

# Socialist Challenge

# WORLD IN CRISIS

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**INSIDE: Washington on a War Footing by Michael T. Klare pg 8**

# EDITORIAL

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.  
Editorial 01-359 8180/9. Distribution/Advertising  
91-359 8371.

## After the devolution vote

THE DEVOLUTION VOTE in Wales and Scotland was a severe setback for the Labour government. The result in Scotland poses Callaghan with a real dilemma. All the indications are that he will prefer to antagonise the Scottish labour movement and the SNP rather than the Ulster Unionist bigots and their Tory friends. An election could thus be fought well before October.

As far as the Tories are concerned, there is no better time for an election than the present. They believe that the outright and humiliating defeat in the Welsh referendum augurs well for them, as does the small majority in Scotland. But they should not be too confident on that score, as the Labour left, particularly in Wales, will claim some of the 'credit' for defeating the government!

The Tories are on much better ground, however, on other questions. There can be little doubt that the social and economic policies of Labour have demoralised large sections of its traditional electoral base. All the indications are that Callaghan will not be able to recuperate before the next election.

At the same time the government is rapidly losing the support of the ruling class. In 1976 the City of London thought that a Labour government was a 'lesser evil'. The International Monetary Fund had it in an economic straitjacket and it would be able to control the unions. Many bosses felt that a Labour minority government was better than a Tory minority government.

Now the feeling is different. Callaghan is regarded as an embarrassing lame-duck politician. The referendum results sent shares soaring at the Stock Exchange: a symbolic anticipation of an election which the Tories would win. As the astute author of the Lex column put it in the Financial Times last Saturday:

'In the first place, a Conservative government could expect a healthy majority on the basis of recent opinion polls and Thursday night's by-election results. In addition, the stock market is already beginning to sense that the worst of the pay round is over, and that the results are not turning out as badly as had been feared a few weeks ago...

'For these reasons, the prospect of an imminent general election would now probably send share prices surging higher, at least over the short term. Everyone would latch on to the expectation of dividend freedom and the burial of the Price Commission. The assumption would be that the government deficit would be cut and that the economic health of the private sector would become an urgent priority.'

What this means is clear. The ruling class wants a tough Tory administration and believes Thatcher can deliver the goods. It is prepared for further cutbacks in the public sector and is politically confident that Labour's period in office has prepared the way for a full-blooded assault on the welfare state.

The realisation that something is afoot has seen Tony Benn marshalling his forces. Some sort of an alternative manifesto has been produced (we shall comment on it in detail next week) and Benn's closest supporters are talking about a campaign against government policies. But they have left it too late, and it will be seen by many for what it is: an opportunist ploy to rebuild a disintegrating constituency.

The fight for a socialist alternative remains vital. The Socialist Unity candidates will be opposing the entire record of social-democracy in a number of constituencies. At the same time we will be backing the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory. We do not believe that our two-pronged thrust is contradictory. On the contrary, it offers the only coherent strategy at the moment: to fight Labour's policies all along the line, both inside and outside the Labour Party.

### REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

One-day school organised by the International Socialist Alliance and the International Marxist Group and open to all who have signed or generally agree with the 'joint appeal for revolutionary unity' published in *Socialist Challenge* on 4 January. Big Flame have also been invited.

Saturday 10 March, in the Hampstead Room, YWCA, Great Russell Street, London WC1 (organised under the auspices of the London World Affairs Group). Registration 12.30pm — £1 (50p wageless).

# THE FIRST WORD

## Scottish votes reveal that Workers want an assembly!

From Pat Kane in Glasgow

FEW WOULD have predicted a year ago that the majority for the Assembly would be so small. What the results show is that only the Scottish working class voted yes. It was in the industrial strongholds where the unions and the Labour Party have their strongest support that the vote was unambiguous.

The ruling class threw all their weight behind the No campaign. For them, the prospect of Scottish workers expressing their opposition to Westminster through the Assembly, however limited its powers, was a frightening prospect.

They could envisage a Labour-dominated Assembly in Scotland confronting a Thatcher government at Westminster. The experience of Clay Cross repeated in Scotland did not fill them with joy. Thus the Tories and the CBI placed their resources behind the No campaign.

The biggest set-back for the Yes campaign, however, came from the Tribune left in the Parliamentary Labour Party. The 40 per cent rule confused and diverted the devolution debate. At a time when all sections of the ruling class are attacking democratic rights, the response of the left leaders is to impose their own restriction on the referendum.

The Labour left said the Assembly was a waste of money. They argued that the resources would be better spent on housing and education. These same MPs have voted for every anti-working class policy of the Callaghan government and will no doubt vote for Healey's forthcoming budget.

All the Labour left have achieved in the last four years is to deny the workers in Scotland an Assembly. What happens to devolution now that the referendum result challenges the government's authority to remain in office?

The people of Scotland cannot rely on Callaghan forcing through the Assembly legislation. The government will try to make a deal with the SNP and the Labour left. If this



Photo: G.M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

Tories placed their resources behind the No campaign — they were not enthralled by the prospect of a Labour-dominated Assembly in Scotland confronting a Thatcher government at Westminster.

fails there will be an early General Election.

The task of securing an elected Assembly in Scotland now depends on the Labour and trade union movement. The referendum clearly shows that the workers of Scotland want an Assembly. The labour movement should campaign for immediate elections to such a body.

If the Tories or the Labour left oppose this then every worker who voted Yes should be organised to demand these elections. The Scottish con-

ference of the Labour Party and the STUC should unite in a joint campaign for immediate elections.

We should argue that trades councils, union and shop stewards committees who supported a Yes vote call local conferences to plan the campaign to establish an Assembly, without waiting for Westminster.

During the referendum campaign the STUC organised workplace and delegate meetings for a Yes vote. These could be immediately convened.

For socialists in Scotland, support for the Assembly was never equated with supporting the reactionary nationalism of the SNP. We looked on the demand for an Assembly as part of exploiting the political crisis of the British state.

The narrow result will confuse and demoralise sections of the Scottish workers. This could be overcome by doing everything possible to campaign for the immediate holding of elections to the Assembly.

## OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Delete if not applicable]

NAME

ADDRESS

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

# 'Housewives can be an important part of the left'

'TO MANY WOMEN, the present strikes must seem like yet another burden to bear.'

LIVERPOOL WOMEN'S ACTION GROUP explain why this is the case and what the trade unions and the left can do to change it.

THE CURRENT strike wave is important to all socialists as it represents an attempt by the working class to fight back after taking cuts in living standards and services.

Working class women have borne the burden of the government's cuts in spending.

In the health sector, maternity, abortion and ante-natal services have deteriorated. Waiting for three hours for a patronising gynaecologist to feel your tummy when you're pregnant is an example of this. Liverpool's infant mortality rate is the second highest in the country.

General cuts in the NHS also affect women. If sick and old people can't be taken into hospital because of the lack of beds, women have to look after them at home.

At the same time as health services become more centralised, the appalling public transport means waiting ages at a bus stop to get to hospital. It's hard and frustrating to do the shopping when you can't rely on a regular bus service.

Children are having to travel further to school as local schools are closed down, and it's women who have to make sure they get there on time. Education cuts are falling very heavily on nurseries, which are regarded as a low priority. Nursery schools are inadequate as it is without being cut any more.

The lack of social workers again means that women have to look after those whom social workers normally keep an eye on, such as the old and the sick. The impact of the social workers' strike was minimised by the press and the government, but it has seriously affected the lives of many — and women in particular!

In the housing sector, rent rises and lack of maintenance of council flats obviously cause problems for women. They are the ones who have to cope.

To many women, therefore, the present strikes must seem like yet another burden to bear.

We are not trying in any way to suggest that the inconvenience caused to women in the home should deter strike action. Striking in many circumstances is the only way for the working class to win. What we are saying is that trade unions have not given enough thought to the effect of strikes on women.

The oil tanker drivers' strike meant

that schools were closed and so women either had to take time off work to look after the children or pay childminders. In some areas the buses were off the road.

It's tragic that low-paid women in the public sector have to take action that involves suffering to get even a minimal wage rise. The rich don't have to suffer, they can pay for the services they need.

Jim Callaghan suggested setting up a Ministry for the Family because he said that the country couldn't keep



going if women didn't provide all the back-up services they do.

Being isolated in the family means that women, as well as feeling cut off, may fail to see that all working people are suffering at the same time. But this isolation need not exist. Housewives in Tower Hill, Kirkby, got together to fight for and win a communal laundry for their block of flats.

The media is a particularly strong force in creating the reactionary image to which women are supposed to conform. During the strikes, women have been portrayed as the 'voice of reason' holding the country together, and so on.

The media have really focussed on wives who oppose their husbands striking. They are always there when women attack picket lines in their frustration — as when women attacked the striking lorry drivers picketing Cadbury Schweppes. These women are often called the relatives of strikers when many are in fact outsiders.

In an organised form of opposition the recent 'Housewives United' got spectacular coverage in the media, along with exaggerated reports of the numbers involved. Women have even been encouraged to withhold conjugal rights.

But plenty of wives have supported their husbands. If they didn't, strikes couldn't happen.

Many have given open shows of solidarity, as in the Ford and firemen's strikes. They say that it's not just their husbands' strike — it affects all the family.

Women have played a prominent part in the campaign against the cuts. They have been at the forefront of the opposition to Liverpool Education Department's threat to close city comprehensives.

Women are also heavily involved in campaigns about the bus cuts, and have taken part in occupations to prevent hospital closures such as the EGA and Liverpool Mill Road Maternity Hospital.

Nevertheless, many women have been opposing the recent strikes. This is understandable, as we've tried to show. And this is why the left and the trade unions must take women's needs seriously.

Negotiating for percentage increases means that lower paid workers come out worst — and the majority of these are women.

Nurseries are important if women are to play a full part in the trade unions. Abortion rights are also vital if we are to have control over our lives. But both have been neglected by

the labour movement.

It is argued that more women should become involved in trade unions, but this is difficult when meetings are held out of work-time and women can't find anyone to look after the kids or cook the tea.

But when women have taken action it has tended to be more militant because it has bypassed union officialdom. For instance, the women at the FD clothing factory in Kirkby, where unions are very weak, occupied the factory to prevent closure.

Too often the left has been guilty of assuming that those women not directly involved at the point of production — housewives — are a lost cause and a conservative part of the working class.

But the action of housewives in Netherley in a rent strike, in the Anti-Ring Road Campaign in Liverpool, and in the Relatives Action Committees in Ireland prove that housewives can be an important part of the left.

As wives of strikers, and the consumers directly affected by the strikes, women should be more involved. If they were, more effective ways of striking would develop.

There are more democratic and effective ways of publicising the strikers' case, such as leafletting supermarkets. Women should be involved in the strike committees, creches should be provided, and pickets involve more members of the community.

Women, children, tenants' groups, other workers not directly involved — if they were all encouraged to be involved in strikes then these struggles would be strengthened and more effective.

Our point is: women have to have more involvement and more information.

THIS article was written in response to an over-simplistic and inaccurate report of the Housewives United demonstration at Liverpool Pier Head during the lorry drivers' strike, which was countered by pro-strike women.

This article typified the aggravating and destructive attitude of the left press in general. By saying that the women were all middle class — which was untrue — and that they were backed by the NAFF — for which there is no evidence — it missed the point and was patronising.

The women were frustrated by the strikes, but we must have an answer for them. The answer is for women to recognise the importance and reasons for striking and for them to become more involved. Liverpool Women's Action Group



## Death in March

AS predicted in this column, the Broad Left in the National Union of Students is nearing its end. According to sources close to the Broad Left in Bristol, invitations have been sent out for a 'summit' on the weekend of 9-11 March.

This meeting will launch a 'Democratic Students' Alliance' — a project which the Broad Left's main backer, the Communist Party, has consistently denied. The infrastructure for a London student body bearing this or a similar name has already been organised and will be unveiled a few days after the 'summit'.

Student readers will not be surprised at this development, which represents the logical end for the ever-broadening Broad Left. Dropping the 'left' tag and going 'democratic' will open the door to all sorts of new friends — Liberals and independent right-wingers for example — as well as the groups already in the Broad Left.

When this becomes public there will be a few red faces at King Street. When News from Nowhere first announced the plans to wind up the Broad Left — before the CP had consulted the National Organisation of Labour Students, the other main force inside the coalition — Sally Hibbin, the party's student organiser, told us: 'The Communist Party will remain committed to the Broad Left.'

So committed in fact that Hibbin and the NOLS chairperson wrote us an angry letter setting the record straight: 'There is absolutely no question of the party political groups abandoning a commitment to the Broad Left.'

They added more truthfully: 'Your reporter was quite clearly told that this concept was, and is, not part of the discussion taking place within the Broad Left.'

This was true on two counts. One, our reporter was told this. Two, it was not being discussed within the Broad Left. The whole point of our story was that NOLS had not been told!

Dave Aaronovich, another leading CP student, told us that 'seeking to work with the Union of Liberal Students and left Christians would be within the broad lines of CP policy.' And so it has proved.

The outstanding problem about this historic compromise, however, is that the 'Democratic Students' Alliance' does not seem to be off to an auspiciously democratic start. The secrecy surrounding the 'summit' and the fact that the London branch has already been set up does not promise much for the decision-making powers vested in this meeting.

We await the CP's comment. A politely worded retraction from Sally Hibbin would be much appreciated.

## Levelling out

THIS MONTH'S issue of the Leveller, the 'broad' left-wing magazine, nearly joined The Times in the realms of suspended animation. The reason: a contribution on the new print technology which has

grounded Thomson House.

The Leveller's January issue had carried an attack on the head-in-the-sand attitude of the print unions worthy of the Thunderer itself. 'Technology can and does raise living standards', declared Mike Prest, a journalist on The Times. He forgot to ask for whom.

The magazine's typesetters, the Bread 'n Roses collective, who belong to the National Graphical Association, requested and secured a one-page right of reply to Prest's 'astonishingly reactionary article'. But in the closing stages of production, a member of the Leveller collective decided that — as much as they wanted the reply — space problems were too pressing.

'Well', said Bread 'n Roses, 'we'll have to suspend your typesetting and review the position at a meeting.' 'Blackmail', snarled the Leveller person. 'Yes', responded Bread 'n Roses, 'or you could call it holding the country to ransom, but that isn't your phrase we know.'

The reply made it into the March issue.

## Policing our health

THE MAUDLING family, as far as NfN is aware has no complaints about the Royal Free Hospital, the multi-million edifice in Hampstead where Reggie met his maker. But then the nearest the former Home Secretary had been to a building site was by invitation of a certain architect.

Not so building worker Pete McGeer. Two years ago Pete injured his foot when he fell from a ladder, and treatment by various doctors had not improved matters. Last month he arrived at the Royal Free with a letter from his GP requesting urgent examination by a consultant. For the preceding four weeks the pain had been so intense that Pete had been bedridden.

He was first seen by a junior doctor who said that an appointment would be necessary. Pete sat tight. Then came a senior registrar, who blamed NUPE for the lack of beds. Pete refused to budge.

Then a hospital administrator was brought in. She smiled diplomatically about their inability to help him. Pete continued to demand treatment. His next visitors were a little less polite. Four cops burst into the cubicle, threw Pete on a trolley, and dumped him in the street.

Their diagnosis! 'Piss off, there's nothing wrong with you.'

It was a phone call that night from Pete's GP to a friend at the Royal Free that finally put matters right. He returned to the hospital to see the consultant who had been contacted.

'You may be wondering about the treatment you've had here,' the consultant said. 'This hospital is in a middle class area', he went on to explain, 'and middle class people get more out of the NHS than anyone else. It's disgraceful.' And with that, Pete was admitted for urgent treatment of a suspected blood clot.

Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

# Socialist Feminist Conference

By Penny Duggan

THE 1979 socialist feminist national conference will take place on 24/25 March at City University, London.

So that all women can contribute their own experience to the development of socialist feminist politics and strategy, the first day will be devoted to discussing the broad range of activity we are involved in. This will be broken down into four main areas: social policy, economic conditions, communications, and sexuality and reproduction.

