

# Socialist Challenge

**↑**  
**JOBS**  
**NOT**  
**↓**  
**BOMBS**

# THE TRAITORS



# SACK

# THEM

**SACK DUFFY!** That was the cry of BL workers who picketed the national shop stewards meeting in Birmingham on Monday. They should have added 'Sack Kitson' as well. Between them, the leaders of the AUEW and TGWU have snatched defeat from the jaws of victory to sabotage the possibility of a national struggle against BL's derisory 3.8 per cent pay offer.

Duffy argued against a strike on the basis of 'supporting England'. Kitson refused to give a lead, telling his members to 'make up their own minds'. Last week's massive vote for a strike was turned with the help of the media, into a narrow victory against a strike. The role of the leaders was decisive. They appealed

over the heads of the stewards and more militant workers to the rank and file. The fact that there now won't be a strike, in return for marginal fringe benefits, is a set-back, not a massive defeat for Leyland workers.

But it shows that for a real struggle against Edwardes' slave labour plans and his ultimate aim to close down Leyland, for a real struggle against the Tories' four per cent wage norm, section by section militancy is not enough — a *national* lead is required.

First and foremost we need a new Broad Left in the AUEW.

The Duffy-Boyd team in the AUEW is the main prop for the right wing in the whole Labour movement — the Labour Party as well

as the unions. To organise against them it will be necessary to take up their policies across the board — from nuclear weapons to their craven capitulation to the BL bosses.

'Labour lieutenants of capital' is an old expression. Never has it been more appropriate than now. It was all summed up by a delegate to the CBI bosses' conference who argued against anti-union laws on the basis of 'why bash the unions when people like Frank Chapple and Terry Duffy are doing such a good job?'. Why indeed? Some of our most important unions are led by people who have more in common with the bosses than their own members. Until we change that we will always be defeated.

# How the vote was lost

Longbridge Tuesday 3 November

By Mark Deal

**THE WORKERS at Leyland's Longbridge plant in Birmingham have decided to accept the latest offer of the BL management. The decision, carried by a 3 to 2 majority at a meeting of about 12,000 people, was greeted with 'some disappointment' by Jack Adams, the plant convenor.**

This morning pickets were on every gate at the giant complex. Discussion on the outcome of the mass meeting was lively. As workers assembled in Cofton Park militants brought placards along calling for rejection of the offer and slamming Duffy and Co's attempt to end the dispute.

A solitary worker, whose placard called for acceptance, was greeted with choruses of 'Go home you bum, go home.'

As militants gathered at the front of the meeting the mood of those supporting the strike rose. But it was clear that not every-

one shared their view.

Traffic jams delayed the start and stewards moved through the crowds distributing a strike bulletin issued by the works committee.

One side carried the details of the new offer, the other a report of the various meetings which had taken place since the original strike call. It was around this that Jack Adams made his report.

The story is a familiar one for any active trade unionist. As Jack Adams reported to the mass meeting, Len Murray of the TUC had gone 'into detail of the effects of the strike on the other groups

of workers outside British Leyland, and stressed the importance of attempting to resolve the dispute as speedily and as satisfactorily as possible.'

There were two meetings with ACAS and at the second one, lasting 14 hours and attended by the Leyland Board and Michael Edwardes, the general secretaries presented the new offer to the negotiating committee.

It was decided by the general secretaries and the negotiating committee — which had not been party to the discussion with management — to put the proposals to the mass meetings 'without any recommendation'.

The response of the senior shop stewards to this decision is well known. After an occupation of the AUEW conference room in Birmingham, on Monday 2 November, the senior stewards passed their own resolution stating that they were 'of the opinion that the offers should be rejected and the dispute continued until a better offer is forthcoming'.

Regrettably, even this fell short of being a clear recommendation for rejection. Jack Adams went to



Longbridge workers looked to their leaders to take on Edwardes. They were let down and voted accordingly

some lengths to explain why the senior stewards disagreed with the analysis of the national officers and the negotiating committee.

Yet, with the prospect

of severe financial hardships, the threats of BL managers, the condemnation of the mass media, and the likelihood of a protracted dispute, 'apparent' indecision by the

national leadership of the union was without doubt the decisive blow to this struggle.

Many militants in Leyland understand this and many others will draw

the same conclusion following this defeat. It is the task of these trade unionists to mount a challenge to that leadership if the story is to be any different next time round.

## Land Rover Solihull, Tuesday 3 November

By Janine Field and Gerry Harp

**LAND ROVER at Solihull had voted by a massive majority for strike action last Thursday. By 9 o'clock this morning, picket lines had swelled and the Socialist Challenge 'Reject the Offer' leaflet was going down quite well.**

The picketers began to move into the plant at 9.30. The vote from Longbridge was announced on the radio: acceptance. The mood began to change. 'You should be handing those out at Longbridge,' someone shouted.

'We are — but it's the unions that should be putting them out all over BL,' we replied. The mass meeting began. The senior steward, Joe Harris, a Communist Party member, gave a long speech about the offer.

He made it clear that Edwardes had not softened his stance and that there was no increase on the basic rates of pay. The top

union officials did not think money was available, he said. But the stewards recommended rejection because 'you can't spend all your life running away. There's a time to stand and fight and this is it.'

An electricians union representative was allowed to give his view from the platform. 'Master Parsons' was his name and a vocal minority of the mass meeting took objection to him.

He did not, he said, want to take issue with the points the senior steward had made about the claim. But he wanted to draw the attention of the workforce

**Fred Stanley, Longbridge worker: 'The vote was disgraceful, I'm on the sick at present and to be honest, I'm better off sick than working.'**

**Jimmy Floan, Longbridge worker: 'I shall not go back to work now, they can sack me if they like. I'm not getting paid enough. I take home £54 without bonus and I'm appalled and sickened about today's decision. How can I live on a wage like that and see my kids running around without any shoes.'**

to the implications of a prolonged strike.

We won't get a better offer and some of us will lose our jobs completely, was his line. He finished to sneers and boos from some and a smattering of applause from others, by suggesting that the mass meeting should 'think of the state of the economy and the state of employment in the West Midlands.'

The vote was taken. It was very close — 55:45.

The crowd was disgruntled, calls of 'split vote' caused the convenor to pause and consult the shop stewards on the platform. Only two disagreed about the vote.

The convenor closed the meeting and trundled out the gates. We wondered what the vote would have been if the unions had handed out a leaflet and if the senior steward had taken up the political arguments.

## The will to fight was there

By TGWU shop steward, Longbridge

ON MONDAY 2 November British Leyland's Longbridge plant which had voted for strike action on 16 October was brought to a complete standstill by mass pickets. The militant response of the workforce to Edwardes' threats to sack us was shown as pickets spat out their anger at the management and staff who crossed the picket lines.

The mass pickets turned away the few workers who tried to cross the picket lines and as soon as the plant was closed up we immediately set about the union full time leaders who had tried to stitch up a deal over the weekend with ACAS and the management.

We had found out that all BL senior shop stewards and union officials, including Ken Cure of the engineering union and Grenville Hawley of the transport union, were meeting in the centre of Birmingham at the AUEW offices to discuss the so-called offer the company had made over the weekend.

Having lived through so many sell-outs in the past, especially those organised by the AUEW officials, workers were furious at the officials manoeuvring with Edwardes and coming up with a deal which fell so short of the original demand. We organised some pickets from Longbridge to go down to the meeting and were joined there by workers from Cowley, Oxford and Rover Solihull.

As the officials and senior shop stewards went in we gave them such a barracking that they were left in no doubt as to what we thought of them and their deal. Deafening chants of '£20 now or nothing' and 'Reject the deal' attracted almost as much attention from passers by as they did from the hordes of TV and press reporters.

When we realised that some officials had sneaked in round the back we decided to invite ourselves into the meeting. More chanting and barracking ended only when Jack Adams, Longbridge convenor, and Bobby Fryer, convenor from Cowley, appealed to the workers to allow the meeting to continue.

Our efforts were not wasted. The meeting adjourned after four hours with an overwhelming majority in favour of rejecting the deal.

## Cowley, Tuesday 3 November

COPIES of the management's well printed appeal were littering the field as Austin Morris assembly plant workers filed into the mass meeting.

But most people were hanging on to copies of the unions' appeal for volunteers for picketing. Convenor Bobby Fryer, outlined the tortuous story of last minute wheeling and dealing and explained the real meaning of the 'improved offer'.

There was some cheering but the mood was grim and serious. Fryer explained that the bonus offer was tied to co-operation in work studies and no industrial action. No one at Cowley will be getting the overtime and night premium.

'Not real money, and all ifs and buts', commented chairperson Doug Hobbs. From where we stood the vote looked close — the Leyland Action Committee placards were on the other side of the field. When it was announced — by a 3 to



Cowley convenor, Bobby Fryer, addresses the strikers

2 majority to reject the offer — there was some cheers and a few protests.

We heard the Longbridge vote on the radio. 'Adams didn't do the job Fryer

did,' said transport union steward, Bob Cullen.

No time for long discussions; it was off to the picket line. How long we would be there was another matter.

# Socialist Challenge

If you would like to be put in touch with Socialist Challenge supporters in your area or would like more information fill in the form below

Name .....

Address .....

Age .....

Union/CLP (if any) .....

Send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

# Edwardes' plan to close Leyland

**MICHAEL EDWARDES** has been holding the threat of closure over BL workers since he started in his job.

He promised to put BL back on its feet in three years. Until now the workforce has swallowed redundancies, collapsing living standards, and killing speed-ups in the belief that they were saving BL's future. **But Michael Edwardes is lying: his plan is not a plan to save BL but to destroy it.**

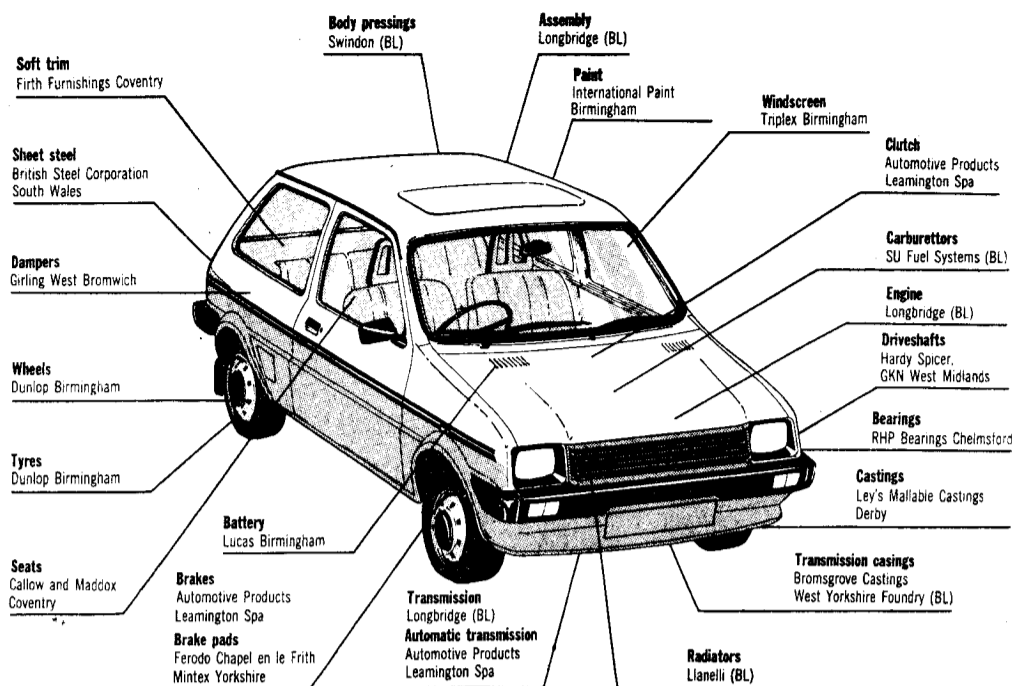
When the ballot on his plan was taken in BL, its details were in fact never revealed. Even now it is not public.

But the *Economist* explained the reasoning behind it when it was first announced: 'The Edwardes' Plan will mean that a Tory government cannot be accused of having acted dogmatically when BL eventually has to be wound up in, say, two years' time, after

another bout of industrial disruption.' In other words, the plan

By  
Alan  
Freeman

# to close Leyland



How car components firms rely on Leyland

would allow for the break-up of BL and the closure of half its plants, using the excuse of industrial disruption, and after a two or three year period of 'softening-up' the workforce.

The record so far confirms this plan. Edwardes has cut the UK workforce from 180,000 to 120,000.

He has closed Abingdon and Park Royal, and stopped assembly at Canley, Castle Bromwich, and Seneffe in Belgium — and has now announced the closure of the brand new Rover Solihull SD1 plant.

## Increase

The total cost of this 'restructuring' in 1980, according to BL's own balance sheet, was £146m — enough to pay a £20 increase to every Leyland employee.

Edwardes is taking BL along the closure road. He argues that BL's high wage costs are driving it to the wall. But in fact BL's wages are lower than nearly all its European competitors.

The *Economist* report on the motor industry pointed out that in 1976, Daimler-Benz's annual wage costs per employee were highest at \$19,000, followed by GM, VW, Ford, Chrysler, Toyota and then Nissan at \$14,400.

BL's costs are less than two-thirds of Nissan and in 1980 — four years later — they still only spent \$9,000 on each employee.

The real reason for BL's decline is systematic underinvestment. Without the proper machinery, no amount of effort from the workforce can produce the goods.

Behind this underinvestment is the criterion of profitability used by the owners, and which has been used by Edwardes.

Throughout the 1970s, BL's private owners saw their profits being eaten into by declining sales. If they had been concerned to keep the industry going — the only way to save jobs — they would have done what their more foresighted rivals did and pump in money to modernise.

Instead they milked it for all they could get, and left a Labour government to sort out the mess under nationalisation.

Between 1968 and 1974 they paid out £70m to shareholders, £17m in interest charges, and at the same time falsified profit figures to cover up. They did this by failing to allow cash to replace used equipment, and by running down the company's working capital.

Workers at Cowley produced figures to show that working

capital was cut by £100m in the two years before nationalisation alone. The Ryder report, on which Labour's nationalisation was based in 1975, showed the effect on equipment.

In an industry where the normal turnover for fixed equipment is eight years, over two thirds of BL's plant was more than eight years old by 1975, and a third was more than 12 years old.

## Assets

In 1978 BL had £5,375 in assets for every employee compared with Toyota's £15,000.

The result was that to save BL, exceptionally large investments were needed. Ryder explained that 'very large sums will therefore need to be provided from external sources to finance the new capital investment and other action required to make BL a viable business'.

