.

We must be realistic and understand that unity will only come about if we are able to mobilise on issues that will generate mass support in our own unions and within the labour

movement as a whole.

As regards the policies of a new leadership, I think it's important to clarify what we mean. There's a danger that it means an alternative leadership now — a splinter group. What I think we need is an alternative strategy, with people who are members of the labour movement supporting that policy...

And organised around it?

And organised around it, yes. But that doesn't mean you're an independent organisation set up either within or outside of the labour and trade union movement; you are part of the labour and trade union movement.

And I think it would be a contradiction in terms to set up an organisation which would be a departure from the labour and trade union movement. What we've got to do is to challenge the very policies that now exist with socialist policies.

I'm convinced that in the long term we can transform the whole outlook of the Labour Party and of the trade union movement. When this will come about, I don't know. Maybe we'll be discussing this in ten years in Socialist Challenge.

By the way, I am certain that the Labour Government will lose the next election. As certain as night follows day. I can't see for the life of me any one among the 1.6 million unemployed, their husbands and wives and offspring voting for a Government that has increased unemployment by a million

Next week: Arthur Scargill on women's rights.



# Socialist Opposition

But we shouldn't over-estimate what means. It does not signal a return to the ages offensive we saw in 1972-4. Ford workers the political obstacles to struggle did not seem so great. Ford was making massive profits; they are well organised; and if the TUC are not with them at least they weren't only against them. Other workers need far more convincing that it is possible to win. It's why the Communist Party call 'ever widening militant action', for its policies, fails to answer the major problem.

Rebuilding the left is the decisive task confronting socialists in the unions.

An organised left wing, far from being divisive, would greatly strengthen the unions, by allowing a clear alternative strategy to meet the crisis to be presented to all the union membership.

It is essential to show that a Tory government is not the only alternative to Callaghan — that instead the five percenters must be removed from leadership at all levels of the labour movement.

This does not mean that workers'

struggles must wait until the left has been rebuilt into a credible alternative leadership. On the contrary, the Ford strike has done more to defeat the 5 per cent limit and strengthen the left than any resolution to the TUC.

But an organised left wing can be vital to the success of these struggles. In the Ford strike, one of the greatest dangers is that the absence of mass meetings and democratic involvement of the rank and file will allow a sell-out deal to be recommended.

That's why a consistent fight by the left-wing militants in Ford for regular

mass meetings and the recall of the Coventry stewards' conference is so important.

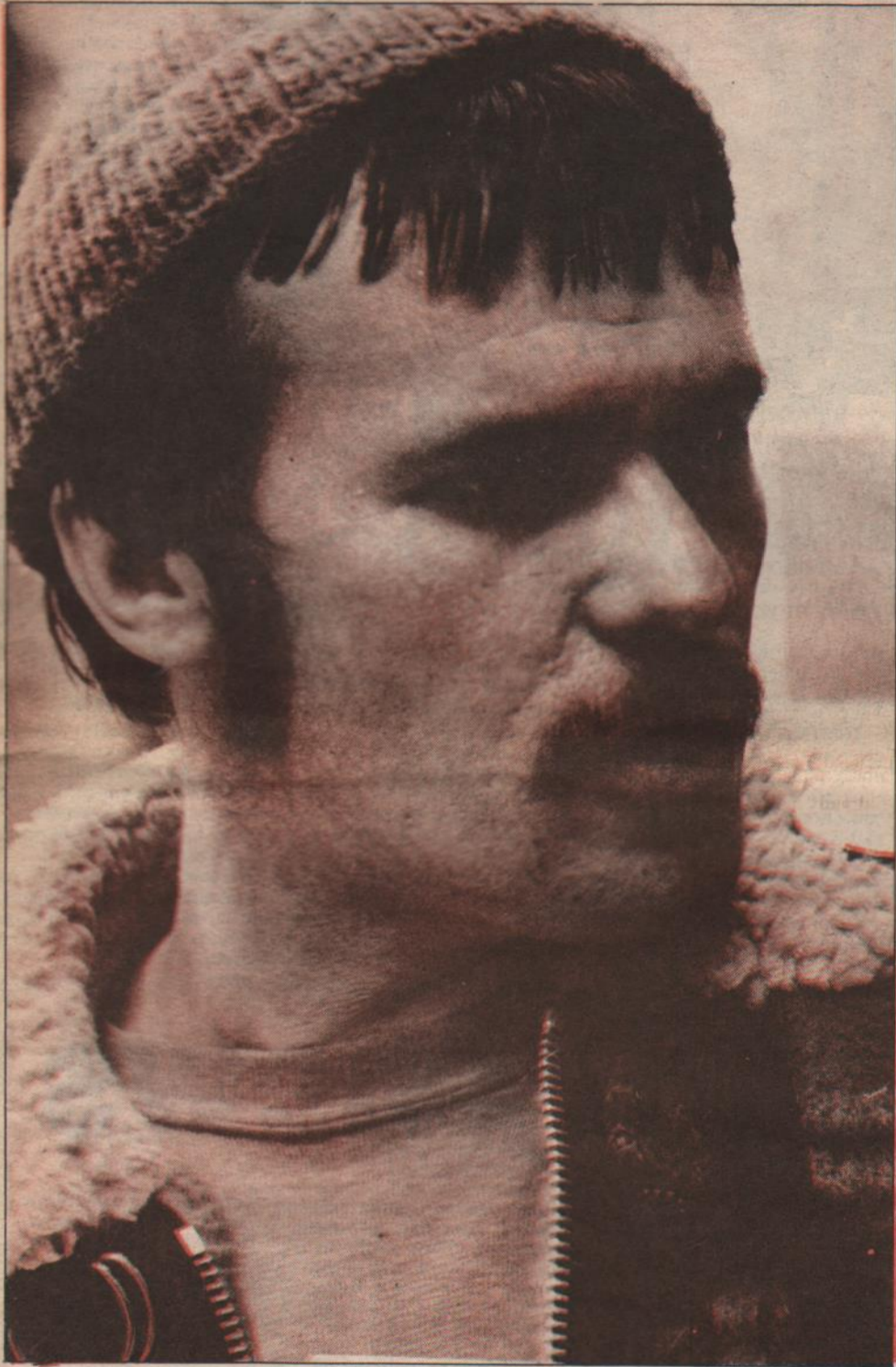
Only by building an organised left to fight amongst the rank and file, and in the stewards' committees, can blatant attacks on union democracy be defeated.

Most important of all at the moment is the need to organise the left on a cross union basis, to fight for a united offensive by all workers with claims in.

A democratic conference organised by the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, and the Rank

and File National Council, would be a major step towards rebuilding the left.

The fight to break off talks with the government and to launch a united struggle by all workers now with claims in, for the 35 hour week and nationalisation of all firms creating redundancy to tackle unemployment, the fight for the removal of Callaghan, and all the other five percenters, from the leadership of the labour movement — these can only be tackled by rebuilding a united democratic left wing that offers a socialist alternative to Callaghan.



## Ford Workers' Group

# Building a movement independent of the leaders

**GERRY WALSH** works at Ford Dagenham and is in the Engineering Union. From 1967 to 1976 he was a member of the SWP and the former International Socialists.

He talks about the left-wing grouping, the Ford Workers' Group, and its relevance in rebuilding the left in the unions and in industry.

The Group is particularly important for me as someone who's not in any political organisation. It has been able to unite militants from a number of different political organisations and those not in any.

The Group is completely independent and self-financing. We have always stressed that it's up to Ford workers themselves to organise.

This contrasts sharply with the recent history of rank and file organisations which have been little more than the industrial arm of an individual political group.

The Ford Workers' Group fills a vacuum which has developed through the bureaucratisation of the unions and the official union structures. In my union there is little life in the official structures while 'Broad Leftism' did nothing to generate rank and file involvement.

This has left a real gap between the rank and file and the officials. In this dispute, for instance, there was next to no contact between the national negotiators and the rank and file leading up to the strike.

In my plant a leaflet was produced by the convenors, but we were on strike before we saw it! It was left to the Group — then called the Ford Workers' Combine — to produce the leaflets and badges necessary to prepare the claim and the ensuing struggle.

We are trying to build a movement which is independent of the leaders. This means

supporting the union leaders as long as they represent the interests of the members, but being prepared to act independently of them if and when they don't.

Our independence is also political. This means presenting both an alternative way of fighting and an alternative in what we're fighting for. We've got to show that workers are not responsible for inflation, unemployment and so on.

For instance, if things continue as they are there will be next to no jobs in the motor industry. It's not just Ford that's at stake here. British Leyland and Chrysler are being carved up.

We've got to advance a socialist alternative — a workers' plan — for the motor industry.

### DIVIDING

We must also take up the question of women's oppression. In two important disputes in the motor industry — first at Cowley and now in this strike — there has been an attempt to weaken the strike by dividing wives from husbands. The Group invites wives and girlfriends of members to participate in its meetings.

Racism's another crucial question, especially in a multi-racial factory like at Dagenham.

We've still to build a genuine rank and file movement which can fight around such issues — either in Ford or outside. It's

going to be a slow process.

I know only of the Ford Workers' Group and a similar organisation in the building industry around a paper called **Building Worker**. I think we'll see similar developments across industry and unions. We seek to encourage these developments, to link up with them and with any similar developments within the motor industry.

I don't think the Rank and File Organising Committee or the Right to Work Campaign can play a big role in this. Certainly they have helped the Group in getting off the ground. And that's been really useful.

But in reality it is little more than the industrial arm of the SWP, and it continually claims to be stronger than it is.

This is not to say that the industrial workers around the Rank and File Organising Committee don't have a very important role to play in building such a movement. On the contrary. And SWP members at Ford's have played an active role in building the Ford Workers' Group.

We don't exclude unity with the Broad Left in building the movement on principle but it is difficult to win such united action in practice. The effect of Broad Left politics in the early 70s has been one of decay. We're continually having to fight them over the issue of democracy.

Rank and file politics has nothing to do with Broad Left politics.

Photo: BOB MURPHY (Socialist Challenge)

## WHAT NEXT IN THE UNIONS?

One day trade union conference organised by Socialist Challenge supporters in Yorkshire to discuss the problems of organising the fightback.