Drawing on the information

and political ideas developed on Saturday, Sunday will be devoted to a more general discussion of socialist feminist politics.

This will include discussion on how far already existing political ideas and strategy can contribute to the development of socialist feminism, and on our role as a network of socialist feminists within the women's movement and the broad political arena.

Papers and offers to lead workshops to: Conference Planning Group, 27 Villa Road, Brixton, London SW9. Registration from: 39 Parkholme Road, London E8.



Photo: G. M. COOSON (Socialist Challenge)

RAY VARNES, member NUPE London Divisional Council

## Public sector claim All out to avoid divide and rule

THE NUPE Executive voted to reject the 9 per cent offer, but without making any call for national action. The key question of how to wage the struggle faces public sector workers.

Some militants, determined to win more than the national offer, are continuing to struggle — some for local deals. But only spreading all-out action for the national claim offers a way forward for all public sector workers.

By RAY VARNES, Member, London Divisional Council, NUPE.

Public sector workers, and NUPE in particular, have had clear demands right from the beginning of the present struggle. £60 national minimum wage and 35-hour week are the key ones. Militants have fought for a common settlement date for all public service and health service workers.

These demands are the only way to meet the real needs of the public sector. Unlike some groups in industry the vast majority of public sector workers do not have the economic muscle to win locally. Without the pressure of a national fight, and pulling out on strike all the groups which can do some damage, the overwhelming majority of public sector workers can't win.

The key aim of the government and the employers all along has been to avoid

such united action. This is why the government settled first with the water workers — and made them a better offer than any other group. Of course the government would have preferred to give the water workers no more than anyone else, and it was only the beginning of a militant struggle in the North West which got more out of them, but the government above all wanted to get the water workers back to work because they would have given real muscle to the public sector fight as a whole.

The union leaderships have aided this government policy. Fisher, Basnett and Co. politically rejected any central fight against Callaghan's right-wing policies. Indeed they support the concordat. They recommended acceptance of a deal and return to work by the water workers and not a united fight in the public sector. They

adopted a policy of selective local action, and not an all-out national strike, which had no chance of winning the national claim.

Now they are splitting local government workers from hospital workers by refusing to count the votes in the national ballots together and instead insisting on counting the votes separately in each sector to decide on a return to work. They have attempted everything possible to prevent the national all-out action that alone can win for the overwhelming majority of public sector workers.

It is clear that local or sectoral settlements and returns to work cannot provide a way forward for the overwhelming majority, over 90 per cent, of public sector workers. A few boroughs, which are exceptionally militant or face particularly left-wing councils, can, in the middle of a national fight, win a good local deal. But the overwhelming majority of public sector workers don't face these conditions.

The London Divisional Council of NUPE, which has called an area stewards rally which will discuss the call for an area all-out strike, shows the way. So does the fight among ambulance workers for national

Fighting for area and national all-out action for the national claim isn't going to be easy of course. Fisher is opposing it. The GMWU and TGWU leaderships have campaigned to get their members out of the struggle. If there is going to be any chance of a successful fight it is going to have to be the strongest sections who will have to lead it. If the most militant areas were to go back after negotiating deals then the overwhelming majority of the public sector workers will be left to the government's 9 per cent.

A common national struggle needs common national demands and a united fight with all workers in the public sector supporting each other. Breaking up that unity will be a disaster for all public sector workers. The employers will triumphantly face a divided public sector whose wages they can hold down indefinitely.

Only by the strongest, and all public sector workers, coming out now, or staying out, and helping to lead the struggle of all public sector workers for the national claim, can the vast majority win a rise over the 9 per cent and the strongest defend their gains.

ALL OUT FOR THE NATIONAL CLAIM!

## Camden victory: the inside story

CAMDEN NUPE has just produced a pamphlet detailing the terms of the settlement it won locally and analysing the lessons of their successful struggle.

As the strike has lessons for militants throughout the country, we publish here a lengthy extract.

The one-day strike on 22 January was a success in Camden. Within its own limitations it drew the membership together

and allowed us to feel our collective strength.

A local march from Camden Town Hall on 22 January was soon swelled by other NUPE members to over 2,000 at Hyde Park Corner and the message from that march was clear — only all-out strike action can win our full claim.

Selective action versus all-out action: Faced with a national policy of selective industrial action, and the policy of 'all power to the local branches' masking the very real lack of a national lead, Camden marked time in the week after the one-day strike.

It was clear that while a national call for all-out action would have got full backing, silence at the national level made our task more difficult.

After a week of discussion, a decision was taken by the strike committee to call out the two petrol pump attendants and works department plumbers on official strike from 29 January.

The effect of that decision was traumatic. Officer members of NALGO were called in to operate the pumps; NUPE members refused to accept petrol from them or to accept chits from garages and by 30 January the borough's transport, works, building, cemeteries, and social services were slowly grinding to a halt.

The branch meeting on 30 January supported the decision of NUPE members not to fill

up at pumps manned by NALGO members and decided to call for a mass meeting on 6 February with a recommendation for all-out strike action in pursuit of the full claim.

On Wednesday 31 January, under threat of lay-offs, the refuse section at Cressy Road took indefinite strike action and sent delegations to the other two refuse depots.

On Thursday morning meetings of the other two refuse sections voted to come out on strike. That day the works department drivers refused to cross the Cressy Road refuse picket lines and themselves voted to come out on strike.

Between then and the mass meeting further sections, including sewers, public lighting, road sweepers, body shop fitters and highways, took strike action.

All-out strike resolution: the mass meeting on Tuesday 6 February was attended by approximately 1,300 members who voted for a resolution calling for all-out strike action in support of the claim for £60 and a 35-hour week.

It also called on the national executive to call all-out strike action in support of the full claim, and called on the Labour council to grant the claim in full.

A strike committee was elected at the mass meeting and met regularly at least once a day

for the duration of the strike. Sub-committees were set up to deal with the organisation of picketing, transport, strike bulletins, claims for supplementary benefits...

The Labour group breaks: On 13 February the Camden majority Labour group voted against the advice of their leader, councillor Shaw, to grant NUPE's claim for £60 basic wage and a 35-hour week...

[But] by the first negotiating meeting on 15 February, it became clear that Labour group leaders were interpreting the offer as a £60 minimum wage rather than as a basic wage...

The pressure of the strike was maintained throughout this period. Picketing was strengthened at the main administrative buildings which were near to being closed because of the lack of heating oil and the conditions inside due to no cleaning.

Council's offer 'clarified': Our demand at the meeting of 19 February was that Camden Labour councillors should not back down and should grant the full claim.

We stressed the inequalities of giving the £60 minimum wage to those not on bonus while leaving those on bonus with the national settlement.

Nevertheless the Labour group endorsed the leadership's interpretation of the



JOHN SUDDABY, Camden NUPE General branch secretary

offer and negotiations were held on 22 February.

As a result of these negotiations the strike committee recommended a return to work to the mass meeting held the following day. This recommendation was accepted overwhelmingly.

Lessons of the strike: The most important lesson of the strike is that the union's full claim of £60 basic minimum wage and a 35-hour week is not pie in the sky but a realistic objective.

If Camden NUPE can get very near to the full claim by taking all-out strike action then the national union can win the full claim, but only if it is prepared to embark on all-out strike action.

We do not believe that Camden NUPE's success can be repeated at a local level in

every local Labour-controlled council; although one lesson we have learnt is that Labour councillors must not be allowed to shed their responsibility for the conditions of low pay among their employees.

In Camden we said that expressing sympathy for our claim but keeping to the national negotiations meant leaving our claim in the hands of Callaghan who seems intent on making those who can afford it least suffer the most.

The lessons of the Camden strike are clear. All-out action in pursuit of the full claim can win. Even now a determined lead nationally can still bring home the full claim.

Copies of the pamphlet can be obtained from: John Suddaby, Secretary, NUPE Camden Branch, 211 Arlington Road, London NW1.

### NATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFERENCE



### Workers' Plans and Workers' Control

28 April, 11a.m.  
Digbeth Civic Hall,  
BIRMINGHAM

Organised by 'Socialist Challenge'

# HOME NEWS

## CPSA pay action

# The comparability chickens come home to roost

PUBLIC sector workers do not have to look very far to see what the offer of 'comparability' between their wages and those of other workers means.

The industrial action now being staged by civil servants centres on the whole comparability issue.

By Rich Palsler

For 20 years some 500,000 workers in the civil service have had their pay adjusted on the basis of 'fair comparisons' with workers doing similar jobs in private industry.

Data are put together by the pay research unit and then used by the two sides as a basis for negotiation.

Quite apart from the fact that comparisons are often made with low paid clerical and non-unionised office workers, this system denies the right of union members to draw up their own wage claim.

Instead of basing a claim on the cost of living, it uses the criterion of how others have fared.

This pay research system was abruptly stopped in April 1975, when it was about to carry civil servants through the limit of that year's wage policy.

Although the system has now been re-introduced, the government has not undertaken to accept the pay research findings for this year. The reason: these findings suggest a pay increase of around 35 per cent.

Approximately 1,300 civil servants, mainly computer operators, are now on strike in pursuit of their claim.

Premier Callaghan has called the action 'unnecessary and unjustified', while Foreign Secretary Owen was among those who happily crossed picket lines on the one-day

all-out strike on 23 February.

The government has complained that the strike action is 'unjustified' because negotiations are not completed.

But in delaying the negotiations, and in refusing to accept the pay research 'comparability' findings, it is the government which is defying the traditional arbitration procedures.

While the current level of civil service pay shows the inadequacy of relying on comparability promises, the immediate aim of a united fight by civil service workers is to win the full increases recommended by pay research.

The strategy adopted by the leaders of the unions involved seems unlikely to achieve this.

Alistair Graham, deputy general secretary of the CPSA, has argued for selective action by saying that it 'shows a more compassionate approach to disrupting community life than has recently been seen on our television screen'.

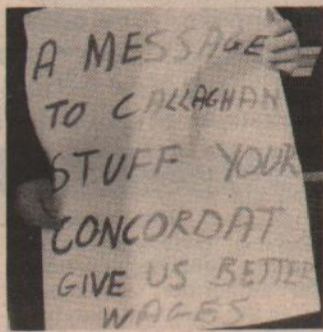
This thinly disguised attack on the public sector workers is hardly likely to win support for the civil servants from other workers.

Nor does it make a great deal of tactical sense, in that a common identity between the civil servants and the public sector workers would help both groups.

Civil servants are obviously right to worry about alienating other workers; they are as concerned with the provision of

emergency cover for the sick or unemployed as are public sector workers.

But as the public sector struggle has also shown, it is full involvement of the membership in strike action which is the best recipe for victory.



## Hornsey Journal

By Kathy Lowe  
Reporter, 'Hornsey Journal'

AFTER the editor of the Hornsey Journal wrote a front-page article attacking low-pay strikes, a local labour movement support committee plus the paper's own journalists pressurised him into publishing a full right of reply from the strikers.

Hornsey Journal editor Stan Cole accused striking caretakers and manual workers in Haringey of conducting 'a carefully orchestrated exercise in trade union power'.

His article also attempted to discredit local parliamentary Labour candidates, warning

that their support for the public sector workers' 'damaging' pay claim could cost them many votes in the General Election.

As soon as the story appeared last month, angry Haringey trade unionists contacted National Union of Journalists members on the Journal, told them they were going to demonstrate outside their office, and asked for their support in demanding a right of reply.

The demonstrators and journalists successfully took Cole to task and the next issue of the paper carried both a statement from the strikers arguing their claim and a strong letter from the journalists disassociating themselves from the editor's article.

## Middlesbrough

By Alan Theasby

REFUSE collectors in Middlesbrough returned to work on Monday with a £30 bonus for clearing the backlog of rubbish. They have totally rejected the national offer.

NUPE members in Cleveland hospitals have said they are prepared to back their national executive if an all-out strike is called.

At a Socialist Challenge meeting in Middlesbrough last Friday, NUPE area officer John Davies warned of the danger of another Clay Cross developing in Camden if the government attempted to surcharge the council for meeting the public sector workers' claim.

He called for a campaign

throughout the labour movement to defend the Camden councillors who had agreed to pay the claim.

## Paddington

By Denny Fitzpatrick  
NUT, Paddington school

OVER two hundred students at Paddington school in West London have signed a petition declaring their refusal to cross NUPE picket lines.

In the petition — the text of which has been sent to the national and local press — the school students state their support for the public sector claim and for any action these workers take.

One student said: 'We were amazed when we discovered that the original 5 per cent offer meant only 60p to these workers.'

'Many of us have parents or friends who are directly involved in the fight. We're completely behind them.'

NUPE area officer Mark Sanders commented on the petition: 'We're delighted with any support we receive from whatever section of the community.'



## Sack Fisher!

By Patrick Sikorski

MOVES are underway in NUPE to remove Alan Fisher, the union's unelected and unaccountable general secretary, following his support for the national pay offer.

NUPE's London divisional

council has called for the sacking of Fisher and his assistant, Bernard Dix. Similar calls have come from Camden general branch, St Nicholas hospital branch, Newcastle, and the ILEA district committee.

The proposal will be taken to the union's national delegate conference in May. The Campaign for Action in NUPE is to make the demand for the annual election of full-time officials and for the right to their immediate recall a central campaign.

## London Labour Party

By Peter Cooper  
Battersea South CLP

THE LONDON Labour Party conference held last weekend stopped short of confrontation with the government.

While most speakers to resolutions on such issues as health, housing and education were critical of the government, the conference voted two-to-one to disallow emergency resolutions against the concordat and in support of the public sector pay claim.

This refusal to act on the central issues of the day was backed by the union delegations, against the votes of the constituency parties.

Two fringe meetings provided more interest. The Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory attracted 50 people with a lively debate on whether Labour councils should meet the public sector workers' claim locally, and whether rates should be raised.

The SCLV is organising a conference on local authority finance, provisionally scheduled for 12 May.

A meeting held by the Labour Co-ordinating Committee — supporters of Tony Benn — was attended by 70 people. It was announced that elections to the committee are planned for the summer.

Dave Wetzel, secretary to the London Co-op's political committee, criticised the LCC for not involving the SCLV and the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

Socialist Challenge supporters backed a call for the committee to organise a conference on Labour's manifesto.

## IN BRIEF

### Sussex students

By Nick Robin

STUDENTS at Sussex University are occupying the administration building after the introduction of quotas for overseas students which are 7 per cent below the 1975-76 levels. The quotas have been implemented in line with instructions from the Department of Education and Science (DES).

Sussex students will be organising a picket of the DES this Friday on the question of overseas students as part of the national day of action on grants organised by the National Union of Students.

They are also calling for an NUS emergency conference on overseas students to coordinate moves against the DES ruling in the absence of any action from the Broad Left leadership of NUS.

Members of the Association of University Teachers, which is against quotas, should be urged to boycott their introduction.

### RAR tour

'JIM ain't fixed us. We ain't gonna work on Maggie's farm. We know who the real enemy is. And we're gonna hit them with our rhythm sticks. Mash 'em with militant entertainment.'

That's how Rock Against Racism describe their Militant Entertainment national tour, starting on 17 March, which 'mixes the new new wave with pioneer punks and the best of UK reggae'.

The bands and venues so far fixed are as follows. Phone RAR on 01-802 8773 for further details.

MARCH  
Sat 17 Cambridge Corn Exchange: Gang of Four, Misty, Red Express and the Ruts. Mon 19 Leicester Poly: Gang of Four, Misty, Ruts and Wendy Tunes. Tue 20 Cromer West Runton Pav: Gang of Four, Misty, Pain Killers

and the Ruts. Wed 21 Coventry Lanchester Poly: Barry Forde Band, Leyton Buzzards, The Piranas and the Specials. Thur 22 Sheffield Poly: Barry Forde Band, Leyton Buzzards, Piranas and local band. Fri 23 Leeds Poly: Barry Forde, Leyton Buzzards, Piranas and Sheeny and the Goys. Sun 25 Lancaster Uni: Barry Forde, Leyton Buzzards, The Only Ones and local band. Tue 27 Edinburgh Clouds: The Freeze, Mekons, and Stiff Little Fingers (reggae act to be added). Wed 28 Stirling Uni: Carol Grimes Band, Mekons and Stiff Little Fingers (reggae act to be added). Thur 29 Aberdeen Ruffles: Carol Grimes, Mekons, and Stiff Little Fingers (reggae act to be added).