Ryder proposed an investment plan of £1.3bn at 1975 prices. As can be seen from the table, even by 1978 when Edwardes came in, investment was dropping behind Ryder's proposal. In his plan, Edwardes cut this by a further third.

In fact, following a detailed study of BL in 1980 by the Transport Union and TASS, the white collar section of the engineering union, government finance of at least £1,449m

would be needed over the next five years to save BL as a viable concern. This is £939m more than Edwardes proposes to spend.

The result will not be a total closure of all BL plants — but it will mean the break up of BL, selling off a relatively small number of plants to international buyers, and the reduction of BL to a shadow of its present self.

As the *Financial Times* in August 1980 said: 'The prospects for the UK industry ... are heavily dependent on BL ... in spite of severe cutbacks, BL is still capable of making between 900,000 and one million cars a year.'

## End

'It needs to retain that capacity to maintain any pretence of being a volume producer. Any further cut in BL's capacity would reduce the company to a specialist car concern'.

In short it would mean the end of British Leyland as we know it today, with the loss of jobs in the industry as a whole of anything between a half million and a million jobs.

This is exactly where the Edwardes' plan is leading.



## TABLE

(figures in £m, adjusted to show 1979 costs)

	Ryder's investment proposals	Actual investment	Edwardes'
1975	168	152	
1976	227	162	
1977	299	208	
1978	354	269	
1979	300	258	
1980	299	244	
1981	252		155
1982	185		153
1983			122
1984			82
1985			73

## How to pay BL workers

IN 1980 BL spent £146m 'restructuring' the firm — that is, closing plants and sacking workers.

This would have paid for a wage increase for BL's 144,000 workers in the UK and overseas of just over £1000 per year — that is, the £20 per week which they are demanding.

In the same year BL spent £105m in interest payments — enough for an increase of £15.

'Profitability' as a criterion means that first these payments have to be made, to give the bosses their pound of flesh, and then BL should make a profit.

Interest payments and closure costs alone accounted for half BL's losses in 1980.

# FORD - ANOTHER SELL-OUT

By Mick Drake  
Dagenham assembly plant

'I'LL THINK about a strike on 23 November.' This was the scandalous reaction of Ron Todd, senior Ford union negotiator, to the company's insulting four per cent pay offer last Friday.

With Leyland on the brink of all-out national strike action, union officials and convenors chose to go back for more talks with Ford on efficiency 'in parallel' with negotiations on pay.

This is despite the fact that the company has turned down flat £20 across the board claim and is refusing even to consider the demand for a 35-hour week. Even four per cent is conditional on acceptance of five efficiency measures which will help strip Ford workers of 24,000 jobs in the next three years.

These conditions amount to effective sanction of the company's so-called 'After Japan' proposals and includes such items as co-operation in the introduction of new technology and work systems and the elimination of demarcation between jobs. For example, assembly line workers would be expected to repair their own equipment and clean up their work areas eliminating both skilled workers and janitors.

The coy talk about 'parallel'

negotiations — a new breakthrough in bureaucrats' double-talk — is to cover the union negotiators from attack for selling jobs for wages. At the Coventry Ford shop stewards conference in September, Ron Todd solemnly promised that there would be no discussion on efficiency before the pay and hours claim had been settled.

Already 4,000 jobs have been lost in Ford in the last two years, despite the opening of a new engine plant at Bridgend, and only 54,000 manual workers are left. Todd's attitude threatens to divide Ford from Leyland workers and weaken the struggle of both in the face of the Tories four per cent pay war.

That's why shopfloor militants will be arguing in stewards committees and branches over the next week for our national officials to call immediate strike action if the company does not come back with a 'no strings' offer on pay and hours when negotiations resume on Monday 9 November.

Leyland workers are also being approached to join a mass lobby of the Ford pay talks on 9 November at 9.30am at Bayswater House, Moscow Place, London W2. We will be telling our negotiators to bring us all out and fight for the claim in full.



Ron Todd: pleased at another sell out?

# Labour to fight Tories over Staffa

By Toni Gorton and Ray Reid

**LABOUR's ruling GLC group has attacked the government for 'encouraging' Staffa Products to throw 390 local workers on the dole.**

At the end of September Staffa workers occupied their plant to save their jobs. Six coach loads of police seized it back for the bosses after two weeks and now a 24-hour picket line is on the gates.

£4.5m government grant which would enable the company to close down its Leyton, East London plant and move to Plymouth.

He said: 'Taxpayers' money is being used to finance a move that will not create or save a single job'.

Ken Livingstone, GLC leader, condemned the

He said that the

government was helping to sack these London workers in the belief that the capital's industry was a 'golden goose' which can be robbed at any time to benefit the regions.

On Tuesday 3 November the GLC decided to make fresh offers to encourage Staffa to stay at its present base and to call on the government to change its industry grants policy.

Meanwhile, Ernie Roberts, Labour MP for Hackney North, is calling a meeting of Labour MPs to launch a national campaign to support the struggle of workers against redundancies and the run-down of inner city areas focussing on the struggle at Staffa.

Stan Orme, Shadow spokesperson on Industry, Mike Ward chairperson of the GLC Industry and

Employment Committee, and representatives of the Staffa workers are expected to speak.

Following the youth rebellions during the summer, Labour leaders said that more money was needed to solve the problems of the big cities.

Here is an opportunity for them and the rest of the labour movement to join a real fight for these areas.

Socialist Challenge supporters should make sure that their local MP attends the meeting in the House of Commons. Trade unionists should argue that their local Labour Parties support the campaign.

Over 30 shop stewards at Ford Assembly plant at Dagenham heard one of the Staffa workers talk about the police raid on their occupation two



Staffa strikers Jim McCulloch (left), Alf Hutcherson and Harry Smith, three of the fifty Staffa 'rabble' at the GLC full council meeting on 3 November. 'Rabble' is how the Tories on the council see workers fighting for their jobs.

weeks ago. They contributed £25 from their own pockets, set out to take a plant collection, and are also recommending an in-

terplant collection of the 25,000 strong workforce.

Send all messages of support, donations and telegrams to Chris Newson, AUEW

Strike Committee, 39 Somers Road, Walthamstow E17, Tel 01-539 0886. Also Staffa can be contacted at the Leyton Labour Party rooms, 01-539 0886.

## Laurence Scott NATIONAL SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE

Saturday 14 November  
10am - 5pm

### Application for credentials

Please send us credentials for.....delegates. We enclose a cheque/postal order for £.....@ £2 per delegate.

Delegates will be accepted on the basis of four from Joint Shop Stewards Committees and two from all other bona fide labour movement bodies.

An agenda and more information will be sent with delegates credentials. There will be as much time as possible allocated to contributions from the floor with priority given to those in dispute.

Name of organisation.....

Union or Labour Party.....

Workplace.....

Name of secretary.....

Address.....

.....

Telephone.....

Please return to: W J Partlan, 15 Lines Road, Droylesden, Manchester

Creche facilities will be provided if requested up to one week before the conference.

## Why you should be at the Laurence Scott Solidarity Conference

By Patrick Sikorski

**LAST week if you had asked any of the 230 striking Laurence Scott workers what the biggest danger British Leyland workers faced the chances are they'd have said 'John Boyd, Terry Duffy and Ken Cure.'**

Three months after the LSE workers had occupied their Manchester factory in the fight for their jobs these national officials of the AUEW 'negotiated' a deal as full of holes as a sieve.

When this was rejected, the officials withdrew official support for the strike. Despite this the workers have fought a hard national campaign for another three months - raising money, gaining labour movement support and getting known as the struggle that 'shows the way' to fight the bosses and the Tories.

The Laurence Scott Solidarity Conference called for Saturday 14 November will discuss the lessons of the struggle. Militants from Lee Jeans, Staffa, Gardner's and many others have been invited to lend their experiences.

This will be a real school for labour movement activists. You'll be able to learn how to organise solidarity in the unions, in the Labour Party; the importance of getting goods embargoed and how to do it; the importance of mass action and picketing; how the laws affect your rights; the role of union officials.

There is nothing abstract about the discussion - it's all aimed at helping Laurence Scott win their dispute, and at getting rid of Duffy and Boyd.

Winning a fighting union for engineers is at the heart of the conference.

## LSE/Staffa BENEFIT DANCE

Leyton Assembly Hall, Municipal Offices

The High Road, Leyton, London E10

Friday 6 November, 7.30-11.30

price £2.50



Trying to hold back pickets at LSE

## Smear campaign exposed by LSE workers

By Pete Clifford

**THROUGHOUT the last week large pickets have made sure that employer Arthur Snipe has been unable to bring in scabs to re-open his Manchester factory after six months of the strike against closure.**

Snipe tried to encourage workers to return to work after the 230 strikers had rejected the offer which would only keep 150 jobs. Having failed to get a return to work on these terms, he appealed over the strikers' heads for a return to work.

But the powerful Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions Manchester District Committee responded strongly.

Recognising this as a union-bashing move by Snipe they unanimously agreed that no trade unionists should apply for jobs there until 'the existing dispute has been resolved to the satisfaction of the strikers and the unions concerned.'

Having failed to smash the union on the picket line, Snipe has now turned to the media to launch a smear campaign to discredit the strikers and their stewards.

Industrial Relations

manager, Stan Lamb, of the Laurence Scott board claimed: 'The reopening of the Manchester factory was not possible due to extensive damage and looting by so-called pickets.'

'We estimate this damage to be in excess of £500,000.'

Convenor Dennis Barry was quick to reply: 'The stewards wish to reiterate the fact that two MPs, Charles Morris and Ken Marks, were given a conducted tour of the premises the day bailiffs evicted us and will vouch for the near perfect condition of the factory.'

Dennis Barry is insistent that the strikers will be neither moved by scabs or by smear campaigns: 'We want the maximum support for our picket line to show we're here to stay until the factory opens on our terms.'

The main problem the strikers face is the silence of the AUEW leadership.

## Check list

● Arrange a speaker for your Labour Party, union or community organisation

● Pass resolutions of support especially directed to the national executive committees of ASTMS and AUEW

● Take collections wherever possible

● Plan fundraising events

● Sell badges - Staffa stays - order from Chris Newson AUEW strike committee, 39 Somers Road, Walthamstow, London E17. 20p each & 15p postage. No reduced rates for bulk orders. Cash with order.

## Open letter to British Leyland workers from Laurence Scott workers

YOU are facing a deal worked out with Ken Cure, Sir John Boyd and Terry Duffy which, from what we can see, is not satisfactory.

Laurence Scott workers recognise the tactics of these union leaders.

We warn you to be wary of the executive. Again they are negotiating their own proposals not the proposals of their members.

In our dispute the executive has broken seven union rules and refused to be moved when accused of breaking union democracy.

What future can the present unions have if they are not democratic?

Do not accept their bully tactics, stand up for your rights as laid down by trade union principles. Today our dispute is unofficial due to refusing to accept the executive's recommendations.

But we are carrying on because we believe we are justified in the actions we have taken in fighting closure.

We hope you will stand up too against the Tories and their friends, brothers Cure, Duffy and Boyd.

Signed

J Pandolfo

P Penning

D Barry, convenor

All messages of support and donations can be sent to G Fryer, 20 Roundcroft, Romiley, Cheshire.

# Labour Party

## Hackney Central Reselection of Labour Candidate

# 'I will be accountable to the party'

**PATRICK KODAKARA** is a well known anti-racist and Labour councillor in the East London borough of Hackney Central.

He is challenging the sitting MP, Stanley Clinton Davis, in a four way reselection contest to be decided on 12 November.

**TONI GORTON** spoke to Patrick about his reasons for standing and what he thinks the issues are.

**You're contesting the nomination of the sitting MP. Why would you make a better MP?**

Stanley Clinton Davis and his style in the many years that he has been the MP for Hackney Central, epitomises what is wrong within the labour movement.

That is, that people who have held office in the labour movement have always taken to themselves certain rights and privileges.

They have the arbitrary capacity to accept or reject the views of the party that they represent.

Davis is totally against any mandate by his party at any level and says that at the end of the day he's independent and that his integrity will dictate that he is answerable only to himself.

Now if the labour movement were to tolerate that kind of situation then I think we would have the dichotomy between a party that would say one thing but its representatives would be doing something else, as a number of Labour governments have demonstrated in the last 10-15 years.

Wilson and Callaghan are the prime examples of this. They paid lip service to the party conferences which have largely been progressive.

They have even gone so far as to put progressive policies in their manifesto at election time.

But after the election they totally ignore the manifesto and the policies of the party and go on to sustain capitalism.

This has happened because the movement has made the concessions to allow these people to be a law unto themselves.

Stanley Clinton Davis epitomises that. My challenge to him is mainly on the question of accountability.

I have fundamental disagreements with him over issues such as his multi-lateralist position on nuclear disarmament, Ireland, and public ownership.

If selected I quite categorically say that I will be mandated and accountable to the party.

I see the position of an MP as no more or no less as a delegate from the party to parliament to carry out the wishes of the party.

**Is that actually the case? Your constituency party is mainly white with many racist views.**

**It's not at all excluded that the party could take very wrong positions on, say the Nationality Bill, or other things that particularly affect black people.**

**How would you see a confrontation between yourself as a black MP and your insistence on accountability?**

It wouldn't necessarily be a comfortable life to actually tell yourself and your party that you stand for manda-

tion when it could mean that the party and you disagree on fundamental issues.

But I see it as a viable partnership between you and the party — a political dialogue — with active participation and raising consciousness on the various issues that are concerned with greater mobilisation into the party.

At the end of the day if there was still a fundamental disagreement, I couldn't see myself continuing to represent a party or being a party spokesperson over questions I fundamentally disagree with.

The question of partnership cannot be viewed as a stagnant one, where one represents a party and its policies in a passive sense.

It must be an active relationship and one should play a key role in moulding the views of the party in the process of representing it.

**Would you say that you are part of the Benn current? Do you identify yourself that way?**

**You stand for nationalisation of the means of production and talk about shifting the wealth in the interests of working people and various other ideas that are associated with Benn.**

**The one big difference is on the issue of import controls, which you're against.**

Whether I'm part of the Benn current isn't the important thing.



Defence of Brick Lane in East London one of the most important campaigns for the black community



**Patrick Kodakara is from Sri Lanka and worked for a while in Singapore where he was involved in socialist activities for which he was thrown out of the country.**

**He has lived in Britain for twelve years and has been a Labour councillor for three and a half years.**

**He is a member of the Council for Racial Equality and the National Association of Local Government Workers.**

This current represents a major strand of thinking within the Labour Party at this time, but in no way is this current a unanimous brand of thinking.

