

# Socialist Challenge

**'What do we want? £60! How do we get it?  
ALL OUT STRIKE!'**



Photo: BOB MURPHY [Socialist Challenge]

Photo: BOB MURPHY [Socialist Challenge]

**HOW THE LEFT VIEWS THE CRISIS: Eric Heffer, Chris Myant, Chris Harman and Brian Grogan — p 8&9**

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# EDITORIAL

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## General election tasks

ENORMOUS grass roots opposition is sweeping the 5 per cent norm into oblivion. The anti-working class politics of the Labour government are being challenged on an unprecedented scale as the workers movement demonstrates its tremendous fighting capacity.

At the same time, the 'left' Labour MPs — with a nervous eye cast on their parliamentary seats — make noises about free collective bargaining but fail to take any organised steps to build support for the millions of people fighting wage restraint. Their refusal to build a nationally organised opposition fighting for a socialist alternative leaves the door open for Callaghan and the trade union bureaucracy to cobble together a new 'social contract' once the storm subsides.

Marxists have a special responsibility in this period of growing class struggle to fight for working class unity around policies that can build a socialist alternative right across the labour movement. The forces that are coming into action have the strength not only to break wage freeze but to start a fight that can replace the right-wing leaders inside the trade unions and the Labour Party.

We must also recognise that the coming general election will be dominated by all issues that have produced the present turbulent crisis in society. People who have been radicalised by the experiences of these movements and class battles will be looking for an alternative, and it is our task to make sure that the needs of the class struggle are not buried under the debris of reformism.

The Socialist Unity conference on 3 February will be discussing how we can make the strongest intervention to ensure that the banner of the socialist alternative is raised during the election. Make sure that your area is represented at this conference.

## Solidarity in Iran

JUST AS spectacular as the internal consequences of the Shah's fall has been its impact on world politics. Sadat of Egypt, for example, is a little unwise to play host to the exiled tyrant for he is widely reckoned to be next in line for the anger of the masses.

The Egyptian press has carefully selected only the 'good news' from Iran (quite a feat from their point of view) but no doubt the Iranian upsurge will remind the Egyptian people of their own anti-government rising in January 1977.

Other regimes in the area have equal reason to feel unhappy. Iran's traditional rival, Iraq, decided to throw its lot in with the Shah in return for his help in crushing the Kurdish rebellion a few years ago. It proved a wrong choice. The rulers in Baghdad may yet live to regret their decision to expel the exiled Ayatollah Khomeini. He is not one to forget a sleight.

Even the Pahlavi dynasty's old foes, the Royal House of Saud, have shed tears over his departure. They recognise that their oil-based economy is just as vulnerable to working class upsurge. The internal threat at the moment may be minimal but the Saudi rulers are worried about the large number of Arab workers in Iran, as well as the Palestinians in Saudi Arabia. Both would be effective carriers of the revolutionary virus.

Iran's oppressed nations — Kurds, Afghanis, Baluchis — threaten to carry the lessons of Iran into neighbouring (and unstable) Turkey and Pakistan. Israel will be another Middle Eastern casualty: under pressure from the masses the Bakhtiar government has cut off oil supplies.

South Africa too will no longer be getting Iranian oil. The apartheid regime may be far away but the political impact will be felt there, as one black former student leader told Trotskyist journalist Ernest Harsch: 'We do not know much about Iran, just what is printed in the papers. But it reminds me very much of our own struggle here, when we demonstrated in 1976. If the Shah falls that will help us. It will show that unjust systems can be brought down.'

Imperialism stands to lose in Iran. The masses have been fortunate in the almost total paralysis of the policymakers in Washington. Britain seemed to have shot its bolt early with Owen's misinformed and dogmatic defence of the Shah. French imperialism, in contrast, has played a clever game, sheltering Khomeini, and now stands to gain control of the Iranian oil consortium.

But none of this means that imperialism has run out of tricks. With the Shah's fall, the most dangerous phase of the Iranian revolution is opening — one in which the masses can place confidence only in the power of their own independent organisation.

But we have a duty to help in that process. The change in government has not halted arms sales to the Tehran regime and it has accelerated more covert forms of intervention by British imperialism. Solidarity now becomes all the more necessary.

# THE FIRST WORD

## Ireland

# Lest we forget

WITH the Labour Government pathetically slithering into its twilight hours, it desperately needs the type of audacity shown by last week's gas and fuel depot bombers.

Alas, such imagination is beyond the collective sobriety of Callaghan, Foot et al.

by Geoff Bell

The bombs themselves did not produce the statutory howls of rage from the ruling class. Its obsession with union bashing has pushed all other matters aside.

Nevertheless, here we are, the eighth anniversary of Derry's 'Bloody Sunday', and still Ireland will not get away.

Indeed it is a fair guess that if Thatcher comes to power then the present offensive of the IRA in this country will develop into blitz proportions.

For that, as with most other things associated with the Iron Maiden's support, the Labour Government bears most responsibility.

Last week a member of the Government could stomach it no longer; assistant chief whip Jock Stallard resigned over the decision to increase the number of Northern Ireland seats at Westminster.

And for all the common assumptions about the inability of the Irish question to percolate the consciousness of the British labour movement, it is now of more than passing interest that three, albeit rather junior Government personnel have quit over this piece of legislation.

## ALIENATE

The decision to increase what, in effect, will be the Loyalists' representation at Westminster was taken purely out of parliamentary considerations and Labour's desire to buy Unionist votes.

That is one more reflection of the Government's attitude to Ireland.

For all the collective blunders, sins, and sell-outs of the Wilson and now Callaghan regimes, it is arguable that their greatest crime against socialism has been their Irish policy.

In particular, the 'achievements' of Roy Mason are breathtaking. He has managed to alienate every conceivable form of opinion in non-Loyalist Ireland.

The Irish Government, the Catholic hierarchy, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, even the rump of the 'Peace

pleas from the NCCL and Amnesty International for investigations into various aspects of his policy.

He sums it up by his H-block policy. Mason not only defends the spectacle of 350 political

Ireland since the foundation of the Northern state.

Such is the legacy of this tottering Labour Government to the people of Ireland.

Yet the majority of the labour movement remains unmoved. One might note the following, for example.

Barnsley is Mason's constituency. He is sponsored by the National Union of Mineworkers.

## BARNSLEY

Arthur Scargill, one of the most left of the NUM's leaders, is the uncrowned king of Barnsley labour. But Scargill's statements on Ireland have been very few and very far between.

Yet it is useless to denounce or criticise without offering a means of channelling indignation. The possibilities are there.

Although the International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland has suffered a number of delays and set-backs, it remains a useful way of focussing greater attention on Ireland in the labour movement.

Tribunals by themselves are insufficient. It is the United Troops Out Movement which, by offering a variety of activities and organising in a non-sectarian and democratic manner, is the most populated of the present solidarity movements.

And so it deserves to be. Those who wish to take seriously Callaghan's remarks about not being 'too parochial' should contact the United Troops Out Movement at 2a St Pauls Road, London N1.

## SUPPORT IRISH POWs

# BLOODY SUNDAY MARCH

## JANUARY 28

## ASSEMBLE 2.30 SPEAKERS CORNER MARBLE ARCH

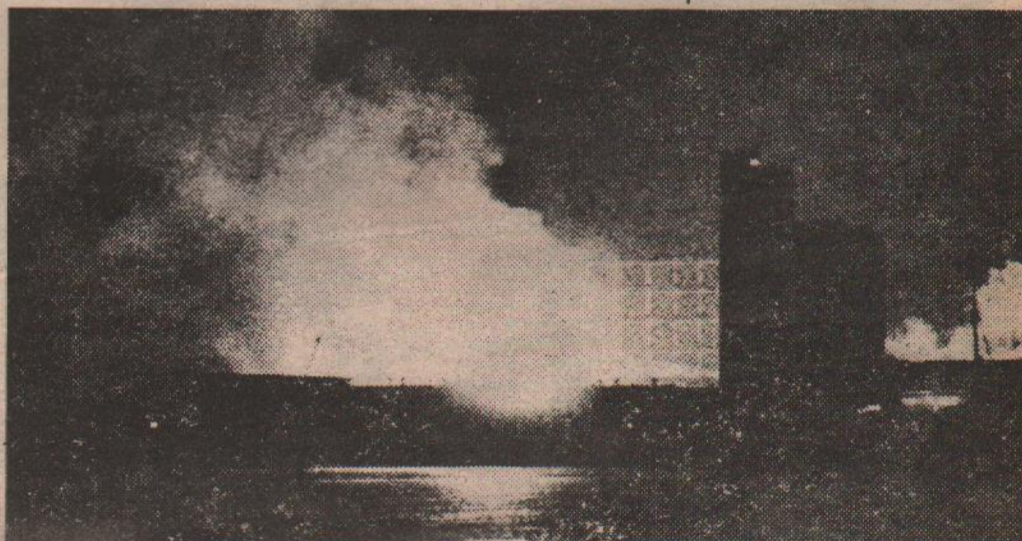
DEMONSTRATION CALLED BY SINN FEIN

People' have all publicly condemned Mason's repressive policies: his obsession with security, his use of the murdering SAS, and his unwillingness to come up with a single constructive idea.

Mason has even turned down

prisoners living in filth and wearing only a blanket, he seems to gloat about it.

It is probably fair to say that Roy Mason has achieved, in the face of great competition, the reputation of being the most hated politician in nationalist



Bombs over London last week

# OUR POLICIES 2

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.

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.

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

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

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

[Delete if not applicable]

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ADDRESS

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

# The day the low-paid rose up



KEN JONES (TGWU, Thanet ambulance station) attacks union leaders at Monday's rally. Inset: NUPE leader Alan Fisher.

FOR WEEKS the Government has been attacking low-paid workers — offering hand-outs instead of ending low pay.

The media has screamed 'murderers' because ambulance drivers and other health workers are not prepared to go on doing vital, heavy, and often unpleasant work for a pittance.

On Monday 80,000 public sector workers — ambulance drivers, nurses, hospital ancillaries, school keepers, water workers, sewage workers and many, many more — came to London to tell Callaghan what they thought of his offer and his solutions.

By Jude Woodward

They all came to show the media just how strongly they came to warn Thatcher not to interfere with their right to strike.

And they came 80,000 strong.

Compare that number with the 600 MPs who have criticised them, the dozen or so national newspaper editors who have attacked them, and the 40 or so members of the TUC General Council who have sabotaged the struggle against low pay by their silence.

Compare that lot with the 80,000, and then ask: Who represents the working people of this country?

John Suddaby, NUPE Camden General branch secretary, who led a contingent of 200 to join the main demonstration, summed up the general feeling when he said: 'It's really fantastic. Now we've got a chance to really show Callaghan and this Labour Government what we feel about low pay.'

'We're not going to stick it any more. If we're as vital as the press has been saying we are for the past week, then it's about time they started paying

us what we're worth.

'This demonstration is our first chance to show how strongly we feel about this; to show how insulted we are by the offer we've got so far.'

'We want £60 a week, and even that's only two-thirds of the national average wage. And we want a 35-hour week.'

'In Camden, North London, we've had a very effective all-out NUPE strike today. All the depots have been closed.'

'The most important thing now is to make sure that those boroughs that go on indefinite strike from today — like Southwark — are not isolated.'

'There has to be a massive campaign for the unions to call everyone out in solidarity. To move on to an all-out strike for the full claim across the country.'

'The union leadership is sitting tight and leaving it up to individual branches what they decide to do. This isn't good enough — it's a recipe for defeat.'

'The leadership of the union has to be forced to give a real lead to the members. The members all want to win — the turn out today shows that.'

'Now we have to face the real fight.'

Bob Elliott, shop steward for

Camden ambulance drivers, told assembled Camden strikers that he was angry with the negotiators:

'They backed down and agreed to voluntary staffing of ambulances for emergencies. Thirty five ambulance offices rejected this and are out on strike.'

'But in many places this worked as emotional blackmail, and they've kept some people in. The police are scabbing on the strike by driving ambulances anyway and they've got the St John's Ambulance Brigade, so this was a real backdown under unfair pressure.'

'Ambulance drivers are fed up with being paid a basic wage of £46 a week. We want a decent living wage. We have to go back to our branches and go for an all-out strike for the full claim.'

'Callaghan is already on the run. If we build strike committees and councils of action then we can win our claim.'

Branch secretary Lindsay of University College Hospital NUPE came with her members and spoke for many ancillary workers when she said:

'We are here today in this freezing cold weather because



our basic wage is £38 a week — if we work a 40-hour week.

'Some of my members have to work seven days a week to earn enough for their families.'

'We are nearly all here today from UCH, but many people have been blackmailed to stay in the hospitals. They are told that they are urgently needed to keep the hospitals open and to stop people dying.'

'We want support in our fight against low pay and for shorter hours.'

Some of her members,

among them Mira Mickovic and Lily Sajnebever, added to her words. 'Quite simply we want more money and less hours.'

'We only get three weeks' paid holiday. You have to work really long hours. If you take even one day off sick you don't get paid and you lose your bonus.'

'It's too much work and not enough money. And we've just about had enough. We don't work for fun. It's not even a particularly rewarding job.'

'If they want to keep us working they'll have to realise that our basic pay is just not enough.'

David, aged 13, from Acland Burghley school, should have the last word. 'My school was closed down because of the strike', he said. 'I think I'm the only one from my school who decided to come on the demonstration.'

'But I came as I support the strike and think they should get more money.'

Photo: BOB MURPHY [Socialist Challenge]

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## Where the public sector action is

FOLLOWING the huge demonstration on Monday, many public sector manual workers are taking action for their pay claim.

Union leaders have not called for an all-out strike, despite strong feeling in favour of this among the membership, but many branches are striking anyway.

Across the country disruption of services continues, and public sector workers are showing their determination to fight it out with their pay masters — the Government.

Here is a checklist of some of the action.

Schoolkeepers in Sunderland, Newcastle upon Tyne, Hillingdon in Middlesex, and the London borough of Haringey are on indefinite strike.

In Gwent in Wales schoolkeepers are likely to stay out. They are angry because Gwent was one of three Welsh areas not to close its schools on Monday.

Six hundred water workers walked out on unofficial strike in the North-west on Monday night — only hours after colleagues in another division had voted to accept the 14 per cent offer.

Several other large branches of the water workers have voted to come out and reject the offer, including South Wales.

In Birmingham, laundry workers in central hospitals will stay out all week.

Southwark and Barking branches of NUPE are on all-out indefinite strike action.

The ambulance service across London is on emergency cover only. This situation applies in many areas of the country.

On Merseyside, the chief ambulance officer threatened to lock out drivers taking limited industrial action, and now there's virtually no service there at all.

NUPE members were sitting-in on Tuesday at Queen Mary College in London because non-union workers had been brought in during Monday's day of action.

In various parts of Britain a number of hospitals and schools have had to close or run on drastically reduced services.

Everywhere public sector manual workers are striking, working to rule, handling emergencies only, working 'without enthusiasm' and banning overtime.

In addition to these public sector manual workers, Manchester Airport faces closure again because of a 20 per cent pay claim from Transport Union members.

Power workers leader Mick Barwick has warned that they will not accept 5 per cent.

Train drivers are due to strike again today for more money. And we've yet to hear from the miners and many others...

## Low paid

# So what will

# Brother Fisher do now?

THE 'Daily Telegraph' described Monday's Day of Action by public sector workers as 'the biggest strike since 1926'.

For many of those on strike the limited nature of the action did not go nearly far enough.

The subsequent rally in Westminster ended in uproar when the audience drowned out the speeches of the union leaders with chants of 'all out strike'.

But the leaders involved — Fisher of NUPE, Basnett of GMWU, Spanswick of COHSE, and Evans of the TGWU — will need a lot more pushing before they agree to such a tactic.

According to last Sunday's *Observer*, the union leaders 'hope to keep a firm grip on the activities of their local action committees which will run the disruption campaign, but they are worried that militants will escalate the action'.

This is why the action committees are being recommended to look at a variety of tactics for pursuing the claim, all of which stop at an all-out strike by all the unions and all the workers involved.

A circular from NUPE suggests 'total strikes by selected groups, overtime bans,

lightning strikes by others, work to rule'.

The unwillingness of the leadership to make strike action as effective as possible is illustrated by their attitude to the strikes by school caretakers.

Both Alan Fisher and his assistant Bernard Dix have informed pickets that it is not their function to close down the schools, but merely to 'persuade' teachers not to do work normally done by the strikers.

Accordingly, on Monday the National Union of Teachers reversed their previous decision and sent out instructions to their members to cross the picket lines — an instruction which was approved by the NUPE leadership.

Similar attempts to limit the action are evident in the ambulance service, where the unions have told their members to answer emergency services, despite the Government's provocation of sending in the army to strike break at the first

opportunity.

Hand in hand with such attempts to contain action, some of the union leaders have already made public their desire to drop the demand for £60 now.

Thus Terry Mallinson, COHSE's Ancillary Council negotiator, told the *Financial Times*:

'The basic increase might not be so important if the Government were ready to admit the union's case for productivity payments, perhaps in the form of an attendance bonus, and for consolidation of supplements into basic rates.'