APRIL

Mon 2 Liverpool Uni: Angelic Upstarts, Aswad, Dead Byrds and The Only Ones. Tue 3 Manchester Poly: Angelic Upstarts, Aswad, Exodus and The Only Ones. Wed 4 Birmingham Regal Cinema: Angelic Upstarts, Aswad, Crisis and Iganda. Fri 6 Nottingham Malibu: Angelic Upstarts, Aswad, Crisis and Slip Hazard. Bands are to be confirmed for the following venues: Sun 8 Llanelli Glen Ballroom; Mon 9 Exeter Routes; Tue 10 Plymouth Woods; Wed 11 Newport Stowaway; Thur 12 Bristol Uni.

### London GAA

LONDON Gay Activists Alliance is organising a public

meeting on Friday 9 March in support of Frank Kelly and Shaukat Ali, victims of police harassment in Bradford.

Frank, a well known anti-fascist, has been charged with buggery and indecent assault. But the prosecution case is based on statements by Frank and Shaukat which the defence committee claims were obtained by intimidation.

The GAA meeting starts at 7pm at Caxton Hall, Westminster.

### Notting Hill

CHANTS of 'Scrap sus' and 'Stop harassment of black people' were shouted by some 70 people who picketed Notting Hill police station in West London on Wednesday of last week.

The picket was called by the student union at South London College after a student had been arrested on a sus charge.

It is hoped that this will be the start of a major campaign against sus in the South

London area. Ring 01-670 3774.

### Sacked for being gay

'YES I'm homosexual too.' That was the proud message that got Jamie Dunbar, a general porter at the Middlesex Hospital in London, the sack last month.

Jamie was told by the hospital management that wearing the badge meant that he had 'a provocative attitude' to his homosexuality.

Jamie is firmly resisting his dismissal and this clear stand for gay rights has gained the support of the National Council for Civil Liberties and the gay community as a whole.

The first move in his defence campaign was a large picket of the hospital by gay activists. Jamie will be represented by his union, the Confederation of Health Service Employees, at an appeal.

### Bank workers

SIXTY members of the National Union of Bank Employees who work for the Bank of India in various centres in Britain are on strike for union recognition and against victimisation.

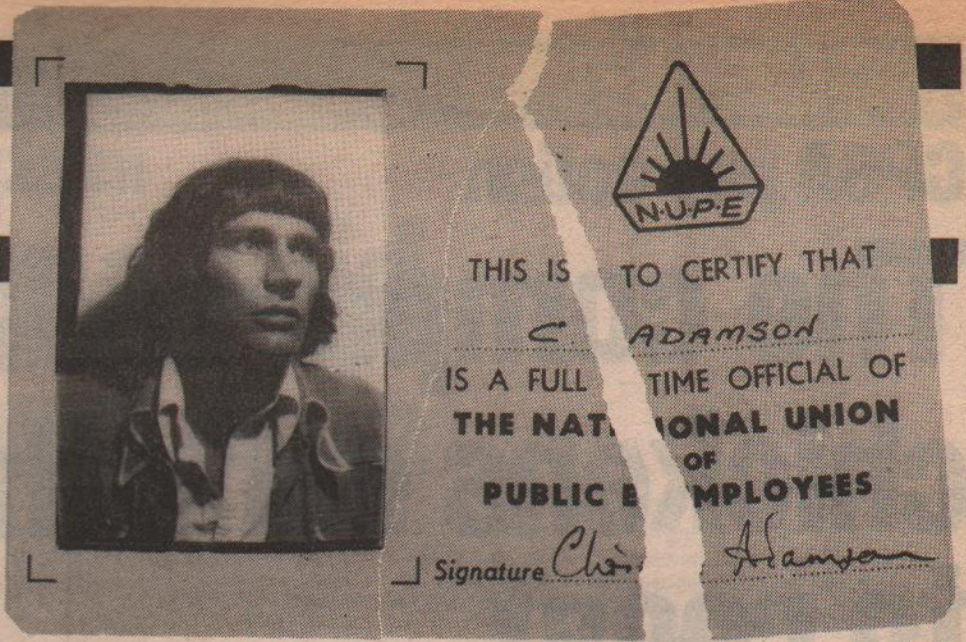
One of their negotiators, Mr Desai, has now been sacked by the Leicester branch manager, but NUBE has so far failed to come up with strike pay or proposals to extend the action.

NUBE members in the National Westminster Bank, for instance, could be asked to boycott all transactions with the Bank of India during the dispute.

Bank unions in India and Switzerland are among those who have sent messages of support. These, as well as donations, should be sent to: Strike Committee, c/o 1 Melbourne Street, Leicester.

# AT WORK IN NUPE

## 'We received instructions to play down the low pay campaign'



THE PROBLEM of being a socialist and a full-time trade union official is something that is constantly with you. My view when I started with NUPE as an area organiser in the West Midlands was that at sometime there would be a crunch situation which could end with my leaving the job in one way or another.

There is only so far that the bureaucracy will tolerate you and only so far that you can tolerate the principles of the bureaucracy.

The dilemma presents itself in two ways. First, it may be that you and the bureaucracy have different ideas about how far a strike or a dispute should go. During the nearly five years I was with NUPE, that was resolved one way or another. Until last November I'd never failed to get support from the bureaucracy for members in dispute; even if that support hadn't been willingly given, and even if they made it pretty clear they didn't want to give it.

The second problem is the more important one, and one that most full-time officers don't solve. Working as — in quotation marks — a 'non-political militant' in the union is one thing. But if you are really going to be of value politically then clearly part of your reason for working for the union is to produce a more socialist line among the membership you represent and to draw people towards the political position you hold.

That's where, as a member of the International Marxist Group, I feel I didn't make a great deal of progress, and where a fair number of other people who belong to a left-wing organisation and work for a union may be good industrial militants but are not particularly useful political cadres.

You sit at the table at the end of the room and people listen to you. And they think, oh, isn't he a great guy, or he's lousy. But it's a little difficult to get involved in the political, across-the-floor, hurly burly of argument, because they tend to look at you as the giver of wisdom. They distance you from themselves as lay members of the union.

When I first joined NUPE in 1974 it was an even more undemocratic union than it is today, certainly on paper. It was a full-time officer-dominated union, which had experienced a massive increase in membership — often due to the activities of fairly left-wing full-time officers recruited

Shortly after NUPE's claim for £60 and 35 hours took off last summer, the leadership panicked over the possibility of members taking action on their own. Local disputes, often arising from frustration over the national claim, received heavy-handed treatment from the union bureaucracy.

It was over the handling of one such dispute that CHRIS ADAMSON resigned as an area officer for NUPE in the West Midlands, a post he had held for four years. He describes the developments in the union over that period, and the problems facing socialists as full-time officials.

from universities and colleges.

In 1975 a report was accepted by NUPE's national conference which democratised the union, producing district and area committees of shop stewards, and divisional councils. The membership was given the possibility of organising at grass roots level. It was clear that one of the things this would do was raise massive political debate among the members, when there hadn't been anywhere to do this before.

They'd been in one branch, relatively isolated from other branches, and probably controlled by a strong branch secretary and certainly kept in line by a full-time officer whom everyone thought of as god, roughly. The re-organisation meant that the membership began to compete for electoral positions and over particular policies.

As a result of these developments, the left-right battle has become fierce, particularly in the West Midlands but I imagine elsewhere too, with different sections of the bureaucracy taking sides more on the right than on the left.

All this made quite a difference to the position of someone like me. In '74 you could buzz round your own area saying and doing what you liked; so long as you could show a membership increase at the end of the day no one bothered what you said. With the re-organisation the leadership became a good deal more concerned about the political attitudes and policy statements people like myself and branch secretaries were making.

As far as I'm concerned, that is very fruitful. It means that for the first time — and we've certainly seen this during the present pay sector dispute — the membership is starting to become really capable of organising themselves, not simply where they work but on a much wider basis.

At the '78 conference there was extreme dissatisfaction with the handling of the 1977-8 wage claim. So the executive came out with a policy which was progressive on paper,

pushing £60 and 35 hours, with a substantial low pay campaign to back it up. The campaign got underway last summer and it became clear that it was picking up an enormous head of steam.

Then we received instructions to make it clear to the membership that the low pay campaign was an on-going campaign; that there was no chance of achieving two-thirds of the national average wage —

Ever since 1974, when the ambulance service was merged into the health service from local authorities, ambulance staff in the West Midlands had been trying to iron out pay anomalies which had continued under the new employer, the area health authority. We'd placed restrictions on the movement of ambulances and in November action was escalated in order to get this thing settled once and for all. The authority responded on

The union had supported the anomalies' claim back from '74 and it had never crossed my mind that we wouldn't get support. But by 1.55pm on the Monday, everyone at head office from Alan Fisher downwards was saying there was no way the dispute would be made official — ever.

I said there was no way I would accept that position. I would put the opposite point of view, and I handed in my resignation to the divisional officer. Then we both went to the mass meeting.

It was a very emotional atmosphere. There were 600 ambulance staff there, virtually all those who had been locked out. They were furious as soon as they heard of the leadership's decision.

There was a lot of personal support for me and considerable disagreement with the executive's position. A number of shop stewards and I took a spontaneous decision to march to the AHA and lobby it. Twenty-four hours later NUPE made the lockout official, but they wouldn't support the anomalies' claim.

Unfortunately over the following two weeks the divisional officer who took charge of the dispute managed to turn it around and get a return to work on an extremely reactionary basis. Somewhere between 10 and 20 branches sent in resolutions to the executive council calling for a union inquiry into the ambulance service and for my reinstatement, but the executive turned them down.

Electing full-time officials in NUPE would make a hell of a lot of difference. If you cleared all the officers out and said we're now going to have an election, you might initially get a more right-wing group of officers, because of the general nature of the membership. But eventually that would sort itself out and it would make the political struggle within the union that much more realistic.

Looking at my own position, there's no way I'd have had to resign if I'd been responsible to the membership. In fact, I was



Lobby of AHA on day of Chris Adamson's resignation.

our £60 target — all in one go. Basically, that we shouldn't get the membership over-excited.

The ambulance dispute over which I resigned became such a focus because in late November all sorts of disputes were underway as a consequence of the frustration members felt about what was going on over the national claim. The bureaucracy was terrified that members would get out of control and take action on their own. Any little thing that happened, they would jump on at once.

Friday, 17 November, by imposing a lockout.

Following discussion with the NUPE divisional officer, my boss, I understood that instantaneous action would be taken to ensure that the lockout was made official. The TGWU, which also had members involved, made it official on the Sunday, and the following afternoon a NUPE meeting was to be held to discuss the way forward.

responsible to the executive council, which was saying one thing and I was saying precisely the opposite.

Because the organisation of the union, particularly locally, gets stronger and stronger, the influence of the membership in a local dispute is increasingly effective.

There is no way now you can go to a group of NUPE members and say: 'You're making a mistake here. Get back to work.' They'll tell you to piss off, whereas four or five years ago they'd have said: 'Ooer, the full-time officer... Better get back to work because we've got no support from the union.'

Where there is a significant lack, which I suspect the present dispute will start to put right, is that at the moment there is no national or even regional basis for defence against the right-wing actions that the leadership and bureaucracy frequently take.

On the things that matter, there's no doubt that the national leadership pull the strings. But I don't think they'll continue to do so because the feeling at the base is tremendously strong. The potential for the Campaign for Action in NUPE is enormous, especially with the fallback in what last summer looked on paper like the leadership's progressive position on pay.

In 1977, prior to that year's wage claim, CAN, along with the Birmingham social services branch, tried to get together shop stewards from local authorities, the health service, and the water works. We were incredibly successful, with a meeting of about two hundred people pledged to take one-day action in support of the claim.

My divisional officer and other officers were obviously very concerned at the turn this was taking, and we received instructions not to attend the meeting, which I ignored.

The initiative would have developed further, but we shot our bolt by over-doing what we should have done at the meeting. Every one voted for the proposal for a day of action, but no one bothered to turn out on the day.

In retrospect it's clear that we should have called merely for a co-ordinating committee and kept the thing going. But that experience shows the potential that's there.

This contribution by CHRIS ADAMSON is taken from a conversation with GEOFFREY SHERIDAN. If you know someone — perhaps yourself! — who could make a good subject for our At Work series, do let us know.

# IRELAND

## PTA UP FOR REPEAL

WITHIN the next few days the Prevention of Terrorism Act comes up for renewal for the sixth time.

Since November 1974, when it first came into operation following the public hysteria over the Birmingham pub bombs, over 3,750 people have been arrested under its provisions.

Of those, no more than 2 per cent have been charged with offences arising out of 'terrorist' activities. Some 4 per cent have been 'excluded', the majority to the North of Ireland.

By Brian Rose-Smith

The facts speak for themselves. The overwhelming majority of the people picked up under the PTA are innocent of any crime of a terrorist nature.

Nor is there any evidence to suggest that the Act 'prevents terrorism', or deters the Provisional IRA from undertaking urban guerrilla warfare in this country.

The IRA active service units (ASUs) carrying out the bombing campaign in London, Manchester and Southampton during 1975 were little hindered by the then recently passed legislation. Members of ASUs were picked up in 1975 and 1976 as a consequence of operational mistakes.

The beginning of 1976 witnessed a closing down of operations by the IRA in Great Britain after the arrest during the latter part of 1975 of a number of key personnel.

But as recent events have shown, the IRA has been able to rebuild its organisation in England and the Act has had little effect on its activities.

Nor is it likely to, for IRA activities are carried out as anonymously as possible.

The typical ASU will be composed of a small number of men and women who have no criminal convictions and are unknown to the police.

They will keep clear of Irish areas and Republican activities; they will not act in a way that is likely to draw attention to themselves, they will stay clear of drugs and drink only moderately.

In these circumstances the PTA is not going to provide much help in detecting and preventing 'terrorism'.

This is not to suggest that the Act deserves support if it were shown to be effective. Indeed there are fundamental reasons for opposing the PTA.

Chief of these is that it is another piece of legislation in a long line of legislative measures designed to combat the struggle of the Irish people for self-determination.

If the Act has not deterred the IRA, what has it done? In terms of pre-existing police powers and practices it was hardly necessary.

In his book *In the Office of Constable*, the former head of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Robert Mark, wrote of the PTA:

'The police were largely indifferent (to its enactment). The National Council for Civil Liberties were quite right in assuming that we would not let any legal niceties prevent us from dealing with terrorism and that we were therefore not all that interested in what we thought was essentially a propaganda measure.'

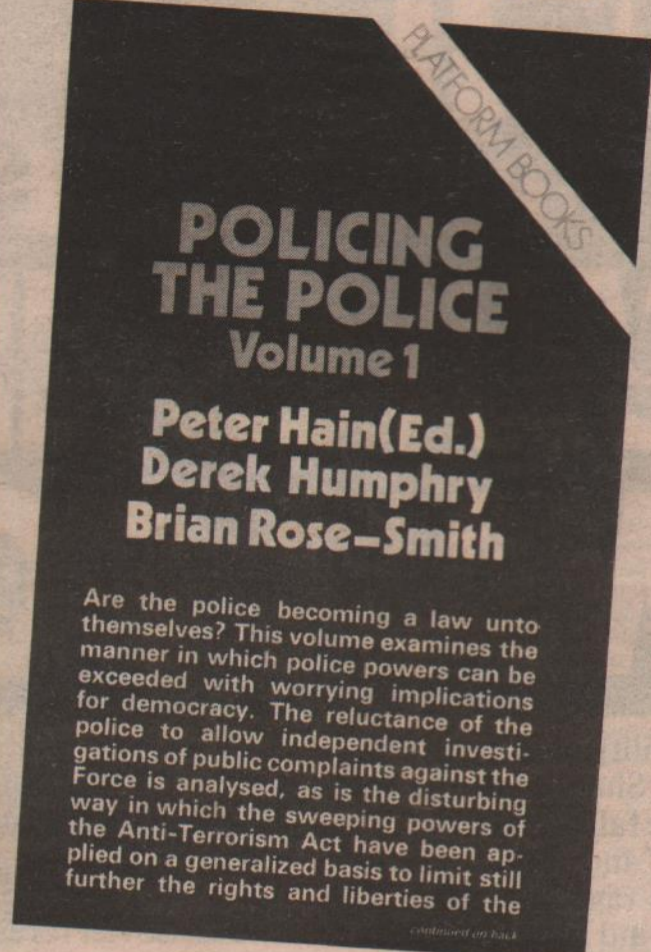
Propaganda measure or not, the Act increased police powers to an unprecedented extent in vital areas.