For instance on the question of

Ireland the Labour Party position is not 'Troops Out' whereas I'm firmly committed to that and to recognising the struggle in Ireland as a national liberation struggle.

I have a difference of opinion

about how the Benn campaign has been fought on that issue.

The issue has not been highlighted and has not been faced.

It has to a great extent been postponed.

On the question of the alternative economic strategy the trade unions, the TUC and the Labour Party are now calling out for import controls.

I feel that this position is too nationalistic.

Because of the economic problems of this country which are essentially generated by the capitalist system this doesn't mean that the whole trend can be reversed by pulling down all the shutters and going into isolation.

In terms of trading patterns, of output, of its whole economic development Britain has to be seen as part of the total world, especially the Third World.

Import controls in the context of preferential treatment for British goods as opposed to goods coming from outside could seriously damage the budding aspirations of countries in the Third World who are struggling to achieve a certain economic base through export.

If a socialist in one country accepts import controls and so does one in another, in effect you outlaw internationalism which is basic to any socialist outlook.

**How do you see mobilising people on rates or race or whatever. For example black people in the area vote Labour but broadly speaking they're not in the party? Yet we know that it's only by people organising in their own interests they are ever going to advance**

Black people are organised at different levels, sometimes not very politically, but organised all the same. So far, because of their general experience in this society where they have been discriminated against, black people feel rejected and alienated.

I think the way black people will be brought into the mainstream of political activity will be when the Labour Party is seen to be actively and sincerely interested in promoting equality — with moves to outlaw racism.

Another way is for the movement itself to embrace within its fold black people at all levels not just as foot soldiers.

Up to now the experience has been a negative one. The TUC congress had just a handful of black faces with the Labour Party conference the same.

Black people watching these events feel — well, look these places are not places for black people.

I think that it is not enough for the Labour Party and the trade unions to say black people must participate but at the end of the day 'participation' is defined as support for the white male leadership of these bodies.

This is not to say that somehow if I were elected as MP that I alone would be able to further the cause of black people or for that matter the cause of the working class struggle by bringing more black people into active participation in that struggle.

It is going to be a long hard road ahead but nevertheless these are a few ways of symbolically showing black people that the movement means business about multi-racialism.

**What are the issues you think are important?**

The most important issue for any socialist programme is who controls the economy, the means of production, distribution and exchange.

I put the question of nationalisation very high in my programme but under workers control not the form of state capitalism we've known in recent years.

Another very important issue which needs solving is the achievement of the goals of various liberation movements such as women, ethnic minorities and gays. I feel these issues can't be postponed until a socialist society but need attention now.

# A POLICE CONSPIRACY

**MICK McMAHON** and **DAVID COOPER** served ten years and eight months in prison for a murder they did not commit. They had been convicted almost solely on the evidence of **Alfred Mathews** who had claimed that they and a fourth person, **Patrick Murphy**, had tricked him into going to Luton where a postmaster was shot dead on September 1969 during an attempted robbery.

Three years after the original trial Murphy had his conviction quashed when fresh alibi evidence turned up. Despite the fact this proved conclusively that Mathews was a liar, **McMahon** and **Cooper** served another eight years in prison before the Home Secretary remitted the rest of their sentences last year.

Even now, they have only received the Royal Prerogative of Mercy and not a Queen's Pardon and thus still have convictions for murder. Over the years their case became a *cause célèbre* — there were five appeals which were unprecedented in legal history, many newspaper articles and television programmes.

It was a book 'Wicked Beyond Belief' edited by **Ludovic Kennedy** which finally secured the release of the two men on 18 July 1980. **Mick McMahon** and **David Cooper** talked to **TESSA VAN GELDEREN** about their case.

The chief officer involved in our case was Chief Superintendent **Drury** who was head of the Flying Squad at Scotland Yard. He became Commander soon after our case and years later in 1970 was convicted himself of corruption.

He was found guilty of receiving money and favours from the Soho porn king, **James Humphries**. He was sentenced to eight years, reduced to five on appeal. He served two in an open prison and came out with his full pension.

It's certain that **Mathews** and **Drury** conspired together to work out a case against us three. The only way they could do that was for **Drury** to agree with **Mathews** that he wasn't on the scene of the murder. In actual fact **Mathews** was very possibly the man who killed the postmaster.

## Press

At the committal stages the charge against **Mathews** was withdrawn and he became the chief prosecution witness.

**Drury** was primarily concerned with convicting someone for the murder because this was a great feather in his cap.

There was a lot of pressure on **Drury** to convict someone — there was a lot of press coverage — it had gone five or six weeks with no arrests. No-one else has ever been charged with the murder, even after the Appeal Court quashed **Murphy's** conviction.

The Commissioner of Police wrote that as far as he was concerned **Murphy** was still involved in the murder. It was only over the years that certain facts came to light — we'd only had trimmed up versions of witnesses' statements at the trial.

For example when I (**Mick**) was first arrested, I was put on identification parade and a woman picked me out. She was about 65 yards from the scene of

the killing. I had one statement from her. Four years later I find out she made 14 statements.

Her original statement was very, very brief, only made hours after the incident. She'd seen one man and put him in his teens. She couldn't describe him or anything. And she would never be able to recognise this man again. She made a few more statements, and increasingly it became more detailed.

## Photo

When **Mathews** some five or six weeks later picks me out from a photo, that same day she's brought to Luton police station and makes a further statement.

She gives a full description of the three men and says she would be able to recognise one of them again. (*The woman, Mrs Crawley later received £200 of the reward money — TvG*).

We knew nothing about two witnesses until after the trial. They gave the police descriptions of the driver of the van who they saw quite clearly. They said he was a middle-aged man. (*At the time David was 27, Mick was 25 and Murphy was 26.*)

The only middle aged man in the case was **Mathews**. These two witnesses, **Seal** and **McNair**, attended identification parades for **Mick**, **David** and **Murphy**. **Drury** never put **Mathews** on parade. The police suppressed these two witnesses.

It was only when we were waiting for our first appeal to come up that **Murphy's** family managed to get hold of the names of these two and wrote to them. Even then, the police 'advised' them not to get involved.

It was only years later that the significance of this came out. **Mathews** and **Drury** were working together to get a conviction against us at any cost.

After **Murphy's** successful appeal in November 1973, the Home



*Ex-Commander Drury has never been charged for his part in the conspiracy that was 'wicked beyond belief'*

Secretary, **Roy Jenkins**, referred our case to the Court of Appeal because **Mathews'** evidence against **Murphy** was suspect, and that meant his evidence against us was suspect.

We lost that appeal in February 1975. In July 1976 the case was again referred back to the court when fresh evidence on behalf of **David** came to light. That appeal was a joke, it was virtually a press trial.

There'd been a lot of newspaper comment on how restrictive the previous appeal was. We'd tried to get **Mathews** recalled into the witness box. That appeal was so farcical that *Panorama* a few weeks later devoted the whole programme to the appeal courts.

It looked like the judges were on trial. They



*Alfred Mathews who caused two innocent men to spend nearly eleven years of their lives in prison*

took a lot of stick over not allowing **Mathews** to be recalled, so in 1976 they just opened the doors. Some seasoned lawyers were saying they'd never seen anything like it in their lives.

The Appeal Courts had had enough of this case and they weren't going to leave themselves open afterwards to say 'well, look, you were unfair in that appeal'. In the end the whole case became

a battle between the Home Office and the Appeal Courts. It was like a game between the two of them. We became insignificant.

The Home Office was obviously concerned about the case and kept sending it back to the Appeal Courts. The Appeal Courts were adamant that they were right and they weren't going to be told by anyone on the political side that they were doing the wrong thing.

We had another appeal in 1978. **Merlin Rees** was Home Secretary at the

time. He wanted to let us out, not because he wanted to do us any good, but because the thing was becoming such an embarrassment. **Rees** was just

looking for any excuse. But the Appeal Court rejected the case again.

Both of us, unknown to each other, had written a book about the case. **David** eventually got his manuscript out and it found its way to **Ludovic Kennedy** who, when he saw what had happened, just couldn't let the thing go. The book he edited forced the Home Secretary, **William Whitelaw**, to release us.

## Life in Winson Green where Barry Prosser was murdered.

**David Cooper:** I was on remand there, in a hospital ward, so you're isolated from the main part of the prison but you could smell it on the air.

**Mick McMahon:** I actually spent two nights there during my sentence. In those I said if I had to do any length of time in **Winson Green** I would have cracked up or ended up dead. They talk to them like dogs there. I thought **Wandsworth** was bad enough but **Winson Green** is ten times worse. If **Wandsworth** screws are classed as pigs, which some of them are, well, **Winson Green**.... I don't know how you'd describe them.



of jobs, nothing. We're both still unemployed.

We're the only lifers we know who aren't on any kind of parole, no probation officers, nothing. But we're still convicted. That's why we demonstrated by climbing up scaffolding at the House of Commons on the first anniversary of our release.

Our case is not an isolated one. We're not saying it's happening every day of the week, but it happens in quite a number of trials in this country. The skulduggery that's done on this other case with **Mr X**, that's like the skulduggery that was done in ours.

It's always the same with corruption on the part of the police. It's their own friends being implicated. Any smell of corruption or wrong doing is smartly covered up by their own colleagues. When the smell comes out on the part of the police, it's only the tip of the iceberg.

There's a lot of corruption by the police. **Drury** got a lot of the reward money from our case, **Mathews** gave him half his £2,000 share. All that came out later.

We got no compensation because in law we still stand convicted. In the majority of people's eyes we've been cleared, but in law that conviction still stands.

## 1: The crime

On 16 December 1980, a security van, containing over £800,000 was ambushed outside **Kingsdale School**, South east London.

A skip lorry, a hi-jacked crane, a stolen car and a Kenning van were among a number of vehicles used in the hold-up. When the security van was forced to a halt, the police pounced.

OVER THE last few years there has been growing disquiet on the methods used to get convictions in the courts. The use or misuse of identification parades was highlighted in the Peter Hain case.

The 'confessions' of the three youths charged with murdering Maxwell Confait caused great concern and the three were subsequently pardoned. More recently, during the youth riots, an accused man had pleaded guilty to something he hadn't done on the understanding that he would get bail and a lighter sentence.

Many such abuses and misuses of the legal system go on. But perhaps the one that is used by the police more and more to 'nail' their victims is the informer, the 'supergass', the agent provocateur.

Socialist Challenge has been investigating one such recent case. Those affected claim a miscarriage of justice.

We also print on these pages an interview and an account of the two men wrongly convicted in what was known as the 'Luton Murder Case', MICK McMAHON and DAVID COOPER.

They served ten years eight months of a life sentence before they had the rest of their sentence remitted by the Home Secretary last year.



William Tobin at his moment of capture. His vendetta against the police has resulted in a grave miscarriage of justice for four men now serving long prison sentences.

# Daylight Robbery?

armed robbery. Tobin was in possession of a camera when he was arrested with which, he claims, he was going to photograph the alleged bribe.

## 3: The Hogg and Jackson Story

Mark Hogg and Stephen Jackson are brothers-in-law. In late November 1980 they were approached in a pub by Mr X. They had never met him before.

The following week they met him again. He asked them if they were interested in making money. They were. Mr X told Hogg and Jackson the police were in on the crime. It was only on the morning of the robbery that Jackson and Hogg were told that guns, with blanks, would be used in the hold-up. They weren't happy about this, but by now they were in too deep to try and get out.

Hogg, who is left-handed, put the gun in his top left-hand pocket, and buttoned his coat over it, so that he was in no position to use the gun.

Jackson and Hogg were arrested at the scene of the crime. They had thought the plan was that the police would allow them to escape. Mr X was hit on the head with a truncheon during the attempted robbery, by a policeman who had not been put in the picture.

He carried on running and was allowed to get away. Mr X was never brought to trial. Jackson and Hogg claim that he had set them up.

## 4: The Ron Cook story

Ron Cook had gone to see David Goff who ran an ice-cream van, just outside the school near the robbery the morning the crime took place.

In the aftermath of the robbery both Goff and Cook were arrested by the police. The police checked their records and found that Cook had previous convictions, but Goff had not.

Goff was released, but Cook was charged. He maintains he had nothing to do with the robbery.

## 5: The Jimmy Williams Story

On the day of the attempted robbery Jimmy Williams and his wife, Carol, planned to go shopping. They had made arrangements with another couple to do so, who couldn't make it. On the way to the shops the Williams' car broke down. The battery's terminal had broken.

Jimmy Williams went into a nearby hardware store to inquire where he could buy a battery. In the shop he bought a purchase for which he has produced a receipt.

Williams then joined his wife in a pub where they chatted to the publican. At 12.40 Williams left to find a garage. Eventually, after failing to do so, he set out to return to the pub.

On his way there he was arrested by two policemen who claimed they had just seen Williams getting out of a Kenning van — the one involved in the robbery.

The policemen later stuck to this story in court, although four other cops said they had not seen Williams leaving the van. The man who Williams was supposedly identified as, had a moustache. Williams had not. The police claim the moustache was a false one.

It was not until five days after he was arrested that Carol Williams knew her husband was in prison. She was tipped off by an anonymous phone call.

## 6: The trial

There were two trials that led to the conviction of four of the defendants. (Tobin was eventually convicted at a third.) The first was stopped by the judge when a juror became ill early on in the case.

The second one proceeded in very dubious circumstances; 'One member of the jury was the son of the nightwatchman at the premises of Mr X's business partner.'

Towards the end of the trial, one juror had a heart attack and was released from the case.

As the jury was retiring to consider its verdict, another juror was released on the grounds that one of her relatives had been taken ill.

Yet despite having only ten members now left on the jury, majority verdicts were allowed — an unusual, though not unknown procedure.

\*Most significantly Mr X did not appear in court at all, either as a defendant or a prosecution witness. The police claimed in court that he was an informer rather than a provocateur, and that Tobin was the ring leader.

Yet Hogg & Jackson

testified in court that Mr X had approached them — not Tobin, who they had never seen before.

\*In court, the police continually contradicted one another. Some police placed Mr X in the Kenning van and Tobin in the crane. Others said Tobin was in the van.

\*The police videoed the robbery; the only man who could be clearly identified was Tobin.

## 7: The Consequence

Four people are serving a total of 56 years in prison for a crime they say they had nothing to do

with or had been duped into by a police provocateur.

Mr X received £5,000 reward money from Scotland Yard's fund and £3,000 from the security firm. He had been hoping for £80,000.

So to make some more money, Mr X tried to sell his story. The *Daily Mirror* refused to give him money but on 29 and 30 September the *Sun* published his story.