- ★ The way forward for socialists in the unions
- ★ The lessons of Rank & File and the Broad Left

Agenda: 10.30 to 11am Coffee and registration. 11am to 12.30pm Introduction and short talks on: Broad Left, Minority Movement, Rank & File. Lunch. 1.30 to 3.30pm Workshops on: 35-hour week; Sliding scale; Equal pay and sexism in the unions; Fighting the cuts; Fighting racism in the workplace. 3.30 to 4.30pm, Summing up and discussion. Supper and party later in the evening.

Saturday, 11 November  
Swarthmore Centre, 4 Woodhouse Square, Leeds 3

Child care and accommodation available—contact Leeds 629631 first



## Sinn Fein conference

# Breaking the stalemate

ON 21/22 OCTOBER Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Provisional Republican Movement, held its annual Ard Fheis [conference] in Dublin.

**GEOFF BELL** reports on the two days of debate and discussion.

Michael Pablo, a former leader of the Fourth International, stood on the platform and told the Ard Fheis:

'I have followed your struggle for many years. I think the struggle is near to victory. You must be confident, confident of a very real and complete victory.'

Pablo was giving greetings to the Ard Fheis as a veteran anti-imperialist and 'on behalf of my wife and myself'.

His presence in Dublin, as well as, more importantly, the greetings read out from SWAPO, showed the progress Sinn Fein has made in the last few years in its attempts to establish international links — links which have been one of the causes of the general leftward shift in its politics.

Nevertheless, the leaders of Sinn Fein are aware that predictions of imminent victory need to be treated with caution. As newly elected vice-president Gerry Adams told *Socialist Challenge*:

'The present situation is one of almost stalemate. Since 1975 the British Government has been intensifying its efforts to split the Republican movement from the base of its support.'

'The last 18 months have shown that they have failed, the Republican movement and Sinn Fein have survived and remain strong. This stalemate situation could continue for the foreseeable future unless the British people mobilise behind the demand for disengagement.'

'Until this is done I believe that we will have a continuation of the last ten years.'

During those last ten years the Provisionals have offered a more steadfast resistance than any to another British imposed solution of the 'Irish problem'. Specifically, it is the guns and bombs of the Provisional IRA

which have denied British imperialism its victory.

But as the Sinn Fein leaders themselves realise, guns and bombs are not enough. As Gerry Adams put it in a speech to the Ard Fheis:

'We have the situation where the IRA has proved it can resist the British war machine. We in Sinn Fein need to prove we can provide a political alternative.'

The successful implementation of our socialist policies and the withdrawal of the Brits will prove we have that alternative.'

It was understandable that in a conference which only lasted two days the exact nature of these 'socialist policies' did not clearly emerge.

Indeed, in a crowded agenda only half an hour was allotted to what was described as 'community involvement and social issues', and in the debate itself the emphasis which emerged was on 'self-governing communities'.

### EVOLVE

But there were indications that Sinn Fein is attempting to evolve a more detailed overall political programme.

The decision of the Ard Fheis to appoint a spokesperson on trade union affairs was one example, as was one of the major decisions of the conference — to strongly contest the local government elections which will be held in the South next year.

But the most contentious debate of the Ard Fheis was on a motion which stated: 'While recognising that our struggle is against British rule in Ireland, Sinn Fein welcomes open discussions with Loyalist people on the principles of a British withdrawal from Ireland, national self-determination for the whole people of Ireland, and



**MICHEL PABLO**, a former leader of the Fourth International, addressing the Ard Fheis: 'You must be confident of a very real and complete victory.'

a general amnesty for all political prisoners.'

There was confusion in the Ard Fheis as to what exactly this motion meant. Proposing it on behalf of the executive, Daithi O Conaill simply argued the need to keep 'an open mind and open door'.

It was an argument which did not impress the Belfast delegates. With a good deal of reality, Danny Morrison from *Republican News* pointed out:

'If you sit down at a table with Loyalists and start by saying

you are against their idea of a six counties independent Northern Ireland, how far will you get? They will leave the room.'

Tom Hartley, another Belfast delegate, argued: 'Loyalism divides our people, stands for emigration, bad housing, no education and the gerrymander. Loyalism stands for the division of the Irish people. Republicanism stands for the unity of the Irish people.'

Despite this opposition the motion on Loyalist talks was agreed, although the assurances

the executive gave on any such talks — that no compromise of Republican ideals would be involved — did help to placate the delegates.

Nevertheless the danger of 'negotiating' with such right-wing gangster outfits as the Ulster Volunteer Force remains one of which Sinn Fein needs to be very aware.

The motion on Loyalist talks was the one significant defeat for the left wing of Sinn Fein during an Ard Fheis which in general represented a consoli-

dation of their position.

But large gaps in what exactly Sinn Fein stands for in certain social and economic fields remain to be filled. Most noticeable was the lack of any resolutions on women's oppression.

This was all the more surprising in that the South of Ireland is at the moment experiencing a real and significant growth of activity on such issues as rape and contraception. The recent 6,000 strong anti-rape demonstration in Dublin is the most graphic example.

However, at least a high proportion of those attending the Ard Fheis were women.

But the real test of Sinn Fein in the coming months is how effectively it can present a fully fledged socialist alternative in the run-up to the Southern local elections.

The old suspicion — that the party is very much subservient to the armed wing — remains despite the executive's obvious determination to present Sinn Fein as a real political alternative.

Most revolutionaries in Ireland today accept that the relationship between the armed struggle, the mass protests, and the hammering out of detailed socialist policies is a relationship which is difficult to work out and to get right.

It cannot be solved by meaningless clichés or slogans, and at least the latest Ard Fheis of Sinn Fein did not pretend that it could.

photo: DEREK SPEIRS (JFL)

# Solidarity news

### Glasgow demo

ON 18 November the Irish Defence League will once again be marching through the streets of the East End of Glasgow calling for prisoner of war status for Irish political prisoners and for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.

Among those supporting the march are Glasgow Sinn Fein, the Socialist Workers Party, and the International Marxist Group.

Brendan Gallagher, father of Willie Gallagher, will speak in the afternoon at a rally organised by the local United Troops Out Movement in solidarity with the demonstration.

The demonstration is particularly important in view of the attacks made on Irish solidarity activity by the labour bureaucracy in Scotland.

After hearing of Edinburgh Trades Council's support for the 9 July London demonstration on Irish prisoners, and its vote to organise a campaign for political status for such prisoners, the Glasgow-based Scottish TUC began to wield the big stick.

The STUC, dominated by the Communist Party-controlled Broad Left, informed the trades council that the STUC and the leadership of the big Scottish unions were not in favour of

Irish issues being raised. The 18 November demonstration aims to provide an effective reply to such intimidation.

### Gallagher tour

As well as speaking in Glasgow Brendan Gallagher will be touring the country in November raising the issue of his son — who featured in the *Legion Hall Bombing* TV play censored by the BBC — and all other Irish political prisoners.

Tour dates include: 14 Nov., Manchester; 15 Nov., Liverpool; 16 Nov., Newcastle; 17 & 18 Nov., Glasgow; 20 Nov., Leeds; 21 Nov., Barnsley; 22 Nov., Sheffield; 23 Nov., Kilburn, London; 24 Nov., Acton, West London.

### Brennan v Farrell

THE Socialist Society at Imperial College, London has succeeded in organising what promises to be a most lively exchange of views on 19 November.

Irene Brennan from the National Executive of the Communist Party will be debating Michael Farrell of the Peoples Democracy/Movement for a Socialist Republic on 'Ireland — the left's position'.

Given the Communist Party's reluctance to speak out on the key issues in Ireland — political prisoners and 'troops out' — this promises to be an occasion not to be missed.

The debate is open to all and will take place at Imperial College, Room 213 [Maths], Huxley Building, Queens Gate, SW7 at 7.30pm.

### Terror Act

THE Merseyside branch of the United Troops Out Movement has recently printed a new pamphlet on the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Explaining the importance of the pamphlet, a spokesperson for Merseyside UTOM said:

'Merseyside is at the top of the league of shame with the biggest

total of arrests under the Terror Act, averaging nearly one a day.'

'The detentions and questioning under the Act are not seriously concerned with the "detection of terrorists" but with discouraging people from the North of Ireland and Britain from visiting each other's country in the pursuit of open and legitimate ends.'

The pamphlet concentrates on how the PTA has been used on Merseyside and costs 15p plus 7p postage. Available from UTOM, c/o 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool 1.

### Birmingham

A MIDLANDS conference on 'Britain's involvement in Ireland' is being held on Saturday 11 November at Friends Meeting House, Bull St., Birmingham 4.

Three local MPs are among the host of sponsors for the conference, and speakers include Michael Farrell, Bart Milner of the NCCL, and representatives of the Belfast Relatives Action Committee, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, and the United Troops Out Movement.

The conference is open to individuals and delegates and there is an admission price of 50p. For more details contact the Planning Committee, 65 Woodville Rd, Birmingham 14 [tel 021-773 8683].



**DANNY MORRISON**, Republican News: 'If you sit down with Loyalists and say you're against their idea of an independent Northern Ireland...they'll leave the room.'

photo: DEREK SPEIRS (JFL)

# INTERNATIONAL

## Solidarity still needed

# Kaunda buttered up with guns

A FEW planeloads of guns for Zambia is all that is needed to show commitment to black rule in southern Africa, writes RICHARD CARVER.

At least that is what the British government hopes as it makes this vain attempt to restore its rather mucky international image.

But there's also a more sinister side to the Zambia deal. Doctor Death at the Foreign Office hopes that this will accustom southern Africa to the sight of British arms in action.

Last week's reassurance that Britain would not send troops to Zimbabwe was hardly very comforting either.

The effect of the statement was blunted by the insertion of the word 'unilaterally'. In other words Britain would not send troops on its own.

But if somebody else was

involved (like the United Nations)... well, that would be a different matter.

This means that the southern African solidarity movement in Britain should still have a campaign of resistance to British military intervention in Zimbabwe as its top priority.

A good chance to discuss and organise such a campaign will be the Manchester Anti-Apartheid conference, sponsored by the North-West TUC, on 11 November.