It enabled them to arrest people for no particular crime and to hold them for up to seven days without the inconvenience of producing them in court.

It introduced new offences couched in ambiguous terms, making it an offence to support the IRA in any way.

Eventually, therefore, the Act has had two important effects. In the first place it has enabled the police to intimidate and harass Republicans

Secondly, the Act has provided the police with the means to gather information on



those politically active on the Irish issue.

Thus the police find the Act extremely useful as an intelligence-gathering instrument. It is this particular aspect of the Act that explains the extreme disparity between the total numbers detained and those actually charged or excluded.

In that context the Act fulfils one of the conditions of a Frank Kitson-type counter-insurgency strategy that requires a large quantity of 'low level intelligence'.

Necessarily, such a strategy envisages the arrest, detention and screening of many innocent people.

To better enable large quantities of information to be obtained once an arrest has taken place, it is important that the police have the power to

detain their 'suspect' for a considerable length of time without interference from solicitors or being subject to judicial review.

Specifically the Act precludes an application for habeus corpus, and it is admitted police policy to refuse access to a solicitor during questioning.

The importance of the PTA lies in the application of Frank Kitson's theories to a British 'theatre'.

Whatever Mark may have said, there are few police officers who would gladly see the Act repealed. On the contrary, the trend is towards extending its 'draconian' power to 'ordinary' crime.

\*Brian Rose-Smith is joint author of the forthcoming book *Policing the Police*.

You don't have to be mad to join the army ... they teach you



Trooper Edward Maggs

At his trial it was reported that Scott turned to a fellow soldier after his shoot-up and exclaimed: 'I am cracking, I am cracking.'

The judge presiding over Scott's case took a sympathetic view and sentenced him to all of five years in prison.

Other soldiers have seen prison as a way of escaping a posting to the North of Ireland.

Last December Lance-corporal Michael Parkinson left a Doncaster magistrates court smiling — despite being given eight months for a string of offences including drunken driving, other car offences and obtaining money by deception.

Parkinson's lawyer told the court that his client committed his crimes in the hope that he would be found out and consequently discharged from the Army.

### DESERTING

Parkinson, the lawyer explained, couldn't face another tour of duty in the North of Ireland.

The effects of serving in the streets of Belfast, Derry or wherever have been described by one former soldier, Ian Phillips.

Writing in the pamphlet *British Soldiers Speak Out on Ireland* (available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1 at 30p), the ex-Royal Marine explained:

'By 1975 a tour of Northern Ireland was the worst thing that could happen. The number of soldiers deserting or going absent without leave was increasing, alcoholism and violence was prevalent and the cost to family relationships was immeasurable.'

'Apart from the very new recruits who have never been there the attitude of most ordinary soldiers is that we should get out.'

### TERRIFIED

Edward Maggs' father made a similar point on hearing of his son's death. 'He had been there before,' he said of his son, 'and was terrified of returning. He was a victim of Northern Ireland.'

It is difficult to feel any degree of sympathy for members of the British Army in Ireland, but Maggs' death gives a reminder that the ultimate responsibility for both the carnage they have caused and the problems individual soldiers face lies with those who send them there.

BILLY CONNOLLY introduces his song Sergeant Where's Mine this way:

'I wrote it a wee while ago after seeing a documentary on television. It was about Ulster and the children in Ulster, being in a terrible state with the war being on, and the soldiers in Ulster, being in a terrible state trying to cope with the kids and fight a war that they don't know what it's all about.'

The song itself ends with a rhetorical question: 'But I can put up with most things I've done in my time. I can even put up with the pain, But what dae ye dea with a gun in your hand When you're facing a hundred odd wains?'

The killing of Trooper Edward Maggs in a West Belfast barracks last week confirms Billy Connolly's view of the Irish war rather than that in the swashbuckling advertisements put out by the Army Careers Information Office.

### MORALE

Maggs, the official version goes, was shot dead by his own 'comrades' after he had opened fire on two NCOs, killing one.

Whatever the truth of that account, Maggs' death does throw a chink of light on the state of morale of Britain's occupying forces in the North of Ireland.

He was not the first to go berserk, but was unfortunate in that he went berserk against other soldiers. Had he merely killed a couple of civilians he would probably be alive today.

For example, in 1977 Cheshire Regiment member David Scott opened up with an SLR rifle in the Catholic Strand Road district of Belfast. He killed one passer-by and injured two others.

## TUCAR Tour

PHIL FLYNN, deputy general secretary of the Irish Local Government Association and Public Services Union, and John Major, a branch secretary of the Civil and Public Services Association in Belfast, are the main speakers in a tour organised by the Irish-based Trade Union Campaign Against Repression.

The tour's dates include: Monday 12 March, Manchester, 8pm, Cavendish House, Manchester Poly, All Saints; Tuesday 13 March, Liverpool, 7.30pm, AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant; Wednesday 14 March, Birmingham, 7.30pm, phone 021-773 8683 for details; Thursday 15 March, Sheffield, 7.30pm, City Polytechnic, Students Union; Friday 16 March, London, 7.30pm, Leander Hall, off Tanners Hill, London SE13; Saturday 17 March, London, 7.30pm, City of London Poly, Fairholt House, Aldgate East. With St Patrick's Day social. Entrance £1, claimants 60p.

## WHAT'S LEFT

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

**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. Weppier, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

**CHARTIST** (incorporating *Chartist International*) new bi-monthly magazine. First issue contains articles on the Labour Left, Socialist/feminism, Immigration Controls, Bolshevism, Rosa Luxemburg, the Economy, Local Government. Price 35p + 15p p&p. Four issues for £1.50. Also: *Roots of the Middle East Conflict* a collection of articles exploring the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict. 30p + 10p p&p. Available from Chartist Publications (SC), 60 Loughborough Road, London SW9.

**WOMEN AGAINST** Violence Against Women. Week of local actions leading up to a National Women's Demonstration/Carnival in Leeds on Saturday 10 March (assemble 1pm, Woodhouse Moor, Leeds 6). Women only demonstration, followed by social (creche). All women welcome. We will be having one main (WAWAV) banner so no other banners, please.

**CHILEAN** evening in support of the resistance. Latin American food, music (YURO), drinks, exhibition. Fri 9 March, 7.30pm to 11pm, 21 Star St, London WC2.

**PUBLIC** meeting to defend Frank Kelly and Shaikat Ali. Frank Kelly has been charged with sleeping with a man under 21 and faces possible life imprisonment. The main witness in the case, Shaikat Ali — the man he is alleged to have slept with — is already under threat of deportation. Speakers from the Defence Committee and the Bradford Asian Youth Group. Fri 9 March, Caxton Hall, Westminster, 7pm. St James Park tube. Organised by London Gay Activists Alliance.

**LIBERTARIAN** Spain No 2 bulletin of Libertarian Spain Committee, articles on workers' struggles, trade union elections etc. 20p from LSC, 73 Walmgate, York YO1 2TZ.

**SPARTICIST** League public meeting: Reforge the Fourth International. Speaker: James Robertson, International Executive Committee, International Spartacist tendency. Fri 9 March, 7.30pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London (Holborn tube).

**WHOSE law and order?** The increasing use of law against strikes, pickets, occupations and demonstrations. New booklet, price 30p (inc p&p) from the Campaign Against A Criminal Trespass Law, c/o 35 Wellington St, London WC2. Tel: 01-289 3877.

**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.

**TRADE** Union Day Conference on Chile Sat 24 March, NUR Unity House. Delegates invited from all trade union bodies. Fee £1. Chile Solidarity Campaign, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, London N7.

**ISABEL** Letelier will speak at the premiere of the film *The Dead Are Not Silent* describing the assassination of her husband Orlando. 27 March, 6.45 pm, Sudbury House, St Pauls, London. Adm: £1.50. Tickets from Chile Solidarity Campaign, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, London N7. Also showing Sheffield 28 March, Glasgow 29 March, Edinburgh 30 March. Film only Leeds 15 March.

**GLASGOW** UTOM demonstration: 'Political Status for Irish Prisoners', 'Troops Out Now', 'Self-determination for the Irish people'. Sat 21 April. Assemble: 10.30am Queens Park Gates, Victoria Rd, to march to city centre.

**REVOLUTIONARY** Communist Group public meeting 'The capitalist crisis, the party and the working class'. Speaker: David Yaffe. Tues 13 March, 7.30pm, Conway Hall. Adm: 20p.

**REVOLUTIONARY** Communist Papers No 4. Revisionism, Imperialism and the State: the methods of Capital and the dogma of State Monopoly Capitalism. Through a critique of the revisionist dogma of SMC the main article by Frank Richards puts the struggle against the reformist leadership of the labour movement on a firm programmatic foundation. Available from the Revolutionary Communist Tendency: BM RCT(4), London WC1V 6XX. 50p plus 15p postage. Cheques payable to RCT Association.

WORLD  
IN CRISIS



## After the shah's fall

# WASHINGTON ON A WAR FOOTING

1979 HAS WITNESSED the continuing inability of imperialism to stabilise the 'third world'. The fall of the Shah dealt the most devastating blow to the United States since the fall of Saigon.

Today there is a war between North and South Yemen, confrontations in southern Africa, civil wars rage in Uganda and Chad, and Belgian paratroopers have gone to aid Mobutu in Zaire.

The only joy for imperialism has come from the war between China and Vietnam, a war which further weakens the entire system of post-capitalist states.

We review the growing world political crisis over the next six pages and analyse its broader implications. Next week we shall discuss Soviet foreign policy.

**By Michael T. Klare, Washington**

WASHINGTON is rapidly turning into a war capital. Not, perhaps, in the sense that troops are being called up for deployment to some foreign battlefield — but rather in the sense that top policy-makers believe that the likelihood of a war is increasing daily, and that, therefore, preparation for war must be accelerated even if other national goals suffer in the process.

In the past few months, the Carter administration has committed the United States in the thermonuclear arms race, and has ordered a massive increase in spending on conventional (non-nuclear) arms.

And while these moves do not necessarily signal the imminent outbreak of conflict, they will surely aggravate US-Soviet relations and, thus, increase the risk that future crises will result in war.

As one State Department officer told me in January, 'we are now closer to a nuclear war with the Soviet Union than at any time since the Cuban missile crisis'.

As in Washington of the early 1960s, when the Kennedy Administration's obsession with 'counter-insurgency' led us inexorably towards Vietnam, Pentagon strategists are searching for opportunities to test out their new weapons and tactics — except now the emphasis is on desert warfare and on 'high intensity' operations in hypothetical European and Middle Eastern battlefields.

US combat forces are being completely re-equipped with new tanks, PGMs (precision-guided munitions, also called 'smart bombs' or

'smart missiles'), helicopters, and fighter planes, and the strategic nuclear arsenal is being 'modernised' with a new generation of missiles, warheads, and launching systems.

All this is being accompanied by a change in US strategic doctrine which emphasises the 'usability' of nuclear weapons in 'limited' conflict situations.

With the collapse of the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran — and with it the policy of relying on client powers to defend US interests in the third world — Washington is heading towards a renewed interventionist posture abroad.

Commenting on the Iranian crisis, for instance, Secretary of Defence Harold Brown observed: 'I think that's a worse problem than it was in the 1950s and 1960s. You say how could it be worse than Vietnam? What I'm saying is that our vital interests are more likely to be involved than, in retrospect, they probably were (in Vietnam). We're more interdependent; we're more resource-dependent on the outside world.'

Given this fact, he added, 'We might have a very difficult time avoiding the choice between active participation in conflict...or severe damage to our national interest and resources.'

To demonstrate that he was not talking in abstract terms, Brown revealed that 'planning is going ahead' for a highly mobile, hard-hitting specialised force for conflicts outside of NATO.

On Capitol Hill, it is hard to find law-makers who will speak out against provocative new weapons, programmes or particularly belligerent statements by the administration.

Equally chilling is the atmosphere in the press, the universities, and the think-tanks. People who applauded the US withdrawal from Vietnam and spoke of a 'new world order' where disputes would be settled peacefully now advocate the 'revitalisation of NATO' and planning for a future US 'oil intervention' in the Persian Gulf.

(Klare goes on to detail the massive increase in military spending and the projects it is going on: neutron bombs, cruise missiles and a number of lesser known projects. He also reveals that there is talk of creating a standby draft system for all young men and women.

Finally — and most absurdly — Carter's choice for director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency is in

After announcing that the United States would not proceed with the procurement of the much-detested neutron bomb, President Carter has now authorised the production and stockpiling of neutron bomb components, thus permitting near instantaneous production of complete bombs at any future date.

**favour of new nuclear weapons, opposed to the SALT agreement, and a member of the Coalition for Peace Through Strength, a pro-military lobby!)**

All of these developments have been accompanied by a shift in attitudes about the use of military intervention to solve US political-economic difficulties abroad.

Whereas after Vietnam many US leaders argued that we should spurn military means in favour of diplomatic and economic measures in future third world crises, today many of these same figures are suggesting that intervention may be appropriate in some situations.

If the Angola crisis of 1975 (when Congress voted to block US participation in the civil war there) can be seen as the high point in the pendulum's swing towards anti-interventionism, then the Zaire crisis of 1978 (when Carter placed the 82nd Airborne Division on alert for possible deployment in Zaire's embattled Shaba Province) was the mid-point in its swing back in the opposite direction.

As one State Department official said at the time, 'We are now at the Tonkin Gulf stage in Africa'.

And while it would be foolish to predict a repetition of the Vietnam entanglement — with many thousands of US troops involved in a protracted ground war — it is not so unrealistic to envision a US 'lightning strike' to topple a radical Arab regime that blocks US oil supplies or to overcome some other threat to US economic 'survival'.

By now you must be asking: why this dramatic upturn in militarism and interventionism at this time? Of course, there is no simple of definitive explanation for what is obviously a complex and challenging situation, but I will try to identify at least some of the underlying causes.

First, US military preparedness has become a major political issue, in that

potential presidential candidates such as Senator Jackson and Ronald Reagan have used the 'Soviet threat' issue to embarrass and discredit President Carter.

And since Carter feels that the electorate might be vulnerable to such 'scare' tactics, he has moved steadily to the right on military issues — thus forcing his rivals to release even more alarming statements in order to stay in the game.

These developments suggest that the 'Soviet threat' will be a major issue in the 1980 presidential election and, thus, will trigger a continuing increase in hawkish, Cold War rhetoric.

Next, we can discern a split within US ruling circles on foreign policy issues that tends to be expressed through the debate over the Pentagon budget. This split revolves around the question of how best to preserve US global power in the wake of the Vietnam disaster.

Whereas some leaders — especially those in the business and financial community — emphasise the solidarity of the capitalist world (especially the 'trilateral' powers of North America, Western Europe, and Japan) in the face of mounting demands from the underdeveloped world, other leaders — particularly those in the national security bureaucracy — emphasise the expansion of US military strength and the 'containment' of Soviet power.

The former group (which I have elsewhere called the 'Traders') believe that the USSR will become increasingly dependent on Western technology and thus will be less prone to challenge US interests, while the latter group (which I call the 'Prussians') argues that only a massive build-up in US military power will discourage aggressive Soviet moves.