It included photographs of him with a shotgun and pistol. The *Sun* refused to tell Socialist Challenge how much they paid Mr X.

Six men were later tried on a variety of charges arising out of the hold up. One of these, Kevin Brown, was acquitted. The other five were found guilty. William Tobin was sentenced to 16 years.

Mark Hogg and Stephen Jackson were sentenced to 12 years. Ron Cook and Jimmy Williams were also given 16 year terms.

## 2: The William Tobin story

At the time of his arrest William 'Billy' Tobin was a villain at odds with the police. In particular he was at odds with Detective Superintendent Bassett of Rotherhythe police.

Tobin suspected Bassett of trying to frame him on a previous occasion; Bassett suspected Tobin of 'nobbiling' the jury when these charges were brought to court. It is Tobin's contention that Bassett was determined to 'nail' him, once and for all.

Towards the end of last year, Tobin says he was approached by another villain. For legal reasons he will be referred to as 'Mr X', which was what he was called in the subsequent court case.

Tobin claims Mr X told him he was going to bribe Bassett with £5,000 to drop charges Mr X was facing. Tobin's story is that Mr X asked Tobin to accompany him, and witness the hand over of the money, from a discreet distance.

Instead, Mr X's 'meeting' with Bassett turned out to be an



Police provocateur, Mr X poses with guns in hand for his confessions in the Sun. The associate editor refused to comment on the legality of such photographs

# THE BACKGROUND TO THE UPRISING

**THE Communist Party leaders entered Hungary in 1944 with the Soviet tanks. Manipulating the masses' desire for genuine radical change and using the presence of the Russian military, the CP gradually eliminated its bourgeois and social democratic rivals to become the 'leading force' in the state by 1949.**

The economic and social transformations carried out by the increasingly CP-controlled regime between 1945 and 1949 had the support of the majority of the Hungarian workers.

## Toll

That began to change dramatically however after 1948/49. The alienation of the working class from the new regime resulted largely from the economic policies pursued by the Stalinists in emulating the Soviet model of rapid industrialisation. The workers were constantly aggravated by the ever-increasing work norms, while forced deliveries took their toll on the peasantry. Workers' discontent was met with increasing repression.

Imre Nagy, who became Prime Minister during the later uprising, pointed out in his later writings that: 'The number of persons imprisoned is greater than ever before. But the most alarming fact is that the majority of those convicted come from the ranks of the working class, the industrial workers.'

At the same time as the East German revolt in June 1953, which began as a protest against higher work-norms, there were strikes in some of the major industrial centres in Hungary such as Csepel, later one of the centres of the '56 revolution.

Between 1949 and 1952 the standard of living of the workers had actually fallen by almost 20 per cent, and by 1956 most commentators were describing the mood of the working class as one of seething discontent.

The factor which released this discontent and provoked the explosion of 1956 was the crisis inside the Soviet bureaucracy generally referred to as 'de-Stalinisation'. This was a self-defence process carried out by the ruling elite against a rising tide of discontent in the Soviet Union.

It was not a real movement of self-reform. But the relative stability of the Soviet bureaucracy meant that this process did not provoke any mass upheaval in the Soviet Union itself, rather its explosive effect was felt almost immediately in Eastern Europe.

The CP elite in the East European satellite countries was much more isolated from society as a whole than its Soviet counterparts, especially in Hungary. The CP was practically non-existent at the time of the liberation in 1944. Its position of power depended on the presence of Russian backing in a most visible and military sense.

In addition, in the few years since the CP takeover, the bureaucratic elite had not yet succeeded in assembling a solid bureaucratic base, a privileged aristocracy of labour firmly tied to the bureaucracy materially and ideologically.

This isolation of the bureaucratic apparatus from the working class made it very weak when confronted with any kind of mass social discontent. It also heightened the social contradictions, making an explosion much more likely.

The national question was another factor in the impact of de-Stalinisation on Eastern Europe. The Stalinist leadership was imposed on Hungary by a foreign power, an important fact in a country where the

nationalist traditions of the 1848 War of Independence were still very much alive.

The absence of militant and Communist traditions in the Hungarian working class also contributed to the fact that the only political current able to step into the leadership of this mass desire for political change was the liberal reformist wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy itself. From 1953 onwards this current was associated with the name of Imre Nagy.

## Elite

The Nagy current was never really organised inside the ruling party. Nagy's personal commitment to the unity and rule of the party elite, and his opposition to any kind of links with the popular masses outside the party, contributed to the weakening of this current even on the limited terrain of its own reformist project.

Nagy represented and typified the liberal bureaucratic element within the Stalinist apparatus. He was made Prime Minister in 1953 on instructions from the Soviet leaders as part of the temporary liberalisation taken after the workers' uprising in East Germany. He had spent 15 years as a Comintern functionary in the Soviet Union and was part of the CP administration in Hungary from 1944.

On the morning after Stalin's death it was Nagy who delivered the eulogy in the Hungarian Parliament, praising Stalin as the 'great leader of humanity'. The retreat from the liberalisation in the Soviet Union strengthened the hard-line Stalinist wing in Hungary led by Rakosi and led to Nagy's dismissal at the beginning of 1955.

He was brought back into the party and government only after the beginning of the 1956 revolt — in an attempt to head it off.



# Hungary 25 years ago RUSSIAN TANKS CRUSH THE REVOLUTION



IMRE NAGY, the 'reform communist', was installed as head of the Hungarian government by the Soviet intervention of 24 October. He immediately agreed to the imposition of martial law, approved by the Russians, denouncing, 'the small number of counter-revolutionaries who have launched an armed attack on our peoples republic'.

The main organised support for Nagy in the party came from the journalists around the party paper and the intellectuals. The Petofi Circle, which played a prominent part before the uprising in organising among the intellectuals, was a circle of the CP youth organisation in Budapest.

Another inner-party group which supported Nagy was the small group of intellectuals around Georg Lukacs. The latter were not in any sense, however, an organised political group and remained somewhat aloof from events both inside and outside the party. Lukacs joined the Nagy government after the first invasion.

The intellectuals had very little contact with what was going on inside the working class. The populist-nationalism and peasant orientation of the Nagy group fitted well into the traditional ideological bent of the radical Hungarian intelligentsia. They were by and large disoriented by the popular uprising on 24 October.

The politics of the Nagy group, and certainly of Nagy himself, evolved in a rapid manner after Nagy took over the government. They oriented on the one hand towards the peasantry and on the other towards the old bourgeois parties of pre-1945 which at this point were powerless components of the CP-dominated Peoples Patriotic Front.

Miklos Krasso, a young party intellectual at the time who played a role in the formation of the workers' councils, describes the Nagy group in this way:

'Imre Nagy had his court where these awful former Stalinist hacks collected, who then became anti-Stalinists and professional anti-Communists after 1956. And partly the populists who were formerly in the National Peasants Party and then cabinet ministers in the Stalinist period. The Lukacs group had this cultural and, to my mind, political line, while the Imre Nagysts had this demagogic with the posters calling on "Patriots" and this absolute obsession with the peasants as if the workers didn't matter.'

It wasn't until after the second invasion on 4 November, when they were already defeated, that the Nagy leadership attempted to establish some links with the working class.

When the Nagy group came to power, the old Stalinist leaders were completely discredited and fled from Budapest in Soviet planes. Kadar replaced Gerö at the head of the party.

From then until the crushing of the Nagy government by the Soviets on 4 November the two main forces in the struggle, the 'reform communists' and the working class, began to move more in unison. At the same time the distinct political interests of both groups diverged more clearly.

The Nagy government, by calling for a Russian withdrawal and for a multi-party system, placed itself in tune with the basic demands of the insurgent masses and the working class. For this reason the workers supported the Nagy government.

But as the workers began to organise themselves independently in councils, first in the factories and then in the districts and the capital city itself, they began to develop a programme of demands and organs of popular power which had little in common with the popular coalition plans with which Imre Nagy hoped to salvage the basic hierarchy of power and the 'nation'.

When Soviet tanks occupied Hungary on 4





**WHEN Soviet party leader Nikita Khrushchev denounced the crimes of Stalin at the 20th Party Congress in 1956, he triggered off a severe crisis for the Stalinist bureaucracies in Eastern Europe. Workers revolted in the Polish city of Poznan. In Budapest in Hungary a mass student demonstration in solidarity with the Polish workers led to armed clashes with the authorities.**

**The Soviet army intervened on 24 October and installed a new government under the 'reform-communist' Imre Nagy. But the demands of the masses became more radical. And as the working class began to organise itself independently in Workers Councils, the Nagy government was forced to concede the popular demands for greater democracy and independence.**

**The Soviets then intervened a second time on 4 November to crush the Nagy government. The armed resistance of the working class against the puppet regime of Janos Kadar continued for months before it was eventually defeated. Joe Singleton recalls the events of the Hungarian revolution some twenty five years ago.**



the head of the CP and ignoring the so-called coalition parties. On 14 November, 10 days after the invasion, a mass assembly of delegates elected a Central Workers' Council for the city of Budapest.

It drew up a programme which declared, 'our unshaken loyalty to the principles of socialism. We regard the means of production as collective property which we are at all times ready to defend'. It drew up a set of demands which included:

- \*non-recognition of the Kadar government and the return of Imre Nagy.
- \*release of all political prisoners.
- \*withdrawal of Soviet troops.
- \*an end to the false information in the media.
- \*a multi-party system which recognises parties 'that base themselves on socialism'.

The period after the invasion was one of continuous struggle between the Workers' Council and the Kadar regime. The radical intelligentsia came more and more to recognise the central role played by the working class.

Shortly before it was dissolved by the Kadar regime the Revolutionary Council of Hungarian Intellectuals, whose president was the famous composer Zoltan Kodaly, issued a declaration of 'complete solidarity with the workers councils' which recognised that the working class was 'the strongest mass force capable of defending the achievements of the revolution'.

Finally the Nagy leadership, including Lukacs, which was still in the Yugoslav embassy, issued a statement which recognised the importance of the councils: 'The central government of the Hungarian Peoples Republic should first and foremost rely for its support on the workers' councils.'

The growth of the working class movement after the invasion and the escalating confrontation with the illegal Kadar regime was also accompanied by the beginnings of debate and political differentiation inside the workers' movement itself. This political differentiation had a lot to do with the different backgrounds and experiences of the workers who played leading roles in the struggle.

About half of the delegates to the Workers' Council were young workers in their early twenties. They had grown up in post-1945 Hungary, and had internalised and taken for granted the many social transformations that had taken place during the previous 10 years.

The other main group in the leadership consisted of older worker militants that had been active in the workers' movement under the Horthy regime before 1945. Many were skilled workers and often members of the old Social Democratic Party.

The political role of the workers' councils as organs of workers' power were not clearly recognised from the beginning. The demands of the factory councils often dealt mainly with the question of the running of the enterprises. The district and regional councils were however clearly more political organisations.

Likewise all of the councils raised political demands — for a multi-party system, for free elections, and so on. The leader of the Central Council was Sandor Bali. Bali was one of the older militants from the pre-war Metalworkers

Union, a social democratic stronghold.

He argued: 'We know quite well that the workers' councils can't be political organisations.... We know that the workers' councils will become the directing organs of the country's economy, and of course we welcome this. But we don't want to commit the same mistake that the party made in the past, when it was at one and the same time the master of the country and of the factories, and the only organisation representing the interests of the workers. If we make the same mistake then we'll be back where we started.'

On 22 November the government passed a decree which attempted to limit the Council's authority to economic matters. Then on 27 November Kadar denounced the councils as 'counter-revolutionary'.

During the revolution many of the councils had dismissed factory directors. Now the struggle began in the factories as the Kadar regime sought by repressive and intimidatory measures to reinstate the sacked directors.

This confrontation strengthened those who argued that the councils should play a more political role. As one of the council leaders, Miklos Sebestyen, later wrote: 'The time had now come... to assert ourselves as a political force recognised as such by the people'.

Plans were underway to establish a national Workers' Council for the whole country, but from the end of November outright repression increased considerably and threw the workers' councils on the defensive. When the Budapest Central Council decided to bring out its own newspaper to counter the lies of the official media the police raided the printing premises and seized all copies.

At the beginning of December some 200 members of various councils were arrested and on 9 December a majority of members of the Central Council were arrested and a government decree declared the Budapest Central Council dissolved.

The response of the workers was a general strike throughout the country which was probably the biggest in Hungary's history. The government then declared a state of emergency. On 1 January the Soviet leaders visited Budapest and a few days later the death penalty was extended to striking or inciting to strike.

On 15 January 1957 the Budapest Central Council issued its final appeal to the workers: 'Because of the terror, and the death penalty for even distributing leaflets, the Council exhorts the workers to spread all news concerning the underground by word of mouth. Sabotage and passive resistance are the order of the day.'

Sabotage and passive resistance continued throughout 1957 but the councils had been broken. They were finally dissolved by government decree on 17 November 1957.

The repression organised by Kadar was ruthless. At least 2000 people were executed and more than 20,000 imprisoned. Political parties were forbidden, the revolution was now declared to have been a 'counter-revolution' and the leader of the 'reform communists', Imre Nagy, was executed.

**Thus ended the Hungarian workers' first attempt to create a socialist alternative to Stalinism.**



Kadar



Nagy

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**BRADFORD:** SC at Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.  
**BRISTOL:** SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. More info Box 2, c/o Fulmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.  
**BURNLEY:** SC on sale every Sat morning 11.30-1pm St James St.  
**CHESTERFIELD:** SC sold outside Boots, Marketplace, Sat 11.30am-12.30pm.  
**COVENTRY:** SC available from Wedge Bookshop.  
**HEMEL HEMPSTEAD:** SC sales in Tame Square, Sat 10.30-1.30pm.  
**HUDDERSFIELD:** SC sold Sat 11am-1pm, The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.  
**LEEDS:** Sat 11-1 at Lands Lane Pedestrian Precinct and 10.30-12.00 at Headingley Arndale Centre. Corner Bookshop, Woodhouse Lane.  
**LIVERPOOL:** SC on sale from News from Nowhere, Whitechapel and Progressive Books, Berry St.  
**MANCHESTER:** SC sold 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER outside the central reference library in St Peter's Square and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.  
**NEWCASTLE:** SC on sale every Sat 11-1pm outside Fenwicks. Also available at Days of Hope bookshop, Westgate Rd. Every Friday outside Newcastle University between 1-2 and outside Newcastle Polytechnic between 12-1 every Monday.  
**OLDHAM:** SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.  
**OXFORD:** SC sold Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.