The conference is open to all sorts of organisations, but it is particularly aimed at trade unionists and youth.

One of the things Socialist Challenge supporters will be arguing for is the establishment of an informal network to link militants working on southern Africa in the unions.

Take the ICL case detailed on this page. It would be a waste if



the gains and lessons of that campaign were to be spread no further than the readership of the left press.

Such a network would ensure that the ICL story — and a host of similar experiences — were not lost.

A similar type of information network is needed in the solidarity movement as a whole to overcome the situation where the Anti-Apartheid Movement centrally has the whole movement sewn up, breeding a sectarian attitude towards united action both inside and outside its ranks.

Above all we will be arguing for the conference to take up the case of the 11 Soweto student leaders on trial in South Africa for their alleged part in the 1976 uprising.

The threat posed by these prosecutions should be self-evident. Yet, unbelievable as it

may seem, nobody turned up when Soweto leader Barney Mokgatle called a meeting in London recently to set up defence activity.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement has organised dramatic and extensive events in defence of Solomon Mahlangu, the African National Congress militant currently facing the death sentence. This is excellent.

If the Manchester conference takes a lead perhaps we can persuade them to show similar enthusiasm in defence of these leaders of the mass movement.

For details of the conference, contact: Manchester AAM 59 Tintern Avenue, Manchester M20 8ND.

Venue: Abrahams Moss Centre, Crumpsall, Manchester. Saturday 11 November, 10-6.

## Challenge to ICL-Smith African deal

# Unions program out racism

REPRESENTATIVES of the 9,000 trade union members employed by International Computers Limited met the company on Monday to protest about its links with the South African state, reports ANDY BLUNDELL, secretary of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs at ICL's West Gorton, Manchester factory.

The meeting was a result of opposition at all ICL's major sites to the company's decision to supply the South African police with new computers to administer the notorious pass laws.

When we discovered — through a report in the *Sunday Times* in August — that the company had taken this order, ASTMS and AUEW-TASS branches and groups passed resolutions ranging from requests for the company to 'reconsider' its decision to a call for joint action with other unions against the deal.

### REFUSAL

In line with this the ASTMS national official wrote to the company seeking a national level meeting. TASS members at the company's Putney headquarters have stated their refusal to work on any projects for ICL's South African subsidiary.

But the company was able to

delay the meeting for two months. Without, as far as we knew, any machines being built for the police, local stewards felt unable to force the pace.

### IMPRESSED

Meanwhile the company, no doubt impressed by the oil companies' 'swap' arrangements, was organising the delivery of two 2960 computers built, according to the name boards above them in the Winsford factory, for a commercial organisation in South Africa.

But if the company is feeling smug at this manoeuvre, it has misjudged several factors.

The first is the effect of the campaign against the order in building up a network of activists at rank and file level and on an inter-union basis who certainly do not see this as the end of the matter.

Secondly, the campaign has started a political debate and an

awareness of the company's South African involvement among the mass of the work force on many sites.

Some members felt we should oppose this particular order but not ICL's wider involvement in South Africa. Their reaction has now been to ask why this order was so important to the company that it resorted to this type of action.

This gives us the opportunity to explain the extent of the company's South African connections and the direct way in which its £40m sales, both to the state and private sector, depend on the exploitation and repression of the black population.

### DEVELOP

From this we can go on to explain the broader links between British capitalism and apartheid — and indeed racism in this country.

In order to do this effectively we will need to develop our own knowledge and understanding of ICL's South African operations.

In other words, using the resources of our unions and sympathetic sections of the labour and socialist movement

we will need to launch our own inquiry — a workers' inquiry — into ICL's links with the South African state and other capitalists involved in the exploitation and oppression of black South Africans.

### REJECTED

The campaign has raised much broader questions of our right to control how the technology we have developed is used.

Our members have rejected, in practice if not consciously, the idea that the product of our labour belongs purely to the employers, asserting a right to veto sales that are against our interests and wishes.

It has also highlighted the need for social control of new technology. Probably very few computer workers still see computers bringing about the technological paradise envisaged in the 1960s...

### BOLSTER

But this issue brings home the fact that the technology which does indeed make rational economic planning more practicable is just as capable of being used to bolster the most oppressive capitalist regimes.



## Intercontinental Press combined with Inprecor

AN interview with black South African trade union leader Drake Koka and analysis of the economic crisis in Iran are major features of this week's Intercontinental Press/Inprecor [Vol 16, No 41].

Single copies are 30p plus p&p, but why not take advantage of the favourable

subscription rates: £9 for one year (48 issues), £5 for six months (24 issues), or £2.50 for an introductory offer of 10 issues.

Write now to Intercontinental Press/Inprecor PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. All cheques/POs should be made out to Intercontinental Press.

## WHAT'S LEFT

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

### WOMEN, THE FAMILY AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT.

A series of meetings organised by Tyndale Socialist Centre.

Mon 13 Nov: Children — future labour force, future labour movement? Speakers: Brian Haadlow, ex Tyndale School, two women from Leeds involved in alternative forms of childcare.

Mon 4 Dec: Towards a socialist way of living. Speaker: Sheila Rowbotham.

The meetings will all take place at 7.30pm at Tyndale Cinema (rooms upstairs), 10/12 Pilgrim St.

### THE NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN

needs a new office worker to coordinate the campaign's work, run the office, organise activities, demos, etc. Office experience useful, commitment to women's liberation essential. Hours 10-5 with some evening and weekend meetings. Salary approx £160 per month after tax. Please apply in writing giving previous work and other experience to: NAC, 30 Camden Rd, London NW1.

NEWSREEL FILM 'Divide and Rule — Never!' just out. Showings by Revolution in Scotland, 9-11 November. Film available from: Other Cinema Distribution, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2. Tel 01-734 8508/9. Or from: Concord Films, Nacton, Ipswich, Suffolk. Tel 0473 76012. Hire fee £15.

PICKET GARNERS: Main pickets every day, noon to 3pm and 5.30 to 11 pm at 399 Oxford St., London W1 (opp. Selfridges); 243 Oxford St. (Oxford Circus); 40-41 Haymarket; 56 Whitcombe St. (Leicester Sq.). Mass picket every Saturday at noon, 399 Oxford St. Donations urgently needed as strike pay is only £6. All donations to: Garners Strike Fund, c/o TGWU, Rm 84, 12-13 Henrietta St., London WC2. Tel: 01-2893877.

LEICESTER National Abortion Campaign demonstration for a woman's right to choose. Sat 4 Nov, 2pm, assemble Victoria Park, Leicester.

ALL LAMBETH anti-racist movement conference on 4 Nov, 11am to 5pm. Clapham Town Community Project, Venn St, London SW4. How to fight racism in Lambeth, future campaigns.

BLACK SOCIALIST Alliance desperately needs money. Here to stay, here to fight social, Afro/Asian food, bar, disco etc. Adm 75p (50p wageless). Fri 10 Nov 8pm, Institute of Education SU, Bedford Way, London WC1. All welcome.

HOLDING a meeting or conference on a social issue? New Society has a free listings information service. Details to arrive by the Wed. of the week before publication, to: Listings Editor, New Society, 30 Southampton St, London WC2.

ANTI-RECRUITMENT film 'Home Soldier Home' will be shown in Manchester on Weds 8 Nov, 7.30pm at The Squat, Devas St (off Oxford Rd). Organised by UTO, Manchester Area NUS, STA, NUSS, Anti-recruitment Campaign. For details tel. 2735947.

TOWER Hamlets week of action against apartheid. Thurs 2 Nov, Barclays picket, 4.30pm to 6pm, 568 Mile End Rd. Fri 3 Nov, Sainsbury's picket, 5 to 8pm, Watney Market E1. Sat 4 Nov, Anti-Apartheid Cabaret, Queen Mary College, Bancroft Rd E1, 8pm till late. Broadside Mobile Workers' Theatre, poets, dance, disco, bar. Adm: £1.

OCCUPATIONS. Criminal Trespass and the use of the law — CACTL national conference, Sat 11 Nov, Conway Hall, London WC1. Credentials: £2 (claimants £1). Details from: CACTL c/o 35 Wellington St, London WC2 Tel: 01-2893877.

COMRADE from an African country (political refugee) desperately needs own room to rent in London. Contact: Richard Carver at SC. 01-359 8180 (office hours and Sundays) or Jon 01-986 4045 (evenings).

MARXISM and Economics: an explanation of the economic nature of capitalism and its inherent class antagonism. Third in a series of ten meetings organised by the Socialist Party of Great Britain at The Roebuck, Tottenham Court Rd, London W1. Sun 5 Nov 7.30pm. Questions and discussion. All welcome.

BILL NORRIS (CPGB) opens a discussion on 'The British Road to Socialism' at a meeting organised by the Socialist Party of Great Britain, Islington Branch. Extensive period of questions and discussion. Mon 6 Nov, 8pm, at Islington Information and Advice Centre, Highbury Corner, London N1. All welcome.

ARE THE unions running the country? Socialist Party of Great Britain meeting. Monday 13 Nov, 8pm, at Islington Information and Advice Centre, Highbury Corner, London N1. Questions and discussions. All welcome.

INSTITUTE of Race Relations public meeting. Tues 7 Nov 6.30pm. The South East Asian Kaleidoscope, discussion to be led by Malcolm Caldwell, lecturer at SOAS. At IRR, 247/249 Pentonville Rd, London N1.

WATFORD Anti Nazi League public meeting with Bill Keys (SOGAT) and Miriam Karlin. Mon 6 Nov, 8pm, at the Public Library.

CONFERENCE on 'Value theory and contemporary capitalism'. 3, 4 and 5 Nov. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1 (3 Nov). Middlesex Hosp. Medical School, Arthur Lewis Theatre, Cleveland St, London N1 (4 and 5 Nov). Sponsored by: NLR, Cambridge Journal of Economics and Conference of Socialist Economists. Advance registration: £5 to NLRE (economics conference), 15 Greek St, London W1.

PICKET the US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London W1, at 3pm, Sat 4 Nov. Against the Senator Briggs proposed amendment outlawing gay teachers in California. Called by the Gay Activists Alliance.

