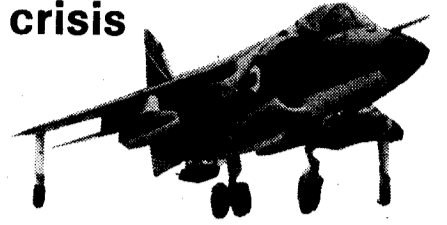


Socialist Challenge

INSIDE

- Who really owns the islands?
- How Healey armed the junta
- Argentine's military dictators
- Suez crisis



Bring back fleet, says Benn

TUESDAY'S meeting of the Labour Party International Committee rejected Tony Benn's amendment to its policy statement on the crisis by six votes to

five. The amendment said it 'opposes the despatch of the naval task force and the government's apparent intention to use it in war

with the Argentinians, believing this will imperil the safety of the Falkland islanders, which should be the prime concern of the government.'

Labour must STOP THATCHER'S WAR DRIVE

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT is being drowned in the biggest torrent of lies since World War I.

LIE No 1: the navy is going to defend the islanders.

THE TRUTH: The navy is defending *territory* to which it has no rightful claim, pushed by an oil lobby which kills, robs and lies.

If the government is so concerned for the rights of its subjects, why has it for three years visited anguish on Britain's black people with deportation and exclusion orders under racist immigration laws?

It evacuated the whole island of Diego Garcia for military exercises. If it wants to give the islanders real protection it should offer resettlement with full compensation for the loss.

LIE No 2: the invasion happened because the island was undefended.

THE TRUTH: The invasion happened because the government clung onto the islands when they rightfully belong to the Argentine people.

The junta used Britain's *false* claim on the Malvinas — the name by which every South American knows the Falklands — as an excuse to divert attention from internal opposition.

In 1969 the British government was negotiating to cede sovereignty. If it had done so the junta would

never have been able to defend its adventure in front of the Argentinian people.

LIE No 3: the navy will defend freedom in the South Atlantic.

THE TRUTH: The Tories and their warships will never fight dictators. Why did they keep governor Gairy in office until the Grenadian people rose up to oust him? Why did they send observers to the election farce in El Salvador? Why is the warship *Exeter* still in Caribbean waters, where it went as part of the US show of force against Cuba and Nicaragua?

In 1979 they closed the door on the Argentinian refugees in the interests of a joint 'struggle against terrorism'. Only weeks ago they and their American friends were plotting an Argentinian invasion of El Salvador and Nicaragua.

This is *why* they are knotted up in the Malvinas. *They can't even decide which dictator to back.*

LIE No 4: The Labour Party Front Bench stood up to the junta in 1977.

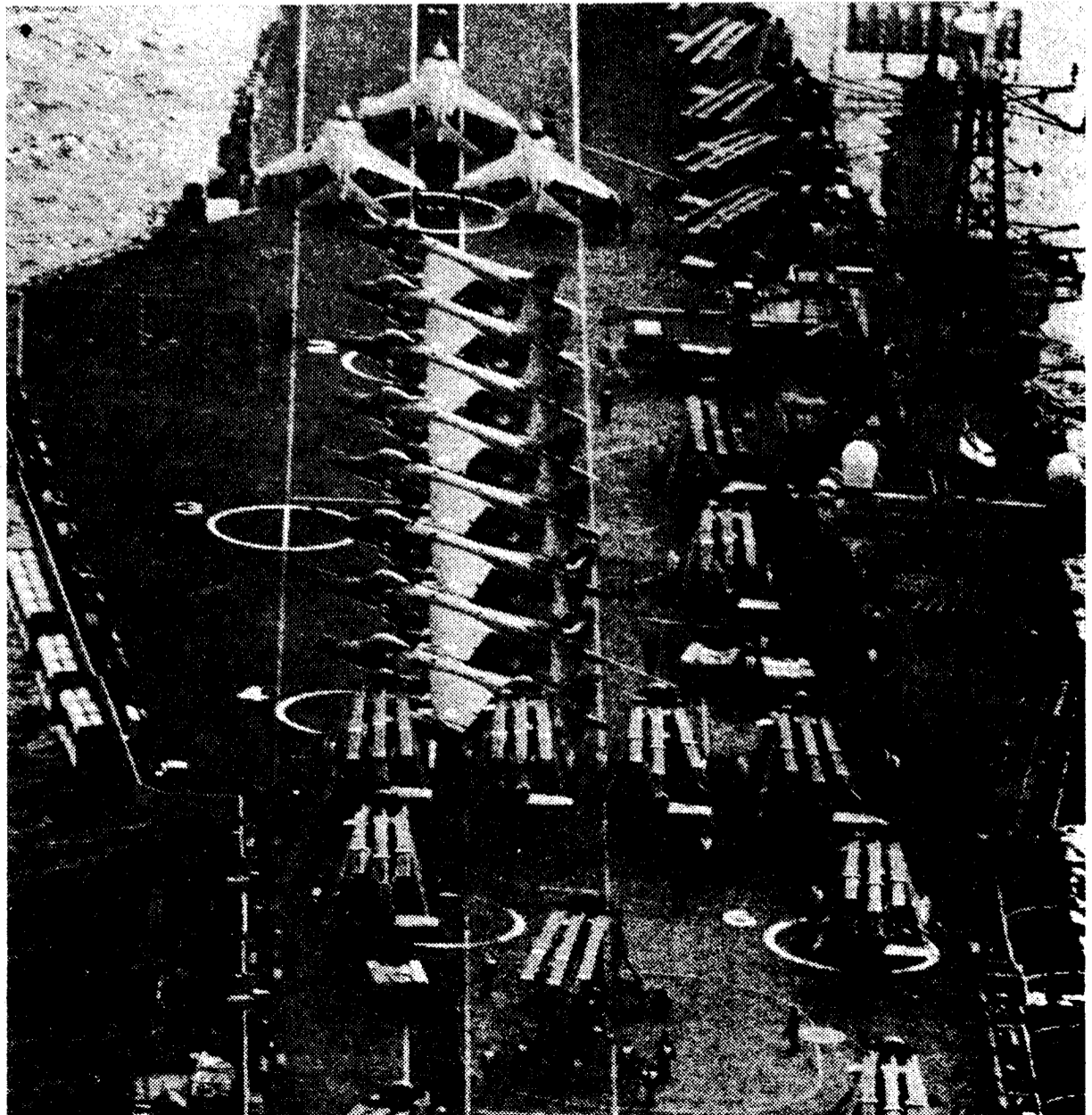
THE TRUTH: Labour front bench hypocrisy knows no bounds. If Healey, Callaghan, Foot and Silkin wanted to fight the junta, *why did they fit out its navy between 1976 and 1979, when not even former US President Carter would trade with it because of his human*

rights policy?

The British Labour cabinet was Argentina's biggest military supplier. And it was on Labour's invitation that Argentine finance minister Martinez de Hoz, his hands red with the blood of Argentine workers, was wine and dined in May 1979 by British businessmen in the London Hilton.

For six years since the military junta came to power, Socialist Challenge has backed the Latin American solidarity committees in their fight with the front benches of both government parties to end recognition of the governments of Chile, of Argentina and Uruguay, of Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, and to open the door to the refugees of these countries. For even longer we have fought for the Labour Party to back the working class opposition of these countries. This is the course of action that will defend freedom: these are the people who know how to fight dictators.

A military adventure by the Tory junta will do nothing to help the peoples of South America, nothing for British workers, and nothing for the islanders. It is the shameful last gasp of an empire with no clothes. It must be opposed by socialists with all the strength they can muster.



MARCH AGAINST REAGAN, JUNE 6 LONDON

Falklands Crisis

Editorial

PO Box 50, London N1 2XP

Phone 01-359-8189/8180 (editorial and distribution)

Thatcher is preparing for war.

Not in defence of the Falkland Islanders, as the Tories pretend, but to defend British imperialism's economic and military interests in the South Atlantic.

The labour movement's first duty is to stop this military adventure.

Its purpose is to shore up Britain's declining world military and colonial role.