Similarly, when Alan Fisher appeared on the *Tonight* programme on Monday night, he made it obvious he would recommend a settlement based on 'the going rate', that is around 15 per cent, or less than half what the pay claim actually is — quite apart from the demand for a 35-hour week.

The union leaders are most enthusiastic for a settlement in the region of 14 per cent followed by a governmental inquiry into public sector pay.

Their suggestion is understandable, and pathetic. The spectacle of moving one and a

half million workers into action to gain an inquiry might amuse the partisans of pay policy.

It would also deny the low paid their one sure means of hoisting themselves to a £60 minimum — militant action now for the full claim.

So, on the one side there are the union leaderships, striving to limit the action and publicly stating their desire to compromise on the claim, while on the other side there is the militancy evident in many sections of the rank and file up and down the country, and most vocally evident at the Westminster rally.

The outcome of the tensions between Fisher et al and the rank and file will be decided in how and who controls the strike action.

Despite having lost the initiative in many areas around the country, the public sector union leaders still have ultimate control at a national level.

But at a time when their collaborationist schemes are increasingly being challenged, the possibility exists for the emergence of rank and file bodies to control the struggle.

Elected strike committees, joint shop stewards committees, and the organisation of

flying pickets can be fought for and won — and the leaderships obliged to recognise such bodies.

Such a fight needs organising. The £60 and 35 Hours Low Pay Campaign Committees can do this job. The Campaign for Action in NUPE can wage the struggle in that union.

But they will only be effective if the small number of initial supporters can channel their efforts in a united fashion and in the right direction.

In London, for example, 11 meetings have been called using the £60-35 hours name but under the title 'Rank and File Action Campaign', and these have called for workers to unite through Rank and File groups.

Such groups and Low Pay Action Committees cannot be the organisers of the strike. They are too small and do not pose any serious alternative to the official or unofficial strike bodies based on the structures of the unions.

Their role should be to get their supporters to fight inside the union for their line as to how the claim can best be won.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE TRADE UNION DAY SCHOOL

on

Rebuilding the Left in the Unions

Saturday 17 February 1979

Open to all supporters of Socialist Challenge in the unions.  
Venue: Starcross School, Risinghill Street, London N1. Entrance 50p.



Photo: BOB MURPHY (Socialist Challenge)

# HOME NEWS

THE ROAD Haulage Association has so far met the lorry drivers' claim of £65 for a 35-hour week with an offer of £60 for 40 hours.

In local settlements, the union leaders have dropped the demand for a reduction in hours and at the same time done their best to appease the Government with a picketing code that amounts to a scabs' charter.

BOB CHORLEY, a lorry driver and TGWU member at Carborundum on the Trafford Park industrial estate, Manchester, told Martin Collins how the strike is biting in spite of weak leadership.

There are 40,000 laid off in the North-west. The docks are bottled up and no containers are moving. Ninety per cent of all transport goes by road.

You'd think we could get this strike finished quickly, but we are divided.

Among the Road Haulage Association drivers the strike is virtually a hundred per cent. But the Freight Transport Association drivers haven't been called out by the Transport and General Workers Union.

The RHA is the employers' association which negotiates for firms operating a hire and reward system. The FTA negotiates for firms which have their own transport for

delivering their own goods.

The union's decision sets up a division among drivers that wasn't really apparent before the strike.

FTA drivers are about 20 per cent better paid, but most would probably have joined the present action. Before the TGWU made the strike official, it was drivers from both the associations who were taking unofficial action.

At our place — Carborundum, on Trafford Park — we had to vote on whether to come out on sympathy strike, with strike pay, or wait until the secondary pickets closed the place down and get lay off pay.

With that sort of choice the drivers voted against strike

action.

Before the TGWU came out, the United Road Transport Union had accepted the 13 per cent offer. Being an all-drivers union, with some 20,000 members, they recognised they'd be finished if they worked through the strike.

I think it's the first strike they've made official, and they're carrying on full secondary picketing.

Secondary picketing is the only way we're going to win. The FTA drivers won't cross other drivers' picket lines, so three or four pickets can close down a really big place.

At our place three pickets have stopped 28 vehicles. At Colgate Palmolive down the

## Lorry drivers' strike The truck stops here

road TGWU members in the warehouse there won't touch any RHA wagons, so they don't need a picket.

A lot depends on what the union officials are up to. At Gateways near Bristol, for example, they threatened to tear up drivers' union cards if they continued to mount secondary pickets.

In Manchester at the moment there is just no chance of this kind of nonsense.

Alex Kitson, the national official in charge of the strike, has some kind of domino theory about 11 regional negotiating bodies settling one after the other.

The union leadership is looking for deals and ways out, and the local settlements are very divisive.

There is a dilemma — if you bring down Labour the Tories would take away the right to strike altogether. So what do you do when Moss Evans signs a code of picketing that Callaghan had probably drawn up for him?

Bill Astbury, the chairperson of the Manchester strike committee, said that if the drivers can't afford to eat no one will. Of course, holding up hospital supplies and animal feedstuffs will not strengthen

the strike.

Bill is very blunt, and that was a bit rash. But what it reflects is our attitude to the strike. The bigger it is, the more solid it remains, the quicker we win.

A crucial part of the claim is for the 35-hour week. The whole industry and pay structure is geared around working 20 hours overtime a week.

The basic rate for drivers is something like £1.33 an hour. In 1981, when the EEC regulations come in limiting the working week, drivers' wages will be slashed.



ROBERT WATSON (right) and the lorry which killed him (above)

## Scab kills picket

By Geoffrey Sheridan

DEATH came to a striking lorry driver last Thursday, under the wheels of a scab-driven truck.

It happened on the picket line at the Shell UK Exploration and Production depot in Aberdeen.

An eight-ton lorry refused to stop when it went into the depot. As it left, Robert Watson and another picket went up to speak to the driver. He sped on, leaving Watson

crushed under his wheels.

The hysteria machine cranked up by Parliament and the 'popular' press has yet to find a single death — human or animal — caused by strikers' action.

Yet their message when a lorry driver is killed fighting for a decent wage is quite simple: Stop your bullying and get back to work.

\* Pickets can look forward to imprisonment — under a National Front government. That was the message from

John Tyndall at the NF's annual conference last weekend.

Tyndall declared: 'When we take over the reins of government, as one day we shall, the moment that mobsters try by physical intimidation to prevent British workers doing their jobs, those mobsters will find themselves in police cells so quickly they won't know what hit them.'

Many do know, though. It's called fascism.



ANTI-STRIKERS — mainly women — took to the streets in Liverpool, Bury, and Oldham last weekend, heckled by counter-demonstrators.

With a combination of strikes and freezing weather conditions making a sharp impact on industrial and social life in the area, the Tories, the far right, and the press have been attempting to rally the most vulnerable.

By Tommy Healey

SOME 70 women and men braved the snow and fog in their suede leather and fur coats at Liverpool's Pierhead 1 last Sunday.

Calling themselves Women Against Strikes and Housewives United, the group's organisers included local Tory parties and the National Association for Freedom.

They were opposed by 120 counter-demonstrators, from the Women's Action Group, Women's Voice, the Ford Workers Group, and other sections of the women's movement, together with striking lorry drivers, low paid workers, and other trade unionists.

Both groups gathered with their placards. A man sat on a raincoat praying, a Bible in his hand.

The banners of the anti-trade unionists, declaring 'Down with Strikes', were waved in

anger as the supporters of the lorry drivers grew larger, finally outnumbering them.

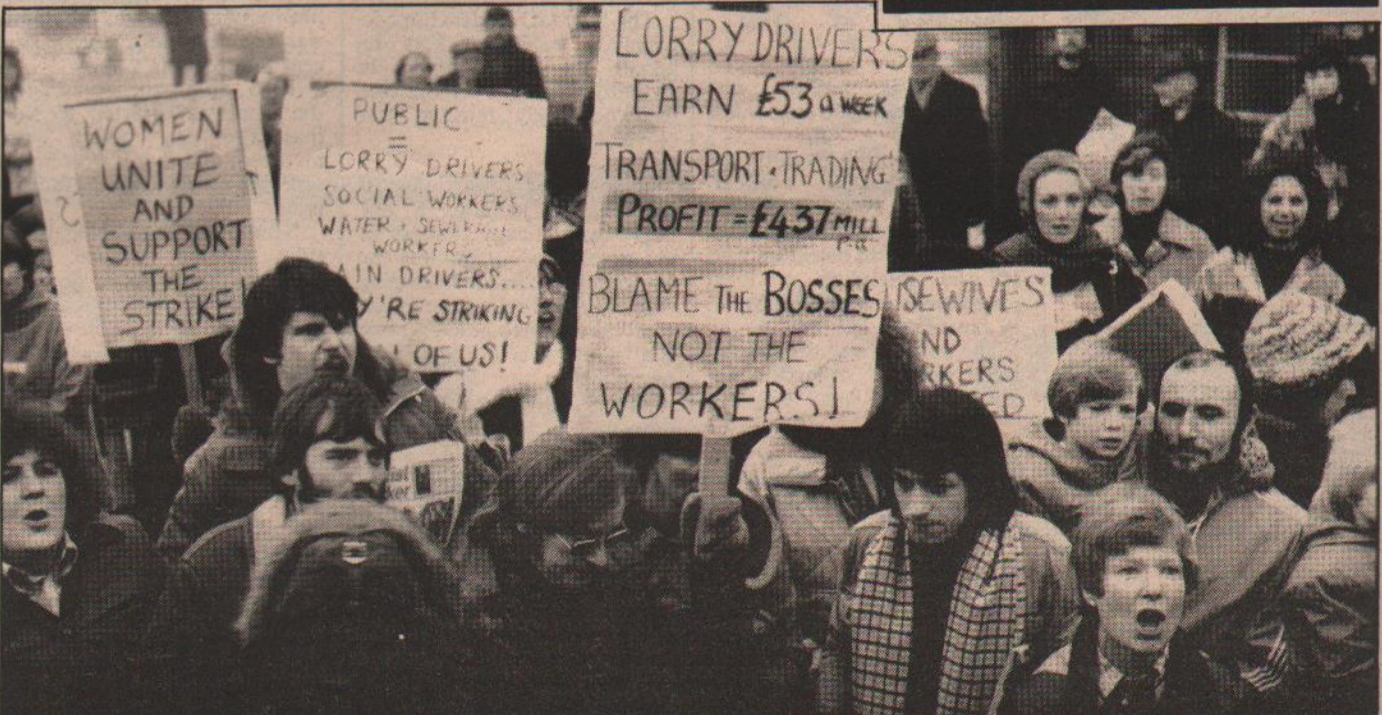
The anti-trade unionists made their worst mistake when they decided to mount the podium which had been erected to celebrate one hundred years of Liverpool Trades Council.

This was like a red rag to a bull to the pro-strikers. Here was a group of anti-trade unionists using the workers' podium to mount their campaign.

They were met with a barrage of abuse and snowballs. Shocked by this, they decided to abandon the podium and gather elsewhere.

But the counter-demonstrators then followed, haranguing, debating, and arguing — coupled with chants of 'Tories' and 'scabs'.

This made the anti-strikers react by singing 'Land of Hope and Glory' and 'We're Proud to be Tory', which was their undoing. Some people among



COUNTER-demonstrators supporting the strikers hit back in Liverpool

them clearly did not see themselves as Tories, and began to leave.

The demonstration ended with the supporters of the lorry drivers clearly the victors, with police in large numbers drafted into the area.

The anti-strikers, shocked and bruised by the vociferous

opposition they had received, planned to meet again, this time indoors.

Their demonstration was a defeat for the press and local radio stations, which for a week had pumped out abuse against the lorry drivers and publicised the anti-trade union demo.

Sadly, what was lacking was

the wives of the lorry drivers; though one cannot fault the effective picketing of the lorry drivers themselves.

But they must learn the lesson of involving their wives, so that they are not left isolated.

The media can more easily persuade women that, as

'housewives', they are the victim of strikes, when the workers movement itself helps to reinforce the same division of roles.

Women's groups in Liverpool are preparing to organise further marches and meetings to counter the anti-strike.

Photo: TONY MEEHAN

# WHAT'S LEFT

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

**SOCIALIST Challenge** designer urgently needs accommodation. Anything anywhere in London considered — long or short term. Please phone Bill; 359 8288 in office hours, 267 9419 evenings/weekends.

**WOMEN** in the NUT disco/social. Sat 20 Jan, 8pm, Stevenson Room, Euston Station Colonnade (near cafeteria).

**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. 01-240 1056.

**NATIONAL Abortion Campaign** film benefit. *Shirin's Wedding* — a Turkish woman leaves her village to avoid an arranged marriage. She travels to West Germany seeking her lover — a migrant labourer. Shows her double oppression as a woman and migrant worker. Sun 4 Feb, 1pm at Scala Cinema, Tottenham St, London W1. Adm: £1.60 (£1.10 unwaged).

**ADMINISTRATOR** wanted by Film Work Group, must be registered unemployed. Weekly salary £64.67. Curriculum vitae to 79/89 Lots Rd, London SW10 or ring 01-352 0538.

**WOMEN, Literature and Criticism** day workshop on Sat 10 March, 10am to 6pm, Birmingham University. Open to women and men. Advance registration please: £1.50 waged/£1 unwaged to include food. Creche available on request. Contact Janet Batsleer/Rebecca O'Rourke, CCOS, Faculty of Arts, The University of Birmingham, PO Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT.

**TWO Italian socialists** looking for room(s) in Central/North West/West London. Can pay up to £15. Willing to exchange Italian-English tuition. Contact 01-229 1750.

**HEAR** the left-wing band *Oxy and the Morons* at the Brecknock, 227 Camden Rd, London NW1 (Kentish Town tube), Fri 26 Jan.

**BLACK Socialist Alliance** benefit for BSA and Black People's Campaign Against State Harassment, with two black bands and late bar. Fri 26 Jan, 8pm to 2am Acklam Hall, West London (Ladbroke Grove tube).

**THE WOMEN'S Theatre Group:** for booking from mid-March. *The Soap Opera:* A musical play for adults, exploring the experiences and relationships of a mixed group of women, accidentally locked in laundrette. *Hot Spot:* a satire of the sexual stereotyping put over to young people. For audiences of 16 upwards. Contact: Tiersl Thompson/Tammy Walker, 291 Finchley Rd, London NW3. Tel 01-794 0958 Mon-Thurs. Message service, 01-278 6783 Mon-Fri.

**TROTSKY's Marxism** by Denise Avenas of the French LCR. Discusses permanent revolution, the role of the party and bureaucracy, from the viewpoint of the relationship between politics and economics. A4, 35 pages, 35p plus 10p p&p, 10% off and post free for orders over 10. PO's, cheques with orders to: Oxford Socialist Challenge, 26 Bullingdon Rd., Oxford.

**TWO feminists** buying house to raise children need sympathetic male help as GLC only mortgage spacious houses to engaged (heterosexual) couples. Man must be under 30, on rising scale of pay (GLC conditions) and around for the next 6 to 9 mths. £50 reward if nec. London area. Write to Box 100, c/o Socialist Challenge, Box 50, London N1.

**SOVIET Union** — why the dissidents are right. Geoff Roberts, Organiser Communist University of London 10/Socialist Europe. 6.30pm Thurs 25 Jan, School of Oriental and African Studies, Malet St, London WC1. Organised by SOAS Communist Society.

**MAY DAY GREETINGS:** trades council or shop stewards committees, would your trade union branch put its May Day Greetings in Socialist Challenge? If so, just send us the name and address of the branch secretary and on 28 February the branch will be mailed allowing the item to be raised at the branches' March or April meeting. Copies of the circular, including rates, from D. Weppler, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

**DESIGNER** required to work for Socialist Challenge/FI Litho.

Must be politically committed.

Knowledge of printing and production techniques, especially platemaking, an advantage.

Apply in writing to FI Litho, 328/9 Upper St, London N1

# HOME NEWS

## NUSS under attack in London

# School students demand right to organise

TWO WEEKS AGO parents of school students at one of the most disciplinarian schools in London, Highbury Grove School, received a letter from the headmaster (illustrated here).

This hysterical reaction to attempts by school students to organise, and even more so to the new National Union of School Students' magazine *Blot*, is fairly typical.

RAY BROWN and SUE HUTCHINS talked to some of the students at Highbury Grove to find out why they wanted a union at their school.

**Pete:** 'We want a union at Highbury Grove to stop the cane, the petty rules and school uniforms.'

**Tim (3rd year):** 'At our school you can get caned for almost anything. The teachers can make up the rules as they go along.'

'For example, I've known people beaten for lateness, fighting, swearing, smoking (even when you're over 16), and even things like eating in class or answering a teacher back or forgetting their homework.'

**Frank (4th year):** 'Once or twice they've caned a whole class. Like one first year class got caned 'cos they were mucking about with a fifth year. The teacher came in and just caned the lot of them.'

'The NUSS told us there are rules about the cane. They said

teachers have to do it in private with a teacher as a witness and with a proper cane.

'In fact kids often get it in front of the whole class and not always with a cane.'

'I'd estimate they use the cane about eight times a week at Highbury Grove. That makes it by far the worst school round here.'

Other problems at the school include incredibly petty uniform rules — to the extent that students have to get passes if, for example, they don't have the proper regulation shoes.