CARIBBEAN Labour Solidarity still needs money to send a delegate to Jamaica. Fund-raising social, 11 November, at 68 Rannoch Road, W6. 8 till late. Adm £1 (includes food).

FRANTZ FANON. Soweto and American Black Thought by Lou Turner and John Alan, 60p (inc p&p). Also 'Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis' by Raya Dunayevskaya, £1. Both from News & Letters Publications, Box NL, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

HUDDERSFIELD Revolutionary Communist Group public meeting: 'POW Status for Irish Prisoners!' Speakers from Prisoners Aid Committee and RCG. Thursday 9 November, 7.30pm, Friendly and Trades Club, Northumberland Street.

MANCHESTER Revolutionary Communist Group public meeting: 'POW Status for Irish Prisoners!' Speakers from Prisoners Aid Committee and RCG. Friday 10 November, 7.30pm, Basement Theatre, Town Hall Extension, Albert Square.

SHEFFIELD Big Flame/SWP joint meeting on lessons of Ford's. Speakers from Ford Combine and NUPE. Weds 8 Nov, 7.30pm, 'Station', Wicker.

POLITICS Can Be Fun! National Communist Party Student Festival, Saturday 11 November, registration 10am. North London Poly, Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove, London N5. Workshops / debates / roundtables / films / games / Turkish food / stalls / creche. And in the evening: Rock Island Line and disco. Late bar. Day & evening, £1.50; evening only, £1.

SPEAKING TOUR by Claude Gabriel, a leader of the Fourth International Africa Commission and a regular contributor to Intercontinental Press and Inprecor. The meetings will be on the theme of current revolutionary developments in Africa.

Tuesday 7 November: EDINBURGH, University Union, 12.30pm. NEWCASTLE, Polytechnic, 8.00pm.

Wednesday 8 November: LEEDS, University Union, 1.00pm. MANCHESTER, Council Chamber, Barnes Wallis Building, UMIST, 8.00pm.

Thursday 9 November: BIRMINGHAM, University of Birmingham Student Union, 1.00pm.

Details of meetings in the London area will follow next week.

# INTERNATIONAL

## Iranian armed forces An extra regiment for the US Army

BRITISH military involvement with the Shah of Iran is well-known. Indeed the Foreign Secretary is prepared to admit as much.

But, as this article from the French Trotskyist paper 'Rouge' indicates, the Iranian army is primarily an offshoot of the greatest imperialist power in the world.

THE Iranian army, with its 420,000 personnel, of whom two thirds are volunteers, is the principal military power in the Middle East. Its technological, logistic and intellectual dependence on the United States makes it a direct subsidiary of the US Army.

After the 1973 rise in world oil prices, Iran became the top military client of the US. Since that date it has received 40 per cent of total US arms exports.

### CLIENTS

It was with the arrival of Richard Nixon in the White House in 1968 that American military aid saw an unprecedented development. This corresponded to the new US military policy which was oriented less towards direct intervention than towards the consolidation of local clients.

Iran was to become one of the most privileged of these clients, in a zone upset by the Six Day War of 1967, the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war, and the development of revolutionary movements around the Gulf, particularly in Yemen and Dhofar.

In 1968, then, Nixon approved the supply of the latest model of the Phantom fighter-bomber, the F4D, and in 1972 Iran was authorised to buy any conventional arms made in the US.

The supply of ultra-sophisticated equipment — some of it still at the prototype stage — and the maintenance of electronic detection systems tested by the various subsidiaries of the CIA during the Indochina war imply the presence in Iran of several tens of thousands of 'advisers' sent by the US army or taken on under contract from the great arms corporations.

### ADVISERS

Last September 43,000 US advisers were working in this way in Iran: 2,200 civilian US Defence Department employees, 1,000 officers and NCOs, 8,000 contractual agents hired by the Defence Department

and 32,000 private sector employees.

### OFFICIAL

The 3,300 members of the Military Assistance Advisory Group — composed of civilians and uniformed personnel — are the 'official' military advisers.

The 8,000 contracted specialists are basically Vietnam veterans responsible, along with the private sector Americans, for training Iranian soldiers and servicing the supplies of equipment.

But it appears that for certain highly sophisticated equipment it is the advisers themselves who operate them.

US contract personnel can be employed in the combat zones against the Dhofar guerillas or on aerial reconnaissance missions.

### BASES

This system of advisers, as well as allowing a tight officering of the Iranian army, has the advantage of getting round treaty clauses between Moscow and Tehran which forbid the installation of foreign military bases on Iranian soil.

One can thus understand Carter's desire to lend his unflinching support to the Tehran regime day after day. There is hardly a regime in the Western world which increases its military expenditure by 26 per cent each year.

### INCREASED

There are not many countries where this expenditure is 25 per cent of the gross national product — that is three times that of the US or USSR and six times that of France and Britain.

Since the rise in oil prices the Iranian military budget has increased fivefold from 2 thousand million to 10 thousand million dollars. There is not another country in the world where such a large proportion of its revenues go on military spending.



# What's going on in Lebanon?

**MANY things are changing in Lebanon. Beirut, once the financial capital of the Arab East, lies in ruins; the Syrian army that began its intervention in Lebanon by attacking the Palestinian and leftist alliance is now razing the Christian part of Beirut.**

**NIGEL WARD reports.**

Many explanations have been presented for the Syrian involvement in Lebanon. What is certain is that the Syrians were not prepared to watch idly as the Lebanese civil war dragged on.

The close ties between the populations of the two countries and easy border access ensured that the influence of the war would spread sooner or later.

For a regime that does not rest on a broad base of popular support, political instability is particularly unwanted. So, from a position of relative strength, the Syrians attempted to end the war in Lebanon.

Even before the Syrian intervention, the cost of the war was estimated to be over £5bn. This is why the attempts to recreate the Lebanese state, including the rebuilding of the army, are proving so difficult.

### CRUSHED

In their effort to stabilise Lebanon, the Syrians have crushed the only social forces on which a state could be built.

Whether they aimed to or not, the Syrians have in practice annexed Lebanon and will now find it very difficult to reverse this situation.

Imperialism has always had a

particular interest in Lebanon because of the economic functions Beirut had in relation to the rest of the Middle East.

At a time when the oil states were receiving massive revenues, but did not possess developed financial institutions or expertise, Beirut was the gateway through which the oil money flowed.

### INTEGRATED

Today, this is no longer the case. All the important Arab states, in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, are developing their own financial set-ups and being more directly integrated into the world economic system.

This fundamental change has been accelerated and completed by the continuing instability in Lebanon. For example, during the civil war one third of the deposits in Lebanese banks were transferred abroad.

When radical nationalist regimes were coming to power in several Arab states, like Nasser in Egypt, imperialism was interested in fomenting instability in the region.

During this period of pre-eminence of Beirut as a financial centre, the alliance with the Christians was extremely important for imperialism as a guarantee of

security.

Today, though, this situation is reversed; imperialism is now quite prepared to drop its former allies in the Christian community.

For years France, as the old colonial power in the region, had bolstered the Christian rightists. But last week the French foreign minister launched an amazing attack on the Christians, and one leader in particular, Camille Chamoun.

Not only did the minister explicitly support the Syrian action, but he went on to vilify the Christians for being responsible for the death of so many Syrian soldiers!

Unfortunately, Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), has given credibility to the Syrian role by claiming that their withdrawal would lead to a Palestinian bloodbath at the hands of the Christians, Israelis and the 'international conspiracy'.

### UNREALISTIC

This argument is, first of all, unrealistic. The Israelis, still involved in the 'peace' negotiations and unwilling to send in the army to aid the Christians, are unlikely to smash through the UN lines in southern Lebanon to wipe out the Palestinians.

Besides which, faith in the Syrians to stop any Israeli aggression ignores the lessons of the civil war and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, when the

Syrians either slaughtered Palestinians or stood by and watched while others did.

In fact, more Palestinians died at the hands of the Syrians than of the Israelis.

Anyway, after being ground into the dust in East Beirut, it is unlikely that the Christians will be able to succeed in overcoming the Palestinian and leftist forces they were losing to during the civil war.

### INSTABILITY

Finally, if there is going to be any international conspiracy it is going to involve the Syrians rather than the Christians.

Rather than fomenting instability, the name of the game for imperialism today is 'peace'. The rightward shift throughout the Middle East in the last few years now makes this project plausible.

It is possible that control of most of Lebanon will be the sugar to sweeten the pill of recognition of Israel and loss of the Golan Heights for the reactionary Syrian regime.

In such a situation, the Syrians will not want the PLO to operate from Lebanon. This will inevitably force the PLO into conflict with the Syrians; to do otherwise would remove the whole reason for existence of the PLO.

For socialists there can therefore be no support for the Syrian action in Lebanon. The genocidal attack on the Christian population of East Beirut must be condemned in the strongest terms.

# Rally to build Fourth International

THE founding conference of the Fourth International was held 40 years ago in Paris. The degeneration of the Second and Third Internationals had made it necessary to build a new and revolutionary international.

In Germany in the early 1930s the leadership of the Communist Party, under the influence of the Stalin faction in Moscow, had pursued a policy which had disarmed the German workers and allowed Hitler to take power with relative ease.

The conclusion which Leon Trotsky and other orthodox communists drew from this tragic defeat (re-affirmed by the Spanish debacle a few years

later) was the need for a Fourth International.

The founding conference of the Fourth International was attended by about 30 delegates representing 11 sections, mainly from Europe and North America.

Today the International is considerably stronger both numerically and in terms of political influence. It now has sections or nuclei of sections in more than 60 countries.

On Friday 24 November a rally will be held in Camden Town Hall to commemorate 40 years of revolutionary struggle throughout the world.

The speakers will include Ernest Mandel, the Marxist

economist, author and veteran leader of the Fourth International, and Willie Mae Reid from the American Socialist Workers Party.

Reid is a militant black feminist and was the SWP's 1976 vice presidential candidate. She co-authored **The Racist Offensive Against Busing, Black Women's Struggle for Equality and Which Way for the Women's Movement**, and is director of the SWP's national women's liberation committee.

Another speaker will be Tariq Ali, editor of **Socialist Challenge** and a leader of the International Marxist Group

since 1968.