Michael Foot and Denis Healey's suggestion that a strong navy is an alternative to Trident is an outrage. This adventure will strengthen all warmongers. The whole purpose of the present drive over the Falklands is to create better political conditions in Britain for closer Tory collaboration with Reagan and US imperialism.

The awful jingoistic stance struck by the Labour leadership is a lasting disgrace.

The British Navy is hated by those fighting for freedom the world over. It should be immediately and unconditionally withdrawn into British territorial waters.

The Tories have no interest in freedom and their navy will not protect it. They have backed the repressive Argentinian junta to the hilt.

Their contempt for democracy is even more obvious now that they have chosen Chilean support for their military adventure against Argentina. Only three weeks ago, the Tories were privy to a US-inspired plot for an Argentinian invasion of revolutionary Nicaragua.

Socialists cannot reduce the matter to a choice between Thatcher and Argentinian dictator Galtieri. The political character of the Argentinian government cannot determine our decision. The real choice is between the rapacious claims of a still powerful British imperialism wanting to hang onto its imperialist role and colonial possessions, and the just claims of a dominated country — claims raised by Argentinian governments of all shades for 130 years.

Historically and economically the Falklands Islands — the Malvinas — are an Argentinian possession. The present 1700 islanders were settled there as part of Britain's colonial occupation. They have no right to the territory against the rights of the Argentinians. They should be given the choice of coming under Argentinian jurisdiction, of com-

ing back to Britain or moving to any other place which will grant them settlement — with full financial compensation from the British government.

The interests of the Islanders will never be served by support for a false and unjust claim to British sovereignty over the territory of the Malvinas and the mineral wealth in the waters that surround them.

They have been duped by a government which has followed the dictates of an oil lobby bent on private greed at the expense of all else.

Imperialist military action cannot be supported as some way of defeating the hated Argentinian junta. On the contrary, such military action provides the one justification that the junta claims in front of the Argentinian masses recently in rebellion against it.

Our confidence and support is extended to the Argentinian labour movement to bring this junta down.

Part of our solidarity with the Argentinian trades union federation, the CGT, is the demand that the Tories open the doors which they closed in 1979 to those fleeing the junta's murderous repression.

The political stakes in this crisis are extremely high. Already Lord Carrington has been forced to resign, and Thatcher has stated determination to use military force against the Argentinians is a desperate bid to shore up her shaky government. A determined opposition by the Labour leadership could bring her down.

The present course of Labour's leaders will fan the flames of right wing hysteria and compromise Labour in a reactionary military adventure.

Labour's hypocrites

'THE NAVY should be sent against the Argentinian dictators instead of to the Caribbean', said Denis Healey as soon as the invasion came over the news.

Denis Healey should know all about fighting dictators. Between 1974 and 1979 the government of which he was chancellor supplied more arms to the Argentinian government than any other country — 17 per cent of Argentina's total arms purchases.

The government should negotiate from strength when dealing with fascist dictatorships, as did the Labour government,' said Labour's International Committee in rejecting Tony Benn's motion to stop the British fleet. What rubbish! Labour's cabinet virtually equipped the Argentine and Chilean dictatorships.

Arms

These arms were sold despite repeated calls for a ban on arms sales to the juntas of Chile and Argentina. The government supplied 41 per cent of all Chile's arms.

It tried to sack Eric Heffer in 1974 for speaking out against this, in support of Labour Party policy — one year after the Chilean coup.

'Britain might well be selling arms it could find turned against itself in the event of a conflict over the Falklands,' says a British Argentina Campaign pamphlet on the Argentinian trade unions produced in 1978.

This is backed up by reports from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which reveals that in 1977 the Argentinian junta had the following equipment on order from British firms:

- 12 Seadart missiles, made by Hawker-Siddeley
- 72 Seawolf missiles, supplier BAC

- 8 type 21 frigates
- 2 WG-13 Lynx helicopters

In July 1978 the Labour government suffered a disastrous setback. An order for 6 further frigates was lost to Blohm and Vos of West Germany, worth £500m.

Smarting from this humiliating rebuff the government promptly dispatched HMS Tarbatness, armed to the teeth for a tour of Latin America — to sell the arms to the dictators there.

This saved the day and subcontracts worth £100m were given to Rolls Royce, Westland and David Brown. Vickers won contracts for two T-42 frigates, and in December 1978 a visit was scheduled for Agosti, the commander-in-chief of the Argentinian Air Force, who was looking for 60 Hawker-Hunter aircraft.

Visit

Sad to say the visit was cancelled 'for personal reasons' but, not to be outdone, the Board of Trade invited Finance Minister Martinez de Hoz to speak to a gathering of businessmen in the London Hilton, to be addressed by Labour Minister of Trade John Smith.

The election stopped John Smith speaking, but it didn't change anything: his Tory counterpart took over without anyone noticing the difference.

Sorry!

Last week's paper was badly printed in parts because of technical reasons at our end.

Public Meeting
Stop Thatcher's war drive!
Britain out of the South Atlantic!

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square
Monday 19 April 7.30pm
Organised by Socialist Challenge



Let's not forget: demonstrating against the World Cup visit in 1978. Healey armed the junta: the Tories kept out the refugees

Argentina's junta

'THIS FIERCELY monetarist government rules the country with a rod of iron. But it is now in desperate trouble. Riots in the streets and growing trade union opposition have led it into a desperate military gamble to win back flagging support.'

No, the ITN reporter quoted above was not talking about Thatcher, but the Argentine junta, with which until two weeks ago the Tories had 'warm relations'.

The junta took over in March 1976, to avoid the General Election scheduled for October. There have been no elections since.

Declaring his aim to be a war against terrorism, the new dictator — General Videla — launched a campaign of terror.

The 85,000-strong army and the infamous 'Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance' death squads are reckoned to have caused over 6,000

deaths. At least 20,000 have 'disappeared' — kidnapped by armed or paramilitary forces and never heard of again.

The claim of a struggle against terrorism was, as usual, the cover for an attack against the unions which in Argentine are the regime's greatest threat.

There are six million workers of whom around four million are in the CGT, the main union federation. Anti-union laws have sought to replace union leaders by military figures, punish strikers with imprisonment up to ten years, ban union meetings, disband unions and change the law regulating sacking and un-

fair dismissal to allow political sackings.

No, the man's name is Videla, not Tebbit.

The unions, with tremendously strong shop-floor organisation, have never stopped fighting back and last week called demonstrations of several thousands in Buenos Aires and Cordoba, confronting the police in running street battles.

Telephoned reports from Argentina suggest that although the claim over the Malvinas is immensely popular, this has not benefited the dictatorship. The CGT has said that though it supports the claim it has no intention of accepting a truce in its fight against the government. Newly-freed political prisoners have announced that they will

Freedom fighters who didn't get British support

WITHIN WEEKS of coming to office the Tory government began turning away Argentinians seeking refuge from the military junta.

The Committee for Human Rights in Argentina has hundreds of such cases on its files. Below are just three:

Alicia Beatriz Weiland
Age: 28

Profession: journalist
Serving eight years in Villa Devoto with more than 300 other women
Arrested at her home on 11 November 1975
Adopted by the London Latin American Women's Group
REFUSED ENTRY 22 June 1979

Walter Desiderio Salinas Poblete
Age: 46

Profession: public employee
Arrested 28 August 1974
Adopted by Manchester Central Branch ASTMS
UK visa applied for June 1979
REFUSED ENTRY 16 October 1979

Ruben Oscar Suarez
Age: unknown

Profession: unemployed
Arrested 5 June 1973 for 'terrorism'
Serving 16 years
Adopted by Edward VII teachers, Sheffield
UK visa applied for June 1979
REFUSED ENTRY 3 August 1979

Photo: Mark Risher (IFF)

The best method of fighting the dictatorship is to strike up links with the opposition in Argentina, recognise the just claim of the Argentinian people to the Malvinas — and join forces to overthrow tyranny on both sides of the Atlantic.