If they don't get a pass from their housemaster they're likely to get suspended.

Some students thought racism was a problem too.

**Steve (4th year):** 'Some teachers seem to pick on the coloured kids more than the

others. Like if a coloured kid and white kid get caught fighting, I've seen some teachers punish the coloured one and not the other.'

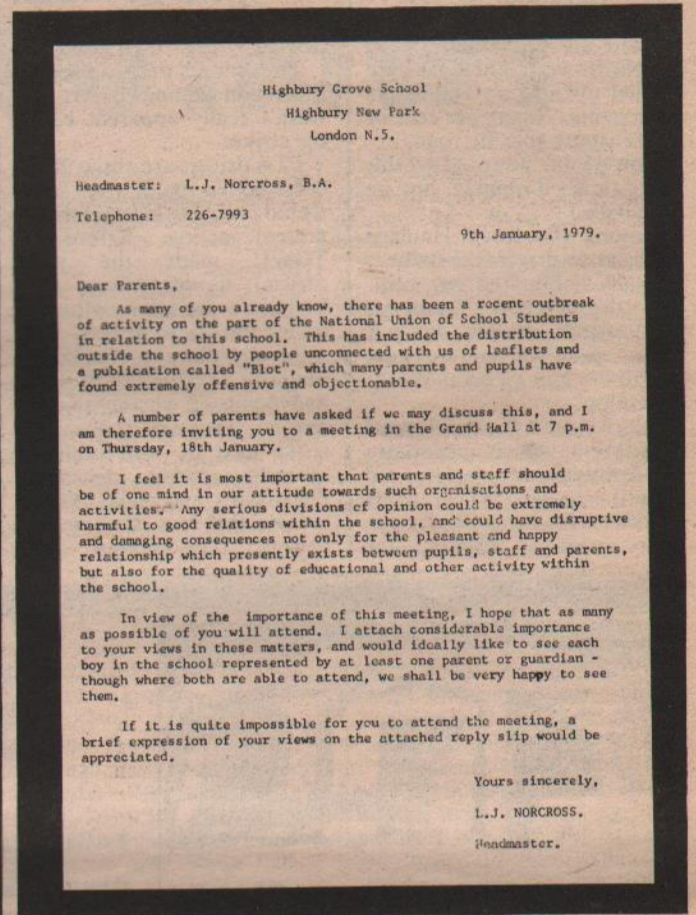
In fact Highbury Grove is already a test-tube for many of the Stone Age ideas that its former headmaster Rhodes Boyson, now Tory education spokesperson, would like to see applied throughout the education system.

The keynote is discipline, and a senior staff smart enough to use their privileged access to parents to whip them up against any attempt by their students to change things in the school.

In spite of this the students are getting organised. Forty came to a meeting after NUSS had leafleted the school and responded to the head's letter by distributing *Blot* free at the school gates.

They didn't come to be 'subverted and corrupted'. They came because they thought a union could help them to win basic rights that those of us not at school take for granted: to join a union; against physical violence from teachers; for the right to wear the clothes they choose.

Their next step will be to try to win mass support for tactics like not wearing uniform,



demanding that at least the legal code on the cane is enforced, and trying to get ride of corporal punishment altogether.

They deserve the support of socialists — and more especially socialist teachers, whose union leaders universally attack and condemn the NUSS.

# Social workers confront union ruse

By Pete Cresswell  
Secretary, Liverpool strike committee

'AFTER six months our members are still strong, but is NALGO?'

The question is asked by the local government workers' union's own standing conference of strike committees, in a leaflet sent to all delegates who will be attending a local government group meeting on 26 January.

The meeting will discuss the social workers' strike for pay regrading and local negotia-

tions, which now involves 19 NALGO branches.

The NALGO leaders hope to persuade social workers to accept an offer which is virtually the same as the one overwhelmingly rejected last November.

Their latest report, issued last Friday, includes a few fairly insignificant changes in the employers' offer; but the leadership appears to be hoping that they will win support on what they seem to be suggesting is a victory over the 5 per cent pay policy.

But until the last few weeks

the pay policy has not even been an issue in the dispute. It had been assumed that, as the claim was for regrading, the 5 per cent limit couldn't apply.

Then, about six weeks ago, the employers started to say that the pay policy was involved, and that it prevented settlement on the regrading issue.

Now, at the last minute, both sides in the dispute have suddenly 'revealed' a government ruling that the policy doesn't apply after all.

So what seemed apparent at the beginning of the dispute is now portrayed as a 'victory' by

the union leadership!

Meanwhile, no headway at all has been made on the central question of local negotiations, and the suspicion is that the issue of pay policy was raised and then unraised as a way of camouflaging the dropping of this demand.

As an alternative to what would, in reality, be a defeat for the social workers, striking branches and their supporters are calling for immediate withdrawal from talks on a national deal — a strategy which would re-emphasise the claim for local negotiations.

Other suggested tactics

include giving strikers more control through representation on the official strike operations committee, the escalation of strike action, and a levy of the membership to finance the strike.

\*Lobby NALGO meeting at Central Hall, Westminster, Friday 26 January, 8.30am onwards.

# BOC victory

By John Ross  
WORKERS at the British Oxygen Corporation's Hackney depot have won their struggle against the suspension of Transport and General Workers Union convenor John Walsh and five other workers.

The six were suspended after the Hackney workers had refused to work on iced-up lorries on safety grounds. Now, after a two week strike, management has caved in and lifted the suspensions.

The six are to be reinstated and those who walked out with them are to be paid for the time of the suspensions. Work has been resumed on the basis of negotiations in 28 days on payment of all wages lost in the strike.

# Victimisation threat to journalists

By Kathy Lowe  
NUJ North London branch

THE ENDING of the seven-week strike of provincial journalists, with the decision to accept a 14.5 per cent pay increase, has brought a mixed response from the 8,500 members of the National Union of Journalists who were affected.

Certainly, this level of pay rise would never have been achieved without the hard-fought industrial action — the first national strike in the union's history.

But the settlement falls far below the £20 claim, and for juniors — those with less than three years experience — it means a before-tax rise of under £5.

The employers have once again succeeded in maintaining the differentials which provincial journalists have long been concerned to narrow.

The worst aspect of the settlement, however, is that the union leadership recommended the deal without ensuring that there would be no victimisation.

At the Nottingham Evening Post, where the unions were

smashed after a strike in 1973, 28 journalists now stand to lose their jobs. Threats of dismissal have also been made against probationers in Sittingbourne, Kent, and elsewhere.

NUJ chapels were asked to vote on the pay offer before we had the information about the failure to secure no-victimisation.

A proposal to continue the strike until everyone is reinstated, put to a national meeting of chapel representatives on 17 January, was defeated by a three to two majority.

Since the chapels themselves

had already voted to return, this result wasn't surprising.

Unless there is a united effort now to win total reinstatement, the prospects for future industrial action will be gravely damaged.

Above all, the strike has revealed the importance of electing a strike leadership.

Our action lacked national leadership, and when it came to the crunch the full-time officials suffered a bad failure of nerve. This persuaded them — without any real evidence — that the strike would collapse unless there was a quick settlement.

## Political debate is vital

CONSIDERABLE interest has been aroused by the appeal for revolutionary unity and joint work drawn up by the International Socialists Alliance and International Marxist Group and published in our issue of 4 January (copies still available).

We hope to print one or more contributions to this debate every week. This week's contribution is by FRANCIS MULHERN, a member of the paper's National Policy Committee and of Camden Socialist Challenge Group.

The IMG-ISA 'Resolution on Revolutionary Unity' seeks to consolidate the political understandings reached to date by the forces gathered around Socialist Challenge into a programme of joint action capable of giving these understandings practical effect and attracting wider support among socialists for the project of revolutionary regroupment.

As such it should be welcomed by all those interested in building an effective revolutionary socialist organisation in this country.

By the same token, the resolution is a limited document, representing a modest organisational base and confining itself to somewhat generic statements and proposals.

It is not an analysis of contemporary Britain, or of the tasks and possibilities lying before the British left today, and should not be evaluated as though it were.

However, having signed the document, I would like to indicate certain reservations or differences of emphasis, three concerning particular formulations and a fourth concerning the general tenor of the text.

1. The CP is lumped in with the Labour Party as part of 'the reformist Left'. This is erroneous, in my view.

The new 'British Road' certainly represents a strengthening of the impulse towards reformism, but the Party remains a centrist organisation whose political destiny is still uncertain.

It is hardly conceivable, at least not in the reasonably near future, that the CP could finally degenerate into reformism without a severe crisis involving the departure of large numbers of its militants — forces who should be seen as potential members of a united revolutionary organisation, and who should therefore be approached with greater political delicacy than this phrase gives evidence of.

2. The section on anti-racist and anti-fascist work speaks of 'destroying' the National Front et al. Nothing else here actually bears out this suggestion, so it may be that the word slipped inadvertently.

At any rate, it was a regrettable lapse, which will not help to rid the far left of its residual weakness for anti-fascist heroics.

As the rest of the section rightly indicates, racism — fascist, state-organised, or simply the everyday popular variety — can only be combatted by mass political

mobilisation.

The whole purpose of democratising the ANL is to equip it with the analysis and demands that this objective necessitates — and which the ANL obviously lacks.

3. Section 5 calls, among other things, for 'solidarity with those fighting British imperialism' in Ireland. Put so abstractly, this demand is unexceptionable; and it seems clear that British withdrawal is a precondition of further political advance in the island.

Yet it remains a fact that, after ten years of continuous crisis, none of these anti-imperialist forces has been able to weaken the resistance of 1 million Ulster Protestants to their political projects, or to explain that resistance in any cogent way.

My own view is that these political projects, in their present form, are not compatible with the consistent exercise of the right of national self-determination in Ireland which the resolution also demands.

4. The resolution's emphasis on joint-action — which in another form has been a recurrent theme in debates over Socialist Challenge since its inception — is unsatisfactory.

There is at times a tendency within Socialist Unity to uphold action as a dependable solvent of political differences and to relegate political debate to optional status.

This tendency should be resisted.

No likely experience of

## IWA President on Why we'll be defending Dave Stevens

THE TRIAL of Dave Stevens, the Wolverhampton anti-racist committee treasurer who was arrested on a demonstration last March, is due to start between 7 and 14 February.

The defence campaign for Dave has had a big impact locally. N.S. NOOR, National President of the Indian Workers Association (GB), told Chris Roseblade how racism affects the Asian community in Wolverhampton and why they are campaigning for support for Dave.

**You have recently taken the initiative in forming a campaign committee for multi-racial education in Wolverhampton. What do you think of the racist remarks about this from Nick Budgen, Enoch Powell's successor as Conservative MP for Wolverhampton South?**

Budgen's remarks don't surprise me at all. He calls for stricter immigration controls and says that multi-racial education will lead to apartheid.

Given his past history this is not surprising. Three or four years ago he accused Asian parents of selling their daughters to the highest bidder. We challenged him to appear on the same platform as us to prove this false allegation. Of course he had to eat humble pie. He had no proof.

The general question of multi-racial education is a delicate area. Although this local authority is controlled by so-called socialists, the Asian

community has suffered more at the hands of the Labour council in Wolverhampton than anywhere else in the country.

We have had dozens of complaints from Asian parents whose children deserved grammar school places but were never allowed any. When we asked for the selection criteria they were never revealed, but were always kept as a state secret.

That is why we set up our committee, to campaign for provision for the special needs of ethnic minorities.

**Has it been effective?**

Definitely. The issue is now in the public eye. There is a clear rift developing within the Labour Party, with some people in favour of complete implementation of multi-racial education.

People are now prepared to fight back against all sorts of discrimination — not just in education, but in social security

'action' will encompass the whole range of action that will sooner or later, over a period of decades, be required of a cohesive and versatile revolutionary organisation.

This range is available only in the entire practice of the socialist movement, past and present, and can only be grasped as a whole in political

discussion.

There is of course another, less exacting road to unity, the International Socialist road which has led, many splits and purges later, to the Socialist Workers Party. The course of 'action' which produced that kind of 'unity' is better discussed today than repeated tomorrow.

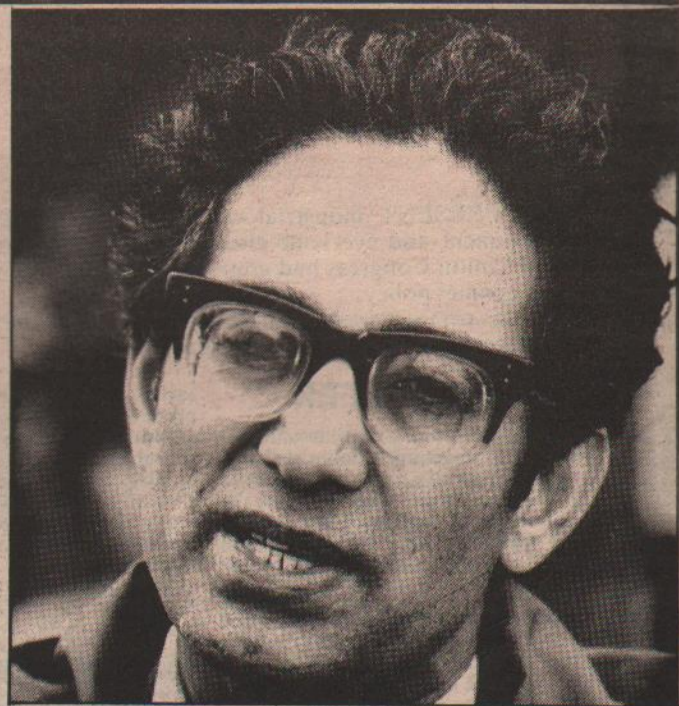


Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

provision, for example.

**This is a major grievance among the community, isn't it?**

Of course. They don't know their rights. The tribunals are a pack of racist parasites.

Often they don't even bother to cross-examine the claimant. They simply say 'Wait outside', because in reality they've made up their minds already.

I am often present as an interpreter. The medical officer will say that this man is fit for work even though his own doctor says that he isn't.

They try all sorts of tricks to stop paying benefit, or again they can simply delay the claims for months.

It is these practical questions — education and social security — which really affect the community, and which anti-racists have to take up.

**But despite everything, your balance-sheet of our work in the last year is positive?**

Undoubtedly. To a certain extent we have already exposed racists in the administration, the police and the judiciary.

Our acquittal rate of people with charges trumped up

against them is staggeringly high — about 90 per cent. This now makes the police think twice before they arrest 'potential criminals'.

It is not accidental that Dave Stevens has got a lot of support in the campaign that we have organised to drop the charges against him. Support from MPs, councillors, trade unionists — this reflects the work that we have done.

His trial will probably be in early February, and as of now we are leafleting and preparing for it.

We have called a community rally for the India Republic Day celebrations on 28 January. About 2,000 people will be there, and Dave Stevens will address the meeting together with MP Bob Edwards.

We are convinced that Bob Edwards will help to mobilise support for the first day of Dave's trial and to present our petition to the DPP.

The Indian community knows what Dave Stevens has done for them in the past. We will now be asking them to help him in return, and I'm sure that the community will respond wholeheartedly and help build a huge picket for the first day of his trial.



**ABOUT** a thousand mourners for Michael Ferreira, the black youth murdered by white racists in Hackney, East London, raised their fists in angry defiance last Saturday as they passed Stoke Newington police station, where Michael had to wait for 45 minutes before an ambulance arrived.

# THE LEFT AND ELECTIONS

## socialist unity

National conference, Saturday 3 February. London WC1. Registration fee £1. Credentials from Bob Pennington, SU, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Speakers include: **Hugo Blanco**, leader of mass peasant struggles in Peru and deputy for FOCEP united left slate; **Harry McShane**, active in the CPGB's election work in the 1920s; **Pat Arrowsmith**, campaigner against nuclear weapons, for gay rights, for troops out of Ireland, and Independent Socialist candidate for Cardiff South-East.

Conference begins 11am, or BR from Victoria. Adm £1 Holborn Assembly Rooms, (50p wageless).

**ALSO BENEFIT** afterwards with Belt and Braces rock band, Latin American music, curry supper, refreshments. 7.30pm at St Matthews Community Hall, Brixton (opp. Lambeth Town Hall) — 5 mins from Brixton tube (Victoria line), buses 35, 2, 3, 196, 159, 95, 37, or BR from Victoria. Adm £1 Holborn Assembly Rooms, (50p wageless).

# Tribune

THE PRESENT industrial crisis was not unpredictable. The government and everyone else was given plenty of notice. The Trade Union Congress had gone on record against wage restraint and incomes policy.

It was perfectly clear that the rank and file of the unions would not accept any further wage restraint.

## By ERIC HEFFER

It was therefore somewhat unrealistic for the government to insist that it was in favour of a 5 per cent maximum increase for future wage rises. Once the Labour Party conference had rejected the 5 per cent the government should have bowed to the realities of the situation.

Instead most ministers acted like ostriches, mouthing old phrases about how the 5 per cent line had to be held and how the country simply could not afford to pay any more. This attitude merely exacerbated the situation.

It was clear that the government would be forced to retreat. That they are now doing, and each dispute will be settled as it arises. The incomes policy is as dead as a dodo.

The demands for legislation to control the unions which are being put forward by Tory and Liberal politicians have, unfortunately, found an echo in right-wing Labour politicians.