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**STAFFORD:** SC on Sale Market Sq Sat lunch-time.  
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**SWINDON:** SC on sale 11-1 every Sat, Regent St (Brunel Centre).  
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**WOLVERHAMPTON:** SC sales on Thur/Fri at Poly Students Union from noon-2pm and British Rail 4.30-6pm; and Saturday near Beatties, town centre from 11am-2pm.  
**YORK:** on sale every Thursday, dole office Clifford Street, 9.30-11; University Vanburgh College 12-2; Saturday at Coney Street 11-1.

## London

**BRENT:** SC sold Willesden Junction Thur 4.30pm.  
**EALING:** SC sold Thur, Ealing Broadway tube, 4.30-5.30pm  
**ENFIELD:** SC at Nelsons newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.  
**HACKNEY:** SC on sale on estates throughout Hackney, at public meetings, and local factories. Contact us c/o PO Box 36, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8 2NF or phone Megan or John at 359 8288.  
**HILLINGDON:** SC sold Fri, 4.30-5.30 at Uxbridge tube station; Sat 10.30-12.00 outside Woolworths, Uxbridge shopping centre.  
**KILBURN:** SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square, and Thursday 8.30am at Queens Park tube.  
**LAMBETH:** SC available from Village Books, Streatham; Tetric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk. Also sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.  
**NEWHAM:** SC sold Sat 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Mkt, Upton Park.  
**PADDINGTON:** SC sold at Portobello Rd market Sat at noon.  
**WEMBLEY:** SC sales Fri 6.45am at North Wembley BR Station.

## Bookshops

**BANGOR:** Rainbows, Holyhead Road, Upper Bangor, Gwynedd.  
**BRADFORD:** Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Sandgate.  
**BRIGHTON:** The Public House, Little Preston St.  
**BRISTOL:** Fulmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol 6.  
**BIRMINGHAM:** Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth, Birmingham.  
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**ILFORD:** South Essex Bookshop, 335 Ley Street.  
**MILTON KEYNES:** Oakleaf Books, 109 Church Street, Wolverton.  
**OXFORD:** EOA Books, 34 Cowley Rd.  
**LEICESTER:** Blackthorn Books, 70 High St, Leicester, and V Karia, 53A London Rd, Leicester.  
**LIVERPOOL:** News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool L1  
**LONDON:** Central Books, 37 Grays Inn Rd; Collets, Charing Cross Rd, WC2; Paperback Books, Brixton and Charlotte St; Kilburn Bookshop, Kilburn High Road, NW6; The Bookplace, Peckham High St, SE15; Books Plus, Lewisham; Balham Food Co-op; Housmans, 5 Caledonian Rd, N1; Compendium, Camden Town NW1; Owl, Kentish Town; New Beacon, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Bookmarks, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; Centreprise, 126 Kingsland High St, E8; Dillons, QMC; Page One, E15; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Reading Matters, Wood Green next to Sainsbury's.  
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## Socialist Challenge events

**NALGO** fraction: Sat 21 Nov 12 noon to 5pm. Venue from SC office.  
**RAIL:** national meeting of supporters in rail, Sat 7 Nov, 1.30pm at centre.



# Letters letters LETTERS

## Iran: who represents counter-revolution?

**CHARLIE VAN GELDEREN (15 October)** says that the Khomeini regime is counter-revolutionary and has been so since it came to power.

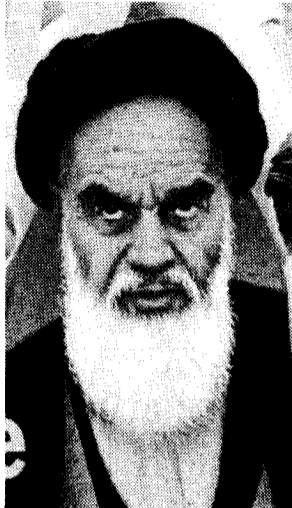
But it is important that we register the gains of the 1979 revolution against the Shah:

- \*The monarchy was abolished and a republic established.
- \*The right to vote, speak and to demonstrate is entirely different to that under the Shah.
- \*The secret police SAVAK was disbanded and there were purges of the army and the state hierarchy.
- \*Wages were doubled and the workweek reduced from 48 to 40 hours.
- \*SAVAK agents and managers were driven from the factories and workers' committees (shoras) were established.
- \*The banks were nationalised along with the insurance companies, establishing Iranian control over their own oil.
- \*Oil to South Africa cut off, links with Israel broken and recognition given to the PLO.

How else, if we don't register the massive gains from the overthrow of the Shah, can we understand the Khomeini leadership? Is its power based on the exploitation of the Islamic fanaticism of the Iranian masses (something which the bourgeois press plays up)?

For me, the bourgeois character of the state and government and the reactionary character of Islamic clericalism is not in doubt. But what is clear to us is not clear to the masses who identify the gains of the revolution with the Khomeini leadership.

It is not religion that gives Khomeini his base, but the political prestige won by that leadership in the struggle against the Shah and imperialism. This explains its ability to establish the confused and



deceptive ideology of the Islamic Republic.

We always understood that Khomeini's regime would be unable to satisfy the masses' material and national aspirations, which is why ruptures and differences deepen and divide the clergy.

The crackdown, starting with the Kurds and the far left, especially after August 1979, was an attempt to deal with the continued combativity of the Iranian workers and peasants, who are mobilised and confident.

Factory committees still continue as do peasant mobilisations for land. Attacking such a movement head on would be suicidal. An effective instrument like the army is needed, but this is divided and unsure although its prestige is increasing with its role in the Iraq/Iran war.

It is also on this question of the war that Charlie is wrong. The Iraqi invasion while not directly engineered by imperialism is most certainly in its interests in destabilising the revolution. US im-

perialism would like to overthrow the regime and replace it with a new right wing government.

The present bombing and terror is fundamentally backed by the extreme right and we should more explicitly denounce such tactics. But in doing so, are we backing the Khomeini revolution? We have never given support to it.

But ignoring the far more reactionary role of imperialism leads comrades to see the overall threat as Khomeini and 'medieval Islam'. Hence the abstention on the Iran/Iraq war.

Similarly, starting from the repressive policies of the Khomeini government and failing to register the gains of the revolution leads to a misunderstanding of why the government maintains its social base — again seeing religion as the central element.

Revolutionary socialists are not for the overthrow of the current capitalist government by Bani-Sadr, Bakhtiar, the Mujahedin, or by any other force aligned with imperialism. We should, as Charlie says, be for the mobilisation of the workers and peasants and for them taking governmental power through their own organisations.

To begin with we must support the defeat of the imperialist-backed Iraqi invasion and destabilisation of Iran. Arming, training and mobilising the masses under the shoras and peasant committees is vital.

Armed and organised workers and peasants will be able to prevent any right-wing backed intervention in Iran and prevent real counter-revolution.

DENNY FITZ-PATRICK, BRENT

## Class struggle unions in Chile

I was glad to see your recent centre-spread on Chile (17 Sept) and the column by Jerry Hughes of the Chile Solidarity Campaign.

Hughes' article focussed on the new problems facing the solidarity movement against repression under the Reagan administration in the USA, but also gave a plug to the 'National Trade Union Coordinating Committee' (CNS).

We all must join in protest against the repression faced by this grouping after its petition was presented to Pinochet. But Hughes' claim that they represent 'approaching one million workers' cannot go unchallenged.

In fact, this Committee's mandate dates back to the union movement as it was before the coup, 8 years ago. Composed of representatives assigned by political parties (the political opposition, according to Hughes), the CNS carries out actions like petitions to pressure the government to accept the latest version of the 'Social Pact' called for by the Christian Democrats and Communist Party in recent years.

However, these officials are simply not leading the class-struggle unions which are re-grouping now in Chile. Unions that are independent from the government and from the old political parties include the Industrial Textile Workers Union (PANAL), whose strike last year was the first to defy the junta's 'labour plan'.

Some of their leaders used to be reform-oriented moderates themselves, but they were forced to break from their old parties by their own experiences under the regime, trying to defend their membership's interests.

Committees supporting these Chilean unionists are organising speaking tours of Canada and Europe this fall, supported by Chilean groups like Combate (Fourth International), MAPU (CC) and the Socialist Party (CNR), and by unions like the Quebec Federation of Labour.

I hope that we can read more about this class struggle union tendency in Socialist Challenge.

GREG McMASTER EDMONTON, CANADA



## Getting rid of the bases

Readers who saw Paul Lawson's article 'Uncle Sam expects you to die for him' may be interested in knowing more about the Morwenstow base in Cornwall. This is supposedly British but was partly paid for by the CIA and according to an ex-CIA agent had ground facilities for the Rhyolite spy satellite installed in 1970.

Rhyolite has a long and interesting history, and the part it played in recent Australian political history should be of particular concern.

The ground facilities for this American spy satellite were installed near Alice Springs in the late 1960s. The Australian people were never told of the function of these bases — they were led to believe that it was 'space research'.

When Gough Whitlam's Labour government came to power in 1972, the CIA broke its agreement to share any information from the spy satellites with the Australian intelligence Services and began curtailing some of the information made available.

There were already fears that Whitlam would reveal the truth about the bases or even remove them. He had already angered the Americans by bringing the Australian troops home from Vietnam and in 1973 he denounced the bombing of Hanoi.

American intervention was not to be on the bloody scale of Chile, instead funds were secretly given to the opposition probables parties. Before Whitlam could reveal the whole story and possibly close down the bases he was removed by the Governor-General, and partly because of the funds channelled to the opposition parties, lost the subsequent general election.

We should consider what would happen in Britain if a government came to power with the intention of removing the bases. It will not be surprising if the 'Australian experience' re-occurs in Greece, where the bases are not even as important or as extensive as those in Britain.

AE FIELD, POOLE



## DOUBLE VISION

By Tony Graham

**THERE can be few people left in the Western hemisphere who are unaware that a film called *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is currently going the rounds. Great expectations exist for two reasons. First, the massive publicity campaign and the almost universal acclaim from critics and reviewers alike have branded the film a success. Second, those who have read and enjoyed John Fowles' book have waited a long time, in doubtful anticipation that a film would ever do justice to its subject.**

We experience the double vision of its author telling a story set in 1867, but continually interrupting it a century on, only to finish on the ambiguous finale of its double endings.

The story concerns a chance meeting between Charles Smithson (Jeremy Irons) and Sarah Woodruff (Meryl Streep) at the end of the Cobb at Lyme Regis — 'a long claw of old grey wall that flexes itself against the sea' — and its aftermath.

For Charles Smithson, a gentleman of considerable means, discovers that it is easier to follow his amateur passion for the study of fossils than it is to pursue his even greater passion for the woman at the end of the Cobb. Sarah Woodruff, it should be made clear, is the Victorian English equivalent of an Untouchable.

### Status

She has lost whatever status she began with, as a governess, through public knowledge of her dalliance with an officer on a French merchant ship. Between them stands the rigid social convention of the newly-emerging industrial ruling class — whose taste for the vicious exploitation of workers was matched only by the continual stream of moralising they offer, uncharacteristically, so freely.

Reviews have emphasised either the idiosyncratic casting of the American actress, Meryl Streep, or the film's efforts to transfer the dualities of the novel onto celluloid. The film adopts a device whereby the actors playing Charles and Sarah are seen to be pursuing a romance parallel to the original, but cast in contemporary clothing and without the savagery of the Victorian moral code.

In the novel there may be two endings but there is only one tale. In the film there are not only two endings but two tales, even though some care has been taken to consciously interlace them.

Fowles used to receive letters from readers demanding to know the 'real' ending. Whatever ending the reader wanted confirmed, Fowles might gently point out to them

that the other conclusion was more likely.

Part of the book's attraction is that it illustrates that in writing as in real life, conscious choices are the lifeblood of human activity. How clearly does this emerge in the film?

Fowles prefaces his novel with a quotation from Marx: 'Every emancipation is a restoration of the human world and of human relationships to man himself.'

Throughout the book, the quest for liberation is strongly felt. Sarah weeps silent tears while mid-Victorian capitalism does its best to destroy the efforts of a single woman to seek an independent path.

Charles, who is beginning to see the world more clearly through the spectacles of Charles Darwin, wants to liberate himself from the entangling welter of ignorance and religious prejudice through electing to follow Sarah.

The rolling thunder of old chains breaking (evolutionary theory) while new ones form (the rise of industrial commerce) can be heard distinctly in the background.

Yet, this is a world in which people are denied the right to choose and, then, make their own destiny. Where women are denied their freedom, men can never realise their own humanity. So long as Sarah is shut out from her society, Charles will be cut off from his, too.

### Modern

The French Lieutenant's Woman is, then, a profoundly modern tale. Its power rests less with its riddles than its relevance to us today. Whatever the ending, it is a positive affirmation of human potentiality.

The author has acknowledged that the film is another way of attempting to tell the same story. In the modern version, Charles and Sarah are played by actors Mike and Anna. True to script-writer Harold Pinter's hallmark, little is said, although we observe them engaging in an affair between takes.

At one point, they are practising the scene on Ware Common where Sarah slips and falls into Charles' arms. Immediate-



ly, we are transported back to Ware Common where the image is realised in its 'proper' setting. This to-ing and fro-ing is also reflected in the fact that many of the original characters are seen fleetingly in their modern guise.

Sarah's mistress, Mrs. Poulteney, (Patience Collier) is obsessed by a desire to appear pious; her modern counterpart, who passes judgement on the Mike/Anna affair, is no less concerned with ap-

pearance rather than reality.

In one sense, the film is about the same story as the book. It does more than dole out the narrative (as in, say, *Tess*) and goes some way to identifying the storytellers intervening into the story — in this case, the film-makers.

This does some credit to Karel Reisz, the director, and Pinter who together came up with this individual solution. It is little more annoying to have Anna and Mike pop

up at odd times than it is to have the author ingeniously write himself into the story in various guises.

What is disappointing, however, is to find so little of that challenging spirit that haunts each page of the book — the spirit that inspires people to conquer their own history. Even though the film uses its own metaphor to reproduce the original dilemma, it remains literal in its explanation, or offers no explanation at all.

Neither the force with which Charles and Sarah interrupt each other's lives, nor the light which the writer sheds on this interruption from a century's distance are successfully carried over into the film. Ultimately, the film resembles a Pyrrhic victory — it wins the form but loses the content.

Despite this, it is worth seeing for other reasons. If for no other reason, it should be seen for Meryl Streep's convincing portrayal of Sarah Woodruff — one of the most impor-

tant and difficult figures in contemporary literature.

At times, the film catches the flavour of the original, such as the initial scene on the Cobb, or the scene in Exeter where Charles and Sarah finally make love.