For your archives

Our numbering is out of sequence. The issue dated 11 March should have been numbered 236 instead of 237. All subsequent numbering has been wrong. In order to get back into sequence we have numbered this issue 240, which repeats last week's number. Sorry for any confusion — and bulk subscribers please note your invoices will be numbered accordingly.

Acknowledgements

Our thanks for their help in compiling these pages to: Committee for Human Rights on Argentina, Latin American Newsletter, British Society for Social Responsibility in Science.

WE shall be carrying a full report of our National Sales Day next week.

All the signs are that it was a big success especially in those areas where estate sales were tried.

Meanwhile, remember to turn every day into a Socialist Challenge sales day!

Who really owns the islands?

By Alan Freeman

THE MALVINAS — as all South Americans call the Falklands — are almost wholly owned by the company that makes the poisonous 245-T weedkiller. The company — Coalite Limited — took over in 1978 when oil was found between Argentina and the Malvinas.

Freedom is close to Coalite's glowing heart. Dioxin — the main component of 245-T was behind the killings and maimings caused by the 'agent orange' defoliant in the Vietnam War.

It caused the 1976 Seveso disaster in Italy in which a toxic cloud poisoned a whole town.

In 1968 an explosion in Coalite's Bolsover plant killed one worker and injured 79: since then the company has blocked all attempts to investigate the incident and its after-effects.

Coalite, which made £19.7m after tax in 1981 and whose turnover has grown from £26m to £358m since 1972, got the Falkland Islands in its 1978 takeover of the Charrington, Lockett and Gardner group. The group includes Dormobile and the Glover, Webb and Liversidge company which makes armoured desert patrol vehicles.

In a 1976 advert Charrington's say they deal with 'Solid fuel, fuel oils, builders' merchandising, vehicle production, transport, warehousing, shipping, sheep farming, North Sea Oil and computer services.'

They took over the 'Falkland Islands Company' in 1973 from the Dundee, Perth and London Shipping Company — a subsidiary of the Slater Walker group which in turn got the islands in 1972 as North Sea Oil began to attract serious interest and coal companies began to diversify into oil.

Strangely enough this last fact did not figure in Charrington's 1976 advertisement which explains how it backs up the gallant islanders' determination to 'stand on their own two feet' with a 'contribution of £2m worth of superb wool every year' — of which the company pockets £400,000.

It describes itself as 'the biggest employer on the island'. This is over-modest. The company is the island. It owns fifty per cent of the land outright and further twenty-five per cent through interlocking directorships.

It owns all shops, runs all auctions and wholesaling, the banks and the shipping line that takes goods to the island and wool back to Bradford where it is sold to merchants David Smiths, in whom Charrington's have a fifty per cent interest.

It is of course a socially concerned company. 'We try to discharge our responsibility,' it explains, 'not just as regards conditions of employment but in sponsoring social activities and community efforts.'

It also displays due patriotic concern on the islanders' behalf. 'The company is pledged to do its best to see that Britain does not let them down,' it declares.

Whatever it did for the islanders must have been successful since the government retreated on its intention, leaked in 1969, of ceding sovereignty to Argentina.

This patriotism may have had slightly more to do with the mineral prospects off the island than the islanders on it. Prospecting began in the early seventies when Charringtons took over the islands and Shell made its first oil strike off Tierra del Fuego in 1977, a year before Coalite's takeover.

Surveys suggest that the thickest oil-bearing strata are to be found on the 'putative median line' between the Malvinas and Argentina — in other words, just where British territory will lie if the islanders' patriotic spirit (and, of course, Coalite's) is duly rewarded by Mrs Thatcher.

Coalite is well-suited to inherit Charrington's freedom-loving, public spirited defence of the island community. Its Derbyshire plants were a continual source of complaint from miners who found the smoke hung 'like a heavy pall over everything' but found the company strangely unwilling to do anything about it.

In 1968 an explosion in its Bolsover plant killed one worker and injured 79 more, exposing 90 in all to toxic by-products of the low-temperature carbonisation process which creates Coalite at the same time as a host of dioxin-related poisons.

Coalite continued using these products to make 245-T until the Seveso incident but has tended to keep its reasons to itself. Indeed chairperson C E Needham's unexpected television appearance on 2 April was his first public audience since 1976 when the company stopped talking to the press.



In 1977-78 Coalite was forced by pressure from the Health and Safety Executive to authorise a follow-up study of workers exposed to the explosion's effects. It then refused to publish the results, blocking a further study by using a loophole in the Health and Safety regulations despite appeals from the Health and Safety Executive, the unions, and Derbyshire County Council.

Ms Jenny Martin, the clinician who carried out the study, finally published some of the results in the medical journal *Lancet*. Her house was subsequently burgled and records of eight subjects of the study were removed.

There is no duplicate copy and the work is now lost. Macclesfield police say the case remains on their books as unsolved. Perhaps they are too

busy with the growing threat of street crime to investigate the rather obvious possibility for a connection between this and a mugging whose scope far exceeds anything that takes place on our streets: the mugging of peoples of the South Atlantic by the oil companies and Margaret Thatcher, hysterically egged on from the Labour benches.

Independence and the Falklands

THE ARGENTINE people's claim on the Malvinas — as they call the Falklands — has been part of their 130-year fight for independence.

They all see the 100-odd islands as part of Argentine territory. Every village has a street named after them.

When the newly-formed Republic of Buenos Aires won independence from the Spanish in 1820, it also secured Spain's rights to the islands, and set up a colony.

Britain and Spain both claimed discovery and contested sovereignty until the transfer to the new Argentinean republic.

The British had not been in possession since 1774 when they ended a three year occupancy.

But they left behind a flag and a plaque on which their present claim rests.

In 1832 the Argentine-appointed governor im-

pounded three US ships for infringement of fishing rights. Washington organised a naval assault and trampled on the Argentinians. A year later the British re-occupied militarily, expelling all the locals.

Since then they have maintained the occupation with a settler population composed entirely of people from the British Isles, although the British claim has never been recognised internationally and the United Nations has made repeated attempts to make Britain settle the issue.

The Islanders have been victims of British ambitions to rule the seas. As a leading trading nation, control of trade routes allowed Britain to dictate terms to its rivals and suppliers. The Malvinas gave them control over the vital South Atlantic passage round Cape Horn at the tip of South America.



Desert Patrol vehicle made by Coalite subsidiary Glover, Webb and Liversidge

Falklands Crisis

The fiasco last time ... The Suez adventure

By Phil Hearse

BRITISH imperialism throughout the 20th Century has been a declining imperialism. Two world wars have destroyed the British empire.

After the Second World War, Britain faced rising nationalist movements and fought a series of bloody rearguard actions to defend its colonial remnants. British troops fought in Malaya, Aden, Kenya and Cyprus.

In addition to fighting to keep its last outposts, British imperialism fought together with the United States against the revolution in Korea.

British troops between 1945 and 1947 fought against the Communist-led resistance movement in Greece. But the last great attempt to assert British imperial interests against world opinion was undoubtedly the attack on Suez in October 1956.

The conflict arose out of the decision by the Egyptian nationalist leader Nasser to nationalise the Suez canal. Nasser came to power in a coup organised by junior

nationalist officers in 1952, overthrowing the despotic King Farouk. The canal, a key transit point for Western shipping was owned by the internationally-run Suez Canal Company. The Company in turn was dominated by the imperialist powers.

Nasser's intention was to use control of the Canal — which after all was on Egyptian territory — to put the squeeze on ships to and from Israel.

In reality, Eden's Tory government and their allies in the adventure, the French, were less concerned with this than the development of the radical nationalism in the Middle

East which Nasser represented.

Together with the Israelis they hatched a plan to overthrow Nasser. Israeli troops would invade Egypt and fight their way to the Suez canal. The British and French would call for both sides to withdraw ten miles from the canal, and in the face of Egyptian refusal, would send troops to 'separate the contending sides'.

The British armada that set off from Malta was rather more formidable than that presently lumbering to the South Atlantic. 130 war ships were involved, together with over 100 troops freighters.

The attack started on the evening of 31 October when 240 British and French planes bombed the Egyptian ports. Landings by British paratroops followed on 5 November.