The Manifesto Group is once again reviving the arguments used in 'In Place of Strife'. These are not likely to receive widespread support, but they do have their supporters in the Cabinet.

The reality of the situation is that the workers, organised in their trade unions, have seriously frightened the employers and the Tory establishment. By their actions they have demonstrated the extent of their power.

It is they who produce and move the goods. Without them capital is useless. It is this power that the establishment is determined to crush.

The demand for legislation to outlaw the closed shop, to stop 'secondary picketing', to bring in emergency powers under a State of Emergency, are all designed to crush the rising power and militancy of the workers.

For the establishment the unions, instead of being the spearhead of the workers' struggle, are to be blunted and used as the policemen to discipline the workers!

However, despite these demands, history will not at the moment lend itself to such developments. Settlements along the lines of the workers' demands will have to be reached.

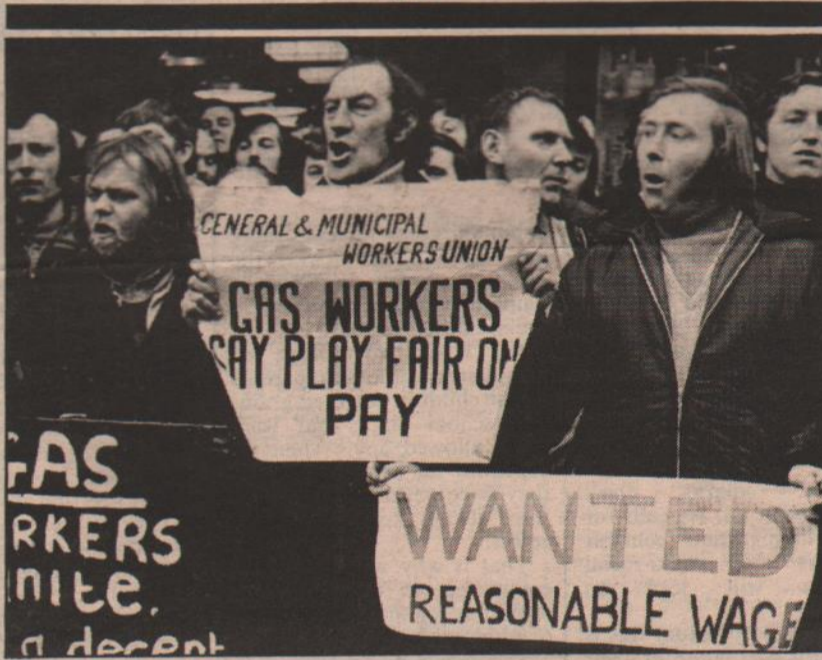
That is why the government is belatedly recognising the facts and is refusing to be stamped into accepting a State of Emergency.

Contrary to what the Tory press is

saying, we are not in the throes of a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation or anything remotely resembling it.

What we are seeing is a purely economic conflict which will blow itself out with the workers making some financial gains at the expense of the employers.

It could and would develop differently if a Tory government headed by Mrs Thatcher were in



control. For then her right-wing views would create a situation of confrontation.

The British labour movement is unique. The Labour Party was created by the unions and it cannot exist without them.

William Rodgers, the Minister for Transport, recently referred to a 'strain'. This exists, but not between the party and unionised workers. It is between the government and the unions.

This is because it is the Labour government which is out of step. It has accepted too many Tory arguments. There is just enough time to put things right, but only just.

# Socialist Worker

THE LABOUR government is now facing a crisis approaching in scale that which brought down Edward Heath in 1974.

The immediate cause of panic in high places has been the lorry drivers pickets' success in bottling up the profitable heart of British capitalism.

This has taken place just as the public sector manual workers are mounting their biggest ever protests against low pay.

## By CHRIS HARMAN

Even if the government clears these two hurdles, it then faces the demands of the miners, the power workers, the civil servants, the teachers. And other workers who have already accepted five per cent are likely to be pushing in interim claims very quickly.

seriously, many struggles are going to be lost, needlessly, like the bakers' strike.

That makes a correct response by the revolutionary left more necessary than ever.

The revolutionary left can begin to make an impact on wider sections of workers than ever before, providing it recognises that its politics has to be rooted in the workplace. There is no substitute for that, although other activities, like building the ANL, may contribute to that task.

For us, the key to successful intervention now lies in a two-pronged strategy.

Firstly, we are seeking to build our papers, *Socialist Worker* and *Women's Voice*, as real workers' papers, where workers can write about their struggles, analyse the political lessons of these struggles in their own words, and see the link between these particular struggles and the overall struggle for workers' power.

We believe these papers can act as a bridge to revolutionary politics for many thousands of workers.

Secondly, our members in each industry and union are trying to build groups of rank and file militants, rooted in the workplace and with a perspective of developing the struggle of their fellow workers rather than the old broad left perspective of simply seeking elected places within the trade union bureaucracy.

We believe that such rank and file groupings provide a mechanism by which revolutionaries can draw non-revolutionary trade unionists into struggle and bring them closer to revolutionary ideas.

In line with this perspective, our members have been on literally hundreds of picket lines in the last few weeks, have distributed many thousands of leaflets, have done their utmost to lead those they work with into the wages battle.



All the props are being pulled out from the elaborate structure built up over four years to hoist profit rates at the expense of wages.

Thatcher's ranting about 'strike committees defying the elected government' is not just demagoguery: it expresses the very real fear of the ruling class that they are losing control over events.

The scale of the struggle against the wage controls is greater, if anything, than in 1973-4: more workers are directly involved than in the miners' strike which displaced Heath.

And the lorry drivers pickets show that in wide sections of industry the attempts by management to incorporate convenors and senior stewards have failed to emasculate shop steward organisation.

However, there is one big difference between the struggle now and that in 1973-4. As yet the level of political generalisation is lower.

In 1973-4 all the struggles began to focus on a single, achievable goal — the removal of the Heath government. The Labour opposition seemed to provide some political alternative to wage controls and the three day week.

Now there is no credible national political alternative to the left of Labour, capable of giving a sense of unified purpose to the many groups of workers in struggle.

'Left' union leaders like Kitson and 'left' MPs like Heffer have been falling over themselves not to distinguish themselves from Moss Evans, Murray or even Callaghan.

The widespread feeling by each group of workers that it should not be subject to wage controls is not yet matched by a consciousness of the struggle as a class-wide struggle. It is this which has allowed defeats like that of the bakers to occur immediately after victories like Fords.

Although the class is advancing, it is doing so in a fragmented manner, which again and again allows employers to retake the initiative. This places a special responsibility on the revolutionary left.

Suddenly, we are in a situation where what we have been saying for years begins to tie in with what workers are learning through their own experience of struggle.

But there are too few of us where it matters, on the factory and office floor, for that many of them to take us seriously. Yet unless they take us



# Crisis

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# SPE

THE COLLAPSE of the policy in the face of struggles poses a serious challenge for socialists.

How can we develop the labour movement?

Here four contributors left of the labour movement give their assessment: ERIC HEFFER, CHRIS HARMAN, JOHN MYANT, and JOHN STURROCK.

Group; CHRIS HARMAN, National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party; JOHN MYANT, assistant editor of the paper, the 'Morning Star'; JOHN STURROCK, national secretary of the

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

Photo: BOB MURPHY (Socialist Challenge)

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



# TAIN



# THE LEFT TAKES

Government's 5 per cent pay series of militant workers' of important questions for alternative to Callaghan in from different currents on the movement give their R, member of the Tribune member of the Central ist Workers Party; CHRIS of the Communist Party's r; and BRIAN GROGAN, International Marxist Group.

# Morning Star

BRITAIN's working people are angry. And who could be surprised at that?

They have been cheated and deceived for nearly five years now — five years in which a Labour government has carried through, with the help of some trade union leaders, one of the biggest confidence tricks of all time.

By CHRIS MYANT

This one netted not just a few thousands for a down-at-heel travelling sales representative, but hundreds upon hundreds of millions for the City, for the multinationals and the other collected industrialists and financiers who go to make up the big business ruling class in Britain today.

Crisis, amplified in Britain by the end of Empire, the greater grip of monopolies and multinationals, and the refusal of capitalist industry to invest at home, has been managed — one might even say stage-managed — by a government which came to power arguing that it alone could re-establish national unity in place of the confrontation upon which the Tory Heath administration was based.

But as is always the case with the reformist leaders on the right of the Labour Party, such appeals to consensus and unity are in reality the disguise for a government programme based on a ruthless policy of shifting the burdens of the crisis firmly onto the backs of working people.

Of course, there have been advances. Any Labour administration, even one as weak in the Commons as the present one, could hardly preserve any degree of political weight and respectability before the movement unless it did cater for some reforms.



But whether it is on women or devolution, pensions or public ownership, the government has only moved as far as it felt compelled to.

Behind this thin pale pink screen lies a central plank of policy — the control of wages through the social contract.

Many, doubtless, genuinely believed the promises of action on houses, on public investment, and the like. They began to believe that wage rises did cause inflation, that if they held back on their pay claims then their real wages would rise.

Those who refused to knuckle under were carefully cocooned away from the

main strength of the whole movement — even so the firemen secured a certain breakthrough, while the government preferred to concede on pay to the police and troops rather than face a growing demand for genuine trade unions among them.

Communists have never considered that such wage policies can for long overcome the central class contradictions inherent in capitalist Britain. Under the Wilson government in 1969 we urged mass action to defeat the 'In Place of Strife' proposals.

When the Tories returned to Downing Street our executive committee posed the objective of blocking its anti-trade union plans through mass action — action which could force the government to the polls before its five year term was up. That objective was met.

What now? At the time of writing — as the first cracks in the government's determination to face down the TGWU are showing, as the public employees are going into action with a marginal increase on the government's first offer already on the table before the strikes have begun — at this moment, the Callaghan Cabinet is reaping the reward of its curbs and cuts.

For the Communist Party the need is both to work for a movement able to secure wage rises sufficient to restore living standards and advance them once again, and to work to see that this movement learns and acquires a commitment in action to a far broader alternative economic strategy as the core of a left programme for government.

Neither will survive without the other. The left, though, will not build itself in divorce and isolation from the existing movement, in opposition to it, seeking to wreck it or disrupt it.

Callaghan and his right-wing colleagues in the Cabinet are far, very far from giving way. Their strength shows the continued strong roots of reformism among our people.

But anyone who doubted that the organised movement, with the trade unions at its heart, could be won for action has their answer now.

Communists, like many others on the left, like the Morning Star, will be striving to see that this opening is built on, that government policies are changed to the left, the Tories defeated at the coming general election, and a Labour government returned to power committed — by policy and the might of the movement — to real advance.

From strikes to socialism needs more than one step. It is always good to know, though, that the British working class is still a determined walker.

The hysteria of the right wing shows just how worried they are at the quickening pace these past months.



# INTERNATIONAL IMG MARXIST GROUP

WHEN the Labour government decided against an election in October last year, it took a calculated risk. It believed it could hold its 5 per cent wage cutting policy by virtue of its collaboration with the trade union leaders.

The public sector manual workers can blow this strategy sky high. But if they remain at the level of mere economic militancy, they give Callaghan the opening to regain the initiative.

What is posed now in every militant struggle is what the socialist alternative to Callaghan is going to be.

By BRIAN GROGAN

The magnificent one day strike last Monday of over 1½ million workers, and the mammoth demonstration in London, reflect the refusal of broad layers of workers to 'tighten their belts' any longer.

But such action falls short of breaking the alliance of the trade union leadership with the government — an alliance based on taking resources from workers' wages, jobs, and the social services, and pumping them into profits.

We cannot be satisfied with the endorsement by the trade union leaders of strikes initiated by the rank and file. Real support for the strikes against the 5 per cent means projecting an alternative programme — improvement of workers' living standards at the expense of profits.

Such an alternative would demand massive nationalisations, real steps to workers control, and a workers plan for the crisis.

But the prospect of such an enormous undertaking has paralysed the left wing of the Labour Party and the National Executive Committee. They have been unable to offer any alternative whatsoever except to demand concessions to safeguard the alliance with the TUC.

What they choose to ignore is that Callaghan is quite prepared to make such limited concessions — but with the aim of recouping the ground and relaunching the assault. Only the emergence of a socialist alternative would prevent him.

It is to this task that all the chatter about the alternative manifesto should be aimed. A recall conference of the Labour Party which pledged itself to solidarise with the present fight against the 5 per cent and adopted a socialist alternative would be a major step.

This could be started now with an announcement by the left MPs that they would vote against the coming Budget.

If there is one glaring lesson of the past years, it is that workers cannot tie themselves to the trade union leaders. True, they cannot be ignored, but we must force them to respond to us.

The way that the trade union leaders have been forced to endorse the initiatives of the rank and file is a sign of the times. It exposes all the poppycock about the incorporation of the convenors and stewards into the

bureaucracy. Now is not the time to attempt to 'go around' the official structures. All recent experience has indicated that whilst we must root ourselves in the factories and offices, such activity must be aimed at recomposing the leadership, starting at the level of the stewards.

We should therefore be for a recall of the TUC to centralise the present struggles, bring out other and more powerful workers like the miners and power workers in coordinated action, and prepare the fight against the government's proposed assault on the right to picket.

Such an orientation is the best way to reach out to more workers at the shop floor level. Everyone now understands the need, for instance, for the public sector unions to make an alliance and cease their splittist tactics.

Equally, it reinforces the fight for joint shop stewards and strike committees to lead the struggle, to which the top officials should be subordinated. Self-proclaimed action committees need to be oriented to these structures and not delude themselves that they are the rank and file leadership.

Revolutionary socialists have never had greater opportunities. With their own leadership in office and attacking them, rank and file workers are forced to search around for alternative policies.

The initiatives taken by stewards in a series of strikes indicate that the political hold of the bureaucracy is now being questioned by the rank and file. They are aware of the political issues as never before. But an answer will not come spontaneously.

We now have the kind of hearing we have never had before. But our fragmentation is a big obstacle.

Roger Cox, a leading member of the Socialist Workers Party, recently expressed in Socialist Worker what is now a common estimate: 'We must not be steered by workers' instincts alone, even though this is often the easiest way. Those instincts must be tempered by answers to questions which those instincts alone cannot provide.'

This recognition of the need to fight for a political alternative to reformism, and the failure of the traditional remedies adopted by the working class, has been expanded by Duncan Hallas in his argumentation for a flexible programme of transitional demands in recent issues of Socialist Worker.

A united campaign by revolutionary organisations around such a 'socialist alternative', including united action in the trade unions, in campaigns like the ANL, NAC and UTOM, could start to provide the perspective which is desperately needed by thousands of workers breaking from their reformist leaders.

It could also provide an impetus towards the building of a united revolutionary organisation in Britain which could fight consistently for such a line of political action and start to overcome the scepticism with which worker militants regard the currently fragmented state of the British far left.

In this regard the electoral alliance around Socialist Unity must not be downplayed. It is just silliness to counterpose activism to taking advantage of the massive opportunities of a general election to provide the answers not furnished by workers' instincts alone.

There is broad agreement with the action programme fought for by Socialist Unity. To refuse to participate when such obvious agreement exists is a folly whose only beneficiary will be Callaghan.

Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (JFL)

**Astrid Proll setback**

ASTRID PROLL faces extradition to West Germany unless her claim for British citizenship is met. The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate has ruled that decided that the West German government has enough evidence on five of the seven charges against Astrid.

Astrid's trial in 1973 on two attempted murder charges was stopped because of her ill health as a result of sensory deprivation torture.

The West German state is very free with attempted murder charges. The Chief Attorney said in 1967: 'If someone is hit with a truncheon by a police officer and disarms the officer and hits him back, they should prepare for a charge of attempted murder.'

The magazine *Der Spiegel* (not a friend of the left) says that even at the time of the trial the prosecution was unable to produce the witnesses to convict Astrid.

However, her hopes of avoiding extradition now rest upon her application for British citizenship on the grounds of marriage. Home Secretary Rees has been stalling on this since October.

**Apology 1**

A FEW weeks ago we published an article on Israeli co-operation with various other unpleasant regimes all over the world.

Over-ruthless cutting, however, meant that we didn't say what you could do about this. The answer is that anyone interested in linking together anti-Zionists and those fighting repression in other countries should contact either Socialist Challenge or the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Box 98, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

**Apology 2**

IN LAST week's News from Nowhere column we carried a piece on Croatian nationalism. This contained the assertion that 'the main Croatian organisations are fronts for the Ustashi, which ran a fascist government in Croatia under the Nazi occupation.'

A reader phoned to say that we should have specified 'Croatian nationalist organisations in exile', otherwise we gave a wrong impression of the politics of Croatian people as a whole.

As she pointed out, the main Croatian organisation is the Yugoslav League of Communists! Apologies for any confusion.

**Intercontinental Press**

ERNEST MANDEL's prognosis for the world capitalist economy in the next year forms the centrepiece of the new issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* (Vol 17, No 2). Also featured are an interview with Polish oppositionist Adam Michnik, analysis of Indochina and Iran, and a report on the repression in Peru.

Single copies are 30p plus p&p. Subscriptions are £9 for one year, £5 for six months or £2.50 for an introductory offer of 10 issues. Write now to *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Cheques payable to *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.