Speakers have been invited from the revolutionary movement in Ireland, **Revolution** (the new socialist youth paper), the Zimbabwe African National Union, and the Zimbabwe African People's Union.

Make sure you arrive in good time (between 5-7.30pm) to visit the many literature tables set up by national liberation and other organisations involved in international politics.

There will be literature and photographic displays on Latin America, Ireland, Iran, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Asia.



Willie Mae Reid

# INTERNATIONAL

## Politics in Sri Lanka

# The IMF rules OK

LAST SUMMER saw the end of the seven-year old 'United Front' government in Sri Lanka. This was a coalition of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (a bourgeois party), the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (an ex-Trotskyist party), and the pro-Moscow Communist Party.

Six out of the seven years of their rule were under a state of emergency. The massacre of several thousand youth, press censorship, abolition of the right to strike under the emergency laws and essential services order, imprisonment without trial, high unemployment, discrimination against the Tamil minority, corruption and nepotism, starvation and death in the tea plantations and an economy in deep crisis — these were the main features of coalition rule.

Not surprisingly, the July 1977 election became a 'protest' election. The United National Party, which promised to fix everything, was swept to power with 139 out of 169 seats in the National State Assembly (NSA).

### TAMIL STATE

The SLFP got only eight seats and the working class parties lost everything. This was the fruit of the 'parliamentary road to socialism'.

A significant aspect of the election was the victory of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) in all 14 seats in the Northern province, enabling it to become 'the biggest group in the opposition, with three more seats in the Eastern province.'

The TULF can claim with justification to have received a mandate for a separate Tamil state only from a majority of the 'Ceylon Tamils' in the Northern and Eastern provinces. The Tamils of 'Indian' origin in the tea plantations have obviously not been won over to the idea.

The plantation workers remain the most exploited section of workers — and being the most illiterate it is more difficult for them to break with an opportunist political leadership which deals with the government over their heads.

Although opposed to separate rule, the UNP promised to look into the grievances of the Tamils. It proposed an all party conference to deal with the problem, which has yet to take place.

### NATIONWIDE RIOTS

Soon after the UNP assumption of power in August, clashes between the Sinhala police and the Tamil public in the Northern province escalated into nation-wide riots. Tamils throughout Sri Lanka were persecuted.

The government did nothing while the police either stood by and watched the looting and killing or themselves took an active part in it.

It was only after several thousand families had fled north as refugees that the government decided to intervene. UNP leader JR Jayawardene (known to all as JR) pressured the TULF leadership to compromise on its demand for a separate Tamil state.

The TULF has a history of deals with capitalist governments and in the

July elections failed to raise the demand for a separate state.

To date nothing has been done to alleviate the problems of the Tamils. This has led to the emergence of militant youth organisations who subscribe to armed struggle as the route to separation.

Discrimination against the Tamils takes many forms. As well as giving their language and religion an inferior status successive governments have adopted a racist approach to resettlement. Sinhalese people are brought into the Tamil areas to be given preferential treatment, while Tamils without land or jobs are kept out of such schemes.

### HARASSMENT

There is an ever increasing use of police harassment of the Tamil youth and this has provoked them to acts of desperation. Repressive police methods are not confined to the Tamil areas alone but are being used throughout the country.

A government-appointed commission examining the behaviour of the police and army during the August riots has still to publish its findings, but has already expressed strong criticisms of their reaction.

The government released many of its own supporters who had been imprisoned for exchange frauds by the previous government. They were thus obliged to release political prisoners from the Janatha Vimukti Paramura (JVP) who had been jailed in 1971 on an unproven charge of waging war against the Queen. Still, the secret police constantly monitor JVP and other activities.

Two months after becoming prime minister, JR pulled off a constitutional coup to become president of the republic for a six year term, without election. He assumed the position of head of state and head of the executive, without being accountable to the NSA.

### DIRECT CONTROL

He has the power to dissolve the NSA and even if his supporters lose their majority in a general election he will still remain president. He is in direct control of the armed forces and has the power to declare a state of emergency. The suppression of trade unions, students and Tamil militants has already started.

JR even has the power to invite foreign troops to 'protect private property'. Finally, he can do all these things without the consent of his cabinet, whom he can appoint and dismiss as he pleases.

The UNP's main economic policy is the creation of a free trade zone (FTZ) in the greater Colombo area to promote foreign investment in export-oriented manufacture. The government claims that this is to accelerate industrialisation and create employment.

It has already advertised the FTZ extensively through embassies and the foreign press. It promises low cost land, construction, power and other facilities.



Above and below: organising the resistance to the UNP's pro-imperialist policies.

More ominously the advertisements offer cheap skilled labour, tax concessions and industrial peace. There are no unions and strikes are illegal in the FTZ.

The country's economic ills — growing debts, unemployment and a widening technological gap — were caused by imperialism. A further period of submission to international capital would worsen rather than solve these problems.

The International Monetary Fund and World Bank have already moved that the Sri Lankan welfare state should be pruned. In the government's first budget the subsidised food rations, which provide the only means of subsistence for millions of people, have been abolished.

They have set out to counter the problem of the educated unemployed by attacking the free national system of education and encouraging private schooling, allegedly to offer freedom of choice. Evidently the government prefers the unemployed to be uneducated and hence more docile.

Free medical and dental facilities are criticised as a luxury in a country which is trying to develop and private practice has been given the go-ahead.

### DEVALUATION

The rupee has twice been devalued massively, leading to price rises uncompensated by increased wages. Despite this the import of consumer and luxury items has been liberalised.

Finally, the co-operative movement is being undermined by a turn towards private enterprise which has placed those least able to afford it at the mercy of private traders.

Sri Lanka has a well organised trade union movement with a record of militancy. Fearing that this may frighten off international investors, the government has prioritised its destruction.

JR is aware that this will not be an easy task and has decided against direct confrontation. He has opted for

a combination of legislative and police methods coupled with an anti-union campaign in the media.

Radio and the press are under governmental control and the imminent introduction of TV will provide the state with another vehicle for attack.

JR is aided by betrayals of the working class which took place while the previous government was in power. However, joint trade union actions are beginning to take place, prompted by the publication of a government white paper on employment relations, which has been described as the worst piece of anti-trade union legislation ever contemplated in Sri Lanka.

### LEGISLATION

In the face of such opposition JR has shelved the proposals, waiting for a more opportune moment to implement them.

The JR government has taken three important legislative steps towards establishing a police state in Sri Lanka, using its two thirds majority in the NSA to do so.

In May a law relating to criminal procedure was passed. This limits the discretion of courts to grant bail and decide sentences of imprisonment for a series of offences.

In the same month another law was passed proscribing an organisation calling itself the 'Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam' and empowering the president to proscribe 'other similar organisations'.

The only evidence that such an organisation even exists is a newspaper advertisement which many suspect to have been planted by the government itself.

Both laws give wide powers of arrest and detention, without the right of bail and even trial in the case of the proscription law. The president may ban any organisation which, in his opinion, 'advocates the use of violence and is either directly or indirectly

concerned in or engaged in any unlawful activity'. There is no right of appeal.

The most recent legislation proposed is a bill to repeal and re-write the Sri Lankan constitution. The revised version will make the open development of mass movements almost impossible and gives guaranteed legal protection to overseas investments.

The JR government has so far avoided any major confrontation with the opposition but has been systematically rearming the state apparatus and fostering links with imperialist agencies.

Amid growing unemployment, rising cost of living and the restriction of democratic rights, the working class opposition is starting to re-group.

In other words both sides are preparing to face any eventuality. A test of strength cannot be ruled out during this government's term of office.

The poor response of the imperialist powers to the UNP's incentives is not surprising. They feel that JR has done a lot to encourage investment but that still more has to be done.

### INTERNATIONAL

International working class organisations, trade unions and socialists, particularly in the West, should be watchful of future developments in Sri Lanka. They must respond immediately when the Sri Lankan people challenge the repressive JR government.

\*This article was written by a Sri Lankan member of the Asian Socialist Forum, a group of socialists from India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh who meet to discuss and take action on the politics of the sub-continent. If you are interested in more information or in taking part in the group's activities write to: ASF, 22 Boundary Road, London NW8.



# COMMENT

## Neil Williamson

IT WAS with great sadness that we heard of the premature death of Neil Williamson. We knew Neil as a revolutionary, a journalist, IMG member and friend.

We wish this letter to be a simple tribute of our appreciation and respect for him.

PAUL BRADY, RUTH McILROY, DAVID NEILSON, JON SIDE [Edinburgh Socialist Workers Party members].

## Thumbs down for 'Vicious' cover

I'VE only been selling *Socialist Challenge* for a few weeks. But I found the 'No Bail for Jim Vicious' cover (19 October) messy, confusing, and basically lacking in appeal.

The punk rock theme is rather gauche. Maybe it's only because I'm approaching the 'over 30' age bracket, but I'm not convinced the working class associates punk with labour, with political protest, or whatever it was that was supposed to be conveyed in the cover. It wasn't even clear that the person in the photo was Jim Callaghan — at least not to people I tried to sell to.

The play on Sid Vicious wasn't clear to people either — not to those of us who hadn't heard of Sid, nor to people who didn't understand the meaning of Callaghan as a 'vicious' person. I don't mean to imply that the working class is uneducated and unfamiliar with day-to-day vicious capitalism, but that it was a rather sophisticated connection to make.

My suggestion is to have bigger blow-ups of photos of people involved in struggle. I feel we ought to present a more serious and actual 'face' to the public — many of whom will be seeing *Socialist Challenge* for the first time. Real people, involved in real struggles, along with clear political slogans seem to make the most sense to me.

Finally, the cover of the 5 October issue — the one with only text on it — was the most boring cover for a left paper I've seen in a long time. Let's not repeat it!

LINDA THALMAN (Manchester)

## Offensive

WE would like to complain about the 'No Bail for Jim Vicious' cover (19 October). To make a pun on the controversy over Sid Vicious was very bad. It was opportunism to try to use punk culture in this way (and inappropriate anyway).