The response of the labour movement was rapid and vociferous. On 1 November the sitting of the House of Commons had to be suspended, for the first time since 1924, such was the fury of Labour MPs.

The Labour Party organised a campaign of marches calling for Anthony Eden's resignation, which culminated in a huge demonstration in Trafalgar Square on 4 November, addressed by both Gaitskell and Bevan.

As the invasion proceeded world opinion moved against Britain. Most importantly, the United States, an imperialist rival of Britain in the Middle East, opposed the Franco-British invasion.

The decisive weapon of the United States was economic. There was a run on the pound internationally, and Britain's gold reserves collapsed. A loan of £300 million was arranged with the International Monetary Fund, backed by the United States — on condition that Britain arranged a ceasefire, and that United Nations troops replaced the British and French.

Eden

Eden agreed without consulting the French. The Suez fiasco was over. The Labour Party later calculated that it cost around £330 million — a huge amount at 1956 prices.

The failure of the Suez operation to either win back control of the Canal or to dislodge Nasser was a devastating blow to Britain's imperial delusions, which are unfortunately being re-born over the Falklands. In 1956 the Labour leadership fought the imperialist banditry of the Tories. Today things are rather different ...

When the British troops were withdrawn the Tories looked stupid and Eden eventually resigned. This time both Labour and Tories are going to look extremely stupid.



British soldiers among rubble of wrecked buildings in Dublin

The Easter 1916 rising

By Niall Power

WHILE BRITAIN was fighting the first 'Great War' against its imperialist enemy Germany in 1916, a rising took place in part of the British Empire itself — in Dublin.

Though little more than 1500 volunteers took part, and although only in isolated cases did it spread outside Dublin, this rising lasting less than a week was to rock Britain's hold over Ireland, and indeed all imperialist occupations around the world.

Other risings took place that year in both French and German colonies, and a mutiny of Indian troops took place in Singapore.

In Ireland the revolt was organised by the nationalist movements, organised by such people as Patrick Pearse and Tom Clarke and a section of the workers' movement, mainly organised in the Irish Citizens Army under the Marxist James Connolly.

They saw that Britain had no intention of gran-

ting independence to Ireland, and calculated that 'England's danger' (the world war) was 'Ireland's opportunity'.

The Citizens Army had been formed the previous year in the large scale industrial disputes — the Dublin lockout of 1913 — to protect workers from the assaults of the police.

Connolly believed that Britain did not intend to give Ireland independence after the war, and that it was clear that the British establishment intended to retain its hold over the island through a policy of partition.

Far from partition producing opportunities for socialism in either part of the country he calculated that it would produce a 'carnival of reaction' north and south. The history of the sixty years of

partition showed that this was all-too-true.

The British authorities responded to the rising with five days of military encirclement of Dublin, with consistent artillery fire which was supported by one of their gunboats on the River Liffey.

Many civilians and of course Irish rebels died through this action and the centre of Dublin was in ruins. Following this the British executed all the main leaders (including the wounded Connolly strapped to a chair) and some who were patently not even leaders.

The majority of the Irish people were to give their support to the rising two years later in the general election, where Sinn Fein won a huge vote. The international working class was to follow the Irish example in Russia and then Germany and beyond within an even shorter period.



Bevan speaking at Trafalgar Square on Suez 4 November 1956

Tories plan new fake devolution

THIS WEEK, Jim Prior unveiled his plan for 'rolling devolution' in the North of Ireland. Already, all the major parties in the North have denounced the White Paper proposals as unworkable. Like other schemes before it, the Prior plan looks set to remain less valuable than the paper it is printed on. What is important for the government is not whether a particular plan for the North of Ireland works, but whether it looks as if it is working.

If it succeeds in getting at least the 'respectable' politicians from both com-

munities around the same table, then a body which can be presented to the

world as democratic and representative of all sections of opinion will be useful to denounce 'terrorism' and generally give voice to the opinions of the British government.

Whatever the government in the South of Ireland may say all indications are that it is in favour of providing as much stability for British interests in Ireland as possible, and moving into the

Western military alliance.

At a recent lunch for top US businessmen in New York, Charles Haughey, the Irish premier, was asked about his country's views on NATO. 'Ireland', he replied, 'is part of the Western ethos, it shares the principals of the West, in this sense it is not really neutral at all.' As US Secretary of State and warmonger Alexander

Haig remarked, 'That's some man'!

The role of the Americans behind the scenes in the Anglo-Irish business is being increasingly recognised. Even the 'elder statesman' of the Official Unionist Party, James Molyneux, now claims to have seen documents demonstrating CIA involvement in the assassination of prominent politicians, as part of

the plot to pull Ireland into NATO.

Concretely, Prior is proposing a new elected 'Assembly'. Would it have any powers? The answer seems to be that it might if Jim Prior thinks it is making sensible choices.

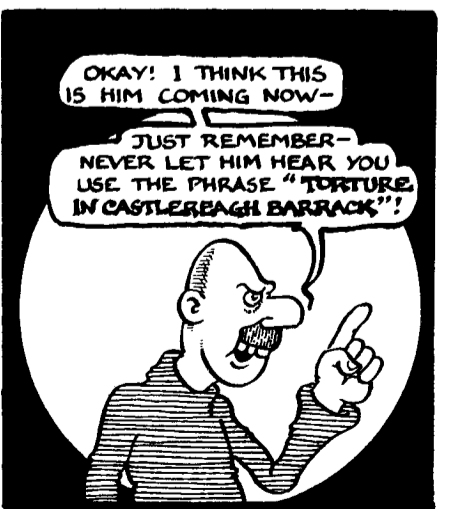
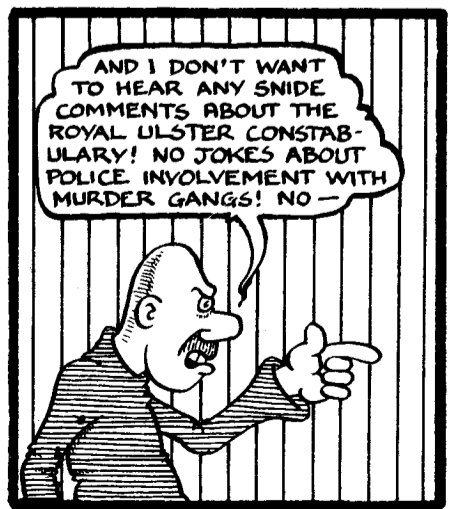
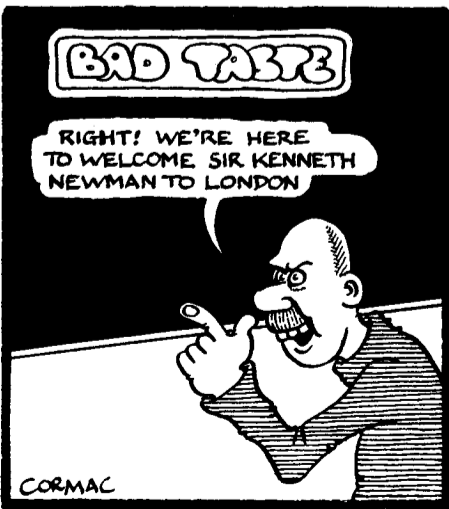
First, a decision can only be made if 70 per cent of the Assembly agrees. But if the British Minister of Northern Ireland affairs thinks a measure has

broad support, then a normal vote would do. Why bother to take a vote at all? Why not admit that the whole proposal is a sham?

Reactions to the initiative are mixed. Irish leader Charles Haughey and John Hume from the SDLP reject Prior's plan because it concentrates on the North and doesn't have enough of an 'Irish dimension'.

James Molyneux from the Official Unionists and Ian Paisley from the extreme DUP reject Prior's plan because they suspect an Irish dimension. All of which suggests that like hundreds of other British plans for Ireland James Prior's proposals will prove unworkable.

The Unionist monster, with its sectarian oppression and hatred of the people of Ireland was created by the British when the mass of Irish people were fighting for the removal of the British altogether. It may have outlived its usefulness to the government, but they have neither the strength nor the desire to break from it. Democracy, as proposed by Jim Prior, is a joke.