And while this debate normally takes place behind the closed doors of corporate board rooms and government offices, it surfaces regularly during the annual debate over the US defence budget, when the hard-liners release exaggerated data on Soviet strength in order to win congressional support for higher military spending.

And given the political climate already mentioned, this process naturally tends to result in ever-increasing military budgets.

Economic factors also play a role in this process. Inflation in the defence industries is running at about twice the rate as in the economy as a whole, with

the result that arms firms must receive an even larger slice of the federal budget pie (their principal source of income) merely to stay in place.

And since Carter has vowed to reduce the federal deficit in order to curb inflation, increases in military spending can only come at the expense of cutbacks in social services.

Such cutbacks have been opposed by unions, minorities, and urban leaders, thus touching off a bitter debate over national priorities (or, as this debate is usually described, guns vs butter). To ensure their success in this struggle, the arms producers have launched a multi-million dollars 'scare' campaign to convince American voters that they need missiles and bombers ('guns') more than they need basic social services ('butter').

There are also some sectors of the population which feel threatened by the political gains made by women, blacks, chicanos, gays and other minorities in the 1960s, and who, thus, yearn for a return to the conformist, repressive atmosphere of the 1950s.

Such constituencies are naturally receptive to calls for a new Cold War, and tend to link 'military preparedness' with other conservative causes (anti-abortion, anti-Equal Rights Amendment, anti-affirmative action, anti-gay rights).

If I am correct in this analysis, we can expect that any further tilt towards a war footing in this country will be accompanied by increasing repression against reluctant sectors of the population — labour, feminists, blacks and other minorities, environmentalists, etc.

Following the announcement of resumed diplomatic ties between the US and the Peoples Republic of China, the American Press was full of speculation about a future US-PRC military alliance aimed at the Soviet Union. Already, Washington has given its approval to the sale of advanced French and British arms to China, and the sale of US arms is sure to follow. And while Carter asserted that the normalisation of ties with a contribution to world peace, it is obvious that any moves toward a formal or informal military alliance would be viewed with extreme unease in Moscow and could result in a further escalation of the global arms race.

The White House has ordered the Army to draw up plans for construction of a factory to produce 'binary' nerve gas weapons. According to The Washington Post, the new plant will be located at Pine Bluff Arsenal, Arkansas. [Binary weapons would use two separately encased chemicals which would mix together to form the deadly nerve gas only after the shell or bomb was on its way to a target]. At the same time, the Army has once again, after a four-year hiatus, used nerve gas in outdoor troop-training exercises. During the exercises, held at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama, small quantities of nerve gas are released and then decontaminated by chemical weapons specialists.





**IN WORLD  
CRISIS**

# What the west lost in Iran

By Our Foreign Staff

JIMMY Carter's recent declaration that he had no intention of interfering in Iran's internal affairs was as ironic as his call for China to get out of Vietnam.

The US President's declaration came during his statement of recognition of the Bazargan government, a move which was echoed by the British Foreign Office. It was all they could do in the circumstances, but the brave professions of faith in the new order in Iran cannot hide the fact that imperialism has suffered a terrible reverse.

No doubt the next move will be to try to enlist the support of the Khomeini regime for the US-backed status quo in the Middle East. Under the Shah the presence of large numbers of American 'advisers' — white-collar mercenaries — was a major way of doing this.

Khomeini has indicated all along that he is not opposed in principle to the presence of advisers, and last week a top general said that many of the advisers who had fled the country were welcome, indeed invited, to return.

A 'foreign diplomat' quoted in the *New York Times* explained the role of National Front leader Sanjabi, the Foreign Minister in the Bazargan government: 'His mission is to preserve the continuing hegemony of the national bourgeoisie of Iran and to protect it from the revolutionary forces unleashed by a year of strife, strikes, and militancy.'

But much of the damage has already been done. The economic impact, for example, has already been considerable. British companies have been hit by last week's decision by the new Iranian regime to cancel the \$2 billion arms contract, which includes Chieftain tanks and Rapier anti-aircraft missiles.

US capitalists have suffered similarly: even before the insurrection the Bakhtiar government had cancelled \$7 billion out of the planned \$12 billion's worth of arms deals.

As we noted a couple of weeks ago, the oil companies are worried that the mythical bogey they themselves conjured up during the 1973-74 crisis — the 'third world' taking its revenge on the West — may yet come true if Khomeini is unable to control the mass movement, and particularly the oil workers.

But far more serious are the 'geopolitical' implications of the overturn. The flight of US personnel and the disruption of CIA monitoring activities in Iran are bad enough for imperialism. With the fall of the monarchy, it simultaneously loses its greatest military ally in Central Asia and faces the threat of similar upsurges everywhere.

It is too simplistic to say, for example, that Sadat is Egypt's Shah (or that Pahlavi's present host, King Hassan, is Morocco's). But this popular analogy signifies that the Iranian revolution marks a decisive new phase in the mass struggle in the Middle East — and autocrats, particularly in poor and populous countries like Egypt, understand this.

The alliance between the new Iranian regime and the Palestinians underlines this lesson. At a time when the Arab regimes are looking towards a political accommodation with American im-

perialism, the decision to back the PLO signifies a step in the other direction. Arab bourgeois opposition to the Camp David peace between Egypt and Israel is likely to harden as a result.

The new alliance has practical implications too. It spells an end to Israeli attempts to turn the Shi'a population of southern Lebanon — Khomeini's co-religionists — against the Palestinians.

But imperialism's immediate cause for concern is around the Gulf. Most immediately unstable is Iraq, which shares with Iran a large Shi'a population and a number of minority nationalities, principally the Kurds.

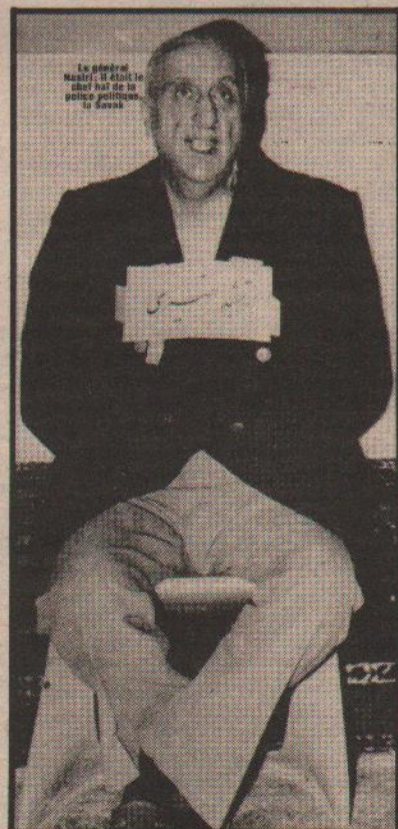
Bahrain too has many Shi'ites. The large Arab population in Iran's southern region is another obvious transmission belt to carry radical ideas along the southern rim of the Gulf.

This is why the US has sent a naval task force to the Gulf and increased arms supplies to Saudi Arabia. But even the Royal House of Saud, the Middle East's most powerful remaining monarchy, is feeling uneasy. It employs many Palestinian immigrant workers, for example.

'If Iran goes, God help us,' Crown Prince Fahd said before the Shah went, and the sentiment must have been confirmed when he saw the television pictures of Yassar Arafat in Tehran.

But finally the fall of the Pahlavi regime signifies a further defeat for US global strategy in the 1970s. The concept of regional 'relay posts' which keep their own corner of the globe safe from imperialism has proven unworkable. Iran is the third of these to come to grief — after South Vietnam, and the South African venture into Angola.

The Pentagon policy makers must be unhappily pondering the conclusion that a mass movement can defeat even the most sophisticated military machine.



**FORMER SAVAK chief Nassiri just before his execution.**

IN WORLD CRISIS

# Iran: the grand sanctuary of Shi'ism

IN this interview with the French weekly *Rouge*, from which we print extracts, MAXIME RODINSON, the well-known Marxist authority on the Muslim world, talks about the relation between Islam and politics in the light of Iranian events.

ruling class, linked to imperialism and capitalism. It is the Europeanised rich who are not religious. It is the 'poor' who keep the faith.

To this must be added mistrust of the Soviet Union because of what happened in 1945-50. The Soviet troops had invaded the north of Iran. They protected the Tudeh Party and helped to create autonomous republics around the Caspian sea.

But in 1950, they withdrew from Azerbaijan leaving the partisans to be taken. This mistrust is further explained by the disappointment produced by the evolution of the 'Soviet model'.

### Are there any tendencies within Islam that favour 'modernisation'?

There have always been 'radical' interpretations of Islam which have been at the service of revolts or revolutions. But most often there was disillusionment: it was a case of 'permanent revolution' and 'revolution betrayed' all at once!

A minority wing of this radical kind emerged out of the revolution of 1905-11. There's no doubt another such current emerging today, though the information we have about this is too imprecise for me to discuss further.

### Can you explain what is particular about the Shi'ite tendency within Islam and its place in Iran?

Since the death of Mohammed in the 7th century, Islam has fragmented into several sects — kinds of 'politico-religious parties'.

In about 1500, the ruling dynasty imposed Shi'ism as the state religion. But, if Shi'ism was very often linked to the government of the day, it always maintained a financial independence. This wasn't the case in Sunni countries (another branch of Islam).

This independence explains how Shi'ism has been able to embody on several occasions an opposition to the contemporary power, as in the recent past.

In fact, since about 1800, Shi'ism has been in almost permanent opposition, as a reaction to the pro-European pro-modernisation policies of the governments.

Between 1905 and 1911, there was a very deep-going revolution with rank and file committees just like today.

To be sure, it's in Iran where the Holy places of Shi'ism are to be found. But Iran is the grand sanctuary of Shi'ism.

WHAT is an 'Islamic Republic' as projected by Khomeini? Given, of course, that the course of the class struggle will be the determining factor and not the doctrine itself, can you explain it from a purely descriptive point of view. The press has made a big deal of certain rules governing adultery...

In a certain sense, there's nothing more to say than what's been written in the bourgeois press. There isn't really a system of Islamic laws.

Rather, what exists is a small number of prescriptions. That's why when you want to show what being a Muslim means, you're forced to turn towards the most spectacular precepts — which can also happen to be the most archaic.

Few things are to be found in the Koran. Yet, Mohammed had a whole community to organise (in contrast to Christ's small cohort of disciples). He did lay down certain laws for the society in which he lived.

These were laws governing inheritance which provided that women could only get half the legacy, laws which prohibited eating of certain foods and condemnation of some forms of lending for interest.

There's nothing else in the Koran except a rather obscure verse where Mohammed seems to advise his wives to dress 'decently' and to cover up their heads, and stipulation that perpetrators of the crime of fornication should be flogged on the condition that four witnesses testify to the fact with complete anatomical precision! There's no question of stoning in the Koran. It was the Caliph Omar later in the 7th century who claimed to have 'remembered' that a passage in the Holy Book provided for stoning; he probably borrowed the practice from the Jewish Holy Book, the Torah.

### Can you explain the prominent place taken by religious forces today in Iran?

It's based on what happened in the past. Unlike in Europe, religion has not surrendered under the weight of two or three centuries of anti-clerical propaganda.

Basically, that's because there wasn't a bourgeois revolution and consequently no revolt against a Church which embodies the social structure of old: feudalism and monarchism.

For the mass of the people, secular tendencies are those of a



# War in Yemen

IT is still not quite clear who started the latest round of fighting in the Arab peninsula. What is not in dispute is that ever since the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen [PDRY] was established, there has been a consistent attempt by imperialism and its local clients to undermine its existence.

The Saudi Arabians have consistently backed the reactionary North Yemeni regime. Iran under the Shah backed the barbaric Sultanate of Oman, recently graced with a visit by the British monarch.

The reason for this hostility to the PDRY was simple. It was the most militant anti-

imperialist regime in the region.

Its opposition, moreover, was neither verbal nor limited to broadsides against the United States. It gave military aid and training to guerrillas fighting against the Sultan of Oman.

The North Yemeni regime was indebted to Saudi Arabia both materially and politically. While the existence of a separate North and a South Yemen lacks any national rationale — there is a common language, common culture, and an uneven historic unity — there are very sharp political and economic differences.

The North is led by reactionary royalists and

traditional rulers in that region. It is backed by US imperialism.

The South is under the control of an extreme left petty-bourgeois nationalist organisation, internationally aligned to the Cubans and the USSR. The Chinese who initially backed the PDRY have long since switched their support to the North.

There was a Saudi attempt to overthrow the southern government in 1972. A full scale war was launched.

The invasion was halted after a week, but it was accompanied by a shock announcement that the two Yemens had united. This was obviously a concession from the South under Arab League pressure. But it remained on paper.

The present conflict is a continuation of the old divisions. The United States has shipped in a massive supply of military aid. The Saudis have withdrawn their troops from the 'peace-keeping force' in the Lebanon and placed their forces on alert.

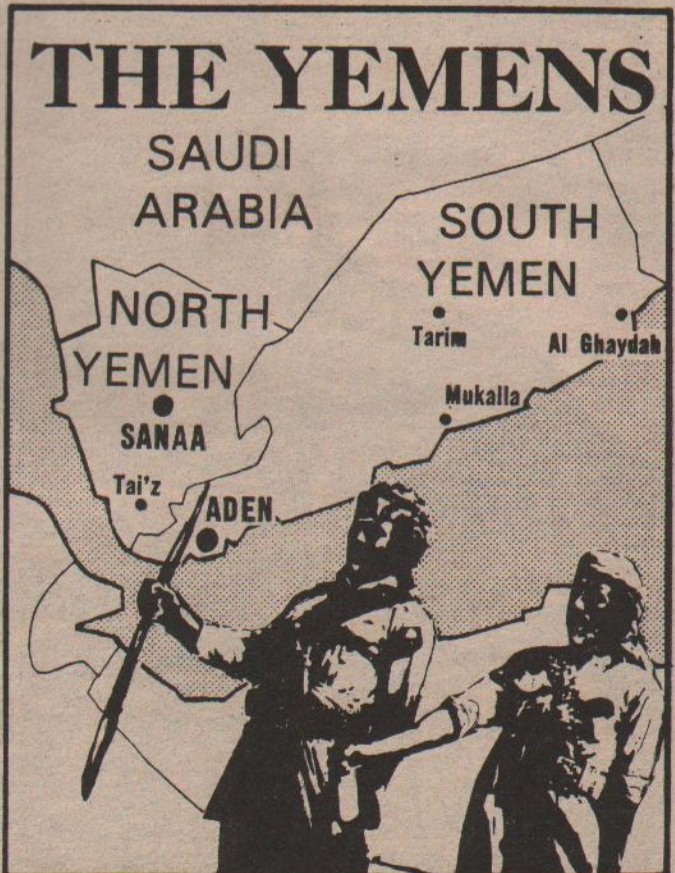
It is obviously a case of Iranitis: the fear that the overthrow of the Shah might encourage the disease to spread in the whole peninsula.

Socialists must be critical of the PDRY and its failure to fulfil its own programme. The regime, like Angola and Afghanistan, has modelled itself on Stalinist monolithism.

In all three cases it is the East Germans who are training the secret police. There is no democratic life. The masses remain outside politics.

But the PDRY must be given support against the North. Its important strategic position would make it an invaluable base for overthrowing the feudal-tribalist regimes dotted round the Gulf.

For that reason the imperialists want to overthrow the government. And for that reason we must defend it.



## Chad war

A THREE-WAY civil war is raging in Chad after the failure of an attempt to bring a former leader of the country's liberation movement into the military government.

Last year France, the former colonial power, sent paratroopers to shore up the government of General Malloum against the guerillas of FROLINAT. They saved Malloum from certain overthrow but demanded in return a facade of democracy. This was achieved by the appointment of former FROLINAT leader Hissene Habre as prime minister.

But the manoeuvre has not worked. Long standing differences between Habre and Malloum have erupted into open conflict, with a section of the army supporting each of them and FROLINAT, itself deeply divided, also taking part in the fighting.