**'Muldergate' financial scandal**

**Buying time for apartheid**

THE COVERT propaganda activities of the South African government are no longer a secret.

The exposure of the now defunct Department of Information, better known as the 'Muldergate' scandal, revealed the huge extent of an international network of bribery and corruption which had been developed to serve the interests of apartheid.

The details of where the hand-outs are going paint an interesting picture of politics in some of the imperialist countries.

By Jude Woodward

Politicians are taken on junket trips to South Africa. South African business people try to buy their way into the European and American press.

Prominent university figures and journalists are courted. Thinly disguised propaganda is distributed as educational material.

All this came to light as a result of the enquiries into South Africa's Department of

Information, but much of the details about how the millions were spent — particularly the most successful exercises — remain secret.

What do we know? Fifteen months ago a conference entitled 'Marketing the International Image of South Africa' was hosted by the University of South Africa and organised by the Department of Information.

Among those invited by Dr Connie Mulder, the deposed

Minister of the Interior, was Reginald Maudling. Other guests included the former US Secretary of the Treasury, William Simon, and Henry Ford III.

Henry Ford distributed a 23-page report entitled 'Why invest in South Africa'.

What sort of 'marketing' has Maudling been involved in since the conference?

According to Hansard he supports the Smith regime, arguing that the Zimbabwean government is now multi-racial because there are three black ministers and the settlement would end racial discrimination.

Maudling considered that supporting the 'terrorists' in Zimbabwe is like backing the IRA — attempting to appeal to anti-Irish and pro-Smith chauvinism at the same time.

But Maudling isn't the only British politician involved in a direct way with apartheid.

Lord Chalfont, voice of imperialism for *The Times*, has also turned up on junket trips to South Africa. These trips, where thousands of dollars are spent on selected journalists and politicians, were particularly popular with the South African propaganda machine during the rigged Namibia elections.

Other British figures to have turned up on similar occasions are General Sir Walter Walker of private armies fame, and the deputy chairperson of the Tory Party, Rear Admiral Morgan Giles.

The South African Government and its supporters clearly understand the importance of a sympathetic press.

David Abramson, one of the super rich racists in the secret Club of Ten — best known for placing expensive newspaper ads in support of apartheid — is currently launching a new magazine in South Africa.

Called *Pace*, the magazine is specifically for blacks and has reputedly received £600,000 from South Africa's secret police.

It was Abramson who, in 1976, tried to acquire a controlling interest in the Morgan Grampian magazine group. Later he sold his 28 per cent share to Trafalgar House which runs the *Daily Express*.

Stuart Pegg, another member of the Club of Ten, is similarly interested in gaining influence in publishing. It is strongly rumoured that he has gained control of the influential *West Africa* magazine, formerly owned by the *Daily Mirror* group.

There are denials from management, but odd things are happening on the journal and it is now common knowledge that South African

money is involved in backing the journal.

The present 'consultant' to the Club of Ten is Donald Boddie, former editor of the *London Evening News*.

In education attempts have been made to gain more favourable coverage for apartheid. In the United States, for example, 10,500 multi-media kits for free distribution to intermediate, union, and high schools have been produced.

The Foreign Affairs Association, another of apartheid's shadowy propaganda outfits, has been organising trips to South Africa for prominent educationalists.

One such recent visitor to the apartheid state was Professor Jack Spence from Leicester University. And all this is just the tip of the iceberg.

The Erasmus Commission, set up to investigate the activities of the Department of Information, identified 160 secret operations, of which only 57 had been terminated.

According to Prime Minister Botha, 68 of these operations are to continue, only eight of which will be openly financed by the government. A further 13 operations, ranging from penetration of foreign newspapers to film making, have 'yet to be evaluated'.

Many, many more are still completely secret.

Every day as the freedom fighters get nearer to toppling the racist regimes in Southern Africa, so the Labour government makes harder efforts to reach a 'negotiated' settlement.

This makes even more pressing the need to expose the many-sided links that exist between Britain and apartheid, as part of building effective solidarity action.

**Jamaican government faces unhappy new year**

By Sheila Malone

THE New Year in Jamaica began with a wave of mass demonstrations throughout the island, sparked off by a steep rise in the price of petrol to J\$3.20 per gallon. Schools, banks and businesses closed, and buses barricaded the streets.

In response, Prime Minister Michael Manley brought troops onto the streets, and at least six people died.

The protests involved workers, poor and unemployed. But they were undoubtedly exploited and mainly organised by the right wing, chiefly the Nationalist Patriotic Movement, an affiliate of the conservative opposition Jamaica Labour Party.

Its anti-government and anti-socialist campaign is similar to that during the CIA's 'destabilisation' campaign in 1976.

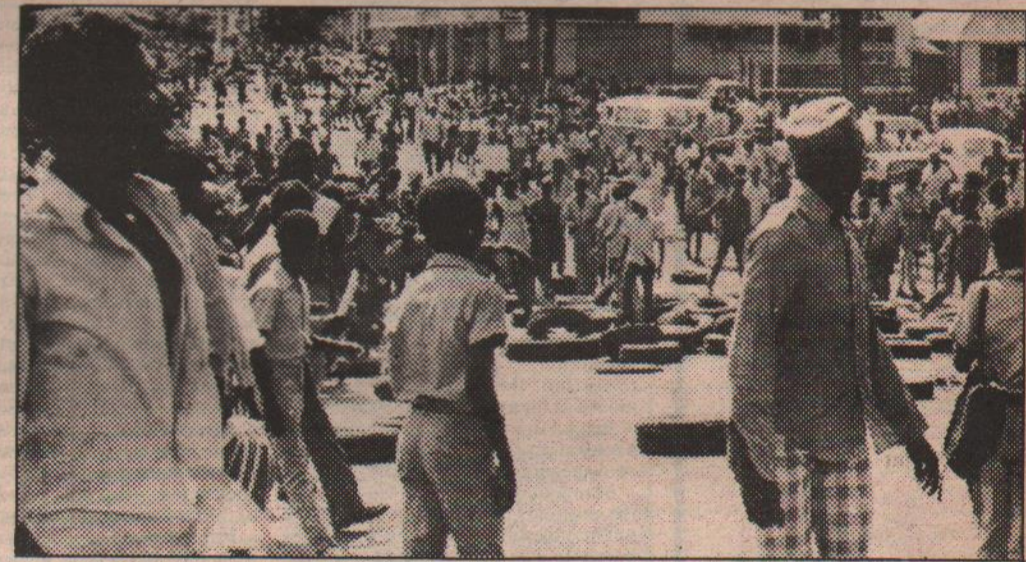
Manley first won support by promising to clamp down on the 'big man', the big capitalists

and landowners, and to give a better deal to the poor through economic and social reforms and by cutting inflation and unemployment. But the economy was in a grim state when Manley's Peoples National Party took office, with a decline in output, a J\$200m trade deficit and a J\$17m deficit in foreign reserves.

Manley's ability to carry out his reforms soon vanished, although his socialist rhetoric remained.

He has since capitulated to a series of harsh terms under which the International Monetary Fund agreed to bail him out: first the 37 per cent devaluation and J\$10 wage freeze in April 1977, then further devaluations of 15 per cent and a 15 per cent wage limit the following year. Public spending has been cut and taxation increased.

Inflation has now reached a record 47 per cent and unemployment is 30 per cent, but the economy still shows no signs of recovery. In fact, it has



Main road in Montego Bay blocked with tyres between 8-10 January.

deteriorated sharply.

According to official figures the Gross Domestic Product will have declined by 2.3 per cent over the last year, foreign reserves dropped to minus J\$402.7 million, and the balance of payments deficit worsened.

Big business is still failing to reinvest and is taking its money out of the country instead.

**RECORD**

So, when early this year the government announced yet another price increase, the protests that followed were against a record of government failure.

Manley's response has been simply to condemn the protests as totally the work of the right wing in attempting to bring down his government, and to call in the military to 'maintain law and order'. This echoes the calls to defend the PNP government in 1976 against the right and the CIA.

But today there are

important differences. In the first place Manley is discredited among the masses

Secondly, it seems clear that US imperialism's policy toward the Manley government has shifted. The IMF loans and the visits of Carter and Young and recently nine US senators to discuss economic co-operation, indicate that imperialism no longer thinks it necessary to get rid of Manley, either electorally or by any other means.

This interpretation is borne out by the fact that the bourgeoisie in Jamaica was split over the recent demonstrations. The Jamaica Chamber of Commerce and the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica condemned them, showing that at the moment the right wing does not have the backing of the most important business sections.

What of the Jamaican left in this situation? In November the largest left wing organisation, the Stalinist-led Workers Liberation League, declared itself the Workers Party of

Jamaica, at a founding rally of 2000 people.

The change in name was not marked by any change in their policy of critical support for the Manley government. They continue to blame all anti-government agitation on the right rather than recognise it as legitimate anger at Manley's sell-out to imperialism.

There are two possible outcomes to the present situation. If Manley continues to meet the IMF's conditions and despite the austerity measures is able to keep the working class in check, then it is likely that he will remain in power with imperialism's support.

On the other hand, if the right wing is able to exploit the present discontent, then, in the absence of a clear alternative from the left, it may gain sufficient influence to replace him.

Either way, the reformist politics of 'democratic socialism' will have been thoroughly discredited.

# INTERNATIONAL

# Eritrea: the guilty and the silent

By Richard Carver

'RUSSIA'S VIETNAM' is an inexact and incorrect description. But on the emotional level it does sum up what is going on in Eritrea.

Led by Soviet generals and serviced by Cuban and Soviet 'advisers', the Ethiopian military regime launched its most serious offensive against Eritrea on 18 November. Subsequent fighting has led to the recapture of all the major towns held by the nationalists since early 1977.

The result has been the uprooting of large sections of the population, the exacerbation of food shortages to famine proportions and the retreat of the nationalists into the countryside.

Perhaps as many as a third of the four million Eritreans are now refugees. By last July the numbers in Ethiopian-occupied Asmara had shrunk from 250,000 to less than 100,000. 30,000 more were made homeless in the Ethiopian capture of Keren in November.

The civilian casualties in this latest offensive have been horrific. The Eritrean Relief Association reports:

'In large areas crops have been burnt to ashes. About 160 villages have suffered heavy damage and 40 of them have been completely ruined. 5,000 civilians are reported seriously wounded or dead, and 8,000 others require medical attention.'

Even worse is the nature of those casualties. People are not just killed and maimed; they are killed and maimed with Napalm B, cluster bombs and defoliant poisons. And all this in the name of socialism.

The plight of the Eritreans is forgotten on all sides. Being victims of the Soviet Union does not qualify them for Western aid. The British government has sent a measly £75,000 to the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

## LINKED

It refuses to send to the Eritrean Relief Association, the only such organisation operating in the war zones, because it is linked to the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front.

What aid there is never reaches those who need it. When the Eritreans took Massawa they discovered undistributed Red Cross food supplies.

John Pilger, one of an honourable handful of journalists to take up the Eritreans' case, has reported the human cost caused by the lack of medical supplies. Eritrea's 16 — yes sixteen — trained doctors have virtually none of the most basic medical aids. For example, an Eritrean doctor writes to Pilger on how amputations are performed: 'The lucky few are given anaesthetic. But for most there is only surgical spirit and a mouth gag. This is terrible for the younger boys... but there is nothing we can do. We have nothing.'

Almost all the refugees suffer from malaria and dysentery and one child in three has tuberculosis or trachoma or severe malnutrition or all three.

The two major Eritrean liberation organisations have disciplined, numerous and effective guerilla forces — probably militarily superior to anything of their type since the Vietnamese NLF.

Previously they have easily overrun their raggle-taggle opponents. In the past Ethiopia has attacked with massive but hastily levied 'peasant armies'. This time the Eritreans faced preliminary air and artillery bombardments followed by swift, disciplined and sophisticated manoeuvres.

EPLF communiques repeatedly point to Soviet and Cuban officering as the explanation for this sudden transformation.

These claims are difficult to substantiate since they come only from the Eritrean political organisations and a tiny number of journalists who have visited the country in recent weeks.

Nevertheless the evidence is impressive. Many refugees report the presence of Cuban troops operating the Ethiopian artillery and flying their MIG-19s, 21s and 23s. One of them told Dan Connell of Reuters:

'We saw white men with the Ethiopians. Most of them were Cubans... I saw them firing. The Ethiopian militia was in front, and the

sioned officers. The EPLF also says Soviet warships have been bombarding the coastline and landing troops and supplies.

These reports are not definitive proof. But they offer strong evidence of one of the most brutal crimes against socialism by its self-styled proponents.

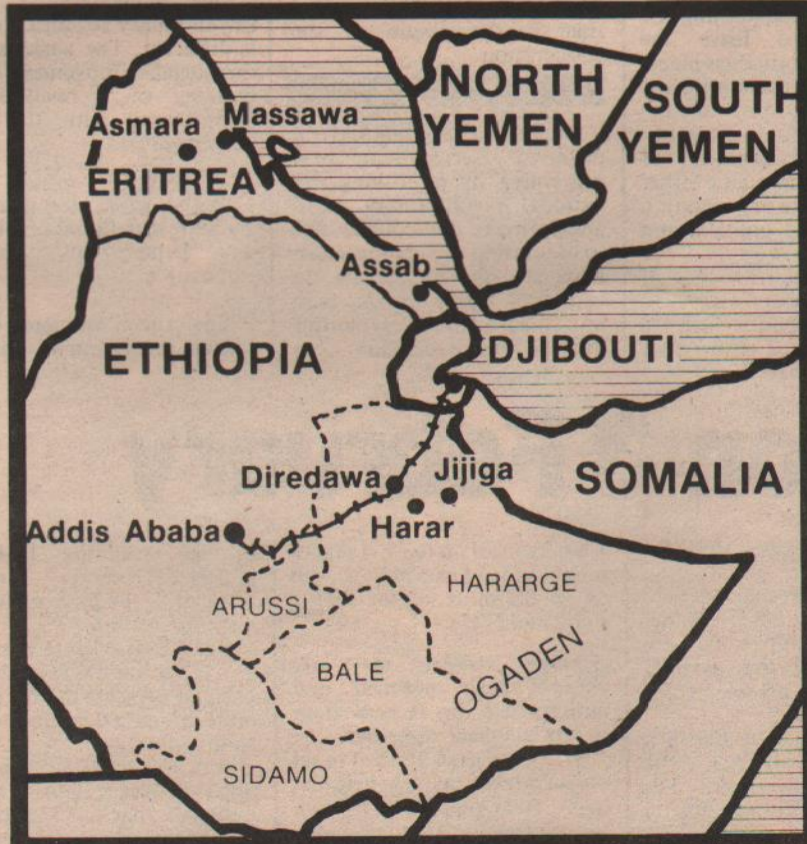
Yet, even on the rare occasions it mentions Eritrea, the left has almost totally ignored the possibility that Cuban and Soviet troops have been used.

## POLITICAL

The political evidence of Cuban and Soviet support for the Derg, the Ethiopian ruling military council, is there for all to see. Mengistu, the Derg leader, is the regular recipient of large arms supplies from the Soviet Union and treacly panegyrics in *Granma*, the Cuban party paper.

Much is made of the insistence of the Cubans, in particular, on a 'political solution' to the problem of Eritrea. Even the way the question is posed is revealing.

Nations are not 'problems' which have solutions, political, military or otherwise. They are entities with the indivisible right to determine the territorial allegiance of their state.



whites were behind them firing the big weapons which were on heavy trucks.'

The EPLF claims that the offensive is being led by two Soviet generals. Connell says that one of these is General Petrov, who led the assault on the Ogaden last year.

Under Petrov are 11 top Soviet officers and more than 1,000 other commissioned and non-commis-

sioned officers. The EPLF also says Soviet warships have been bombarding the coastline and landing troops and supplies.

For example, one of the first acts of the Bolshevik Revolution — and a major reason why it had such widespread support — was to recognise the right to self-determination of the many nations of the Russian empire.

Ethiopian rulers from Haile Selassie to Mengistu have trumpeted

the need for unity.

But what unity is possible between oppressed peoples when one of the nations is burning the flesh off the other with Napalm B or penetrating its guts with the deadly needles of anti-personnel cluster bombs?

Eritrea has every claim to nationhood and self-determination. It was federated to Ethiopia in 1952 by United Nations mandate — not the choice of the people. By imperial fiat, without even the UN's stamp of legality, the regime then destroyed all autonomous, Eritrean institutions and deprived its people of the most basic rights, such as the use of their languages.

In those days imperialism, particularly American, was Addis Ababa's major backer and the Cubans, no doubt to their present embarrassment, trained and supported the Eritrean liberation movement.

When the upsurge came against the old regime in 1974 it was a general strike of the Eritrean workers which struck the first and most decisive blow against the monarchy.

Haile Selassie fell because of the most enormous mobilisation of workers and peasants, Eritrean and Ethiopian. Yet it was not the masses who seized power but a small clique of army officers.

Because of the chronic weakness of the state apparatus and the native capitalist class the Derg continued to rely upon mass mobilisations and to move to the left, implementing probably the most radical land reform in Africa.