The ultra right defeat the far right

By Phil Hearse

WITH most of the returns in, the result of El Salvador's much vaunted elections is almost certainly a victory for Major Roberto D'Aubuisson's fascist ARENA party and a defeat for the Christian Democrats led by President Duarte. The elections had been prepared for more than a year, with the intention of giving a 'democratic' facade to the El Salvador government.

It was a gigantic public relations exercise, with the objective of winning international support for the United States' war effort against the revolutionary guerrillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).

But this gigantic stunt was a failure, if international recognition and support was the objective.

All parties standing in the elections were required to give a list of 20,000 names and addresses of supporters to the authorities. For the left to have stood in the elections would have been to hand over a massive hit list to the death squads.

In any case, electoral fraud is the stock-in-trade of the military rulers of El Salvador. In civil war conditions the holding of elections was a farce.

The elections, far from showing El Salvador to be a 'democracy' only highlighted the repressive character of the regime. During the election campaign four Dutch journalists from the religious broadcasting service Icon were murdered, probably by the National Guard.

Before and during the elections the FMLN demonstrated its ability to launch attacks wherever they wanted, including in the heart of the capital San Salvador. The only Western government which gave any recognition to the elections was the wretched Thatcher government, one of only eight out of sixty-eight governments asked to send observers.

The only success for the regime and the United States was the numbers who voted — perhaps over one million. A number of factors explain this higher than expected turnout. First, the large and relatively prosperous middle classes in the towns turned out *en masse*. They

vote. In the countryside the peasants can expect a measure of protection from the FMLN, but in the towns the repression is fierce, and there is virtually no defence against the death squads.

It was asking a lot of the workers in the towns to boycott the ballot. Even so, more than 12 per cent of those voting spoilt their ballot papers. In the countryside and even in some provincial capitals the military action and boycott call disrupted the election completely.

The outcome is almost certainly the demise of Duarte. The Christian Democrats in the junta have in any case always been the captives of the military, and in particular of defence minister Jose Garcia.

When *Sunday Times* journalist David Blundy was interviewing Duarte a right wing officer came in to the room and urinated on Duarte's chair. The character of the military who run the regime, and their relationship with Duarte is excellently summarised by this anecdote. Duarte will in all probability now just pack his bags and leave the country.

For the United States, D'Aubuisson is an awkward figure. Cashiered from the army, deported from the United States, leader of the death squads and responsible for the murder of Archbishop Romero, who spoke out for the poor and against the repression, D'Aubuisson is not the sort of figure who the United States can parade as a democrat.

The plan proposed by US ambassador Deans Hurton is that a new three-person junta will be formed including two Generals and one civilian, but not including D'Aubuisson.

The Generals will include Videz Cassano, head of the National Guard butchers. D'Aubuisson could then be the leader of the Constituent Assembly, the power behind the throne in alliance with the army leaders.

If the United States at least for the time being goes along with this arrangement, the result can only be an intensification of the war. D'Aubuisson is known to favour calling in the Argentinians and other right-wing Latin American troops, to confront the FMLN with a real 'international brigade' of counter-revolutionary troops. A new and terrible escalation of the slaughter is on the cards.

D'Aubuisson's ARENA party has made a massive political advance during the elections. Now the virulently anti-communist middle class have their man in power, and they will want decisive action to win the war. For the labour movement in Britain and internationally, a new stage of the war must be met with a new stage of the solidarity movement.

The March 28 demonstration was a good start, but not nearly enough for the job of stopping the Thatcher government giving active support to the criminal policies of the United States. In particular, the trade unions and Labour Party, despite the resolutions of the Labour Party and TUC against the elections, were not well represented.

For socialists a crucial task in the coming months must be to fight alongside our brothers and sisters in the FMLN. And first and foremost that means building a gigantic wave of demonstrations against Reagan when he comes here in June.



Whatever the outcome of the elections, El Salvadoran army was the victor

Lives of FDR leaders in danger

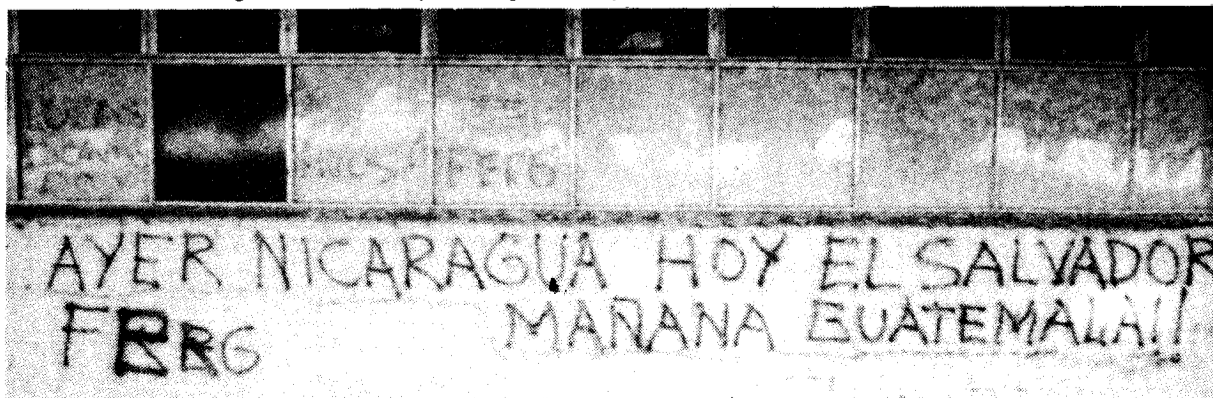
TWO IMPORTANT leaders of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) of El Salvador were arrested last Wednesday in Central America. Farid Handal was arrested at Costa Rica airport after arriving on a Panama airlines flight from Nicaragua. Cardona was arrested at Tegucigalpa airport in Honduras after arriving by air on an Honduran Airlines flight.

Both these important leaders face the danger of being deported to El Salvador where their lives will be in great danger.

Urgent action is needed to free them. The El Salvador Solidarity Campaign is asking for telegrams to be sent from labour movement and other organisations to Costa Rica and Honduras.

Telegrams protesting the arrest of Farid Handal should be sent to: *Licendo Rodrigo Carazo, Presidente de Costa Rica, Palacio Presidencial, San Jose, Costa Rica.* Telegrams protesting the arrest of Ramon Cardona should be sent to: *Sr. Edgardo Paz Barnica, Ministerio de RRLI, Tegucigalpa, Honduras.*

Wall graffiti: 'Yesterday Nicaragua, today El Salvador, tomorrow Guatemala!'



Socialist Challenge FUND DRIVE '82

Help us fight Falklands adventure

THE RESPONSE of the Parliamentary Labour Party to the Tories' Falkland adventure has been pathetic. Suddenly discovering that the Argentinian junta is fascist — which they didn't apparently know when in government they sold Argentina its navy — Michael Foot and co have been even more war-mongering than the Tories.

When Eden sent British forces against Egypt over Suez in 1956, the Labour Party launched a huge campaign against the Tories.

Today things are different. We are faced with a fight inside the labour movement to call the Labour leadership to order, to fight for opposition to this adventure by British imperialism.

We are going to need money for this fight. In our campaign against British imperialism, we want to build up our campaign against Reagan's war drive.

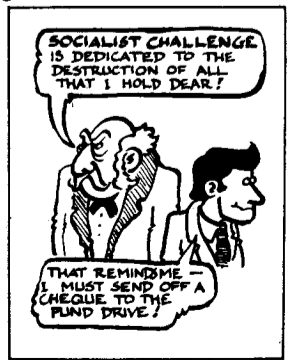
The next couple of months are going to be very heavy ones in terms of our campaigns and hence very heavy on our pockets.

Last quarter's fund drive finished £800 down. If the fund drive doesn't reach its target, it's the campaigns and activities that go, because the production costs of the paper are more or less fixed.

So if you want us to make our contribution to building mass activities when Reagan comes here in June, if you want to help us fight the disastrous course of the Labour leadership on the Falklands, send us money now!