Finally, as Fowles himself hints, in his foreword to Harold Pinter's screenplay, it should be seen if only to prevent the book from becoming sacrosanct — possessing no more life than you might find in a fossil.



# Africa's longest war



By Charlie van Gelderen

Since September 1961, a small nation in the Horn of Africa has been fighting a determined battle to free itself from colonial oppression. For two decades the people of Eritrea have been engaged in armed struggle against Ethiopia first against the forces of Haile Selassie and, since 1974, against the armies of the Dergue.

There would seem to have been a compact between the capitalist press and the organs of the left to keep silent about this war — the longest in the history of Africa.

The various ethnic groups which comprise the people of modern Eritrea have a centuries-old history of struggle against foreign invaders, but its consciousness as a nation within clearly defined frontiers, became firmly established during the Italian colonial rule between 1885 and the Second World War. During the war, the British repeatedly promised the Eritreans independence in return for help against the Italians.

On 2 December 1950, by 46 votes to 10 — including Britain's — the General Assembly of the United Nations resolved that Eritrea should 'constitute an autonomous unit federated with Ethiopia'.

## Federal

Among those who opposed the 'federal solution' was the Soviet Union, who demanded complete independence for Eritrea in accordance with the provisions of the UN Charter.

Ethiopia at that time, though formally independent, was fast becoming a client state of US imperialism. The wishes of the Eritrean people had to make way for the interests of the United States. John Foster Dulles, Eisenhower's Secretary of State, did not mince his words:

'From the point of view of justice, the opi-

The constitutional rights of the Eritrean people were ignored.

In 1956, Amharic, the official Ethiopian language became the official language in Eritrea. Haile Selassie's regime began a systematic reign of terror; the few remaining rights of the Eritreans were abrogated.

## Strike

Trade unions were banned but continued to exist underground and in 1958 organised a general strike. The police opened fire on the strikers, leaving 500 dead or wounded. The die was cast.

In September 1961, the armed struggle began under the leadership of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF). A year later, on November 1962, Haile Selassie annexed Eritrea with the tacit support of the United Nations. The



Fighters in the Eritrean Liberation Front, 25 per cent of activists are women.

people of Eritrea were not consulted.

In its 20 year struggle, the EPLF (Eritrean People's Liberation Front), have carried out both guerilla warfare and conventional siege and assault warfare, inflicting

massive defeats on the American-Israeli trained Ethiopian forces.

From the beginning, the struggle took the form of a revolutionary war. Within its limited means, the EPLF has tried to generate a social pro-

gramme and have succeeded in mobilising the masses through elections, in the villages of women, youth and other groups.

Particular stress has been placed on women's participation in the strug-

gle and 25 per cent of the fighting ranks consist of women, a truly remarkable achievement in a country where women have been subject to severe discrimination in the past. Laws which prohibited the ownership of land by women were abolished.

By the end of 1978, the EPLF controlled all the major roads in the country, and all the major cities with the exception of Asmara, which was surrounded and Massawa, which was under offensive siege. Most of the countryside except Dankalia and Barka Provinces was under their control.

## Charge

All this changed dramatically as a result of the participation of the Soviet Union and Cuba on the side of Mengistu's regime in Ethiopia, which overthrew Selassie in 1974. In October and November 1978 the overall balance of forces changed. As a result, the EPLF has now been driven back from the offensive and is again resorting to guerilla tactics.

In effect there is now a new war, a second war of national liberation. In Eritrea, Haile Selassie's white terror has been replaced by Mengistu's 'red' terror!

The Soviet ruling bureaucracy, which supported Eritrea's right to self-determination in 1950, and called for its independence, by 1978 was more interested in the geo-military aspects. On 3 February 1978, the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared:

'The Horn of Africa is primarily of military, political and economic importance. The importance of the region is mainly because of its situation, where the two continents of Africa and Asia meet. There are many good harbours in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Moreover there are maritime routes which link the oil-producing countries with America and Europe.'

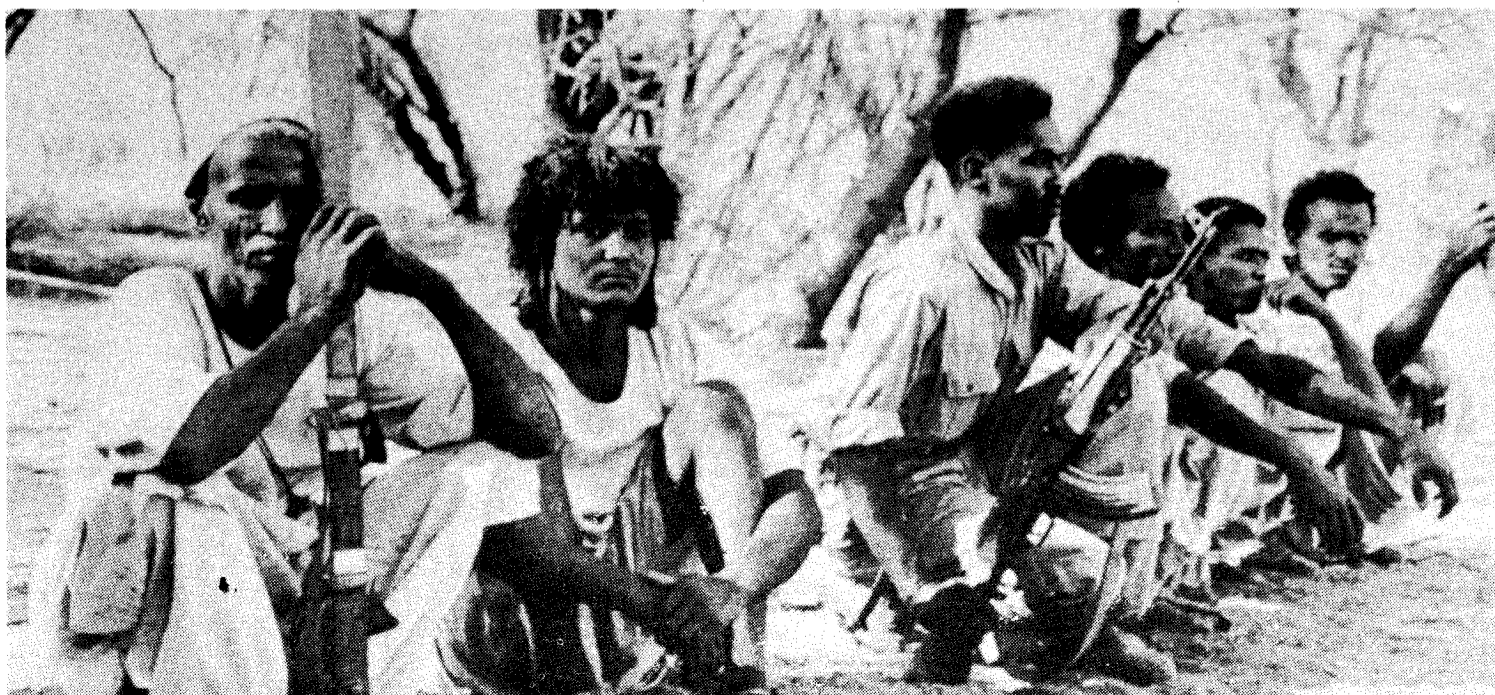
## Support

Cuba, also, has changed its position in line with the Soviet Union. In 1968, Fidel Castro called the Eritrean struggle a 'progressive revolution'; now he calls them 'secessionists' and talks of 'Ethiopia's right to defend its territorial integrity against the Ethiopian secessionists.'

The Eritrean independence struggle is remarkable, not only in the solid support it has among the masses but because not once has it called for aid from any of the imperialist countries. Although it has, rightly, criticised the Soviet Union, it has forfeited all but a trickle of Chinese aid because it refuses to join in the chorus about 'Soviet imperialism'.

It sharply differentiates between the imperialist and the Soviet blocs. And precisely because of this, fearful of the emergence of a socialist Eritrea, US imperialism has not rushed to give its blessing to this independence struggle.

All the more reason why the labour movement and the left should raise its voice in support of the heroic struggle of the people of Eritrea.



ELF members — many of whom were not alive when the war for independence began.

# H Block struggle not over yet

THE hunger strike in the H Blocks of Long Kesh in the North of Ireland may have come to an end, but the issues that led to the strike have yet to be fully resolved.

Last week the Provisional IRA's commanding officer in Long Kesh, Brendan MacFarlane, was put in three days solitary confinement. Later this week prison authorities will spell out how they intend to interpret the reforms on prison work and education announced by the British government at the end of the hunger strike. This will be a crucial factor in deciding whether some form of protest continues inside the H Blocks.

Lily Fitzsimmons and Kathleen Holden, who have sons in Long Kesh and who are leading activists in the H Block campaign in Belfast, recently spoke to Socialist Challenge and recalled the background of the H Block issue. They began by telling how their sons were arrested.

**Lily**

My son was arrested in August 1976, at home, at 5.30 in the morning. He was brought to Castlereagh Interrogation Centre, and held for 60 hours, after which he finally signed a statement.

During the interrogation he suffered mental and physical ill-treatment. They heard threats about what would happen to their mothers and sisters. He was charged with possession of a weapon, which was never produced, with attempted murder of a British soldier, and at his trial, no soldier gave evidence against my son.

He was also charged with membership of the IRA. The trial was a farce

from beginning to end. My son got a total of 15 years.

**Kathleen**

Michael was arrested on 20 August 1976 and held in Castlereagh for 62 hours. During that time, permission for a doctor or a solicitor to see him was refused. He was also told that his mother had been caught with an Armalite, and was being put in Armagh jail.

Like other prisoners, he signed a statement, under heavy duress. He was 18 years old. He was given 96 years imprisonment. Since that day, he has been on the blanket protest in the H Blocks.

**Socialist Challenge**

Britain has been accused

of using torture in the prisons; do you think this is an exaggeration?

**Kathleen**

No, it's not an exaggeration. Britain can talk about her fine modern prisons, but there's one place they never showed on television, and that's the punishment block, where most of these young men are thrown if they sing, or do anything to annoy the warders.

It is a concrete block, no bed, where some men spend 30 days, where they were given bread and water, and very, very slight portions.

**Lily**

It's not a question of modern prisons, but the treatment. The prison officers started the protest by refusing them their clothes, and threw them a blanket. They started the no-wash protest. The warders wouldn't let them out to the toilet without going naked, or being beaten, or pushed against the hot radiators.

My son was put in an empty cell, and continually hosed down with a high powered hose, until he was hospitalised.

**Socialist Challenge**

Why do you think that such extreme measures are used?

**Lily**

Because they are Republican prisoners, and

they demand to be recognised for what they are, prisoners of war, whether they are guilty of the alleged crimes or not. Because they will just not bend the knee.

**Kathleen**

Also, the biggest majority of the screws are Loyalists. I've seen it with my own eyes, one warder had 'For God and Ulster' written on his sleeve.

**Socialist Challenge**

How much support is there for the prisoners?

**Kathleen**

I think the hunger strike proved it. There were thousands and thousands supporting the prisoners, especially when Bobby Sands was elected.

**Lily**

You see, Britain always tried to play down the support, giving a small percentage of the numbers at demonstrations and funerals. The Irish people, as a whole, but especially in the 6 counties, have been right behind the prisoners.

When you go round the Nationalist areas, you see the posters in the windows, they were there even before the hunger strike.

**Kathleen**

When Bobby died, we came out onto the streets with bin lids and whistles. We had only gathered, when the Brits came up, firing plastic bullets into the crowd, but there had been no trouble.

People were standing crying over Bobby, and the Brits were shouting that the 'slimmer of the year' had died. They used the plastic bullets indiscriminately to try and



Lily Fitzsimmons

get the people off the streets, which they failed to do.

**Socialist Challenge**

What role is the British army performing?

**Lily**

The same role as ever, to guard British interests in Ireland. They are there to keep the nationalist people down and to keep us in our own areas, to harass the young people, schoolboys and girls.

Their language to them is unrepeatable.

We were told in 1969 that they were peacekeepers, but in 1970 whenever Loyalists tried to come on to the Falls and attack us, and we dared to protect ourselves, the Brits turned the guns on us.

**Kathleen**

They've told us that in their eyes, we have no rights, they're treating us as second class citizens which we won't tolerate any more. On 24 October a young couple were sitting watching telly, with a year old baby, and the marine commandos in Turf Lodge kept rapping at the window.

The man told them to 'take off' and leave them alone. A row developed, naturally, then they beat him up, arrested him, and took him to Springfield Road barracks.

**Socialist Challenge**

Do you want British troops withdrawn?

**Kathleen**

I would love them to be withdrawn immediately, we all would, but if they gave us a date it would be a relief that we will be rid of them at last.

**Lily**

If the British government took the guarantee away from the Loyalist population there would be no

'bloodbath'. The Loyalists have some strange idea that they are superior to the Catholics. They are little better off than we are, with unemployment being so high.

They have poor housing and the same social problems. But every time the working class people rise up, they tell the Loyalist people that they are superior. I think that if the Brits pulled out, the Loyalist people would realise they would be better off running their own country.

**Socialist Challenge**

What message would you give to British socialists?

**Lily**

I think the socialist people in England are doing a good job by highlighting everything we tell them.

The English people should find out what their troops are doing. The politicians know, but the ordinary people don't. All they hear is bombs and shootings. But they don't hear of innocent 9 or 10 year old children being shot dead and hundreds blinded and maimed by the plastic bullets.

If you build a movement in this country to get the troops out, it would be marvellous. The unemployed youth would be better off walking the streets of Britain than walking the streets of Ireland in a British army uniform.

**Kathleen**

Also we would like to thank all the people and socialists who are helping our prisoners, and our struggle.



The funeral of Bobby Sands MP. Tens of thousands attended, illustrating the breadth of support for the hunger strike.

Photo: Joanne O'Brien

# Japanese nuclear industry's deadly

By Chris Pitts

JAPAN'S nuclear power plants are generating more than just electricity. In the 15 years since the first commercial reactor came on-stream, mounting evidence of the harmful effects of the rapidly expanding nuclear programme is fuelling a militant anti-nuclear movement.

Among the evidence which is giving increasing cause for alarm are massive increases in cancer and leukaemia deaths among communities living near some of the plants, the rapidly increasing irradiation of casual workers employed in them, the discovery of mutated plants and fish, and the high number of 'accidents' which leak radioactive material into the environment, particularly the coastal waters.

Almost incidentally, there is also the fact that the nuclear programme is proving to be a commercial disaster.