But in doing this it did not cease to be a capitalist military regime, as the thousands of murdered working class opponents of the regime are not able to testify.

The most obvious and tragic reflection of the class character of the Derg is its policy on the national question.

The Soviet Union and Cuba have had well-publicised differences with the Derg on this issue. But these were more pragmatic than principled.

The Soviet Union's interest comes first from Eritrea's long Red Sea coastline. Realpolitik alone warned the Kremlin of the dangers of driving the Eritreans into the hands of hostile Arab regimes.

## GUILT

Cuban caution was also prompted by a residual internationalism combined with guilt at past associations with Eritrea. They argued it out with Mengistu, but finally gave way so as not to lose their ally.

A joint Ethiopian-Cuban communique issued at the time of Fidel Castro's visit to Addis Ababa last September said that the 'Cuban side also reaffirmed its absolute opposition to any kind of secession and expressed its firm belief that Ethiopia would solve all its problems in line with the principles of Marxism-Leninism.'

The latter phrase is in danger of becoming newspeak for genocide.

As in Angola the Cubans are doubtless moved by some healthy considerations. But the root of the betrayal in Eritrea lies in their failure to understand that support for the Ethiopian revolution is not the same thing as support for the Derg — indeed the two are incompatible.

The reasons for such mistakes — the initial peculiarities of the Cuban revolution, the all-important role of a single crop in the Cuban economy, the absence of socialist democracy, and dependence on the Soviet Union — lie outside the scope of this article.

But effectively the Cubans fall into line with Soviet foreign policy, which flows from far more cynical considerations. Strategy demands that Moscow builds up its relations with African regimes, especially those as geographically key as Ethiopia. But relations with the imperialist world and the interests of the bureaucracy demand that socialist revolution be actively discouraged.

## SHIFTED

That is how such farces can occur as the switch around of alliances in 1977, when Soviet-backed Somalia and US-backed Ethiopia swapped sides. If class affiliations are a matter of indifference, alliances can be shifted at will: yesterday's 'progressive' becomes today's 'reactionary' and vice versa.

This is not nit-picking. For it is the counter-revolutionary nature of the Soviet leaders and the collaboration of the Cubans which have led to the Eritrean tragedy — another emotional word, but not one which is used lightly.

It is left to revolutionaries to argue Eritrea's case in the Western labour movements. But it is not simply one long horror story, a case for humanitarian aid.

Despite the enormous Ethiopian gains the Eritrean organisations are not crushed. The EPLF has made an orderly retreat and is returning to its old tactics of rural guerilla warfare. Already it has resumed attacks on the Ethiopian supply lines down the Asmara-Massawa road.

Dan Connell has told *Tribune* that 75 per cent of the population remains in EPLF-controlled territory and 15 per cent in areas controlled by the Eritrean Liberation Front. He puts the number of men and women the EPLF has under arms at more than 25,000.

They are prepared to rely solely on their own strength — they have had to in the past. But they should not have to fight alone.

**\*If you want to organise a meeting on Eritrea, a film, Sawrana, is available from either the Association of Eritrean Workers UK, BCM Box 7007, London WC1 or Workers Film Association, 38 Dartmouth Park Road, London NW5, at a hire fee of £18 and with an Eritrean speaker to accompany it.**

Ethiopian soldier with poster reading 'Everything to the war front' at the time of the war with Somalia.

# Iran: building the party

**CHE Bayad Kard** — What is to be Done? — is the name of a new revolutionary weekly published in Tehran. Here we reprint the editorial from the first issue, which came out last Saturday.

As they explain in the article the editors stand for the unification of all Iranian revolutionary socialists into a single organisation. The appearance of this pan-Iranian paper is a step in that direction.

Money is short for Iranian revolutionaries — particularly since the masses have taken to burning banknotes bearing the image of the hated Shah! Donations to help Che Bayad Kard can be sent c/o **Socialist Challenge**. Cheques payable to A Hamzeh.

THE Pahlavi Monarchy, the central bastion of all internal and foreign reactionary forces in Iran, is passing through the final stages of its death agony.

The extensive institutions of the Shah's empire of terror and repression have been smashed one after another by the impact of the relentless struggle of the masses.

Mohammad Reza Shah, the central cog in these ruling institutions, has been put to flight and has taken refuge in the arms of his masters.

The hour of Iran's new revolution is approaching. The powerful waves of this revolution are surging forward one after another, each one more powerful than the last.

The new wave, characterised by the presence of the working class, has turned imperialism's 'island of stability' into the centre of the earthquake of world revolution.

The cities of Iran are once again speaking in the language of the Constitutional Revolution and the period following the flight and exile of Reza Shah.

Every time the dictatorship has tried to provide the ruling class with the opportunity for a breathing space and preparations for a counter-revolution it has soon found itself confronted by a more militant movement.

After every brief lull the movement has reappeared with renewed vigour and the oppressed masses have once again taken their historic path, adding new dimensions to their struggle and deepening their demands.

The ruling class has finally realised that its forces of repression are no longer effective. With guidance from imperialism it is now therefore preparing a trick.

The formation of the Bakhtiar government and the Shah's flight are signs of a plan intended to block two fundamental tendencies within the anti-dictatorial struggle and to divert the mass struggle from its revolutionary path.

On the one hand the inseparable link between dictatorship and monarchy in the Iranian state has fused the struggle for democracy with the struggle against the monarchy itself.

'Death to the Shah', the slogan under which many of the anti-dictatorship mobilisations have taken place, is the first sign of this fusion.

On the other hand the strong bond between Iranian capitalism and the monarchy has given the anti-dictatorship struggle an anti-capitalist character.

The entry of the working class onto the scene of political struggle has made the possessing classes of Iran and their imperialist supporters aware of this tendency.

The regime is trying to harness democratic aspirations through the Bakhtiar government by giving some concessions (limited abolition of censorship, curbing of SAVAK's powers, legalising some political parties, etc.) and promising other reforms (such as free elections etc.).

In this way it aims to take the edge off the anti-dictatorship movement and save the monarchy, the basic foundation of the strength of the state, and hence save capitalism.

Promises of a return to 'Constitutional Monarchy' were ineffective. The Shah has therefore been sent on 'holiday' to prevent the further progress of the mass movement along the path of a revolutionary



A mullah embracing a soldier

overthrow of the monarchy and the power of the ruling class.

In order to ensure the success of this plan they even threaten the mass movement with a bloody coup: either the Bakhtiar government or military rule! This is the ruling classes' answer.

But the oppressed masses will not be fooled by such threats. They haven't given thousands of lives to keep the same regime in power, to have the same imperialist army 'maintaining law and order', to leave the possessing classes in their place.

They will continue until the complete overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a government of workers, peasants and other toilers. This is the only solution to Iran's present political and social crisis.

The most important task of revolutionary socialists is to help bring about such a solution. We must ensure that

the overthrow of the Pahlavi dictatorship is linked to an attack on the capitalist system and the bourgeois state.

Our most immediate task in this direction is to fight for the complete overthrow of the monarchy and all the social and political foundations on which its power is based.

We — a number of different revolutionary socialist groups formed inside and outside Iran and now in the process of fusion — have come together to give a response to this important need. This publication is the result of our cooperation.

Our aim is to link up the different sectors of the movement by publishing this national revolutionary paper and to make our contribution to organising the revolutionary mass struggle by arming the vanguard layers of the mass movement with the revolutionary programme of action.

Our success depends on the cooperation of all Iranian revolutionary socialists. We will make every attempt that they should see this paper as their own.

There are some who see the tasks of the socialist movement limited to scattered activities simply serving the spontaneous movement.

Our understanding of a revolutionary socialist struggle is different. The basic task of the socialist movement is the building of a revolutionary party fused with the mass movement.

Without a struggle for building a national revolutionary paper this task is impossible.

The crucial moments of the Iranian revolution have arrived

and it is time for revolutionary socialists to take up these tasks in a unified manner. The columns of this paper are open to all those who agree with these aims.



FRONT PAGE of Che Bayad Kard No 1. Copies are available for 15p plus p&p from Socialist Challenge [Iran].

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## Solidarity on 3 February

By Richard Carver

IN Isfahan 140 US instructors employed by the Bell Helicopter company went on strike in 1970. They were complaining about bad conditions and the allegedly low quality of Iranian trainee pilots.

Last weekend the roles were reversed when air base workers in Isfahan, Hamadan, Bandar Abbas and Shahroohki struck against the continued presence of foreign military advisers.

One of the ways imperialism exerts its influence in countries like Iran — and an important factor if the US decides on a military solution — is tens of thousands of foreign advisers.

The conventional image of the mercenary is a scar-faced, brainless, fascistoid thug. But this traditional beast, though

he certainly exists, has less lasting impact than the 'white-collar mercenaries'.

Of the 43,000 US personnel in Iran last year only 1,000 were military; 32,000 were civilian employees of private companies.

The provision of technicians is an essential part of the 'post-sales' service in this high technology era. For example, a squadron of F-15 fighters [about 18 planes] requires 266 trained maintenance personnel.

In countries like Iran, with a fragile infrastructure and poor education, these technicians have to be provided from outside. Almost always the contract says that they will only stay long enough to train native workers to take over their jobs.

But it usually doesn't work out that way. Iran is still using

US personnel on the F-4 planes it bought ten years ago, as well as on the more recent F-5Es, F-14s and F-15s.

These visitors stay on because their political and military use far exceeds their purely technical capacities.

When the Shah decided to set up an aerial cavalry brigade, Bell Helicopters took on former General Delk M. Oden to recruit 1,500 US personnel, mainly ex-soldiers, to train the Iranians to run it.

And when the Iranian regime commissioned Rockwell International to set up an Ibx electronic spy system many of the people hired were former agents of the CIA or National Security Agency.

Hiring white-collar mercenaries boils down to the purchase

of high technology from the imperialist powers — which, after all, is the basis of Iranian industrialisation.

But it is also more than that — a subtle but direct method of bringing pressure to bear on the most influential sections of the state apparatus.

Iran's relative political independence and strong military machine gives its generals a large degree of autonomy from the United States.

But the imperialists have such leverage that it is doubtful if the generals would go against their long term wishes — whatever they may be.

The British state does not wield the influence it used to in Iran but it is still a major arms exporter: the Shah bought

more Chieftain tanks than the British army and even now the Ministry of Defence is pressing on with the sale of Rapier missiles to the Bakhtiar regime.

British contractors are behind the plan for a multi-million pound military-industrial complex in Isfahan. And that sort of project means more white-collar mercenaries.

This gives us both the opportunity and the duty to influence directly the course of events in Iran.

Will the Bakhtiar manoeuvre succeed? Will there be a military coup? Or can both options be averted?

The choice is largely with the mass movement in Iran. But it is our responsibility too.

\*Demonstrate 3 February, 1.00pm, Trafalgar Square.

# SURPLUS VALUE

## Interview with Wolf Biermann

# Breaking away from the 'Soviet pope'

IT IS NOW more than two years since the singer/song-writer WOLF BIERMANN was expelled from East Germany as a dissident.

He is now a member of the Spanish Communist Party, although he lives in West Germany. Recently he spoke about the reasons for this, and also about the impact of Rudolf Bahro's book 'The Alternative', to Barbara Heimweh and Alain Brossat of the French daily 'Rouge'.

**You are a member of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE), in Hamburg. That's a bit paradoxical. Can you say what led you to join the PCE?**

I joined the PCE for a very simple reason. I think that it's necessary to organise to be effective politically.

That's particularly true for an artist. One can very easily find oneself isolated as a special case because of one's supposed 'fame' — which is, moreover, a way of being pulled out of politics.

In West Germany, where I now live, there is a party which calls itself Communist and which doesn't like me much. But I can't wait until a Communist Party which suits me appears in West Germany.

And because in other respects I don't want to be shut up in one of those little sectarian cages of the West Germany far-left organisations (some are sympathetic to me, others disgust me, but in any case that's not the kind of organisation I want to belong to), I therefore joined the PCE.

Another reason for this decision was that I wanted in some way to confront the East German authorities politically, since they excommunicated me and would like to isolate people like me from the workers movement, the Communist movement.

I therefore took this decision on grounds of what I would willingly call political hygiene, so that there is no handle for these slanders, so as to help my comrades in East Germany politically.

My comrades in East Germany can thus express their solidarity towards me more easily by simply saying: 'But he's a member of a brother party, this criminal Biermann!'

Of course I wouldn't go so far as to imagine that the high priests of East Germany would let that impress them and shed tears over this expression 'brother party'; they think, to put it subtly, that the PCE has 'embarked on a mistaken road' — or, more crudely, that comrade Carrillo is also a 'criminal'.

Thirdly, I joined the PCE and not the Italian or the French CP (which certainly wouldn't have been delighted to welcome me into its ranks) because chance dictated that I established closer links with this party than with others.

It was because of the facts of my family history, my artistic interest in the songs of the Spanish Civil War, because the PCE invited me during its election campaign; and finally because the comrades in Madrid invited me to join the PCE — I had the feeling that it was a demonstration of friendship, of solidarity, of esteem, and I was glad of that.

Of course I didn't go into the PCE as if it was a church; I have a critical relationship with my party. What the mass media and many comrades call 'Eurocommunism' represents a phase of historical development which has many and complex aspects.

The situations in the different countries where there are Eurocommunist parties vary a lot from one to another; but what interests me are the common features in the orientation of these parties.

What's involved is an attempt to break out of the vicious circle of Stalinism, to develop a politics which relates to the traditions of the communist workers movement, and which relates more to the concrete conditions of the country where one lives: which inevitably means detaching oneself from the Soviet pope.

There is nothing surprising about the fact that this destalinisation is undertaken by the Stalinists — all the others are dead. And we have all observed that this destalinisation is being undertaken in a Stalinist manner (an accusation levelled at comrade Carrillo), that this wish to orient towards the principles of socialist democracy goes hand-in-hand with non-democratic methods, that it is pursued through decrees which descend from the heights...

But these deficiencies are inevitable in my opinion. When one looks at things in East Germany — which still remains the reference point of my political outlook — Eurocommunism stands out inside the party, it is a big hope for many comrades in the socialist countries.

Perhaps this hope is romantic, excessive — but it's nevertheless justified, I think.

The Stalinist bureaucracy which holds power in East Germany has a particular hate for the PCE (this obviously isn't an argument in its favour!) and for everything which happens around the PCI and the PCF — far more than it has for world imperialism.

These bureaucrats feel more

threatened by comrade Berlinguer than by comrade Nixon. And I use the word 'comrade' for Nixon deliberately and ironically. I can't easily forget that some time ago comrade Brezhnev literally fell on the neck of this gentleman, embraced him and called him 'tovarich'.

This gesture deeply affected us in East Germany, because it happened when the Vietnam war was reaching its bloody climax and no self-respecting man would have clasped the hands of this criminal. So...

**You know that the PCE abandoned the reference to Leninism at the time of its last conference. What do you think of this? Was there a discussion on this problem in the Hamburg branch, did you yourself vote on this question?**

Don't ask me that kind of hypocritical question when you already know the answer.

You know very well that as a member of the party I didn't vote on this question — and not just me, living outside Spain, but also my comrades there. You know very well that it was announced by Carrillo while he was at a conference in an American university.

But you also know very well that there are very lively discussions on this question, you know very well that the Catalan section have a very reasonable position on that: not that they fetishise Leninism in an ahistorical way, but they don't want

to throw out the baby with the bathwater and forget everything we owe to Lenin.

They have a real understanding of the historical importance of the October Revolution: also, they don't think that the position of the PCE on this question can result from a simple theoretical wheeze on the part of the leader of the party.

I'm going to Barcelona at the start of 1979 at the invitation of the comrades of the PSUC (Catalan section of the PCE), to sing there and to discuss these problems with them.

In any case, I think we have to get rid of the habit of regarding comrades as saints, only to excommunicate them later.

I find very apt what Rosa Luxemburg said about the October Revolution: its great historical importance, but also its inevitable limits; the immense contribution of Lenin and his comrades, but also the way in which its character was limited by the historical conditions of the experience.

**You wrote a song which comes over as a tribute to the Italian Communist Party (PCI). Since then there has been the PCI's attitude on the Moro affair, its enlistment in a policy of national unity, its adoption of a position in favour of an austerity policy. What do you think of all that?**

Nothing concrete, I don't have enough information. I wrote this song while I was still in East Germany, while I was preparing for my concert tour in West Germany...

At that time I looked at the policy of the 'Eurocommunist' parties from the specific point of view of their influence on political relations in East Germany.

For instance, the conference of European CPs took place in Berlin not long before I left. Before it was held an agreement was reached that the speeches of the CP leaders would be published in their entirety in *Neues Deutschland*, the official organ of the East German CP.

Imagine the impact of this in East Germany — that suddenly one can read the speeches of Carrillo, Marchais, and Berlinguer in this

journal, while people who say the same things in East Germany are put in jail.

Now I live in the West, and I see things a bit differently. I'm much more interested to know the ins-and-outs of the PCI's policy towards the youth, if it understands what is going on among them, whether or not it sides with the bourgeois state against them, if destalinisation is being pursued with Stalinist methods, whether its orientation towards socialist democracy, rank and file democracy, is just a tactical orientation intended to deceive party militants more than the bourgeoisie or not.