This week we received £594.70 and we'd like to give our thanks to our supporters in the following towns:

Bristol	£25.00
Newport	60.00
Preston	30.00
Lambeth	100.00
Tower Hamlets	80.70
Nottingham	171.00
Wakefield	54.00
Glasgow	42.00
Ford worker	15.00
Misc.	17.00
Previous weeks	£14,626.91
Grand total	£15,221.61
Fund drive target	£16,000.00
Shortfall for the Quarter	£778.39



March against Trident

By Martin Meteyard
THOUSANDS of people will march through Glasgow this Saturday, 10 April, in opposition to the Tories' plans to base Trident nuclear submarines on the Clyde.

The march, which leaves Blythwood Square at 11am and ends with a rally on Glasgow Green at noon, has been organised by the Scottish Campaign Against Trident (SCAT).

SCAT was set up last year by a group of CND activists who saw the potential of focusing public opinion on Trident. Getting rid of all nuclear weapons is such a mammoth task that many people see it as unrealistic. But stopping a load of new missiles is another matter, particularly when they're going to be based right on your doorstep.

New

SCAT's first job was to explain that Trident is something new — a 'first strike' weapon which represents a massive escalation of the existing Polaris system. And for this we're being asked to fork out £10 billion at a time when jobs, wages and social services are all on the chopping block.

The government is dead against unilateralism when it comes to nuclear disarmament. But Trident shows they've got nothing against unilateral rearmament!

The message is getting across. Following the evidence of polls taken during the Hillhead by-election, a phone-in on Radio Scotland last Friday showed no less than 84 per cent of callers opposed to Trident.

And as people are startled into awareness of

what Trident means, they begin to think more seriously about the issue of nuclear weapons as a whole. It's not too surpris-

ed, and that they are contributing something to the campaign.

The Rolls-Royce shop stewards at Hillington, Glasgow, have given an excellent lead in this respect. They decided to circulate SCAT's petition round every single worker on the manual side — and ask for a donation at the same time. The result: a massive discussion on the shopfloor about Trident and the nuclear weapons issue, and a collection of £207 in small change.

Another good example of what can be done was a trade union rally against Trident organised by Paisley CND last week. Every major workplace was leafleted for the meeting, and this was reflected in the attendance and discussion.

Rally

Saturday's demonstration can be the launching pad for a movement that sweeps through every workplace, housing scheme and school to say no to Trident. A movement that finds expression through a Scottish Assembly against Trident or similar representative gathering. A movement that says working people, organised together, have the power and the responsibility to check the plans of a government whose every step brings total nuclear destruction nearer. A movement which gives confidence to and sustains those workers best placed to take action to stop Trident: on the construction sites and in the planning offices.

That way and no other lies hope for a nuclear-free future.

Trade union support will be crucial. And this must go beyond the usual bout of resolution-passing. Every trade unionist must feel involv-

Scottish Campaign Against Trident

STOP TRIDENT

NUCLEAR MISSILE BASE

EASTER DEMO

Glasgow - Saturday 10th April, 1982

March starts - 11.00 a.m. Blythwood Square
Rally with Speakers & Entertainment

420 Sauchiehall St. Glasgow O41-332 3141

ing that the polls now show a majority in Scotland also in favour of unilateral disarmament.

But it's Trident that

Trade unionists against Trident

By Stewart MacLennan, West Scotland area secretary CPSA (personal capacity)
THE RECENT trade union conference held by the Scottish Campaign against Trident (SCAT) began to get to grips with the problem of organising mass trade union action against nuclear weapons in Britain.

Bill Niven of AUEW TASS described the work of shop stewards at Vickers, Barrow, where the Trident missiles are to be built, to devise schemes for alternative socially useful production. He emphasised however that such programmes have always been adamantly resisted by manufacturers and government and cannot be realistically seen to be the decisive means of stopping Trident.

With mass unemployment imposed as a weapon of fear against trade union militancy, it is a stark fact that the Vickers workers will build Trident rather than go on the dole, unless the anti-nuclear movement can back up its moral exhortations with an organised mass movement capable of coordinating, sustaining and protecting

strike action in the key areas of weapons production and installation.

Base

These problems become increasingly complex for Trident's prospective base — the Clyde submarine base (CSB) at Faslane and Coulport in the West of Scotland, already notorious as the home of Polaris. This site, contrary to its popular image as a small semi-secret American base, is a massive industrial complex, employing several thousand manual, clerical and scientific workers in an area of massive unemployment.

The only practical socially useful alternative employment which could

be offered by this war machine would be a short-term one — demolition! The workers too have problems within their own ranks: there is a history of division between the industrial grades organised in unions such as the TGWU, GMWU and the EETPU, and the non-industrial grades in the civil service unions. Within the latter, further potential schisms also exist between the highly skilled scientific staff and the clerical grades.

If the trade union movement in Scotland is

Scotland against Reagan

So you thought last year's demonstration of a quarter of a million against nuclear missiles was big? Well, for 6 June, Scottish CND is calling on its supporters to organise transport for double the number who travelled down to London in October.

Match that, England and Wales, and we'll really put Reagan in his place!

Fighting nuclear weapons — the lessons of Hillhead

By Tony Southall
POLLS taken during last month's Hillhead by-election showed that nuclear weapons were a crucial issue for voters. This was especially true of the Tories' plans to site Trident II on the Clyde at Coulport.

The local umbrella peace organisation, the Glasgow West Disarmament Campaign, played an important part in this. It held a series of well attended film shows and public meetings; leafleted every house in the constituency twice; and appeared with propaganda at most of the candidates' meetings and were constantly on the streets up to polling day.

Raising a single issue like this during an election campaign is not easy. It is legally impossible — as well as politically undesirable — for such campaigns to endorse a particular candidate. But we do want to persuade people to make a choice based on the parties' lines on a particular issue. Unfortunately the campaign in Hillhead was not clear enough to do this.

The popularity of the central slogan,

'Vote for Peace', could be seen in the number of badges, stickers, and window posters displayed in the area. But at the same time, it let the candidates off the hook. Even the Defence Secretary, John Nott, could and did argue that the Tories wanted peace — you just needed Trident to get it!

The slogan failed to show that political differences about nuclear weapons are about what to do here and how to end the arms race.

One poll in the constituency showed 73 per cent against Trident — including 44 per cent of Tory voters. Even Jenkins won votes by saying he was against it. Less publicised was his qualification that the Alliance would renew progress according to the stage the project had reached when (sic) they assumed power.

The Labour candidate, David Wiseman, was unambiguously anti-Trident. But Labour leader Michael Foot, speaking in the constituency immediately before the poll, avoided committing the party to unilateralism: 'We will use our powers, example and intelligence to see that Britain's influence is used against supporting this madness and to secure independent negotiations to bring this nuclear arms race to an end.'

CND's campaign in Hillhead should have been able to nail such prevarication!

This could have been done by linking Trident to the whole unilateralist case. All candidates should have been called on to build — indeed head — the 10 April demonstration in Glasgow.

Such an approach will be essential if CND is to have a decisive influence in future polls — most critically in the next general election.

Vote for a nuclear-free

By Martin Meteyard
CND supporters all over Scotland have drawn encouragement from the impact made on the issue of nuclear weapons in the Hillhead by-election.

They now have a chance to develop that aspect of the campaign further with the regional elections on 6 May.

Several of Scotland's regional councils — including the largest, Strathclyde — have already declared themselves nuclear-free zones. That's not a statement of literal fact, of course. The Polaris submarines haven't suddenly vanished from the Clyde. But as a declaration of intent it's important.

Right now it can mean no wastage of resources on civil defence, which spreads the illusion that society can somehow survive a nuclear war. It can mean no cooperation with

the government's nuclear war games, such as 'Hard Rock '82' later this year. In Strathclyde it has meant a refusal to discuss with the Ministry of Defence any aspect of locating Trident in the region — such as roads, sewerage, and so on.