He only made the headlines through being accused of murdering his companion! The coverage of the bourgeois press on this has been insensitive, and it is offensive that



Socialist Challenge's should be too. MARIE McADAM (Harrow), PAT RAE (E London)

## Jews and the ANL

I WELCOMED your article (19 October) on the struggle of Jewish militants against the ultra-cautious, cowardly approach of the bourgeois Board of Deputies of British Jews to the anti-fascist struggle.

Many of us who have been working consistently to involve Jewish organisations in the Anti Nazi League have felt both isolated and ignored by the movement in general. Part of the reason for this is the rarity of such articles.

We have understood this to be indicative of an unwillingness to grapple with the reality of anti-semitism in Britain today and to develop a coherent strategy to fight it. A refusal to fight anti-semitism seriously, whether by intent or omission, is hardly the way to attract Jewish youth to the ANL, let alone win them from Zionism.

Finally, I object to the description of the Jewish Socialists Group in the article. We are not a 'pro-Zionist' organisation. The group numbers among its members both left-Zionist and anti-Zionists whose basis for unity lies in their socialism and in the fact that they are under threat by the National Front, racism and anti-semitism precisely because they are Jews.

Falsely labelling the JSG as 'pro-Zionist' merely creates unnecessary difficulties for those of us who are not Zionists and who support revolutionary Marxist positions within the group.

CLIVE GILBERT (Manchester)

## Truth about the holocaust

REFERRING to your article 'We accuse' [21 September], I would like to accuse you of gross misinformation and misrepresentation of facts.

In your bid to condemn Zionism, you are confusing Zionists with

certain Jewish community 'leaders' who did sell out the Jews to the Nazis during the Holocaust. The main perpetrators of this crime were assimilated Jews, who were set up as intermediaries between the Jewish communities in Europe and the gentile ruling class of their host countries (Germany, Hungary, etc.).

These Jewish boards of deputies, who represented the gentile establishment rather than the Jewish community at large, were not Zionists but individuals concerned with their own survival — apolitical. If Kastner tried to help Jews escape to Palestine, because no other country would take in Jewish refugees, he was being a humanist.

Or do you suggest the Jewish communities should have willingly marched off to the gas chambers so as not to be labelled Zionists?

G. WEINKOVE (Basildon)

## Marxism as science

PAUL TICKELL's letter (5 October) concerning science and Marxism asserted as support for its line of argumentation the 'fact' that Marx intended dedicating *Capital* to Darwin. Whilst I sympathise with the general tenor of the letter I would like to correct this false assertion.

It is true that the Soviet magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism* published in 1931 a letter which it claimed was from Darwin to Marx in 1880 which graciously rejected the offer of a dedication. Recent work however has shown that this was a letter not from Darwin to Marx, but rather one from Darwin to Edward Aveling — that least attractive of Victorian socialists — in response to a request that he be allowed to dedicate his book *The Student's Darwin* to him.

Quite how this mistake was originally made is not known. Certainly Edward Aveling's character was such that little was beyond his fertile imagination, similarly the Russians might have had ulterior motives in 1931. The one thing that is clear is that Marx never offered to dedicate *Capital* to Darwin.

J. FORD [Ashton-under Lyne]

## 'Capital' and Darwin

I MUST reply to Paul Tickell's letter (5 October). The idea that Marx's system can be equated to a set of eternal laws like the 'natural sciences' is erroneous, and derived from Engels — in particular his *Dialectics of Nature* and Ludwig Feuerbach... This 'philosophy' of dialectical materialism was accepted without question by the revisionists of the Second International, E. Bernstein and K. Kautsky; and G. Plekhanov passed it on to Lenin.

The point is that if there is such a natural progression to socialism — 'social Darwinism' — then, as the German Social Democrats rightly inferred, socialism is inevitable! Therefore why be an active revolutionist? Why not tackle the immediate issues? Or, in effect, become a 'sensible', constructive party in the bourgeois parliament. The result of this line of thought was the holocaust of the 1914-18 war.

From Lenin this notion was accepted into the Stalinist reaction, and excused the butchery of collectivisation and industrialisation in the '20s and '30s. So-called Marxist intellectuals in the West explained it away in terms of 'contradictions in progress to realisation, etc., etc.'

Since the war Eurocommunists have used this to defend their capitulation to reformism. And the formula infects this movement's intelligentsia even today, so that Althusser remains at best equivocal about the May '68 Paris events and our own M. Cornforth explains why it is correct ('dissolves all conceptions of absolute truth', as Paul Tickell has it) to shoot workers and students in Budapest and Prague; dialectically, of course!

Marxists must eschew all this nonsense. What is scientific about our system is that we show that

**THE LENGTH of letters printed will usually be kept down to 400 words in order to encourage as wide a range of contributions as possible. All letters may be cut at the Editor's discretion. Unsigned letters will not normally be published, although we will withhold real names from publication on request.**

socialism can be created out of capitalism now, not at some indefinite future date, and we show this by our practical/critical activity (Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*), that is, revolutionary practice!

TONY SHARP [Liverpool]

## RAR is autonomous!



PAUL Tickell's article on rock music (12 October) wasn't bad, but it did perpetuate a factual error.

Terms like 'ANL/RAR' give the impression that the Anti Nazi League and Rock Against Racism are some sort of partnership. In fact most of RAR's work has been organising hundreds of gigs completely separately from the ANL. Where it does organise events jointly with the ANL, like the Carnivals, the collaboration is equal — RAR gets the bands, PA, etc. organised, the ANL handles the broader practicalities.

RAR also has a separate political approach to the ANL. It wasn't formed purely to fight the NF, and so it can offer a more varied political diet. The last issue of *Temporary Hoarding* had articles ranging from the political situation in Africa to the return of skinheads. Local RAR groups often have an overlapping membership with ANL branches, but this doesn't make them politically identical.

Behind Paul Tickell's article lurks the widespread assumption that because of its work for the Carnivals, RAR must be the ANL's entertainments committee. Unfortunately, the ANL hasn't done much to correct this idea. I'm not writing officially on RAR's behalf, but perhaps in future you could give RAR its due as an autonomous rock-based movement?

B.J. DAVEY (London SW11)

# SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

THE DEADLINE for this column is midday on the Saturday before publication.

### NORTH WEST

**WARRINGTON Socialist Challenge** group meets regularly. Ring Manchester Socialist Challenge offices for details. 061-236 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 (226 4267, evening), or write to Manchester SC Centre, 14 Piccadilly.

**SALFORD Socialist Challenge** supporters can be contacted at the Manchester Socialist Challenge offices, Tel 061-236 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 88 2830.

**NW REGION Socialist Challenge** Group organisers meet next on Sunday 12 November at Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre, 14 Piccadilly, 2-6pm. Agenda includes: report back from National Policy Committee; sales and subscription drive progress report; a North-West bulletin.

**BOLTON Socialist Challenge** supporters group meets, White Lion, Deansgate, Thursday, 23 November, 8pm. Is the Communist Party revolutionary or reformist?

**MOSS SIDE Socialist Challenge** supporters sell the paper at Moss Side Centre, Saturday, 11-1.

**NORTH EAST**

**NEWCASTLE Socialist Challenge** local supporters are active! If you want to join them, phone Pete on (0632) 29057.

**DURHAM Socialist Challenge** Supporters Group. For details contact: Dave Brown, 2 Pioneer Cottages, Low Pitlington, Durham.

**LONDON**

**HARROW Socialist Challenge** supporters meet regularly, details from Box 50, London N1 2XP.

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

**HACKNEY Socialist Challenge** supporters meet to discuss revitalising the SC Group on Thurs. 9 Nov. at 7.30pm in the Britannia Pub, Mare Street. Speaker: Dodie Wepler. This is your chance to have a say in its future!

**TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Challenge** Group meets every fortnight (phone 247 2717 for details).

**TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Challenge** supporters sell every weekend: Saturdays meet 10.30am, Whitechapel

tube; Sundays meet 10am, Brick Lane (corner of Buxton St.).

**SW London Socialist Challenge** Group meets fortnightly at 8pm at Clapham Library, Clapham Common North Side (Clapham Common tube). Next meeting, Weds. 1 Nov: 'The nature of Zionism'.

**WALTHAMSTOW** readers can buy *Socialist Challenge* regularly from Sheridan's Newsagents, 86 Hoe St, E17.

**LEYTON** readers can buy *Socialist Challenge* from Patel's Newsagents, 326 Lea Bridge Road, E10.

**SW LONDON** sales every Saturday, 11am-1pm, at Capham Junction (Northcoote Rd), Brixton tube, Clapham Common tube, Balham tube. Also obtainable from bookstalls outside Oval tube, Heme Hill BR.

**HARINGEY Socialist Challenge** Group, 'The Fight Against the five per cent', with public sector trade union speaker. West Green Community Centre, Stanley Road (off West Green Road), London N15. Tube: Turnpike Lane. Thursday 9 November, 7.30pm.

**HOUNSLOW Socialist Challenge** supporters will be discussing burning questions of the day at their fund-raising Guy Fawkes party on Sat 4 Nov, 8pm at 25 Grove Rd, Hounslow. Real ale and food provided. Please bring some fireworks.

### SOUTH WEST

**ISLE OF WIGHT** readers can buy *Socialist Challenge* from the Oz Shop, 44 Union St., Ryde.

**BATH Socialist Challenge** sales every Saturday, 2-3.30pm, outside Macfischer's. Ring Bath 20298 for further details.

**SOUTHAMPTON Socialist Challenge** sales every Saturday from 10am-1pm above bar, Post Office, Bargate.

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

**BRISTOL Socialist Challenge** sales every Saturday, 11am-1pm in the 'Hole in the Ground', Haymarket.

**FOR INFORMATION** on activities in the South-West, write to Box 002, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Road, Bristol 6.

**CARDIFF Socialist Challenge** Forum on 'Automation and Mass Unemployment' on Friday 3 November at Four Elms Pub, Elm Street, off Newport Road, 7.30pm.

**YORKSHIRE**

**BRADFORD Socialist Challenge** Group meets fortnightly at 8pm at the Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate. Next meeting, Mon 6 Nov.

**HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge** meeting on Thursday, 9 November, 8pm, Friendly and Trades Club

**DEWSBURY Socialist Challenge** meeting every Tuesday, 8pm, Socialist Club. Next meeting: 'Reform or Revolution'.

**DEWSBURY Socialist Challenge** sales regularly on Saturday mornings in Westgate at the Nat. Westminster Bank, 12.30-2.00pm.

**HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge** sales regularly Saturdays 11am-1pm in the Piazza.

**YORK Socialist Challenge** is on sale at the York Community Bookshop, 73 Walmgate or from sellers on Thursdays (12.30-1.45) at York University, Vanbrugh 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.

**NOTTINGHAM Socialist Challenge** Forum: Bob Pennington, 'The Struggle for a United Revolutionary Organisation', 7.30pm, Thursday, 9 November, International Community Centre, Mansfield Road.

### SOUTH EAST

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

**NORWICH Socialist Challenge** sales every Saturday in Davey Place (opp. market) and bookstall Thursdays at University of East Anglia.

**COLCHESTER Socialist Challenge** supporters meet regularly. For details phone Steve on Wivenhoe 2949.

### SCOTLAND

For information about the paper or its supporters' activities throughout Scotland please contact *Socialist Challenge* Books, 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday afternoons. Phone for alternative arrangement (221 7481). Wide range of Fourth International publications.

**EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge** supporters group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-346 0466 for details.

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

# UNDER REVIEW

## 'Word Is Out' Stories of some of our lives

'WORD IS OUT', currently showing in London at the Scala Cinema, is the most positive of the films which have come out of the gay movement, writes BARRY PROTHERO.

It consists of interviews with 26 lesbians and gay men, presenting a wide range of experience. The interviews are skilfully cut together to make a documentary which remains engrossing, moving and entertaining throughout 128 minutes.

Ignoring the too familiar stereotype characteristics of despair and so on, *Word Is Out* shows homosexuals who are dealing confidently and competently with the problems and difficulties of their lives.

Even those people who have experienced the most appalling persecution talk of their experiences with an amazing lack of bitterness, even with humour. With only one

exception, the stories of these lives all have happy endings.

When Whitey tells of her four years in a state mental institution — she was placed there by her family at the age of fourteen — the image of the strong, genial, easy-going woman on the screen mitigates the horror of the story she relates.

Cheerful Rick Stokes, who cracked under the strain of living the lie of his marriage, has survived the tortures of prolonged electric shock therapy. ('We could castrate you,'

he was told, 'but let's try some treatments and see what we can do there.') He is now an openly gay San Francisco politician.

For the most part, however, the women and men in this film do not have exceptional stories to tell. But what is remarkable about them, in terms of the composite image of homosexuality that they present, is that they are all 'normal', 'well adjusted' people.

Nearly all of them are apparently successful in the most conventional middle class terms. For *Word Is Out* is pitched at a middle class audience and, perhaps more importantly, at a straight audience.

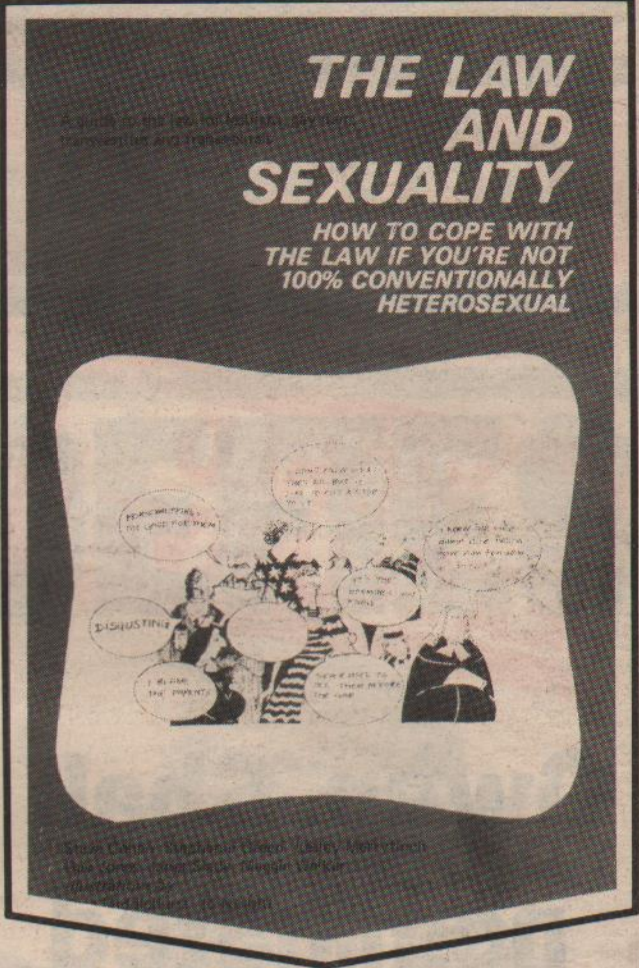
Despite its positive image of homosexuality, the film makes too many compromises with the values of the 'well adjusted' bourgeois family. There is a

recurrent assumption that gay women and men are particularly validated if they live together in 'stable' couple relationships.

It is disturbing, for example, to hear a man whose sexual encounters are casual one-night-stands asked if he thinks his behaviour is 'healthy'. A question like that is so loaded that a convincing reply is almost impossible.

The film makes too much of an effort to prove that gays are just the same as straights. For all that, the stories of the individual women and men provide a rich pleasure.

The film was made by the Mariposa Film Group, based in California. Although the group has not been able to get it shown in American schools, it will be screened across the country on public television towards the end of this month.



'THE LAW and Sexuality' is a much needed practical guide on 'how to cope with the law if you are not 100 per cent conventionally heterosexual', writes JOHN INIGO.

As well as explaining what the law is and how to cope with it, it provides a concise and well-written explanation of its underlying sexist assumptions.

It shows how, within the law itself, discrimination against 'sexual minorities' derives from the fundamental oppression of women.

The book makes it clear that, although lesbians are prosecuted under the criminal law less often than gay men, they are just as or more oppressed in the areas of marriage, custody and adoption of children, employment, and censorship.

For instance, there have been only two cases of access and one of custody of children which lesbians have successfully contested.

It is good that the book also takes up the gross oppression of transvestites and transsexuals — the latter having no recognition at all within the law. It also argues simply and convincingly for paedophile relationships to be treated in law on the same basis as any other sexual relations.

There is sadly no discussion of when and how to conduct a political campaign around a court case. In fact, there is very little discussion of collective

forms of action directed at actually changing legal or semi-legal sexism.

In the chapter on employment, for example, no mention at all is made of the existing gay trade union groups.

As a result, the analysis of sexism remains hanging in the air: although a good programme of revision of the law is proposed, there is no indication of how this might be fought for, particularly around individual cases.

A second weakness is in the discussion of the apparatus of the law. One of its most striking points is the massive area of discretion possessed by the courts — nearly always used in a reactionary way. Yet the book's conclusion proposes to tackle this simply by a campaign of education.

This is completely utopian: as long as the legal apparatus is dominated by a class that has a direct interest in the oppression of women, the courts will continue the kind of appalling practices documented in this book.

★ 'The Law and Sexuality' by Steve Cohen, Stephanie Green, Janet Merryfinch, Gay Jones, Lesley Slade, Maggie Walker. (Grass Roots Book, £1)



MEMBERS of the Mariposa Film Group who made 'Word is Out'.

## A positive view Lesbian mothers

'IN THE Best Interests of the Children' is a film about lesbian mothers in America. It's very much a propaganda film, writes SUE MANZI of Lesbian Line, aimed at showing to the outside world that we are just like other mothers.

One of the strongest points that comes across from the lesbian mothers in the film is that having struggled to realise their own sexuality and redefine their life-style, the strength and openness that they have had to achieve is reflected in their children.

The children are given a lot of time to talk about their mothers and the attitudes they come up against.

It becomes a bit repetitive, but it was good to listen to and it was difficult at times to remember that one 12-year-old girl was not an 18-year-old feminist.

What finally comes across is a superior view of lesbian parenting.

The women most likely to lose custody of their children are the most 'healthy' lesbians — those who are not prepared to repress their sexuality or hide their relationships and involvements from their children for the sake of a court decision.

Something that was new to me is that apparently a lot of fathers, having made their point by winning in court, end up giving the children back to the mother. The drudgery of parenthood was not so much what they wanted as the legal victory.

It would be useful to know

how many women end up with their children after they have been awarded to the father, and how many go against the revolting restrictions put on them by judges who do give them custody.

Along with *In the Best Interests of the Children*, this kind of information would help to expel the idea that it is 'unnatural' for lesbians to bring up children, and that there are

not many of us doing it anyway.

Unfortunately, the film has quite a heavy 'family' slant, and little is said about the possibilities of living in, say, collectives. It does not make any connection between the rejection of the nuclear family and the broader questioning of societal structures and oppression.

It's perhaps a film to take your mother to when you've

come out to her, and it's certainly worth seeing as a positive view of women who have come through the difficulties of custody cases and gained a strength in the face of prejudice.

'In the Best Interests of the Children' is available from: Other Cinema Distribution, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2. Tel 01-734 8508/9.



'THE strength and openness of lesbian mothers is reflected in their children'.

## Bookmarx club

1978 Fourth Quarter

The Bookmarx Club is now an established method for socialists to get the best of new socialist books at a big discount — and delivered to your door. In past quarters members have received books by such well known writers as Alexandra Kollontai, John MacLean, and Leon Trotsky. Indispensable books of reference such as *Your Rights at Work* and *The Political Police in Britain*, and have been introduced to little known classics such as *Second Class Citizen* by Buchi Emecheta *God's Bits of Wood* by Sembene Ousmane and *The Dispossessed* by Ursula Leguin.

HOW IT WORKS. You send us £4.50 for which you will receive the books in list A below plus those in one other list of your choice. Extra lists can be obtained for £2.50 each. Don't delay, send in the form now with your subscription — you will save over £2.50 on the retail value of the books (shown in brackets on the list)

**LIST A**  
*Marxism and the Party* by Molyneux (£2.95).

How to build the revolutionary party? and how to make it relate to the workers? Vital questions for all Marxists. Molyneux draws together for the first time the writings of key Marxists on the question.

*Our Flag Stays Red* by Phil Piratin (1.50)

A new reprint of this exciting classic of the battle against fascism on the streets of East London before the war, written by a veteran of Cable Street.