**On a different subject, we would like to know what influence you think Bahro's book *The Alternative* had in East Germany.**

I'd left East Germany by the time the book was published. So I can't do more than speculate on the basis of the information I have from East Germany. On that basis, I think Bahro's book has had an immense impact.

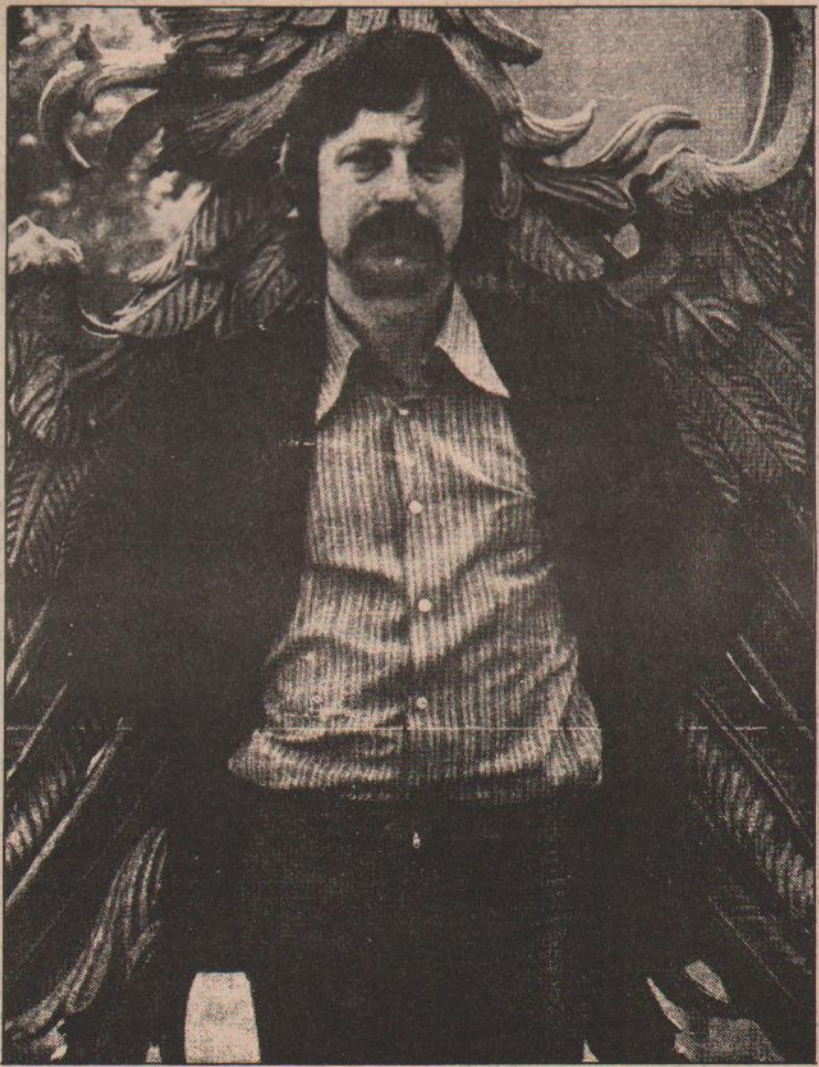
The machine for diffusing the 'samizdat' has functioned in the same way as it did with my songs — which, in proportion to the number of inhabitants, are more widely circulated in East Germany than in West Germany.

What is true from them is still truer for *The Alternative*: prose gets out more widely than songs, in this case because it corresponds to the forms of social oppression... which are prosaic.

I'm told that Bahro's book has been reproduced in large quantities. In the West, many people tend to forget that East Germany also lives in the 20th century.

East Germans have photo equipment and printing materials, although it is strictly forbidden to possess any machine for reproduction apart from the typewriter.

The machines which can be found in factories — duplicators, photocopyers — are controlled in the strictest fashion. And in spite of that these texts get out. It's like the saying: one who is thirsty can drink just as well out of the hollow of their hand.



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**Eleanor Marx (Vol 1)** by Yvonne Kapp (£3.95)

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# LETTERS

## Rank and file in NALGO

AS A NALGO social worker in Southwark I have been out on strike since 14 August. NALGO's behaviour and attitude at national level has been appalling. It seems to me that we owe much to the All London Social Workers Action Group, the Standing Conference of Strike Committees, and the NALGO Action Group — all of which are regarded by NALGO as unrepresentative groupings. They have helped to fill the crucial void created by the union in the handling of this dispute.

Whilst I personally do not like the hint of exclusiveness that characterises the delegate system of the SCSC, it probably does reflect mainstream thinking among strikers. It appears to be reasonably efficient in carrying out the vital organisational and co-ordinating work that has helped each group of striking or militant social workers maintain contact with one another and exchange information and ideas.

NAG, on the other hand, tends to offer political and practical perspectives in terms of strategy and tactics, and I think has pushed people's thinking and actions in a number of healthy ways. The importance of their role is to me best seen at grassroots level in the local areas.

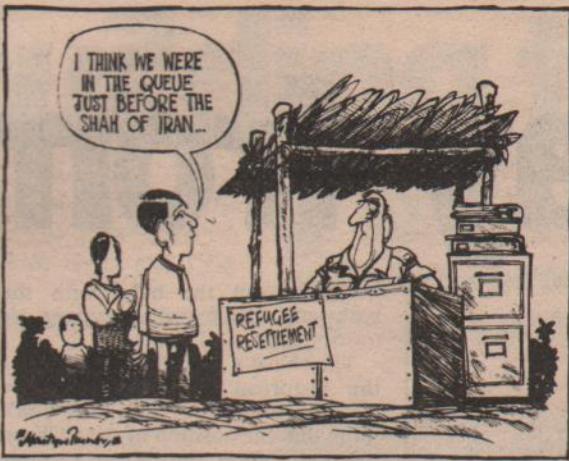
It was the local NAG group that, with what some may have considered to have been reckless optimism, pushed for a one-day strike of all Southwark branch members earlier in the month, and won branch agreement. Whilst I welcome the open meetings offered by NAG, it is not a representative body because it tends to attract only the more politically conscious — extremely valuable though.

What is essential is that all social services sections put in local claims (as instructed by union conference), do the work necessary to make sure they get majority support in the ballot for strike action, and convince their fellow branch members to support them. For those of us who have been out for nearly six months it looks as though some social workers are sitting back content for us to engage in battle on behalf of all social workers.

EMMA TAIT [London EC1]

## Is SF all bad?

I FIND Ursula K LeGuin's article on science fiction (11 January) a bit too pessimistic. It is true that most SF stories do not challenge bourgeois order (however I have read one where the enslaved working masses overthrow a dictatorship through



How they saw the fall of the Shah



armed struggle). But the examples to which she refers seem to be taken from the most conventional type of SF literature or third rate sub-products (like Star Wars).

In modern speculative fiction one can find examples of real 'human idealism' and civilised feelings, provided that one makes some selection. Many prejudices find themselves challenged, e.g. our conception of time and logic, sexual taboos, ostracism against gays, the 'beauties' of nuclear power, McCarthyist hysteria, and even sometimes racialism (to quote a few examples that I have encountered).

The 'alien' can be spiritual-minded or comforting (as in some novels of Theodore Sturgeon) and even sexually desirable (as in Philip José Farmer).

Moreover, Soviet science fiction is relatively immune from the individual hero cult. It rather emphasises collective forms of actions.

CHRISTIAN RONSE [Oxford]

## Thinkers and doers

AFTER the third article in the series 'Marxist Theory and the British Labour Movement' (11 January), I am writing to warn that I feel you are in danger of making worse the very division between theory and practice which you condemn.

So what are we supposed to think about the fact that Lenin could speak five languages? That we are not true revolutionaries until we can do the same? That intellectual activity is in some way superior to fighting around 'day-to-day questions' (rather than interdependent and linked)? Or should we just feel awe-inspired and more than ever convinced of the inevitable disparity between 'them' thinkers and 'us' doers?

As a trade unionist — a thinker who became a doer, if you like — I argue often with those who don't respect theory: empiricists, syndicalists,

workerists. They are to be found most among ex-student acquaintances and not advanced workers. I also argue with students who feel that their studies are a substitute for political activity and who cannot see that this self-justification in itself leads to theoretical unclarity.

Most fellow trade union militants not only respect but thirst for theory. What would be useful would be an article on how to make the necessary links: how to respond to the needs and develop the theoretical capacity of workers and how to encourage intellectuals to look towards a practical proletarian implementation and testing out of ideas.

You cannot counteract the philistinism of Stalinists and social-democrats by morally exhorting workers to have a greater respect for theory. Nor is the problem that simple. For instance, there is a worked-out school of thought which says that the struggle for cultural hegemony is a substitute for mass political activity.

It is facile to blow the trumpet to the goddess theory without defining the dichotomy between ideas and activity as a two-sided problem. Marxist intellectuals who remain in the realms of abstraction are if anything more to blame for this dichotomy than syndicalist workers, because they should know better.

SUE OWEN (Oxford)

## NHS low pay

YOUR 'Page One Comment' on basic rates in the public sector (11 January) says: 'The basic wage rates of workers in the public sector is between £40 and £45 a week.' Speaking for the NHS this is not quite so.

On the current basic wage rate for hospital workers, the £40 figure comes in at grade 10. Above this grade you will find mostly supervisory workers; and below it — the majority of the workers, such as domestics and porters.

If you add on the supplement of £7.20 it will go over the £40 mark —

but then you are talking about 'additions' on top of the basic rate.

STEPHEN PAGE (NUPE Senior Steward, St Andrews Hospital, Norwich)

## State racism

TERRY Dawson's proud assertion that 'what differentiates British racism from racism in, say, South Africa or Rhodesia is precisely the minimal role of the state' (4 January) cannot be allowed to go unchallenged — unless he has discovered a new meaning for the word 'minimal'.

On any one day 300 'illegal immigrants' are held in gaol, prior to deportation — by the British state.

When immigrants, such as the Ahmeds in Manchester, have their homes broken into by plainclothes police and defend themselves, they are arrested — by the British police.

When the Virk brothers fought back against their racist attackers, they were given massive gaol sentences — by a British court.

The fact is that the state — through its police force and courts — systematically uses the 'sus' and immigration laws to harass, arrest and deport immigrants and blacks. And it has always implemented those laws in the interests of British capital, that is to provide a source of cheap labour.

Under the immigration laws, work permits are issued for one year at a time, and are only renewed if the employer vouches for the worker's 'good behaviour'. It is hardly surprising that immigrants are forced

**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.**

to take the worst jobs, with the lowest wages and the longest hours.

Let us have no illusions in the British state. It is the major racist force in Britain today — and any serious anti-racist movement must take that into account.

JAMES HETHERINGTON [Manchester]

## View on the bombs

WHAT attitude should we take towards the IRA's new bombing campaign in this country? Geoff Bell's article (4 January) condemned the bombs as a diversion which will weaken the solidarity movement here, build support for Mason's policies, and give the British state an excuse to use more repression at home.

Our revolutionary duty to give unconditional support to those forces fighting imperialism does not mean that we aren't allowed to criticise their politics or tactics. But any such criticism should stem from the policies' unsuitability for winning the struggle, not because of any adverse effect on the left in the imperialist country — Britain in this case.

In fact, comrade Bell implies that it is the British movement for troops out, rather than the Irish Republican and socialist forces, which will be responsible for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. In that case the Irish national liberation struggle can be conducted largely from London, Leeds, and Liverpool! This is as bad as the old International Socialists' policy of preaching from Britain about the need for a revolutionary party in Ireland.

Internationalism demands that the emphasis of our arguments should be on Britain's responsibility for the bombing campaign. Instead this point merits a few sentences, and the disgusting headline 'Bombs and boasts' sums up the tone of Bell's article.

TEESSIDE READER (name/address supplied)

# 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 4287), evening, or write to Manchester SC Centre, 14 Piccadilly.

**SALFORD Socialist Challenge** supporters can be contacted at the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre c/o 14 Piccadilly, Manchester with a view to forming a Salford SC group.

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

**OLDHAM Socialist Challenge** group now meets fortnightly on Wednesdays. For details phone 061-136 2352 or write to Manchester SC Centre, c/o 14 Piccadilly.

## 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 Pittington, Durham.

**MIDDLESBROUGH Socialist Challenge** sales, Saturday lunchtime near the lottery stand at Cleveland Centre. Also available from Newstare in Linthorpe Road.

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES** readers can buy Socialist Challenge from Green Books, upstairs in the Spencer Hall shopping centre.

## SCOTLAND

For information about the paper or its supporters' activities throughout Scotland please contact Socialist Challenge Books, 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Open Wed, Thurs, Fri and Sat 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.

## YORKSHIRE

**HUDDERSFIELD SC** group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at the Friendly & Trades Club, Northumberland St.

**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.

**LEICESTER Socialist Challenge** group meeting on 'The fight to end low pay': Wed 7 Feb, 8pm, Highfields Community Centre.

**COVENTRY Socialist Challenge** group meets fortnightly on Tuesdays at 8pm in the Old Dyers Arms, Spon End. Next

meeting 30 January: 'The situation in Iran'.

## 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 Macfisheries. 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, 11.30pm-1pm, Commercial Road Precinct.

**SWINDON** supporters sell Socialist Challenge 11am-1pm Saturdays, Regent St (Brunel Centre).

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

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

## SOUTH EAST

**BRIGHTON SC** forums fortnightly on Tuesdays. Contact Micky on 605052 for details.

**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.

## LONDON

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

**TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Challenge** supporters sell every weekend: Saturdays meet 10.30am, Whitechapel tube; Sundays meet 10am, Brick Lane (corner of Buxton St).

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

**HARROW Socialist Challenge** supporters meet regularly, details from Box 50, London N12 2XP.

**TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Challenge** Group meets every fortnight (phone 247 2717 for details). **BRENT** supporters sell every Saturday, 2.30pm, at Kilburn Sq., Kilburn High Rd, London NW6.

**SW LONDON** sales every Saturday, 11am-1pm, at Clapham Junction (Northcote Rd), Brixton tube, Clapham Common tube, Balham tube. Also on bookstalls outside Oval tube, Herne Hill BR, and at Shepherds newsagents, Braganza St.

**HACKNEY** supporters sell every Saturday, 12-2pm, in Kingsland High St, Dalston — meet outside Sainsbury's.

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

**HACKNEY Socialist Challenge** supporters group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at 7.30pm in the Britannia pub, Mare St, E8. 1 Feb: 'Stop school closures in Hackney', introduced by Jon Duveen (Hackney NUT).

**HACKNEY Socialist Challenge** group benefit gig for the Fund Drive with Oxy and the Morons, Tues 13 Feb, 7.30-11.30pm, at North London Poly (Ladbroke House annexe), Highbury Grove.

**HARINGEY Socialist Challenge** supporters next meeting: 'The socialist answer to the crisis', with speaker from public sector trade union. Thurs 1 Feb, 7.30pm, at West Green Community Centre, Stanley Rd, N15 (Turnpike Lane tube). Paper sales at Finsbury Park and Seven Sisters tubes, Thurs evening; Muswell Hill and Crouch End Broadways, Saturday morning. Also available at Muswell Hill Bookshop, Muswell Hill Broadway; Vares newsagent, Middle Lane, N8; and Bookmarks, Finsbury Park.

# UNDER REVIEW

## Nuclear power

# Big could be beautiful, too

ACCORDING to the official statistics, a serious accident can be expected in a nuclear reactor once every 17,000 reactor years. By the year 2000 a thousand reactors will be in use...

Two new books continue the debate on nuclear power and take up the question of a socialist perspective on this relatively new technology.

JOHN BORAN reviews 'The Nuclear Disaster', published by Counter Information Services (65p), and 'The Politics of Nuclear Power' (£1.95), by Dave Elliott and others, published by Pluto.

The Nuclear Disaster is a useful guide to the nuclear industry and examines some of the main issues of the nuclear debate: the economics of nuclear-generated electricity; the role of private capital in nuclear power; the operations of the nuclear establishment; the nuclear fuel cycle, and safety.

The Politics of Nuclear Power looks more closely at why the state has chosen this method of generating electricity and the effects it has on employment in the energy supply industry, on trade union rights, and the benefits of an alternative energy strategy.

Nuclear power is providing private industry with a new source of profit which, in Britain, is guaranteed by the state.

In the USA, industry had to be lured into the nuclear market by large state grants for research and development, because of the massive capital costs involved.

### REFUSAL

Even with guaranteed profit on power station contracts, the margin is not enough for firms like GEC, which has recently reduced its stake in Britain's National Nuclear Corporation because of the government's refusal to opt for the American-designed pressurised water reactor (PWR).

GEC has the rights to this design from the US-owned Westinghouse Corporation and will only consider nuclear contracts likely to include large scale ordering of the PWR, which generates higher profits

and involves lower capital costs since much of the plant can be mass produced.

The current British system — the advanced gas-cooled reactor — is largely fabricated on site, and therefore cannot easily be mass produced.

An important factor in the decision to develop nuclear-generated electricity is the desire on the part of many governments to have an energy source independent of coal and oil.

This is because of miners' strikes, and the increasing inclination of Third World countries to restrict supplies of their oil and at the same time raise its price.