## Chilean excluded

NELSON Gutierrez, a leader of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) of Chile, has been refused entry to Britain to visit his wife and daughter.

Gutierrez arrived in London from Rome on 6 February. At Immigration he was treated abusively and forcibly strip searched, despite his protests that this was against international law. The British authorities would not admit him, despite the fact that he had valid travel documents.

When eventually he asked to go to Paris the request was refused on the grounds that his travel document from Sweden, where he has refugee status, was invalid. This was untrue.

Finally, he was told that he could only go to Rome as the Italian authorities had already admitted him. But when he arrived in Rome he was identified as having been deported and held until it was established that this was untrue.

## Indochina

INDOCHINA: a Socialist Challenge International Forum with speaker John Ross. 16 March, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London NW1.

## Joe Hansen

JOSEPH HANSEN died in New York on 18 January. A publishing fund has been set up by Reba Hansen and Intercontinental Press contributing editors — Pierre Frank, Ernest Mandel and George Novack — in order to publish some of Hansen's writings.

The aim is to raise \$20,000 by 31 March. \$8,000 was raised at the memorial meeting in New York on 28 January.

Sponsors for the fund include: Robert Alexander, Tariq Ali, Robin Blackburn, Hugh Blanco, Marguerite Bonnet, Pierre Broue, Ken Coates, Tamara Deutscher, Quintin Hoare, Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, Louis Sinclair, Ernie Tate, Harry Wicks, Mary-Alice Waters, Evelyn Reed, Joyce Meissenheimer, Nahuel Moreno, Babak Zahrie, and Vsevolod Volkov [Trotsky's grandson].

The convenors of the British fund — Tariq Ali and Connie Harris — have announced that contributions should be sent to the Joseph Hansen Publication Fund, 23 Lambeth Towers, Kennington Road, London SE11.

# Women's day in Iran

IN WORLD CRISIS

THIS appeal is being distributed by the Socialist Workers Party, Iranian section of the Fourth International, for International Women's Day.

17 ESFAND (8 March) is International Women's Day.

On this day, all over the world, from Africa, Asia, Australia, America and Europe, women who are struggling for their social and political rights, for equality and to free themselves from all oppression, gather together for meetings and demonstrations.

This stems from 8 March 1908. On this day 71 years ago, textile workers in New York protested against inhumane conditions at work and held big demonstrations demanding the right to work.

Two years later in Copenhagen, at a congress of socialist women, this day was called International Women's Day.

In 1917 on this day, textile workers protested against low pay, bad conditions and food shortages. This strike was the start of a series of struggles which finally led to the overthrow of the Czar and the success of the October revolution.

During the 1920s, after the fight for equality had died down, this day was forgotten in most countries. But with the birth of the new women's liberation movement in the last decade, International Women's Day became a day of solidarity among all women throughout the world to uproot all forms of oppression and prejudice against women and to put an end to their inferior social status.

For Iranian women this year, International Women's Day has a certain significance. After one and a half years of big struggles, the 50 years of autocracy and brutality of the Pahlavi regime have come to an end.

In the course of this long and hard struggle, women have fought shoulder to shoulder with their brothers for political and civic freedom. In this fight they have not put any differences between men's and women's rights and from tiny villages to large towns, millions

have struggled for revolution.

A year of struggle has proved the idea of women's weakness and inferiority to be nonsense. The thousands who have given their lives on the road to freedom and have been beaten and killed by the regime bear witness to this fact (...)

In various parts of the country women proposed the following demands:

1. Equal pay for equal work;
2. Free nurseries for all;
3. The abolition of all reactionary laws that put the woman's right to decide in other hands;
4. The right to organise autonomous women's groups (...)

For our success we must organise all oppressed women into militant women's organisations. It is in this way that our success has been realised — through the united action of the organised working class and the oppressed.

Although world imperialism has been badly hit by events in Iran, the final goal of revolution — a new society — is still a long way ahead (...)

Through their participation militant women have shown that their liberation is linked to the success of social revolution.

There can be no revolution without women's liberation and no liberation without revolution.

Now, by overthrowing the Shah's regime, the revolution has put behind it its first obstacle. It must now organise the solidarity of women and other oppressed sections to defend these achievements and defend the freeing of women from centuries of oppression.

With the present success it has been made possible for Iranian women to celebrate this day with their sisters throughout the world, and to show their solidarity with all other oppressed working women throughout the world.

To organise for this day a provisional committee has been called together. Participation in this committee is open to all militants.

We urge everybody to help up make this day a success.

**\*31 March is an International Day of Action for Abortion Rights. In London there will be a demonstration starting at 1.30 at Hyde Park and ending with a rally in Trafalgar Square. Details from ICAR, 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.**



A cartoon published in the journal Azerbaijan in Tabriz in 1907 shows clearly the weight of the burden which Iranian women are still fighting to throw off.

# Trotskyist rally disrupted

By A. Hamzeh

THE Iranian Trotskyist organisation Hezb-e Karegaran-e Socialist (Socialist Workers Party) planned to hold its first public rally on 2 March in Tehran. But the rally, the first to be organised by a left party, was sabotaged and prevented from taking place.

After a considerable struggle the HKS had forced the new authorities to let them use a sports hall at Tehran Polytechnic, but when more than 2,000 people, including 600 workers from Tehran factories, arrived for the rally they found the Poly locked. They sent a delegation to the Committee (headquarters of the pro-Khomeini militias who have taken over police duties) to protest about the situation. After considerable argument a group of militia came to open the building.

They were reluctant to let the rally take place and it was only the large number of supporters which forced them to concede,

and even to announce the rally on the radio.

But no sooner had the rally begun than a group of about 200 people in the audience began disrupting it by heckling. The chairperson told them that if they had disagreements or objections they would be allowed to raise them and eventually their spokesperson was allowed to address the meeting.

He had little to say other than slanders against the HKS and a number of its leading members, whom he accused of being SAVAK agents.

There were strong protests from the audience. One young worker got up and said: 'We fought and gave our lives to put an end to such methods of slander and thuggery and now you are bringing them back in the name of the revolution.'

When the HKS was accused of having insulted the 'Great Comrade Stalin' there were roars of laughter from the audience.

Having failed to win politically the disrupters turned to another tactic — they sabotaged the microphone. Since it was impossible to hold the rally without a microphone, it was eventually decided to postpone it.

The disruption comes at a time when the HKS's activities are having increased success. Its line of uncompromising opposition to the Bazargan government's attempts to

demobilise the masses is winning support.

The party has begun to recruit many militant workers, including some who had played a leading role in the recent general strike in the oil, steel and printing industries and the railways.

The third issue of the Trotskyist paper *Che Bayad Kard* (What is to be Done) published last week is now 16 pages. 50,000 copies were printed and are selling so well that there may be a second run of 20,000.

From next week *Che Bayad Kard* will be incorporated into a new weekly 16-page paper called *Kazegar* (The Worker), the first weekly paper of the left to be published in Iran.

Paper sellers are often arrested by the militias and taken to the Committee. But in all cases the militias have had to release the comrade almost immediately under pressure.

Many of the people who started the disruption of last week's rally are believed to be supporters of an ultra-sectarian Maoist group called the Union of Iranian Communists. This group has a long history of using violence and disruption against other currents on the left. In the present situation, when the left is under increasing attack from the new government, sectarian politics can only aid counter-revolutionary forces.

The history of this Maoist

sect casts serious doubts on its nature and the extent to which it was being used by the agents of the Shah's regime to create divisions among the opposition.

British socialists must protest against such attacks and demand that the Bazargan

government immediately give full legal status to all organisations of the left and remove all obstacles to their activity.

At the same time, now that SAVAK has been dissolved, the Bazargan government must open all SAVAK files and expose how SAVAK tried to

disrupt the opposition by penetrating and manipulating 'opposition' organisations.

The HKS has now rescheduled its rally for a fortnight's time. This time counter-revolutionary forces must not be allowed to disrupt it.



## Grogan tour

BRIAN GROGAN, from the Socialist Challenge Editorial Board, has just returned from Iran and is on a tour of meetings all over the country. If details of the venue are not given on this list phone 01-359 8371 for details.

8 March, 1.30pm Salford University Students Union. 7.30pm Bolton, White Lion pub, Moor Lane, Deansgate. 12 March, Cardiff. 13 March, Bristol (2 meetings). 14 March, Southampton. 15 March, 1.00pm Birmingham University, Union Buildings. 7.30pm, Friends House, Bull St. 16 March, Thames Poly (lunch), Goldsmiths College (evening). 20 March, Liverpool. 21 March, 7.30pm, Aberdeen Trades Council, Adelphi (off Union Street). 23 March, Leicester (evening).

### COMMITTEE AGAINST REPRESSION IN IRAN CONFERENCE

Saturday 31 March, 11am, University College, Gower Street, London WC1

Delegates' credentials £2, observers' £1, from CARI, Box 4, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

**IN WORLD CRISIS**

# Raid on Angola Ian Smith ups the stakes

THE Rhodesian attack on Angola last week shows just how dangerous imperialist domination of Africa is. Ian Smith may try to push the continent to the brink of total war.

And elsewhere in the continent, the crisis of the Amin regime in Uganda shows how imperialism still imposes its misery after the departure of the white rulers. Amin is the subject of grotesque racist caricatures from the very people who put him in power.

By Our Foreign Staff

TWO scenes last week heralded a new phase in the political situation — a murderous air raid into Angola and a stage-managed tearful performance from Ian Smith at the last session of the all-white parliament.

On 26 February British-built Canberra bombers bombed an alleged Patriotic Front camp near Luso in Angola. There were widespread reports that South African Mirage jets, with

either Rhodesian or South African pilots, were on standby in Northern Namibia in case the mission was discovered prematurely.

The second event to some extent explains the first. It is not just that Smith is sentimentally attached to white rule. The problem is that his plan to transfer power to a fake, white-dominated administration is looking less and less likely to succeed.

This substantial escalation of the war to Angola is an attempt

to raise the military stakes and, at some point, to provoke outside intervention.

British Foreign Secretary Owen was furious: 'The government believes that missions of this sort will only sharpen the conflict...and can only bring nearer the point at which an all-out war engulfs the whole region.'

His understanding is dead right. Unfortunately, however, the role of the British government in such a conflict would not, as the statement suggests, be on the side of the Zimbabwean and Angolan people.

Ian Smith knows very well that any imperialist military involvement would be in favour of neo-colonial rule and, if it came to the crunch, of his white settler regime too.

Already Rhodesia has mounted a sustained campaign of



Castro in Angola — bolstering Cuba's aid against South African intervention.

aggression against its neighbour Mozambique. Two more air raids in the past fortnight underline Mozambican govern-

ment warnings that there is now a danger of total war.

In the course of the civil war against imperialist domination,

South Africa invaded southern Angola and the radical MPLA government called in Cuban troops to help drive them out.

Since the war the new regime has been the subject of repeated attacks, both open and covert. The French and US governments finance the right-wing UNITA guerrillas in the south of the country.

In 1976 the MPLA uncovered the imperialist-sponsored Operation Piano Cobra 77, aimed at attacking the country from north and south. And then in May 1978 South African troops and planes massacred 600 Namibians at Cassinga in southern Angola.

Only last November, on the eve of the anniversary of independence, a bomb exploded in the central market at Huambo, killing 24 and wounding 60.

# Army split threatens Amin

By Richard Carver

THE claims and counter-claims are hard to disentangle, but a combined force of Tanzanians and exiles loyal to ex-premier Milton Obote seems to have captured the southern Ugandan town of Masaka.

The belligerent President Idi Amin has appealed for peace — a sign that his eight year rule is finally, and mercifully, drawing to an end.

The story of Amin's discomfiture begins on 30 October, when between 2,000 and 3,000 Ugandan troops with air and artillery backing pushed 18 miles into neighbouring Tanzania. They occupied a 700 square mile area down to the Kagera river, which Amin implausibly claims for his own.

Tanzania was taken by surprise, both because the territorial claim was so bizarre and since the area is completely barren.

Amin was surprised at the hostility of African reaction. Most of his East African neighbours condemned the invasion outright, while Uganda's Libyan ally called for a 'brotherly resolution'.

Belatedly realising that the adventure was a military disaster, Amin agreed to pull out. The Tanzanians, hardly surprisingly, did not believe a word of it and continued to pour troops into the Kagera salient. That was the beginning of the present war, which has

now worked its way northwards into Amin's back yard. Three serious explanations for the invasion have been advanced. Amin's syphilitic brain — although it can be medically proved — is not a serious cause. For all his lunacy, he has hardly departed from the norms of behaviour proper to a bourgeois politician.

The first reason, floated by Tanzania and a number of radical African states, was that the invasion aimed to divert Tanzania from its preoccupa-



Amin (left) with vice-president Adrisi before they fell out

tions as a 'front-line state' in the south of the continent. The Mozambican government, for example, said: 'The current aggression by the Ugandan regime is part of an imperialist strategy against peoples who could be independent.'

The second explanation, which is more easily supportable, is that the intention was to dissuade Julius Nyerere's Tanzanian government from aiding exile guerrillas supporting the liberal Obote.

The third and basic reason for the attack is the internal situation in Uganda. The crisis in the army, on which Amin's rule depends, is particularly critical.

The confusion over the battle for Masaka last week is just one example, when it was unclear whether an elite pro-Amin regiment had taken the town from the rebels or joined them! Amin thoroughly purged the army after the 1971 coup which brought him to power. He transformed it into something resembling a mercenary band, with British advisers at the top. By recruiting from minority tribes and religions he isolated it from the population as a whole.

Institutionalised political murder was Amin's style of government. Despite the vast network of patronage, it was impossible to build a stable regime on such a basis.

Inevitably splits have emerged. The most important, and the one which seems to have triggered the whole current crisis, was between Amin and Vice President Mustafa Adrisi. While not opposing military rule, Adrisi wanted to let up on repression. He is now in exile in Egypt after a 'car accident'.

In September Amin sent loyal marines to three pro-Adrisi garrisons to restore order. In each case the rebels

got wind of Amin's plans and ambushed and defeated the loyalists. This was the occasion for Amin's initial announcement that Tanzanian troops had attacked southern Uganda — which was obvious nonsense — and became a signal for further army rebellions.

But, far from easing tension, the disastrous war with Tanzania has only worsened Amin's position. He has now fallen out with General Gowon and Brigadier Malyamungu, the top army leaders and the only two remaining co-conspirators from the 1971 coup.

They were foolish enough to object to Amin's eccentric military tactics and now find themselves on indefinite leave.

Behind the political crisis in the army lies the catastrophic state of the Ugandan economy. Expenditure on the armed forces has been a constant drain.

Things have got even worse with the end of the coffee boom. As a major coffee exporter Uganda benefitted from the rise in world coffee prices after the 1975 Brazilian frost.

Amin characteristically used the extra revenue to bump up spending on the army, without any thought for what would happen when the world market returned to normal, as it did in 1977.

The already crisis-stricken state of the economy meant that the black market became the normal method of export. For example, of the 12,600 tons of Arabic coffee produced in 1977, only 2,500 tons was exported, the rest being smuggled out of the country.

The Ugandan masses have suffered eight years of repression, with a steadily worsening economy. Amin's military opponents are the ones responsible for extravagant military spending and it was they who carried out the

repression. But when Uganda's rulers fall out among themselves there are new opportunities in the struggle for democratic rights.

Amin is doomed. It is unlikely that Tanzanian regular troops have any intention of staying in Uganda, since this unwanted war has already set back the slow recovery of the Tanzanian economy. The main danger is likely to come from imperialism.

Israeli intelligence put Amin in power with the backing of Britain and the United States — and has boasted about it since.

The British Tory government was delighted at the disappearance of the 'pinko' Obote (who at that moment was their guest at a Commonwealth conference) and became the first to recognise Amin.

But Amin proved troublesome. What worried the West more than his mental instability was the political instability caused by his excesses. He broke off links with Israel and established them instead with the Soviet Union and Gaddafi's Libya.