Win

Most importantly, it lays the basis for a campaign to win the mass of the population to the idea that there should be no nuclear weapons in their region: to explain, for instance, the direct link between mass unemployment and expenditure on these weapons of destruction.

And then to use such support to begin to make idea a reality — by preventing the introduction of Trident, for example.

Stand

CND groups in various Scottish regions will be campaigning for 'vote for a nuclear-free zone' on 6 May, ensuring that voters go into the polling booths knowing what the candidates stand for on the issue. This will be done through publishing results of questionnaire to the candidates; holding public forums at which latter will be invited to explain their position; answer questions; organising mass leafleting; and so on.

In particular, all those who claim to oppose Trident (which includes SDP and Liberals) will

Bridgend councillors dig in

By our special correspondent

WALES has been declared the first nuclear-free country in Europe. But councillors in Mid-Glamorgan are determined to hedge their bets in the battle against nuclear arms.

At their December meeting, having declared Mid-Glamorgan a nuclear-free zone, the Labour-dominated council approved plans to refurbish the wartime control bunker at Bridgend to enable it to withstand nuclear attack. Three Labour councillors who opposed the majority group decision were threatened with disciplinary action by the

local party.

Local CND groups were quick to act. A 24-hour picket was established at the site and mass pickets called for every Sunday. The council was obviously becoming embarrassed by the mounting criticisms of its decision to spend £390,000 on nuclear defence while cutting back on education and social services.

The bunker, they now claimed, with its decontamination chambers and reinforced concrete blast proof walls, was only to coordinate civil disasters such as floods and blizzards.

As the Councils credibility hit rock bottom, CND protestors moved in to occupy the site. The ensuing battle, which included concrete being poured over protestors, hit the headlines throughout South Wales. Deeply embarrassed,

the Council acted once more to stop the work, passing a motion by 63 to 4 to convert the site for peace time use.

But once again the victory was hollow. After a meeting the following day with the Home Office, Council officials announced that they would be breaking the law if they failed to prepare for nuclear war.

This Easter, protestors from all over South Wales will converge on Bridgend's bunkers in a battle to establish a real nuclear-free zone. The Welsh NUM, Ray Powell MP for Ogmere, and speakers from CND, Plaid Cymru will greet the demonstration in Bridgend.

The message for the Bridgend Labour Party is clear: either Labour Party policy should be implemented or the councillors should make way for those who will.

Stop the missiles

Direct action and the missiles

How can we defeat nuclear madness? That's the big question for millions of people today. Among the strategies put forward by those opposing nuclear weapons is the tactic of non-violent direct action. Last November's CND conference advocated it and last month's London regional conference voted to organise a series of weekend schools on the issue. PHIL WATERHOUSE argues that non-violent direct action is a completely inadequate strategy.

Supporters of non-violent direct action (NVDA, for short) form a strong current within CND and the anti-nuclear movement, basing themselves in part on the actions of the Committee of 100 in the 1960s.

It is very likely that over the next year their tactics will be adopted for the actions marking the government's Hard Rock civil defence exercises in October.

Many of the proposed forms of non-violent direct action socialists would agree with: pickets, marches and strikes were all organised by the Direct Action Committee in the 1950s and 1960s, against the parliamentary lobbying line of the CND leadership. But there are big

disadvantages to the NVDA approach.

First, actions by small groups of dedicated individuals are often counterposed to mass action initiatives. For example one woman from the Molesworth Peace Camp commented in *Sanity* on last October's mass demonstration in London that: 'It's all very well having a rally where a quarter of a million people turn up, but at the end of the day they all go home and it's easy for the press and the government to forget about them, whereas we're here all the time.'

Eve

Of course such direct action can be productive at certain times in bringing



Will Warren, supporter of the Direct Action Committee, being removed from North Pickenham missile base, Norfolk, in 1958

campaigns into the public eye, especially if it's well planned and carefully linked into building mass ac-

tions and demonstration. But exemplary actions by a dedicated handful are more likely to incur the

aim was 'propaganda by deed', serving as a rehearsal for mass resistance.

But the net effect of such civil disobedience was demoralisation and apathy. They would have done well to heed the advice of an earlier advocate of civil disobedience, H Thoreau: 'If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison or give up war and slavery, the state will not hesitate to choose.'

Morals

For other supporters, non-violent direct action is a form of moral persuasion stemming from pacifist or religious beliefs. The idea is that through taking exemplary action the moral justice and truth of an idea will be revealed including to its opponents. In this situation NVDA seeks to destroy the enmity not the enemy.

Unfortunately life is a good deal more difficult. The privileges and power of the ruling class will not be challenged by an appeal to its morality. It will tolerate any repression, injustice and inequality to defend class society, including through the use of nuclear weapons if necessary.

Mass conversion of the ruling class to 'common sense' is a non-starter. Warmongers the world over will not be moved by moral argument, but only by the power of mass opposition movements of the working class and the

dispossessed.

That's why the most effective way forward for CND is to take its campaign to the organised labour movement and the youth. Mass actions and protests by these social forces will be much more effective than the non-violent direct action tactics of exemplary action.

CND Easter marches

Glasgow: Demonstrate against Trident, 10.30am, Blythswood Square, Saturday 10 April.

Wales: Bridgend demonstration, after local feeder marches, 11am on 10 April at county war bunker, Bridgend.

Leeds: March from Woodhouse Moor, 11.30am on 10 April.

North East: March and festival at sub-regional controllers' bunker, Hexham, Monday 12 April.

East Anglia: March from US airforce Woodbridge base to Ipswich, 10 April at 10am.

London: March from Princess of Wales pub, Blackheath at 12 noon on 10 April meeting East London feeder march at Greenwich and back to Blackheath.

Sheffield: March and rally on 10 April. Ring 0742-693658 for details.

Birmingham: March 12 noon from Milk St on 10 April, rally at Town Hall from 1pm.

Manchester: March on Saturday 17 April, assemble 1pm at All Saints.

zone!

asked what they will do to stop its introduction if they are elected.

Big

The campaign to stop Trident and get rid of all nuclear weapons is a big opportunity for the Labour Party in Scotland to recover from its setback at Hillhead, demonstrate that a vote for the SDP/Liberal Alliance is incompatible with the majority sentiment in Scotland for unilateral nuclear disarmament, and win majorities in the regional councils committed to standing up to Thatcher's nuclear offensive.

This in turn can help to boost support for Labour in the next general election as the only party of government which can be committed to ridding Britain of the obscenity of nuclear weapons.



Civil Defence: The Cruellest Trick

New CND pamphlet by Phil Bolsover, just 80p. Write to: CND, 11 Goodwin St, London N4.

The Tory view of Trident

TORY Minister Peter Blaker has eased the fears of those of us worried about the new Trident nuclear missile system. Speaking at the annual conference of the Greater London Young Conservatives on 27 March he explained that: 'We must put the cost of Trident in perspective.'

'The price tag of peace through Trident is half what we spend on beauty care, hair-dressing and manicure.' In fact if Trident's £7.5bn cost is broken down to an annual average of £500m, Blaker pointed out that consumers spend 30 times as much on alcoholic drinks and tobacco. Worse, as far as Blaker is concerned, they even spend as much as that on books!

The message is clear: if we would all only stop drinking, smoking, reading and making ourselves beautiful then Trident wouldn't seem half as expensive.

8 weeks



Support the American people — dump Reagan

By Davy Jones
JUST IN CASE you thought that organising a big campaign against Reagan's visit to Britain smacked of anti-Americanism, you can now rest in peace. Latest US opinion polls give the thumbs-down to the American president in a startling turn round in his popularity.

Asked by Time magazine whether they thought Reagan should stand for a second term of office some 52 per cent said no, with only 37 per cent wishing he would. Further, some 35 per cent of the people interviewed felt their impression of the president had worsened since his election, and only half that number, 17 per cent, that it had improved.

Even in his own state of California, Reagan's popularity has nosedived. He has dropped an unprecedented 27 popularity points from 64 to 37 per cent.

Perhaps the greatest condemnation for Reagan in the opinion polls is the extent to which his 'guns not butter' policies appear to be rejected by the electorate. As the State Department revealed 10 million away, Time magazine announced that 48 per cent of those interviewed thought that military spending should be cut and only 23 per cent opted for cuts in social programmes.