**LIST C**  
*The Politics of Nuclear Power* ed. Dave Elliott (1.95).

The first book on this subject to address itself to trade unionists, and consider the effects of the nuclear industry on jobs, TU rights and health and safety. Who really pays for Nukes — and who benefits?

*Crash of '79* by Paul Erdman (95p)

'Wittiest political/financial thriller to appear in a long time'

**LIST E**  
*Finding a Voice: Asian Women in Britain* by Amrit Wilson (2.50)

By using extended interviews and a minimum of editorial comment, Amrit Wilson presents a powerful but perceptive picture of British Society from the point of view of Asian women.

*Fathers and Daughters* by Kathy Porter (1.00)

An absorbing account of the Russian women revolutionaries who were active in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Limited edition in paper of this book previously only available in a £6 hardback.

**LIST B**  
*The Mandate of Heaven, Marx & Mao in Modern China* by Nigel Harris (2.50)

China's revolution and transformation to a superpower is a modern legend, but how did the transformation come about? How do peasants and workers there really live? And if Mao was 'right' why was Marx wrong? Nigel Harris' long awaited book.

*Ireland Unfree* Steve Berry (75p)

Might be subtitled Ireland — a marxist analysis — a really excellent introduction to the cause of and (socialist) solution to the problems of the Irish people.

**LIST D**  
*Cwmardy* by Lewis Jones (1.95)

A classic documentary novel, newly reprinted, of the militant pre-first-war days in a mining community in the Rhonda.

*Masters of the Dew* by Jacques Roumain (1.20)

Manual returns from Cuba to his home village in Haiti to find his family divided and stricken by drought. He uses his experience of political awareness and solidarity from abroad to solve their problems. A political fable written in 1944.

I wish to join the Bookmarx Club and enclose £4.50 + £2.50 for each extra list

Name

Address

Please send list A + List(s)

Send to BOOKMARX CLUB, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

# Socialist Challenge

Anniversary of the Fourth International

## RALLY

Speakers include:

**Ernest Mandel**  
(United Secretariat Fourth International)  
**Willie Mae Reid**

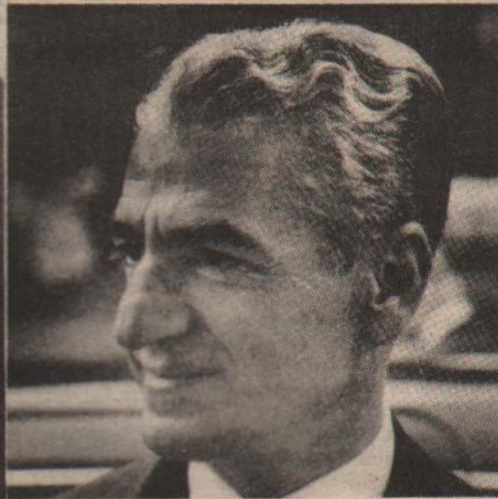
(leading black woman militant of American SWP)

Stalls, exhibitions, speakers on Zimbabwe, Ireland, Iran, Latin America, international youth struggles.

Friday 24 November, Camden Town Hall, London.

**WORLD EXCLUSIVE!**

## Owen, Shah nominated for 1979 Nobel Peace Prize



THE Nobel Peace Prize Committee has received a recommendation signed by five Western heads of state insisting that the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to the Shah of Iran. The British Ambassador in Washington has added the name of Dr David 'Death' Owen.

**TARIQ ALI comments.**

This news has still to be confirmed, but is it really so astonishing? Just look back over the years and see some of the recipients of this august prize.

In 1972 it was Henry Kissinger. (His North Vietnamese opponent Le Duc Tho contemptuously refused to accept the prize.)

A few years later it was Betty

Williams and Mairead Corrigan of the 'Peace People' from the North of Ireland. These two charmers pocketed the £80,000 for themselves and recently resigned from the Peace People's leadership.

The Peace People themselves are now largely defunct.

This year it is Begin and Sadat. As we said some weeks back, the only prize they

deserved was an Oscar.

It is only fitting, then, that the Shah of Iran and Dr Death should receive the joint nomination for 1979. Just study their respective records.

The Shah has built one of the largest military and air forces in Asia. As we all know, this is to protect peace in the region.

He has built the most frightening torture apparatus. This is to maintain his own peace of mind and body.

Over the last six months he has ordered the killing of hundreds of people fighting for democratic rights. Several

students died in Tehran only a few days ago. Clearly the Shah deserves the prize.

Dr Death, the British Foreign Secretary, has assiduously and carefully ensured that the Shah's posterior remained clean after he had done his dirty work. The effect on the Labour Foreign Secretary's tongue and health must provide medical students with new avenues of research.

In addition Owen has done a grand job in Zimbabwe and South Africa. His book on 'Human Rights' has no mention of Iran or Ireland as he believes that Chieftain tanks and CS gas are being used to preserve the Queen's and the Shah's peace.

While the Shah's efforts in Iran will appeal to the Committee there is one major drawback. That is that he might be in permanent exile in the Swiss Alps.

But this should not be an obstacle. He will have done his bit for the cause.

★ Simple question: which Cabinet Minister was responsible for nodding through the ABC Official Secrets prosecution?

Easy. It was Merlyn Rees, the bobby's friend.

Wrong. Merlyn, of course, was not a million miles away, but the man with this honour was none other than...Dr Death.

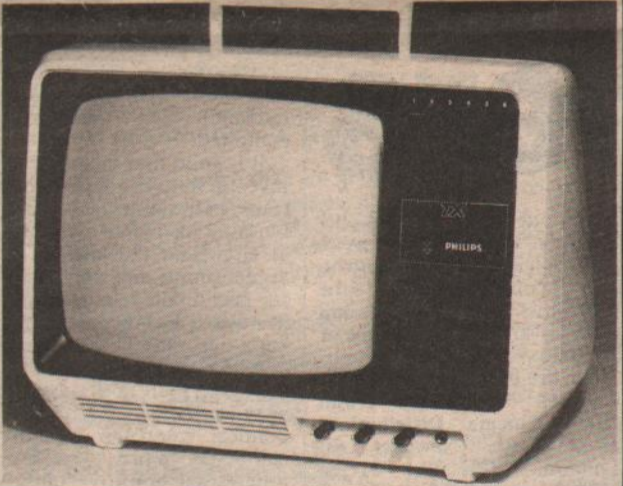
Turn to page 2.

## OUR FUND DRIVE

WHY NOT try your luck in our Xmas lottery?

For 10p per ticket or £1 for a book of tickets, plus sae, you can have a chance to win one of the following: a portable 12-inch black and white TV; a case of French wine; an autographed copy of Ernest Mandel's new book, *The Second Slump*; a record token; or a year's subscription to *Socialist Challenge*, *International and Socialist Woman*.

The draw will take place on 18 December in our offices, and the winning number will be printed in the issue of 4 January 1979. Organised by D. Weppler of 328 Upper Street, London N12XQ.



★ For £5, an attractively designed gift subscription token. The receiver just sends the token into our offices — complete with the name and address — to receive a 6-month subscription to *Socialist Challenge*, plus a 1979 diary.

★ Greeting cards with the famous design on the cover by Lissitzky, 'Beat the whites with the red wedge!'

★ Our Xmas lottery with a full range of prizes, including a black and white portable telly (details left).

★ Attractive hessian bags with either the women's liberation symbol or the fight racism slogan and black clenched fist design. £1 each plus 25p (p&p).

★ Fight racism T-shirts. Good quality cotton, red on white. Sizes medium or large (order large, if in doubt) £1.50 plus 25p p&p.

★ Football cards.

Why not order these fund-raising aids now? They can be used on campus book-stalls, and at local rallies and meetings.

Our thanks this week to:

Cash	£1
Simon Mohun	£10
Anon	£100
C. Hodges	£5
Jean Mackenzie	£8
Viv Lacey	£5
Manchester supporters	£5
Preston supporters	£5
Trevor Smelt	21p
J. McGhee	£5
B. Ebbatson	£1
S. Bodini	£1
Watford supporters	£10
Glasgow supporters 'In memory of N Williamson'	£5
Anon	£3
ISA	£100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£269.21</b>

**SOCIALIST CHALLENGE** seeks a full-time fund-raiser. We've got lots of ideas, but we need someone competent and committed to put them into practice!

Wages not brilliant, but great scope for initiative. Apply to: D. Weppler, 328 Upper Street, London N12XQ [01-359 8371].

**SOCIALIST CHALLENGE** received a big political and financial boost this week when the comrades of the International Socialist Alliance steering committee voted to donate £100 to our fund drive.

Comrades who introduced the motion at the ISA steering committee meeting welcomed the improvement in the paper in recent weeks — especially its coverage on the Ford dispute. Other ISA members expressed doubts about the paper and its political project, but felt that whatever weaknesses persist, *Socialist Challenge* is still a paper that should be maintained.

The total income this week —

with many thanks to the anonymous donor who left crisp new notes adding up to £100 in the Other Bookshop — came to £269.21, making a cumulative total of £597.28. So Videla's head rolls!

But we are now almost a third of the way through this quarter, so we are still behind. Only an enormous collective effort to get funds in will ensure that each and every head ends up in the basket by the end of December.

Hounslow **Socialist Challenge** supporters have followed the lead set by the Manchester comrades — they have also organised a benefit for the paper on Guy Fawkes night.

Not to be outdone in their

efforts, Manchester supporters also deposited a huge envelope of used stamps on our desk over the weekend. Many thanks for contributing to this steady source of income for the paper.

These are the kind of collective efforts which will guarantee we reach our target. But in addition to the parties, discos, jumble sales, and other events planned by supporters for this quarter, we have a number of fund-raising aids in our offices — all with special discounts for bulk orders.

These will help you get in finances for local activities and help us in getting the cash we desperately need. Many can be used for Xmas presents.

## SUBSCRIBE NOW!

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

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a donation for the Fighting Fund of \_\_\_\_\_

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

Complete and return to:

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.

**VIDELA 500**

**BEGIN 1000**

**SHAH OF IRAN 1500**

**PINOCHET 2000**

**SMITH 2500**