It was only then that the racist propaganda barrage began in the Western press — carefully overlooking the fact that Amin's police continued to be trained in the US and a weekly 'whisky run' to Kampala still left Stansted airport.

In 1976 Israel, with South African aid, violated Ugandan territory with impunity at Entebbe, and in 1977 the US began threatening invasion, even sending an aircraft carrier to the East African coast. That remains the central danger.

It is impossible to predict the outcome of the present ferment, except to say that only if they are exceptionally unlucky will the Ugandans have another Amin visited upon them.

Their worry now should be that the West will be manoeuvring to find a more amenable replacement.



# Chinese workers say: China out of Vietnam

FONG DING teaches English at a Peking school. At the end of last month he spoke about the China-Vietnam conflict to Claudie and Jacques Broyelle while on a visit to Europe. The interview is taken from the French magazine *L'Express*.

**What have been the most common reactions to the conflict?**

Disapproval and approval — together with many shades of opinion in between — are all to be found in the same current which gives 'critical support' to Deng Xiaoping and the present 'liberalisation'.

Those who are against the war fear setbacks on the diplomatic and commercial level. Especially after the cultural revolution, say the 'opponents', China must present a humane, reasonable, pragmatic image.

Those who support it think that the war will only have minor consequences.

On both sides, however, there is condemnation of the huge error made in supporting the Kampuchea of Pol Pot.

**The support for Pol Pot and the Red Khmers is condemned?**

It is seen as ridiculous, grotesque. China has had enough of Maoism, and yet here it was supporting the only country in the world which based itself on Maoism at its worst.

This was so much so that the visit of Chou En-lai's widow to Phnom Penh really tarnished her image, which up till then had been excellent. The mistake even rebounded on her husband, one of the few leaders whose memory is respected.

**What arguments are used by those who support the expedition against Vietnam?**

They could have put up with the conquest of Kampuchea, the ingratitude of the Vietnamese and their arrogance, but they say that the aggressiveness of the Vietnamese, the treatment they inflicted on their citizens

of Chinese origin, was too much to be tolerated.

The responsibilities in this war are largely shared. Given the impasse we're all caught in in Kampuchea, we think that there's only one solution left — to appeal to Sihanouk.

**You are prepared for a prolonged war against Vietnam?**

Those in favour of the war foresee a conflict lasting between one and three months. They don't want to get bogged down, but they think that there's not much risk of that and we'll eventually end up as the victors.

The others, in contrast, think that after a week of fighting the

war has already gone on too long. They are haunted by the prospect of a prolonged conflict which will see neither victors nor vanquished.

Neither side seriously envisages the possibility of an armed intervention by the Soviet Union.

**But which are the more numerous — the supporters or**

**opponents of the conflict?**

In my opinion it's the latter, the opponents. It was the opposite at the beginning, but unease has been gaining ground.



## Only Kampucheans can overthrow tyranny

THE extract we publish below reflects the position of the Fourth International on the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea. It was endorsed by the Political Bureau of the International Marxist Group last week.

A debate on the issues at stake will, however, continue to take place in **Socialist Challenge**.

HAVING since the early 1970s embarked upon a course of considering the Soviet Union as the main enemy, the Chinese bureaucracy in turn used its hegemony over the Kampuchean CP leadership to whip up a systematic anti-Soviet and anti-Vietnamese campaign.

It inflamed Kampuchean nationalism and did not hesitate to appeal to the international bourgeoisie for aid and comfort against both the Soviet Union and the Vietnamese workers state.

The Vietnamese bureaucracy could have made the outcome of this process at least uncertain had it presented to the Kampuchean masses and communists an attractive alternative of a genuine Indochinese socialist federation. A federation in which the three peoples of Indochina would have enjoyed equal rights and all those forms of workers and peasants demo-

cracy which would enable them to control their own destiny.

There can be no doubt that such a federation would have helped to solve the grave economic and social problems with which the victorious revolution was confronted in all three countries in the aftermath of the huge destruction and disruption caused by the barbarism of imperialist aggression.

But instead of following such an internationalist course, the Vietnamese bureaucracy transformed the concept of federation into a formula scarcely hiding Vietnamese domination and control.

The Vietnamese bureaucracy's relations with Laos provide a striking proof of this in the eyes of the Kampuchean masses.

Under these circumstances, it was inevitable that traditional Kampuchean nationalist hostility to the Vietnamese would

again unfold and give both the Chinese bureaucracy and its stooges in Phnom Penh the necessary basis for their irresponsible campaigns against the Vietnamese workers state.

In turn, the extreme terrorist methods of mass deportation and mass executions used by the Pol Pot regime led to widespread discontent, passivity and demoralisation among the Kampuchean masses, thereby facilitating the irresponsible attempt by the Vietnamese bureaucracy to 'solve' the Kampuchean question through a full-scale military invasion, starting around Christmas 1978.

By opposing the invasion of Kampuchea by the regular Vietnamese army, the Fourth International does not give an atom of support to the bloody terrorists of the Pol Pot clique. That regime was a disgrace for socialism as no regime since that of Stalin in the thirties has been.

But the task of overthrowing these tyrants was and remains the job of the Kampuchean workers and poor peasants. Under no circumstances can this task be given to the bureaucracies of other coun-

tries and their armies.

Any further presence of the regular Vietnamese army on the territory of Kampuchea will not only transform into a farce the claim of the new regime in Phnom Penh to be a genuine Kampuchean alternative to the Pol Pot tyranny.

It will also strongly inflame Kampuchean national feelings against foreign occupation and risk to trigger off long-term mass resistance — even in the form of prolonged guerilla warfare — which under the present circumstances could make it easier for the Thai reactionary dictatorship and imperialism to prepare a comeback against the Vietnamese revolution for the first time since its crushing defeat in 1975.

The very interests of defending the Vietnamese workers state against imperialism make an immediate withdrawal of the Vietnamese army from Kampuchea absolutely imperative.

Workers, peasants and other oppressed peoples of the world should oppose demands that the United Nations intervene in Kampuchea. Such intervention — while unlikely given the

present relationship of forces in Indochina and on a world scale — would only be a paper-thin cover for US imperialist intervention.

The US rulers used the United Nations to mask counter-revolutionary moves during the Korean war in the 1950s and later in combatting nationalist forces in the Congo.

The attempts to use Kampuchea as a pretext for tightening US military encirclement, diplomatic boycott, and economic blockade of Vietnam should also be opposed.

The US rulers, who brought so much death and destruction to Indochina, must provide massive reconstruction aid to Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea — with no strings attached.

No support to the Pol Pot regime!

Immediate withdrawal of the Vietnamese regular army from Kampuchea!

Let the Kampuchean workers and peasants freely decide upon their own government!

Stop the military threats and conflicts between workers states!

For a united front of all the workers states against imperialism!

Return to the Leninist tradition of genuine proletarian internationalism!

For a democratic socialist federation of the Indochinese peoples, with a strict level of equality!

Against the bureaucratic dictatorships, for the democratic rule of workers and peasants!

Imperialists, hands off Kampuchea, hands off Vietnam!

**Intercontinental Press**  
combined with **Imprecor**

INDOCHINA and Iran are the central features of this week's Intercontinental Press/Imprecor (Vol 17, No 8), along with coverage of the French steel strike, Spain, the Middle East and the Indian women's movement.

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# LETTERS

## Problems of Labour councils

THE article 'How Labour councils could pay' (15 February) provides far too facile a solution for the very real problems of finance which face Labour councils in a capitalist state. As it stands, 'Refuse to pay interest charges' is simply 'instant-leftist' sloganising.

Local government authorities have only three sources of income: rates, grants from central government, and raising loans in the money market. Capitalist financial institutions are hardly renowned for their altruism, and any local authority which withheld interest payments would soon find itself cut off from this source of funding.

As for rates, this is one of the most unfair systems of taxation. It does not discriminate between rich and poor. Our transitional demands should include the abolition of the rating system (with a special super-tax on empty privately-owned buildings such as Centre Point), and the introduction of a progressive local income tax which will place the burden where it belongs — on those who can best afford to pay.

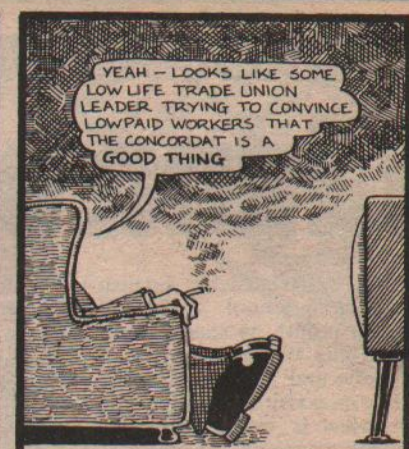
This is a demand which is immediately realisable if the Labour movement brings its full strength to bear on a Labour government.

Furthermore, our transitional programme should also include the demand for nationalisation without compensation of all financial institutions, such as banks, insurance companies, etc. This would enable central government to make interest-free loans to local authorities, provide capital for expanding the health and social services, education, the arts, etc.

While we must press for the inclusion of this in Labour's programme, we must be under no illusion that such a policy is feasible under capitalism. Only a democratically controlled workers government, determined on a planned transition to socialism, can realise this.

In a planned socialist economy, with profits no longer being siphoned off into the pockets of the capitalists, or utilised to finance imperialist suppression in Ireland and war preparations against the Soviet Union and other non-capitalist states, industrial output itself would generate the capital required both to assure the workers a civilised living standard and to improve our environment and community services.

CHARLIE VAN GELDEREN  
(London NW10)



## Ultra-left on Camden

I AM staggered at your attempt (1 March) to turn one of the most significant developments so far in the public sector dispute — the pay award won by Camden NUPE — into a supposed sell-out on the national claim. The article acknowledges in its first paragraph that it is 'a significant pay victory', but goes on to say 'a blow has been dealt to low pay in Camden' (not anywhere else, note) and that Camden should have continued 'to play their leading role by staying out for the full national claim...'

To my mind it is ultra-leftism gone mad to suggest that Camden NUPE should have told their employers — the Labour council — to get lost because their offer involved the consolidation of some bonuses (the Camden offer represents in the order of a 45 per cent increase for the large majority of the Camden workers and is almost certainly in excess of what will be achieved at a national level).

This is tantamount to arguing that for revolutionaries it has to be all or nothing... a position which would lead to the rejection of a return to work in almost all strikes, at almost all times; a position, in other words, which would guarantee revolutionaries an audience consisting solely of themselves (was it parts of the far left who made up the six opposition votes at the mass meeting of over 1,000?).

The logic of your article, however,

**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.**

is that the offer should have been rejected even if it had met the full claim. In other words, oppose local negotiations. This is in direct contradiction to your article the previous week, which correctly argued that the offer secured by Camden NUPE's all-out strike showed to all public sector workers that their £60/35-hour claim isn't pie in the sky.

But instead of trumpeting this achievement, and suggesting that the Camden branch publicises their success in the country, you denounce the branch leadership for having the temerity to accept the offer.

The only circumstances in which the branch leadership could credibly argue that remaining on strike (and risking having the offer withdrawn) would be the only way to strengthen the national struggle is where that struggle was, at the very least, on the brink of substantial all-out action. If that was the analysis of **Socialist Challenge** you have been manifestly reluctant to put forward the evidence.

PAT MASTERS (Islington)

## PSC lives

YOUR issue of 22 February includes a letter from a member of the British Anti-Zionist Organisation (BAZO) informing everyone that the Palestine Solidarity Campaign has disbanded. This is not true, and we are surprised that you published the letter without checking the information in it.

Anyone who wants to contact the PSC can do so by writing to: PSC, Box 98, Rising Free, 112 Upper Street, London N1.  
NIGEL WARD (London)

## Hats off to Camden!

THE INTERNATIONAL Marxist Group's Political Bureau obviously enjoys facing both ways at the same time. The great victory of Camden NUPE is justly applauded in **Socialist**

**Challenge** (1 March): 'If the eventual (national) settlement was to match that one in Camden, then the attempts of the government to restrict further wage increases this year would be stopped dead.' But then the branch leadership is lambasted for not having urged rejection!

Unlike **Socialist Challenge**, **Camden Journal** reports what branch secretary John Suddaby actually said at the mass meeting: 'We have achieved a great deal, although we have not won our full claim... This is just the beginning.' What more should he have done?

Camden NUPE have shown the way; they can hardly be berated for not having taken on the national struggle virtually single-handed. How Camden's victorious return to work can be seen to weaken the fight nationally is beyond our understanding.

True, they didn't storm the Winter Palace, but it would have been irresponsible for any revolutionary to have argued for rejection. This would have jeopardised the unity forged in Camden NUPE's (almost isolated) all-out action and the very real material gains made. In that unity lies the key to the future.

The IMG Political Bureau seems out of touch with the realities of industrial struggle. Hats off to John Suddaby and Camden NUPE!

IRENE BRUEGEL, RICHARD KUPER (London NW5)

## Give us a quote

ZED Press is planning to put together a volume of quotations from a wide range of socialist thinkers and revolutionaries, particularly from the 20th century and stressing Third World figures. Anyone on the left interested in playing a role in this project or able to send us quotations they admire (together with precise details as to source, please), do get in touch with Zed Press, 57 Caledonian

Road, London N1 9DN.

ROGER ZWANENBIG  
(London N1)

## LeGuin's SF

BOB Gilbert's puzzlement (8 February) concerning the inconsistency between Ursula LeGuin's critique of science fiction and the sexist structure of her children's books should be easy to dispel.

Looking at LeGuin's work from these early productions to more recent adult works (**The Left Hand of Darkness**, **The Dispossessed**, etc.), there is a clear development in her thinking, an increasing concern with issues of sexual politics, socialism and anarchism, and the transformation of personal relationships.

Like many of us, she has been deeply affected by anti-imperialist and anti-racist struggles and the women's movement, and the article reflects this growing awareness. Her earlier books can thus be seen as examples of how an exceptionally sensitive writer can unquestioningly take over the presuppositions of the field in which s/he works.

Of course this doesn't exhaust the issue. Should LeGuin write a preface to new editions of the children's books attempting to explain this to her young audience — and would she be able to persuade her publishers to agree?

And, while accepting that LeGuin's breadth of vision in her recent work is something that most revolutionaries could learn a lot from, this isn't to say that it doesn't pose problems of its own, even in the terms of her article — why are the main characters almost always men, even when non-sexist societies are portrayed? What space is there for revolutionary organisation (or is this another alien)?

IAN MILES (Brighton)

# 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.

BOLTON Socialist Challenge public meeting: 'Iran — an eyewitness report of the revolution', with speaker Brian Grogan. Thur 8 March, 8pm, in the White Lion, Moor Lane/Deansgate.

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.

PRESTON Socialist Challenge group meeting: 'Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts — what happened to equality?' Speaker Cath Cirket (Liverpool Women's Group). Thur 8 March, 7.45pm, in Windsor Castle pub, Egan St.

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.

## 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 Newsfare in Linthorpe Road.

MIDDLESBROUGH Socialist Challenge supporters meeting: 'Social workers and the state', with speaker from local social workers. Thur 8 March, 8pm, AUEW Hall.

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.

HAMILTON supporters sell Socialist Challenge every Saturday in the Hamilton shopping centre, 1-5pm. For details of local activities contact John Ford, 553 Eliot Crescent, Hamilton.

ABERDEEN Socialist Challenge meeting: 'An eyewitness account of the Iranian revolution', with speaker Brian Grogan. Wed 21 March, 7.30pm, Aberdeen Trades Council, Adelphi (off Union Street).

## YORKSHIRE

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

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at the Friendly & Trades Club, Northumberland St. 1 March: speaker on Eastern Europe.

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

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.

LEEDS Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday at City Centre Precinct, 11am-1.30pm. And at Elland Road — when Leeds Utd are playing at home!

## MIDLANDS

COVENTRY Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Tuesdays at 8pm

in the Wedge cafe/bookshop, High St. Next meeting 13 March: 'Socialists and the new technology'.

NOTTINGHAM readers can buy Socialist Challenge regularly at Mushroom Books, Heathcote St.