Despite an expensive pro-nuclear propaganda campaign promoted jointly by government and the industry, massive amounts of money paid out in bribes and compensation payments to buy off anti-nuclear campaigners, and the use of riot police and private strong-arm squads to break up peaceful protests, the tide of opposition to Japan's nuclear development program continues to grow.

## The current situation

Japan has 21 nuclear reactors in commercial use, with a combined generating capacity of 15,000 Megawatts.

All but one, the gas-cooled Tokai No 1, are light water reactors designed by Westinghouse or General Electric of the USA. Eleven are Pressurised Water Reactors (PWR) and ten are Boiling Water Reactors (BWR).

Japan is second only to the USA in the world nuclear energy league. Britain has more reactors, but less generating capacity.

The Japanese government, anxious to reduce the country's dependence on imported fuel, aims to increase the proportion of nuclear-generated energy as rapidly as possible. But technical problems, popular resistance and spiralling construction costs have forced them to scale down plans for nuclear expansion several times over the past decade.

They are currently projecting a rate of expansion which will double present generating capacity by 1985, and triple it by 1990.

By 1990 it is hoped that there will be 58 nuclear plants generating almost half of Japan's energy needs — a massive 53,000 Megawatts. Seven plants are currently under construction and approval has already been granted for seven more.

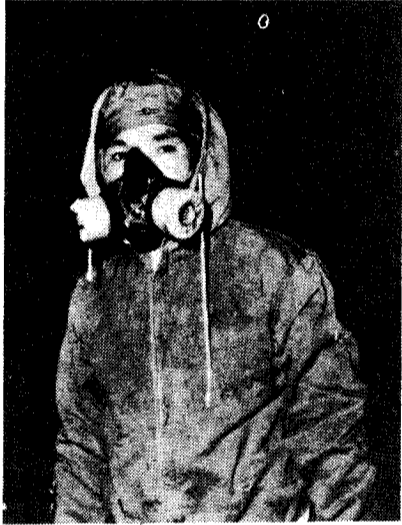
From the start, the nuclear program has been plagued with technical problems. Cracks in steam and coolant pipes and other components, the bending of fuel rods, and leaks of radioactive material have caused long shutdowns, which the companies usually claim are for 'routine maintenance'.

Some plants have been undergoing this 'routine maintenance' for almost as long as they have been operating. In 1979, the latest year for which figures are available, the average capacity factor (energy actually generated divided by generating potential) of all Japan's nukes was 49.8 per cent.

It is calculated that reactors must operate at 70 per cent of capacity to be commercially viable, but few have achieved this figure for more than a few consecutive months.

## Death and disease among nuclear workers

According to the government's own figures, released in response to questions in the Diet (parliament) in March 1977, 75 workers temporarily employed at nuclear power plants had



Nuclear worker

died of 'unnatural causes' during the previous ten years.

There were 32 deaths from cancer, three from leukaemia, 23 due to high blood pressure, 12 from heart disease and five from other causes.

Significantly, but not surprisingly, there were no deaths recorded among full-time employees at the plants; the reason for this lies in the different treatment accorded to the two categories of employee.

Throughout Japanese industry, permanent employees with labour contracts are considered valuable due to their training, experience, and the fact that they will stay with the company until they retire.

Also, companies are usually obliged to pay large sums in compensation if one of these workers is killed or injured on the job. Therefore it is customary to protect them, although not by improving working conditions or safety standards.

Firms usually adopt the cheaper expedient of hiring subcontract and temporary labour for the dirty and hazardous work.

The nuclear industry, though, faces a unique problem. As the reactors become older, they not only break down more frequently and seriously, they also become more radioactive.

So despite the fact that the permitted level of radiation exposure is ten times higher for workers in the nuclear industry than that for the general public, each individual receives his permitted dose after shorter and shorter periods inside the reactor.

Hence the industry needs to hire constantly increasing numbers of expendable workers.

Up to now, there has been no shortage of casual labourers and out-of-work farmers willing to take the high wages offered for a few hours work.

They are often recruited from the poor areas of Japan's towns by local entrepreneurs who set up as subcontractors specifically to supply nuclear labour.

The recruits are given a minimum of instruction in safety procedures, and most are understandably totally ignorant of the nature of radioactivity and its potential dangers.

Since work with radioactive materials began, there has been a progressive reduction in the permitted dose as new data about the dangers of radioactivity became available.

They are not a *guarantee* of safety, but a compromise between the pressure to protect workers against the harmful effects of radiation and the industry's need to expose them to it.

In Britain and the USA, the permitted dose for workers in the nuclear industry has been 5 rems/year since 1957 and 1958 respectively. (A rem is a unit measuring the amount of biologically damaging energy in received radiation.)

Permitted doses for the general public are much lower; one tenth of that of nuclear workers in Britain and Japan, but one thousandth in the USA since 1974.

The higher figure for nuclear workers is defended on the grounds that they receive regular health checks, continuous monitoring, use protective apparatus and so on. Unfortunately, for Japan's casual workers, permitted a dose of three rems every three months, this is just not the case.

The latest figures from Japan's Natural Resources and Energy Agency show that the total received radiation dosage of all nuclear workers in fiscal 1978 (April 1978 to March 1979) increased by 60 per cent over the previous fiscal year.

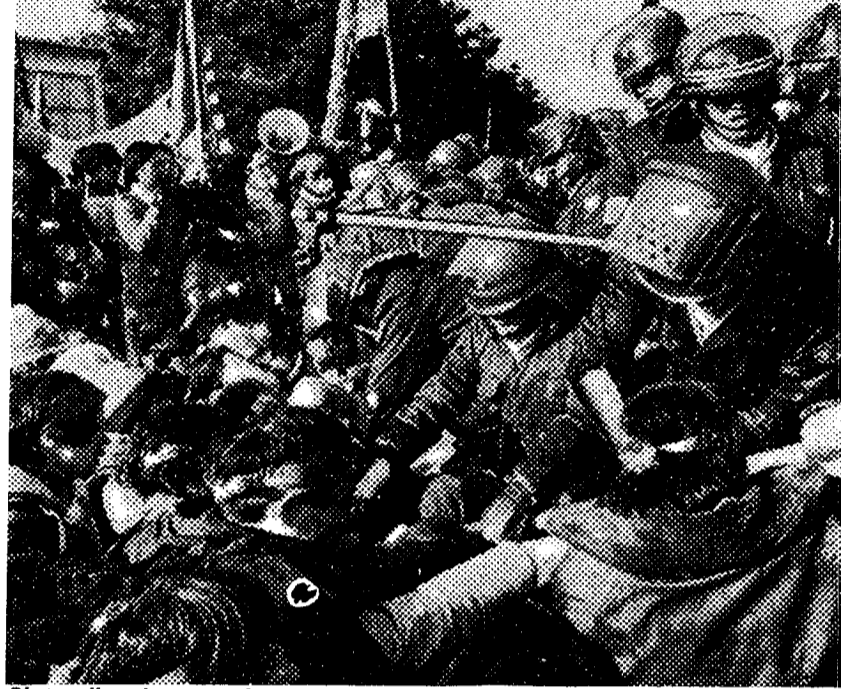
This increase was largely due to the increase in the number of subcontract workers irradiated (up from 25,362 to 34,155), and only secondarily to an increase in the average exposure per worker, which rose to 0.41 rems from 0.33 rems.

The distribution of this radiation exposure is disturbing.

The average subcontract worker received twice the dosage of the average permanent employee. Moreover, subcontract workers bore the brunt of the high exposures — out of a total of 1,292 workers exposed to radiation levels of between two and four rems in 1978, 1,278 were subcontract workers.

At one reactor, Tokyo Electric's Fukushima No 1, the company authorised an unprecedented exposure level of one rem per day per worker after the latest of a series of mishaps and breakdowns occurred in January 1980.

Of course, as soon as a worker is 'burned out' (i.e. has received his permitted dosage), he is sacked.



Riot police drag out demonstrators at sit-in at Hamaoka 'public' hearing, 18 March 1981

But this in itself is not a guarantee of safety. Apart from the fact that absorbing a three-month dose of radiation in three days is not to be recommended, there is no system of checks to ensure that workers do not travel from plant to plant in search of the lucrative work, collecting many times their permitted yearly dosage in a few weeks.

In 1979, three books were published about working conditions in the nuclear industry.

The author of one of these books, Horie Kunio, describes how many of the workers he met showed symptoms of radiation sickness, such as always feeling fatigued and languid.

There are dozens of testimonies from workers whose health is ruined, like that of a 53-year-old farmer from Fukui Prefecture:

*'I took on temporary work at the Tsuruga nuclear power for the five months from November 1974 to March 1975.*

*'In those days people were grateful for work and high wages provided by the power company. My daily salary was about 5,000 yen (£12).*

*'Two kinds of uniforms were worn at the Tsuruga plant: red ones and yellow ones. I wore a red uniform, so I guess I was working in contaminated areas. Every day I went down to the working area with a pocket radiation counter, a film badge, and an alarm meter. My job was mainly radiation clean-up.*

*'At the beginning of 1975 I began to have trouble with my stomach and throat, and felt sharp pains in my*

*joints, head and in the small of my back. Then I began to feel listless.*

*'Doctors said it was due to old age. I didn't know that the amount of radiation I had been exposed to was three rems until members of the Tsuruga City Council and the Town Assembly came to examine me.*

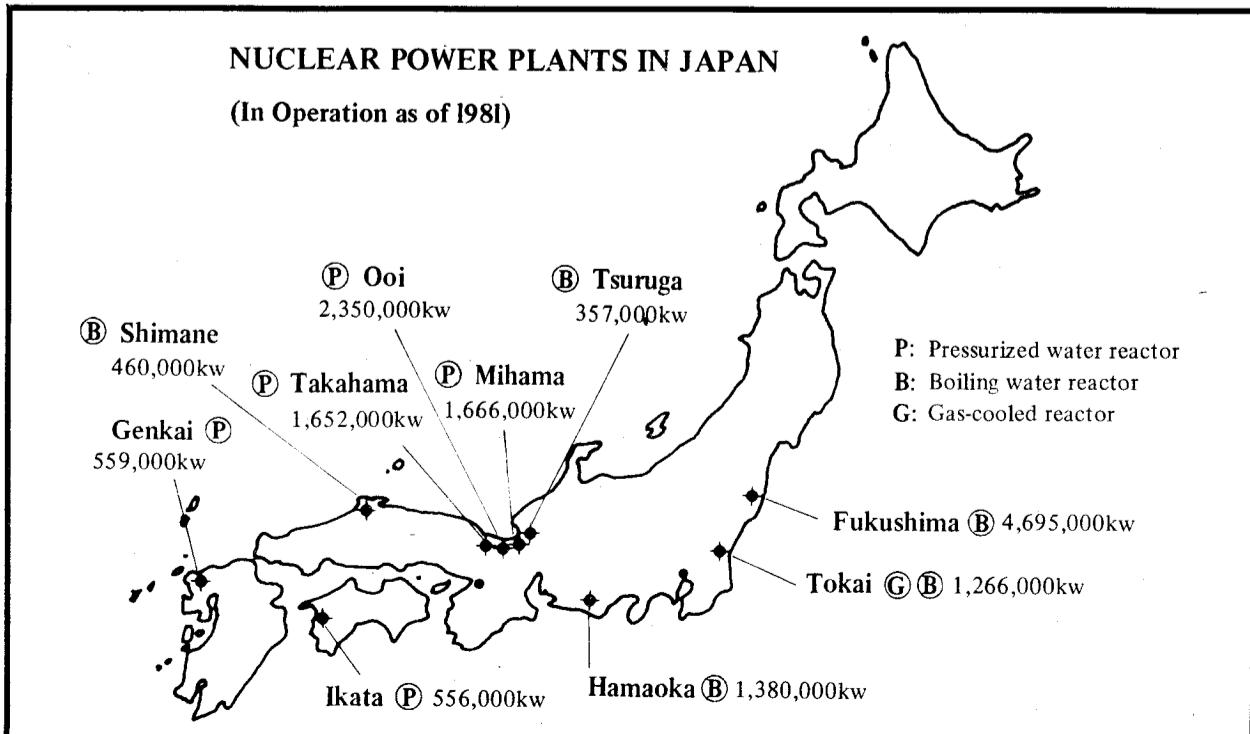
*'Lately I have to go to the doctor every other day, but I get sicker and sicker. I stay as still as possible at home all day long every day. Sometimes I feel I'd rather die.'*

Japan's nuclear power plants are being developed and operated by nine privately-owned electric power companies, which also run conventional plants. The unions which encompass their permanent employees support the policy of hiring subcontract labour for reactor work, as a means of protecting their members.

The larger of the two main unions, ZENROREN, organises about 80 per cent of the power and supports nuclear power. A few hundred employees are members of the smaller and more militant union DENSAN, which is active against nuclear power, but as soon as their views become known to management they are transferred to one of the conventional plants.

From these workers' point of view, it is a case of unintentional 'Protest and Survive', but among the unorganised subcontract workers, the number of victims continues to grow.

At the same time as the data on deaths of subcontract workers were announced, the Ministry of Health and Welfare also released statistics



# record- can it happen here?

showing that people living near nuclear power plants were suffering a significantly increased risk of dying from cancer or leukaemia.

In Mihama town, Fukui Prefecture, the number of deaths from cancer per thousand in 1974 was 278, almost twice the national average of 141. The leukaemia death rate in the same year at Mihama was fifteen, compared with a national average of four. There are three reactors at the site on the outskirts of Mihama, which started commercial operation in 1970, 1972 and 1976.

At nearby Takahama, with two reactors less than seven kilometres away, the leukaemia death rate doubled in one year, from eighteen in 1974 to thirty-six deaths per thousand (i.e. over eight times the national average!) in 1975.

Unfortunately, more recent figures on the numbers of cancer and leukaemia deaths are not available.

But if there is any satisfactory explanation of the above statistics other than the effects of constant emission of radiation into the environment, neither the government nor the industry has yet produced it.

## Genetic Mutation

Results of a two-year study by Kyoto University scientist Professor Ishikawa Sadao show that spiderwort, a plant he claims has cells and genes similar structurally to those of humans, show a significantly higher rate of mutation than normal when growing in the vicinity of the two reactors at Takahama.

He claims that the plants accumulate radioactive iodine 131 given off into the atmosphere by the nukes, and that some show cell damage after only two weeks' exposure.

The Professor concludes his report with an appeal to halt operation of nuclear facilities until the dangers to human health are understood.

In addition to evidence of genetic mutation caused by radiation, various groups of scientists in Japan have collected evidence showing that seafood is being contaminated and killed in water near nuclear plants, all of which are sited on the coast.