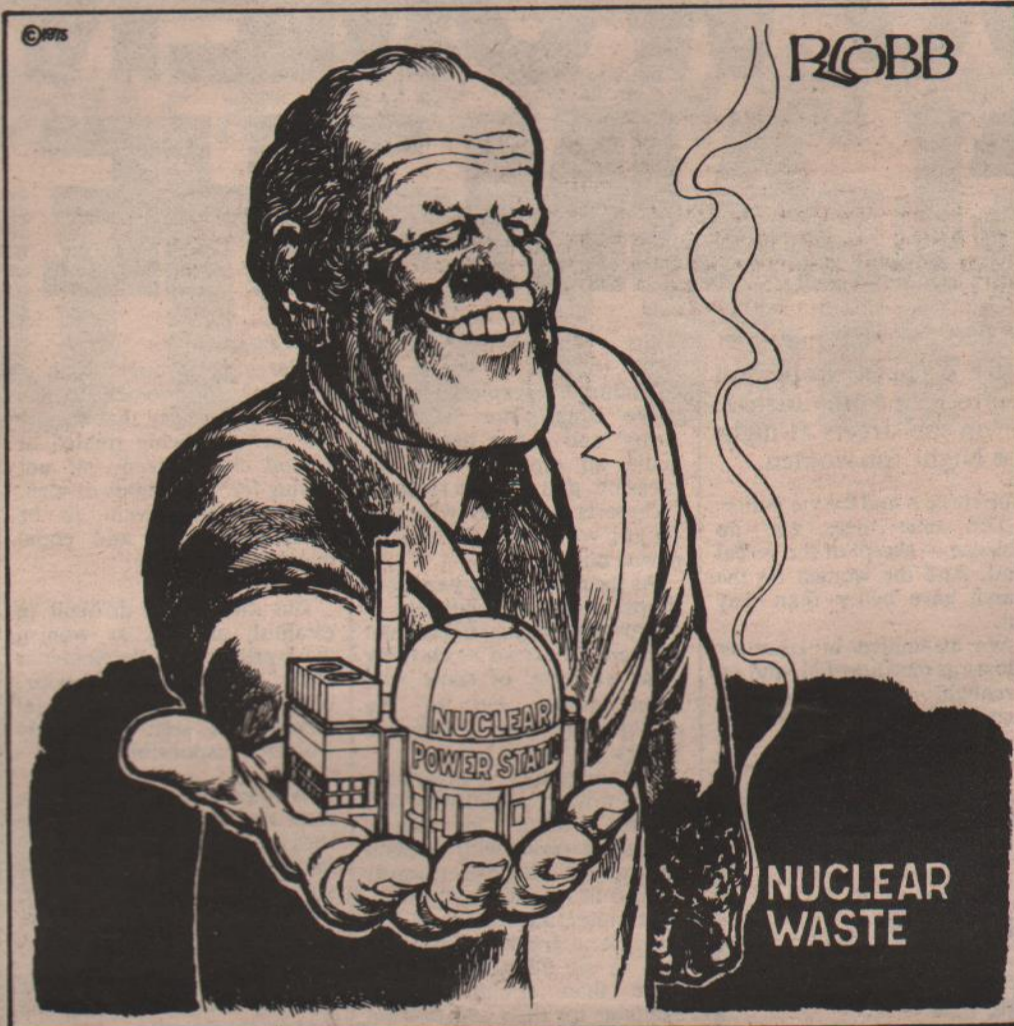
Since such restrictions could be extended to the mining and export of uranium, a number of countries — especially Britain, France and Germany — want to develop fast breeder reactors which, given enough of them, will extend uranium supplies by a factor of 60.

It can achieve this by producing fissionable plutonium from the bulk of non-fissionable uranium 238 in natural uranium ore.

As well as threatening the employment of miners, the development of nuclear power has made a number of inroads into democratic rights.

In Britain, civil and military nuclear technology have always been closely linked. Many workers at the Atomic Energy Authority and British Nuclear Fuels are covered by the Official Secrets Act, for example.

The right to strike is threatened; and on production of a certificate from the Home Office, management can veto



workers' rights under the health and safety at work legislation and the Employment Protection Act, if 'classified information' is likely to be brought up.

The two Special Branch officers present throughout the Windscale inquiry were presumably not there to check on those in favour of extending the processing facilities...

An argument often used by the nuclear industry in support of nuclear power is the number of jobs created by increasing the amount of nuclear-generated electricity.

The argument is totally fallacious.

The number of jobs created and the skills required are much greater with renewable energy techniques and energy conservation programmes.

This assessment of alternative technologies is only just beginning, with the involvement of radical economists, engineers, scientists, and political groups.

Another subject taken up in both books is nuclear safety.

Apart from the problems of proliferation, increasing the number of atom bombs in the world and the possible theft of bomb material, there are the problems of routine low-level

emissions of radioactivity from power stations and nuclear fuel.

The effects of these plants will not be known for 15 to 20 years, and there is always the possibility of a large-scale accident.

Until now, the health and safety record of the nuclear industry is very good.

In Britain, British Nuclear Fuels has settled out of court with the widows of two men who died of cancers which were 'possibly caused by contact with radioactive materials'.

In the USA, a larger number of deaths have been recorded,

but these are small in comparison with deaths in the coal and other energy producing industries.

### FAILURE

The problem, however, is the scale of a possible nuclear accident where the release of radioactivity could cause thousands of deaths and not be limited in time and space, as is the case with any conventional accident.

Failure analysis of highly engineered nuclear stations is complex, and while large

accidents are a remote possibility, they may nevertheless occur.

Official statistics show that a serious accident may be expected in a nuclear reactor once every 17,000 reactor years.

Given that there will be a thousand reactors in the world by the year 2000 this represents a serious accident once every 17 years. (There are presently 477 reactors built or under construction.)

The assessment of this risk is finally a political question, but for many on the left this lack of safety is unacceptable.

The possibility of engineering a higher safety level is remote, especially given the subjective factor of fallibility among the engineers who design the plants.

But the anti-nuclear movement should not negate the advances of technology that can be used to liberate humanity.

Without wishing to draw up a blueprint of socialist society, it is the case that nuclear-generated electricity will liberate many more people from energy production than is possible with labour intensive, renewable, and conservation technologies.

The same argument applies also to coal and oil stations and in general to so-called 'mega' and 'micro' technologies.

The argument for renewable energy options and the employment created in the aerospace, shipbuilding, plumbing, and building industries — their skills being compatible with wind, wave, solar, and conservation technologies — is tactically useful in relation to a struggle against capitalism where the above industries continue to face widespread unemployment.

But large scale 'mega' technology offers greater possibilities of reducing boring, repetitive, and sometimes dangerous jobs, and can be subject to popular control in a socialist democracy.

The argument of many environmentalists is that only small scale 'micro' technologies offer the possibility of popular control — an argument that is conceived almost entirely within the framework of capitalist social relations.

The relationship between these opposing aspects of technological development and their incorporation into a Marxist analysis is something that still largely remains to be done by the left.

Both books are available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1. Add 10% if ordering by mail.



'WOULD you like to say a few words for the viewers?': a radioactive cow, contaminated after an accident at Windscale.

## Now Rock Against Sexism

By Simon Lockwood (of Oxy and the Morons)

ROCK Against Sexism has been set up. About 20 people gathered in London a fortnight ago to have a first discussion on aims and perspectives.

Several issues were debated: \*whether events run by RAS should operate on a 'purist, anti-macho' basis or opt for a more populist approach with spottit name groups, etc.;

\*the possibility of setting up workshops to encourage all-women groups and anti-sexist lyrics;

\*the problems of defining sexism itself and effectively illustrating these definitions in gigs.

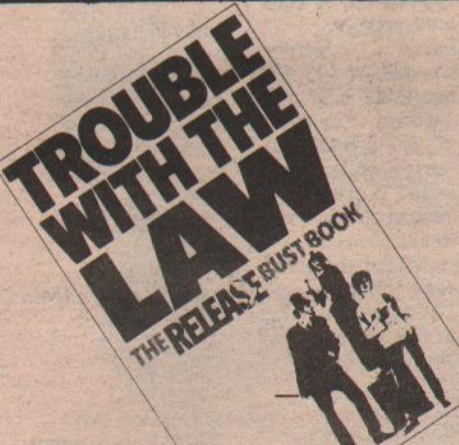
It was not possible at this stage to set out much in the way of concrete proposals, but the lively and informal discussion promised much for the future

of the organisation.

Meanwhile an inaugural national benefit is being planned [probably for 31 March], a bulletin is underway, and moves are being made to pressurise the rock weeklies [themselves perpetrators of gross sexual bias].

For details of RAS, its next meeting, etc., contact 121 Grandison Road, London SW11.

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£1.25, paperback

Pluto Press Ltd, Unit 10 Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Road, London NW1 8LH Telephone 01-722 0141

## Joseph Hansen

IT IS with great regret that we heard of the death last week of Joseph Hansen, a longstanding leader of the American Socialist Workers Party and editor of Intercontinental Press/Inprecor.

We shall be publishing an appreciation in next week's issue. Editorial Board

# Socialist Challenge

# 2000 WOMEN RECLAIM THE NIGHT



Badges 25p inc p&p. Discount negotiable on orders over 10 if cash in advance. From Pat Masters, c/o Socialist Challenge, Box 50, London N1.

LAST SATURDAY night 2,000 women marched through London's Soho, centre of porn shops and strip shows, to demand an end to rape and violence; for a woman's right to be out on the streets at night without escort; to Reclaim the Night for women.

By Jude Woodward

Women gathered from all over the country to bring their support to the demonstration, which was called jointly by the National Union of Students and the Defence Committee for the Hallowe'en march.

On Hallowe'en (31 October) last year a Reclaim the Night demonstration through Soho was violently attacked by porn

shop owners and by the police.

This time there was no violence — except of the verbal kind. And the women on the march gave better than they got.

We assembled in Leicester Square as darkness fell, and by torchlight we moved off through the narrow streets of Soho.

The police were being very

polite — they obviously didn't want to get a name for defending the sexploaters.

We sang 'The Women's Army' and a few new songs made up especially for the occasion, and chanted slogans: 'Whatever we wear, wherever we go, yes means yes and no means no!'

As the march went past porn shops and sex cinemas, a chorus of hoots and hisses went up from the crowd — showing what we think of those who make money out of the exploitation of women's bodies.

Pornography invariably shows women as passive sexual objects, often in utterly degrading poses with implicit or explicit violence towards women as a frequent element.

In presenting women in this way, pornography encourages men to see all women as no more than sexual objects, available for their gratification and enjoyment — unless they've already been claimed by another man.

Women are seen entirely as housewives and mothers — the only other possibility in many men's eyes is that they are 'loose women' or 'tarts', and so not worthy of respect.

A woman out on the streets alone at night, even if she is just walking home from work, is obviously in the second category.

Women aren't just housewives. They are workers and

individuals too.

Marching through Soho is one way for women to say loudly and clearly that they're fed up with being treated as second class citizens, of not having the same rights as men, and that they want to be accepted as full and equal members of society.

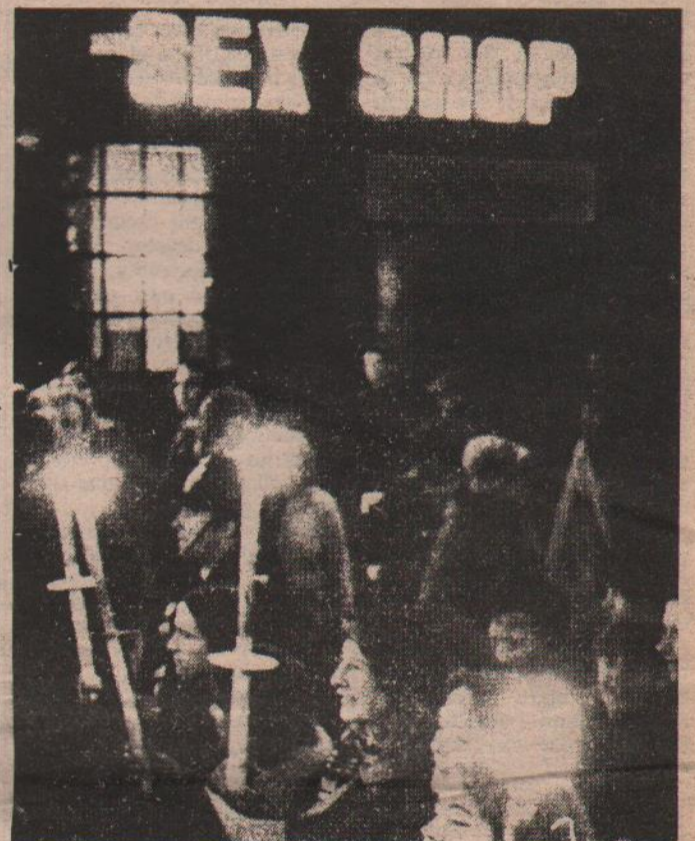
But this will be difficult to establish as long as women work primarily in the home; as long as domestic labour, childcare, and emotional security are seen as entirely women's responsibilities.

Women themselves can be their own worst enemies — like the Housewives Against Strikes in the North West last weekend (see page 5). This reinforces women's role as being primarily in the home.

We can begin to overcome this by women organising together as they did in Soho on Saturday — bringing other women to question their role in the family and to demand that men support the struggle for women's independence.

Our next opportunity to continue this fight will be the week of action on Violence Against Women from 3 March.

Anyone wanting to get involved in organising for this in London should contact: Week of Action Group, 374 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1.



## WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

FOR THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION



### HEAR HUGO BLANCO

MIKE FARRELL, IRANIAN TROTSKYIST, TARIQ ALI  
7.30pm FRIDAY 2 FEBRUARY  
CAMDEN TOWN HALL, EUSTON ROAD, LONDON NW1  
5.30pm FILMS, MUSIC, DISPLAYS/ADMISSION £1

HUGO BLANCO IN GLASGOW: Thursday 1 February

Labour Movement Lunch: 12.30pm, at Glasgow district NALGO office (admission by invitation only)

Seminar: Latin American Institute, Glasgow University

Rally organised by Socialist Unity (inc. Iranian speaker, stalls, etc), 7.30pm, Highlands Institute, Berkeley Street, Charing Cross.

Phone 041-221 7481 for further details.

GARNERS STEAK HOUSES STRIKE COMMITTEE.

## Garner's ANNIVERSARY PICKETS SATURDAY 27 JAN.

ASSEMBLY POINTS:  
LUNCHTIME: 11.30 onwards 399 OXFORD ST.  
EVENING: 6.00 " 56 WHITCOMB ST.

## OUR FUND DRIVE

TIGHTEN your seat belts. Prepare for a surprise. The response to our appeal for funds to make up for the shortfall has been good.

We knew our readers would not let us down, but please don't stop.

Pride of place this week to a letter from Aileen Mitchell, accompanying a £15 donation. She writes:

'This is the first instalment of sponsorship money which I've collected for giving up smoking... My lungs are healthier. I hope this money makes the SC bank balance

healthier too.'

It sure does, Aileen. It sure does. Long may you live.

Last quarter's lottery brought in a profit of £93.50. Tickets are available now for the next grand draw... 10p each or £1 for a book, to win a first prize choice of: Trotsky's Selected Works, or a £30 book or record token. Full details next week.

The grand total for the fund drive this week amounts to £318.02, thanks to people like Aileen. Have you thought of giving up smoking? Your paper needs you.

This week our thanks to:

Andy Herring	£5.00
Anon	15.00
Helen Slymovic	5.00
Anon	5.00
NR Long	2.00
Wandsworth IMG	31.00
Trevor Thompson	1.00
C. Ronse	15.00
Camden IMG	12.75
Anon	.41
Newham IMG	25.50
Tower Hamlets IMG	6.86
Aileen Mitchell	17.00
Anon	25.00
R. Barrell	5.00
Bolton IMG	25.00
SE London IMG	15.00
Bristol Poly Student	3.00
S Robertson	5.00
Lottery (last quarter)	93.50
D Rowley	5.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£318.02</b>
Cumulative total this quarter	£876.23

ONE YEAR after the paper was launched, WH Smith agreed to stock Socialist Challenge on a short trial basis. This was successful enough for them to agree to extend the trial period further.

The sales figures are

currently under review — and they don't appear to be very good! So we're asking all our supporters to make a special effort to use the outlets provided by WH Smith to get your copy of Socialist Challenge.

More importantly, we want to know why the sales figures have slumped. If you have had any difficulty in obtaining the paper at the outlets listed below, then please ring us this week with details.

After all, if the problems lie at the door of these outlets, this will obviously be a factor in WH Smith's final decision on stocking the paper.

Remember too that not only is the paper stocked regularly at the following London shops, plus the Oxford and Cambridge outlets, but you can also ask for a special customer's order for the paper at any other branch of WH Smith.

The present London outlets should be: Victoria (Main, Local), Kings Cross, Brent Cross, Waterloo (South, Terminal, Loop), Crouch End, Kilburn, Liverpool St, St Pancras.

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Abroad: Airmail, £16.50. Surface, £10 per annum.  
Multi-reader institutions: double individual rate

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Cheques, POs and Money Orders should be made payable to 'Socialist Challenge'. Complete and return to: Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.