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

## SOUTH WEST

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 Fulmarks, 110 Cheltenham Road, Bristol 6.

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

## SOUTH EAST

NORWICH Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday in Davey Place (opp.

market) and bookstall Thursdays at University of East Anglia.

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

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

## LONDON

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.

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.

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.

PADDINGTON/N. Kensington Socialist Challenge group meeting: 'The international struggle for women's rights', with speaker Toni Gorton (ICAR and LARC). Wed 28 March, 8pm, in meeting room of the 'Tabernacle', Talbot Rd. (Powis Sq.), W11.

BRENT Socialist Challenge open forums: first Thursday of every month at Anson Hall (Kent Room), Chichele

Road, NW2, 7.30pm. Everyone welcome.

HACKNEY Socialist Challenge group public meeting: 'Where is the revolutionary left going?' With Dodie Weppler (IMG) and Richard Kirkwood (ISA) on the 'joint appeal for revolutionary unity', plus speaker invited from SWP. Thur 15 March, 7.30pm, at the Britannia pub, Mare St., E8.

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

HARINGEY 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.

HARINGEY Socialist Challenge supporters public meeting: 'Labour's record over the last six months'. Thur 8 March, 7.30pm, at West Green Community Centre, Stanley Rd., N15 (Turnpike Lane tube).

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

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

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

# UNDER REVIEW

THE SHOWING last week of *It Ain't Half Racist Mum* — the Campaign Against Racism in the Media's *Open Door* programme on BBC-TV — brought mixed reactions from the press.

The *Guardian* said it was 'an important

contribution to the debate'. The *Dail Mail* made it their 'Pick of the Day'. The *Observer* announced: 'Those interested in the sort of censorship that will prevail after "the revolution" should not miss this half-hour of comedy'.

JOHN THACKARA, secretary of CARM, describes the nine months of frenetic activity that went into the making of the programme; and MIKE PHILLIPS, a freelance West Indian journalist, expresses some doubts about its usefulness.

## 'Open Door' on TV's racism Did 600,000 viewers get the message?



By John Thackara

FROM THE START, our television project was ridden with unresolved questions. *Open Door* normally gets an audience of 600,000 or more, tiny in TV terms but the equivalent of about 10,000 normal CARM meetings!

We began our discussions on the programme nine months ago with disagreements about what this fact meant for the programme. Who did we want to talk to?

In the event, outside forces resolved most aspects of the programme's evolution. A battle with the broadcasting authorities soon began over access to extracts from news bulletins.

We wanted to illustrate how 'neutral' and 'factually correct' news could be racist in its choice and selection (or omission) of 'facts', or by the context given particular items.

To take one example: the harassment of the Janmohamed family 'dumped' on the Home Office by Hillingdon Council in front of four crews and 35 press reporters.

This request for news film caused considerable ructions inside the BBC, where some editors and producers could see that the 'access' principle behind *Open Door* would look pretty sick if our group could not use the BBC's own material.

But the hardliners won. As Alan Protheroe, editor of BBC News, put it to a top-level meeting of news and current affairs editors: 'Why should an organisation which might well

accuse myself and my staff of racism be given privileged treatment?'

In other words, it's a 'privilege' to be allowed to criticise the news, and if racism is involved you just can't do it!

The result of this ban was that we had to deal with what were, for us, secondary aspects of TV coverage. Not that dealing with light entertainment and comedy, for example, were easy.

The role played by programmes such as *Mind Your Language*, *Mixed Blessings*, and *It Ain't Half Hot Mum* in reinforcing myths and racist stereotypes about blacks is instinctively understood by anti-racists but much harder to explain or counter.

It quickly became clear that it only made sense to talk about racist myths if the nature of racism itself was put 'upfront', explained and illustrated early on.

Early scripts contained in five-line summaries an historical and contemporary analysis of racism.

The only problem was that it would have taken up the whole 29 minutes, and wasn't very 'visual'. So this section was decimated in the final script.

If this was the main political failure of the programme, we had many smaller disappointments about the way it was actually put together. Our raw material was literally hundreds of notated extracts from TV programmes monitored by CARM members.

So we started off intending to make a film-only programme, based on these clips, which would be so subtly put together

that the 'voice of CARM' would never have to intrude. The idea was that our arguments would leap out of the screen.

This plan looked possible for several months. We talked about the wonders of the Reilly caption generator, a machine capable of spewing out endless sub-titles; of placards planted in demonstrations with our slogans; of whole arguments articulated through carefully

assembled images.

But as the deadline approached, such innovations were dropped, along with huge chunks of the script. When it came to record the programme, the accumulation of compromises and time-restrictions looked at first to have undermined the entire project.

All the *Open Door* 'turn off' clichés we had sworn to avoid were there: two presenters in a studio at the mercy of a

ludicrously complicated technical apparatus. A long list of important questions left out.

And, most humiliatingly, a ghastly ending with CARM's address (PO Box 50, London N1 — in case you missed it) on a bit of cardboard and a line saying: 'If you want to be active today, buy CARM for political health' — or so it sounded.

The final result has been somewhat more positive. This was, after all, a rare example of

criticism of television on television, and the programme did manage to explain at least some of the ways the media operate to promote or to reinforce racism.

Sure, Sir Michael Swann, hasn't resigned yet...but it's early days. And hopefully we have shown to other political campaigns the possibilities of making use of even the very limited access offered by *Open Door*.

## 'What's wrong is that blacks are the object'

By Mike Phillips

THERE IS no doubt that CARM has been the only organised body in this country which has had anything serious and intelligent to say about race in the media over the past ten years. Starting out with its campaign in the National Union of Journalists, CARM has been consistent in its attitudes.

You only need to compare the vague mutterings about goodwill coming from the Commission for Racial Equality and other bodies of the kind over that period to recognise the difference.

CARM has scored by making precise criticisms and laying out precise guidelines on the reporting of race and on racist attitudes in the media.

So it's no surprise that the *CARM Open Door* was a well-researched and generally irrefutable indictment of a network of racist attitudes as they are expressed in our media. Why do I think that CARM is missing the point?

Consider the attitudes that you'll hear if you talk to TV and newspaper executives, reporters, and editors.

In the past few years I have attended a number of talks, seminars, and personal meetings on the subject of race and the media. And the one thing that sticks out in my memory is

how far the people I've been talking to have internalised the attitudes expressed by CARM itself.

It is no exaggeration to say that it will be a hard job finding one of these people who doesn't sound like a liberal on the subject of race. Yet they are deeply involved in the maintenance of current media presentations of matters concerning race.

The apparent paradox conceals a fundamental misunderstanding about the nature of racism in our society. As an illustration of what I mean take the mysterious case of the missing blacks. *Time Out* magazine in London might well be the publication that CARM supporters ought to find easiest to influence. Elements within it are very much concerned about the subject of race and how it should be handled.

Yet none of this prevents the magazine from having its approval of a racist play — *Gloo Joe*, at the Criterion Theatre — blazoned in all the adverts across the nation. 'Man did it satisfy ma soul', wrote *Time Out*'s reviewer.

And of course there isn't a black face to be seen [at the time of my last visit] in the magazine's office. I'm willing to bet that there isn't a black face to be seen in any of the organs where CARM supporters work [and that would cover all the left and liberal

newspapers, barring Socialist Challenge].

To me, that situation spells a sturdy barrier of racial discrimination. CARM supporters might reply that discrimination is either a symptom or mere by-product of a number of political factors and tendencies.

For me, it is much more important than that, because it is to do with the way that I live, and I would argue with the way that we all live.

Either discrimination becomes the first and primary point at which we attack racist systems, or attitudes become a mere distraction.

So it is quite possible for the editors who run racist news media to capitulate and seriously discuss all the points made by a Carl Gardner without actually changing anything. And they have been doing so for years.

As a result, watching *Open Door*, while I agreed with what was being said and admired the professionalism with which the points got over, at the end I had to ask myself what they thought they were doing.

If the media could be censored for racist content, what result will be obtained? Will it make it easier for blacks to get jobs, houses, and the rest?

I doubt it. But then, I doubt that CARM is about that. And here again we start from very

different bases.

CARM, in spite of what ought to be a backbone of hard-line political commitment, is still dominated by an essentially woolly way of thinking about race in which the problem of race is partly the result of right-wing propaganda.

Turn that view around and it is very similar to the Daily Express view of the role of the left in industrial relations. I disagree with both.

My own view is that racism in Europe is a fundamental aspect of the way the culture grew up and functions. Racial equality has to be the key. It seems to me that what CARM has done so far is merely to talk around that issue.

At one of the last meetings on race that I attended — a social work conference at which every last person was a liberal of some kind — one of the participants from Lambeth spoke about what happened when they began to get black colleagues in the office.

'It was puzzling because we were all anti-racists, but having blacks in the office imported a kind of racial strain that we saw every day outside.'

At the moment what's wrong is that blacks are the object. The only way to change that equation is to end discrimination and it's time that CARM moves that consideration to the top of its list of priorities.

## Journalists discuss racism

By Mike Simpson

A LIAISON group to monitor reporting of race-related issues has been set up between members of the National Union of Journalists on three North London papers and local anti-racists.

At a meeting two weeks ago with journalists on the *Camden Journal*, *Hornsey Journal* and *Islington Gazette*, members of the Anti Nazi League and *Islington Campaign Against Racism and Fascism* [ICARF] argued that there should be more coverage of the problems facing black people.

They also pointed out that there was a great weakness in limiting reporting to exposures of the fascist nature of the NF without confronting the issues which lead people to adopt racist attitudes in the first place.

The difficulty of overcoming editorial control over the content of articles was pointed out, but the journalists are to re-open discussions with management on race-reporting.

And they are confident of winning concessions — through strike action if necessary, they say.

# Socialist Challenge

## 'WHO NEEDS ENEMAS WHEN YOU'VE GOT ENNALS?'

HEALTH workers have moved into the front-line of the public sector pay battle.

Ambulance staff and hospital ancillaries in NUPE have voted to reject Alan Fisher's pay package, and this Friday 80,000 nurses in NUPE are due to start industrial action for their claim.

They will need to build for nationally co-ordinated all-out action if they are to confront the obstacles that have led the majority of local authority workers to accept the pay deal.

By Patrick Sikorski

Health Minister David Ennals has fallen in love. His heart has gone out to the Royal College of Nurses, which has renounced industrial action in favour of moral appeals for more pay.

It is the stuff concordats are made of — the same concordat, endorsed by the government and union leaders, which helped to persuade the majority of local authority manual workers that 9 per cent plus £1 on account was the best they could hope for in a national settlement.

Their vote in the NUPE ballot, announced on Tuesday, was to accept the offer by a

**Support  
the health  
workers!**

majority of six to four. The Transport and General Workers and the General and Municipal had already accepted the deal nationally.

The reasons for that acceptance have important lessons for the ambulance and



ancillary workers who are fighting on for £60 and 35 hours, and for the nurses who have now joined them in battle. The need, first of all, to

overcome the divide and rule tactics of the union leaders.

They began by settling the water workers' claim, weakening a united struggle, and will

now insist that the votes of the three sections in the NUPE ballot be counted separately — although in total a majority of 17,793 has rejected the pay offer.

NUPE ancillaries have thrown out the offer by four to one, and ambulance staff have shown their contempt for Mr Fisher's package by seven to one. The nurses who have asked 'Who needs enemas when

you've got Ennals?' have also rejected the same offer.

Unity between these workers is now vital. NUPE national officer Bob Jones's call for local action committees to organise action by nurses should be extended to include other unions and other workers.

The union leaderships' policy of selective action did much to undermine the local authority pay battle. Nationally co-ordinated all-out action, with emergency cover, would transform the struggle in the hospitals.

Nottingham miners have already pledged their support for any action the nurses request. It was that kind of solidarity which lifted the nurses off the poverty line in 1974.

And it is such support from the labour movement which can put paid to the Royal College of Nurses' cap in hand pleading, which the media is anxious to encourage all nurses to adopt.

Local authority workers continue to fight for their claim in a number of areas, and this is now likely to result in demands for local settlements. NUPE's London divisional council is holding a shop stewards rally at Conway Hall at 7.30pm on 15 March to attempt to co-ordinate action among all public sector workers across London.

## Merseyside fights on

LOCAL government manual workers in Merseyside voted to reject the employers' national offer at a mass meeting on Sunday. The Merseyside liaison committee, representing the GMWU, NUPE and TGWU, issued the following statement:

'This offer is an insult and we must reject it. How can we get a better deal?

'At present we are tied to a national agreement which covers all local authority manual workers in Britain, with the exception of those

groups who have broken away from the national agreement and achieved local negotiations.

'Our wages are at present negotiated by full-time union officials. These people cannot appreciate our problems because they do not have to bring up families on our wages.

'The incompetence of these national officials has been self-evident in the way they have handled this dispute and now have the audacity to recommend such a pathetic

offer to us.

'Merseyside does not even have a representative on the national negotiating body.

'We must take the initiative shown by the workers in the London borough of Camden. They put pressure on their local council and have achieved £60 for 35 hours. Local negotiations are the only answer. Merseyside must break from the national agreement and fight for local negotiations.

'We must exert a maximum amount of pressure on our own

council to continue the fight even if the rest of the country accepts this offer.

'The key groups of workers on strike can be sustained indefinitely, providing the finance comes in. This is a fight that we are capable of winning. It is a fight we must win.

'Reject the employers' offer. Reject the sell-out by national union officials. Fight for local negotiations.'

Industrial action will continue for the full claim.

## OUR FUND DRIVE

EACH week one of us has to sit down at the typewriter and try to inspire you to send us money.

And even when you do respond magnificently — which incidentally you haven't this week — we still have to sit

down at the typewriter and say: 'Great, now do it again'.

So it is a rather thankless task and inspiration is hard to come by.

But it is important. Without our weekly income from generous readers and their fund raising efforts this paper would soon go down the drain.

Less than a month from the end of the quarter we still have nearly £1,000 to raise to meet our target.

And we didn't raise all that we would have liked last quarter.

In fact we're trying not to panic — we have faith in our supporters — but we can't depend on it to move mountains. And unfortunately our debts are looking rather like a mountain at the moment. With the weather getting

better there are more opportunities to raise money outdoors. People always feel more generous in the sun.

I read in some paper recently that buskers can make up to £40 a day. I'm sure there is an abundance of musical talent knocking around among our supporters.

So why not give people some entertainment and raise money for us as well.

You can do it anywhere — you may get moved on but it's not a criminal offence yet. In fact you can add your voice to those who are protesting against the proposal to criminalise it.

Meanwhile Middlesbrough IMG member Roy Winn is planning to go on a 40 mile sponsored walk over the North

Yorkshire moors at Easter.

Why don't other supporters plan this kind of activity — a group going on a walk together could have a lot of fun and it keeps you fit.

If you just feel like sponsoring Roy I'm sure we can tell him if you write to us.

For the moment just bear in mind that £1,000 that we need by the end of March and send in any money that you can spare.

Thanks to all our supporters who did send in money this week.

S Bradbury	1.00
Norman Lockhart	10.00
Brunel Univ supporters	21.20
MB	15.00
R Withecombe	5.00
Anon	10.00
Anon	10.00
D Khamis	2.00

S Little	3.50
H de Ley (Belgium)	20.00
GCV Arbitrary	10.00

WEEKLY TOTAL £107.70  
CUM TOTAL £1,647.03

## LOTTERY

SOCIALIST Challenge Spring Lottery. Tickets 10p or £1 per book. Prize is choice of 12 volumes of Trotsky's Writings or a £25 book/record token.

Draw is on 2 May in Socialist Challenge offices. Help yourself while helping the paper! Why not order a few books of tickets on a sale or return basis to sell locally?

Write to: Lottery, SC Offices, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Organised by D Weppler.

## SUBSCRIBE!

Domestic: 6 months, £5; 12 months, £10  
Abroad: Airmail, £16.50. Surface, £10 per annum.  
Multi-reader institutions: double individual rate

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I enclose a donation for the Fighting Fund of \_\_\_\_\_

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