The Japanese depend on marine products for food to a far greater extent than people of other industrialised nations, eating five to six times the amount and much less meat.

A large proportion of their seafood is harvested in coastal waters by small family concerns whose livelihood has become much more difficult in recent years. Stiff competition from huge, ocean-going factory ships and industrial pollution of their fishing grounds have made fishing a precarious way of earning a living.

Now, fears that fish and other seafood will accumulate radiation in their bodies through the food chain, and a number of scares which have left them unable to sell their catches have driven many of the traditionally conservative fishing people into the anti-nuclear camp.

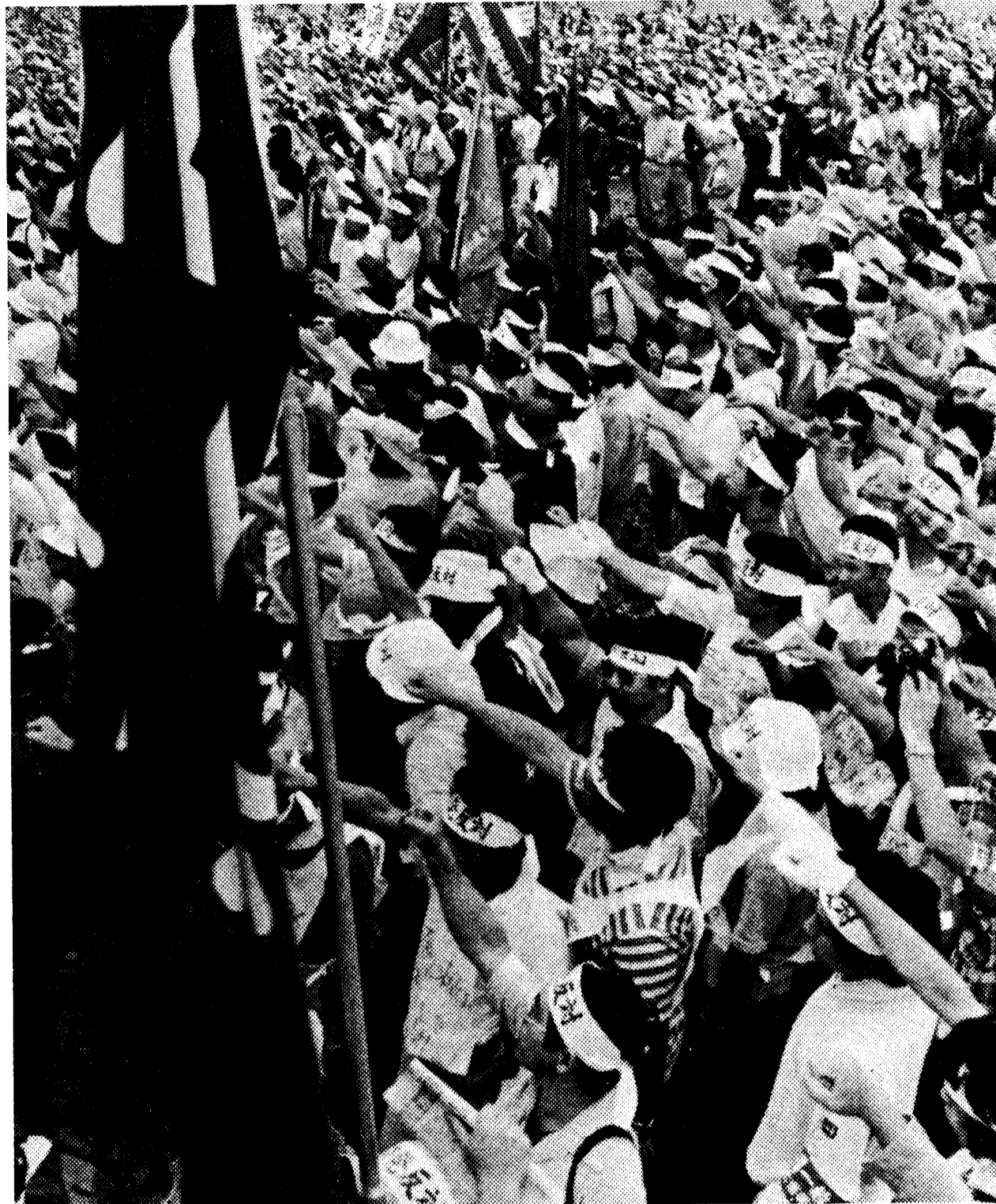
## The Opposition Movement

Although the anti-nuclear movement in Japan does not yet mobilise the tens of thousands that those in the USA and Europe do, the potential certainly exists.

Opinion polls show that a majority of Japanese have at least some reservations about nuclear power safety; most regard it as a necessary evil, and the first reaction of residents threatened with a nuke near their town has tended to be 'don't build it here, but somewhere else'.

Thus the Japanese movement is characterised by strong, militant opposition to specific plants among the locality, but rather weak national organisation.

Nevertheless, as long ago as 1976, a spokesperson of the Energy Council



One of the many massive anti-nuclear demonstrations

ruefully admitted that 'the siting of nuclear plants is not going at all smoothly due to the opposition from local communities. This is the single, most serious bottleneck in our whole programme.'

While that bottleneck has continued to narrow, it has been due more to the impact of events, such as the near-catastrophe at Three Mile

Island USA in 1979, than to a clear political lead from either of the mass workers' parties.

The Communist Party opposes nuclear weapons, but is in favour of nuclear power, with 'adequate' safety precautions.

The Socialist Party nationally does not have a clear stand either for or against, but certain SP members of the Diet are outspoken nuclear op-

ponents, and give a lead to local struggles.

The near catastrophe at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania, in March 1979 caused a furor, mainly because the crippled reactor is the same design as a majority of Japan's nukes. Even before it was clear exactly what had happened, demonstrators had invaded the offices of the Natural Resources and Energy Agency of MITI in Tokyo.

Mounting pressure forced the government to reluctantly halt operation of several of Japan's reactors.

TMI gave the Japanese nuclear programme a blow it has never fully recovered from. For this reason, the authorities have been forced to resort to desperate measures to keep their nuclear programme moving forward, and a new focus of the anti-nuclear struggle has become the public hearings which must be held before permission to build a new plant or reactor can be granted.

These have been blatantly rigged on most occasions to produce an outcome which is favourable to the power companies.

In some cases, the hearings have been held in towns up to 100 kilometres from the proposed site to ensure that few of the affected residents can attend, but the case of the hearing at Kashiwazaki, Niigata Prefecture in 1978 must take the prize.

The local authority appealed to residents to submit their opinions on the proposal to build the nuclear plant in writing in advance, and selected out

of the 3,000 or so replies a mere 47 people from 17 families to attend the hearing.

Hundreds of locals turned up on the day to protest this sham, and about 200 entered the gallery of the hall, demanding to be allowed to participate in the hearing.

At this point, dozens of police in full riot gear forcibly expelled all the members of the public, including the hand-picked 47. The doors of the hall were locked, and the 'public hearing' went ahead uninterrupted.

Since December 1980, protesters have gathered at Kashiwazaki, Shimane, and Hamaoka, to prevent these undemocratic hearings from being held.

What was particularly encouraging about these demonstrations, even though they were not totally successful, was the fact that they attracted support from thousands of unionists.

Another issue raised by Japan's nuclear programme is what to do with the lethal radioactive waste produced by the reactors.

The Japanese government's announcement of plans to dump radioactive waste in the Pacific Ocean has brought expressions of opposition from residents of many of the islands from Guam to Micronesia.

Last year the Japanese government sent a special mission on a tour of these islands armed with charts, graphs, and survey results, ostensibly to explain their intentions and hear the opinions of the Pacific peoples.

Having heard nothing but objections, the mission returned to Tokyo and issued a statement thanking the Pacific Islanders for their co-operation, but announcing that the dumping would go ahead anyway since they, the Japanese, were sure it was safe.

An official of the Science and Technology Agency pointed out to reporters that 'international harmony' was important, but in the last analysis it is still 'not necessary to get the approval of foreign countries'.

Contrast this attitude with the reaction of the Japanese authorities when a Soviet nuclear submarine damaged by fire (although not leaking radiation) was towed briefly through Japanese waters on its way back to Vladivostok, last August.

That action was denounced in the strongest possible terms as a breach of territorial integrity; it seems that there are different standards, depending upon whose integrity is at stake.

## The Tsuruga Accident

The worst accident in the history of Japan's nuclear programme, the hushed-up radiation leak at the Tsuruga plant in western Japan, came to light last April.

Over 40 tons of highly radioactive coolant had gushed from a storage tank; in the company's panicked attempts to clear up the mess, more than 50 workers received high doses of radiation, and most of the dangerous material was dumped into the public sewer system.

The incident was certainly not unique; two more radiation spills, at Oi nuclear plant and at the Tokai reprocessing facility, have been reported since.

The Tsuruga plant itself has reported 31 previous accidents, and workers there have recently told of other incidents which the company tried to cover up.

The aspect which appalled many Japanese was that the operators of the Tsuruga Plant showed such criminal irresponsibility in trying to keep the latest tragedy secret, and then trying to downplay it.

For example, the company claimed that none of the workers involved in the clean-up received more than 13 millirems, but MITI inspectors investigating the contaminated sludge-tank room are reported to have absorbed 30 millirems in a few minutes — this almost a month after the spill.

There is already more than enough evidence to indicate that every nuclear facility in Japan should be shut down immediately.

And there is more than enough evidence to suggest that if it can happen in Japan it can happen here.



Nuclear power plant opponents and riot police clash at Hamaoka, Shizuoka prefecture.

# Socialist Challenge

Socialist Challenge exclusive

## Provocation against railworkers

**RIGHT WING provocateurs are trying to have socialist railworkers victimised by the rail bosses. They are circulating a phony leaflet under the name of Rank and File (Railworkers fraction) designed to alienate left militants from their co-workers, laying them open to attacks from management.**

This clever hoax aims to take advantage of the witch-hunt that Sid Weighell, leader of the National Union of Railwaymen, has launched against the left inside the union. Most of the names on the so-called steering committee on the leaflet are supporters of *Railworker*, the pro *Socialist Worker* rail journal.

Socialist Challenge supporter, Pete Grant was also named. He explained that the leaflet which starts with the demand to support gays and ends with an appeal to support the IRA, will be used by management against militants: 'There is no doubt that a shopping list of such demands with no explanation is not the way to raise these issued inside the union.'

Railworkers, union officials and management should be left in no doubt that this leaflet is a fraud and has to be denounced. Already two of those named, Roger Cox and Jim Scott, have been hauled before management to 'explain' the leaflet.

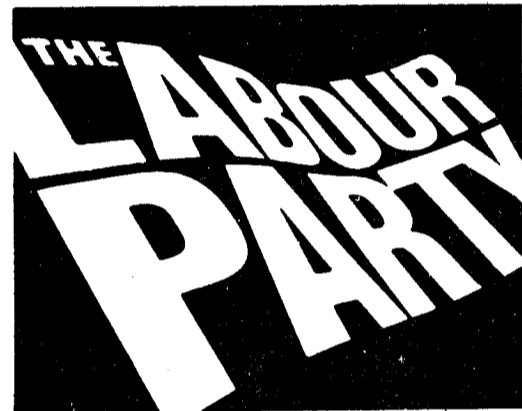
Whoever was behind this affair has to be rooted out. Sid Weighell who is presently bringing charges against militants in the NUR, has campaigned to defend the rights of fascists to be members of the union. In April 1978 he wrote in the *Daily Mirror*: 'We are not proposing to expel members from the NUR, nor to get them sacked simply because they are misguided enough to become members of the National Front. No one wants a witch hunt or restrictions against the beliefs of individuals.'

Weighell does not show such 'tolerance' to those members who are fighting to remove their right wing leaders, and for policies that outrightly oppose all that Sid Weighell and the other union leaders stand for.

The left has to unite against the attacks from both the union leaderships and the right wing provocateurs who seem, from the evidence of this leaflet, to be stepping up their activities.



# Labour Party: stop the witch hunt



**THE Labour Party's right wing is on the war-path.**

In a statement issued on Tuesday, 60 MPs from the party's right-wing Manifesto group demanded Labour's national executive launch a witch-hunt against supporters of the *Militant* newspaper. They also called upon the executive to refuse to endorse Pat Wall as the party's candidate for the constituency of Bradford North.

The Manifesto statement ended by hinting that the MPs would consider leaving the party if their demands weren't met.

Manifesto has used the selection of Pat Wall as the pretext for its purge call. On 9 October Wall, a supporter of the *Militant*, defeated Benjamin Ford, the sitting MP.

The decision of the Bradford North constituency to dump Ford was not surprising. The MP has said he agrees with the SDP 'on many issues'. He also told his local party that he would refuse to be a Labour candidate if the party's election manifesto continued commitment to unilateral disarmament or withdrawal from the EEC.

As both these policies were overwhelmingly adopted at the recent Labour conference the Bradford Party had little option but to select an alternative candidate.

The Manifesto statement is part of a more general campaign which is now being waged against the left by the right and centre of the party. The SDP victory in the Croydon by-election is being used as a stick with which to beat the left.

Labour leader Michael Foot blamed 'distractions and dissensions' in the party 'over the past year' for the Croydon result. He also highlighted, 'some of the affairs that have happened on the Greater London Council' — a sideswipe at GLC leader Ken Livingstone.

But the Croydon Labour candidate, Stan

Boden, was on the right-wing of the party. He refused to allow Tony Benn to campaign during the election in Croydon.

This did little to kindle enthusiasm among Labour workers in the by-election. All four Croydon constituencies voted for Tony Benn in the deputy leadership contest.

The new strategy of the Labour right against the left is becoming glaringly obvious. Any small victory for the left, or any setback for Labour is being used as an excuse to call for a purge in the party.

The aim is to put pressure on the party's new national executive on which there was a shift to the right and centre at the conference.

The best defence against these moves is to maintain the campaign for democracy and accountability in the Labour Party. The constituency parties have every right to insist that it is up to them to select the parliamentary candidate of their choice.

Moreover, it is clear from the actions of the 60 Labour MPs who issued the 'purge' statement that MPs are still too fond of acting without consultation.

The vast majority of Labour Party activists are totally opposed to the policies and scare tactics of the Manifesto group. That opposition now needs to be brought into the open.

### This week's Socialist Challenge

Regular readers will find this week's Socialist Challenge a bit out of the ordinary. There is more feature material in the paper than usual. This is because most of those who work on the newspaper have spent the last week at a Socialist Challenge conference. Consequently, much of the paper had to be prepared in advance.

## Socialist Challenge

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