There was a clear two to one majority against tax cuts, which has been a favourite hobby horse of the right wing politicians over the years. And some 71 per cent favoured an emphasis on arms reduction negotiations rather than increasing the nuclear arsenal.

No wonder Reagan is coming to Britain, he has too many headaches at home.

Proof

Proof of this problem can be found in the history of the Committee of 100 which from 1961 tried to go beyond the symbolic acts of the Direct Action Committee. Mass sit-downs were organised in Trafalgar Square which led to mass arrests and beatings by the cops. The

A hot Rome for Reagan?

By Paul Lawson

WHEN Ronald Reagan visits Europe in June, hundreds of thousands of people are expected to march in Rome against US policy in Central America and against plans to site Cruise missiles in Sicily.

Already a committee representing peace groups, trade unions and political parties is preparing the demonstration.

The plan to site Cruise missiles in Sicily has already caused a furore in Italy. Last September 70,000 people marched to the NATO headquarters in Southern Italy.

The missiles are clearly not aimed at the Soviet Union, but at the Middle East. Although they would give the US the capacity to hit any target in the Middle East, the most likely target at present is Libya, which the Reagan administration bitterly opposes.

Following last September's demonstration, organised mainly by peace groups, a vigorous campaign was started against Cruise missiles in the workers' movement, especially by the Communist Party (PCI).

Sensing the changing mood, the PCI supported the 300,000-strong demonstration against the missiles last October in Rome, despite its position that Italy should not withdraw from NATO.

But the majority of the tens of thousands of PCI supporters who marched that day demonstrated against NATO and against Reagan's policies in Central America.

Whatever the PCI's wishes, the anti-missiles movement in Italy is taking an increasingly anti-imperialist direction.

The PCI's motives for calling the demonstration were not exactly innocent. They started their campaign on El Salvador, and fixed the date of the demonstration, only one week after the calling of a national demonstration in Milan in support of Solidarnosc.

They hope that by vigorously turning their members' attention to Central America, they will quieten down the questioning and disputes over Poland.

The PCI leadership was partially successful in defusing support for the 30,000-strong Solidarity demonstration, which few of their members attended.

Despite this negative side of the PCI campaign, the events in El Salvador and the rest of Central America will increasingly give the anti-missiles movement in Italy an anti-imperialist character.

Just as in Britain, Germany and France, tens of thousands of workers in Italy will tell Reagan he is an 'undesirable element', unwanted in Europe.

On 13 March, 50,000 people marched in Bologna to support the struggle of the people of El Salvador.

Although organised by the major trade union federations, the march was inspired by the PCI, and addressed by its best known trade union leader, Llama of the CGIL.

The rally was also addressed by Reuben Zamora, vice-president of the Salvadoran FDR. Once again the PCI leadership was outflanked by the mass of the demonstration.

While the trade union leaders called merely for peace and negotiations, many of the PCI rank and file, together with the Young Communists and the revolutionary left, called for the victory of the revolutionary guerrillas.

YCND • REAGAN'S VISIT • LA

MASSIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO



Photo: G M COOKSON

THIS WEEKEND, the Labour Party Young Socialists holds its annual conference in Bridlington. At a time when youth are leading the struggles against the Tories' war drive and austerity policies, such a conference should be discussing how it can transform itself into a mass campaigning youth organisation.

CLIFF WILLIAMS is a member of the engineering union's delegation to the LPYS conference. He is an AUEW National Committee youth delegate and a supporter of Revolution Youth. He talked to Socialist Challenge about the issues facing the Young Socialists at this crucial time.



Photo: COLIN HEADWORTH

Revolution's rally last December

THROUGHOUT the world, both in the past and in the present, it has been youth who have been in the forefront of struggles. In Nicaragua, for example, the average age of the government is 24, and it was youth that led the revolution that overthrew the Somoza dictatorship.

In El Salvador, Poland and Ireland it is young people who are leading the fight against oppression and it is the same in Britain.

Youth have never suffered the defeats that older generations have; they haven't experienced the betrayals of the leadership of the working class. Youth don't, in

general, have the same ties that older workers have, they are more dynamic and more open to radical socialist solutions.

The uprisings last year were an indication of this dynamism: when the youth felt under attack from cops and fascists, they fought back against the system in the only way they could see open to them, particularly black and Asian youth.

The Labour Party and the trade unions failed them in the fight-back against the Tories. However, the Labour Party is beginning to change. We have seen it in government where it carried out basically watered down Tory policies.

There were big attacks on the working class and a Labour prime minister called on workers to scab on other workers during the winter of discontent. The rank and file of the Labour Party knows that it was those policies which were the main reason for the defeat of Labour at the last election. They want to see radical solutions to the problems facing the working class, hence the debate that has been going on inside the party.

But at the same time, the party has not really mobilised the working class against the government. As long as the Labour Party stays within the framework of waiting until the next election before tak-

— Campaigning against YOPS —

THE CAMPAIGN for trade union rights for YOPS is a good one. In fact, the first steps were taken by supporters of Revolution Youth in Bristol. A couple of supporters campaigned for YOPS workers to be unionised into the National Union of Public Employees and the campaign gradually took off.

Militant does call for a higher wage but it has to make clear that it is demanding full union rates for the job. They have to make the union leaders take up the issue. YOPS workers need full rights inside the unions just like any other worker.

Revolution Youth supports the unionisation of YOPS workers and the full rate for the job. Fighting to

end the exploitation that these young workers face is the best way to get rid of these schemes and create proper jobs for everyone.

It is in the unions' interests to get decent conditions for YOPS workers, otherwise all workers are going to have their conditions and rates of pay eroded.

It's the same with the campaign against Tebbit: the unions have to realise that the Tories' attacks on the unions and on youth are one and the same thing. The exploitation of young people on these schemes leads to the destruction of jobs.

In my factory it takes over a year for six people to clean and redecorate the place. Management employed one

person and six YOPS people. They weren't paying the YOPS people a penny, it came from the government.

One of the young people had the use of only one arm. He had to climb a tower about 30 foot high, carrying paint and a paint brush as well. People were working below. If he hadn't done it, he would have lost his job.

He also had to go to the hospital one afternoon and out of his miserable £23.50 management stopped his money. The union's not as strong as it could be in our place but we did get him the money back.

If the unions nationally would openly fight for proper conditions and pay for youth, we could get rid of these schemes which give no training or hope for permanent employment.

Youth unemployment has risen dramatically over the last few years

June 1974: 5,400 unemployed school leavers

June 1980: 178,300 unemployed school leavers

Manpower Services Commission estimate 600,000 school leavers in the summers of 1982 and 1983

October 1980: 814,000 under 25's unemployed — 41% of the workforce

(Under 25's represent 20% of total workforce)

Apprenticeships 1968: 170,000 young men

1980: 90,000 young men

*It is significant that no figures for female apprenticeships are available

No curfews on youth!

By Tessa van Gelderen

NOT CONTENT with giving youth no future, the Tories now plan to put a curfew on them. Young 'offenders', such as those involved in the youth uprisings last summer, will be made to stay in at night and at weekends.

From 6pm to 6am on weekdays, and from noon to 6am on Saturdays and Sundays, these 'offenders' will be forced off the streets. For many young people such a curfew is a way of life already. With no job and no money — and now the government plans to stop the dole for all sixteen year olds — there's not much to do anyway.

Just in case youth do get a bit uppity and go out for some fun, or maybe a YCND meeting, after 9pm they'll have to pay full fares in London like everyone else.

London Transport has to break even but such a rule can't bring in much revenue. No, it's another form of curfew; having to pay 40p for one bus journey is a good way of keeping young people off the

streets.

Even taking to walking will not be safe. The new police powers being proposed will bring back the 'sus' laws. Police will be able to stop and search anyone and, of course, it will be young blacks who will bear the brunt of it.

The Tories have created a 'no hope, no future' society for tens of thousands of young people. Now they have to pass laws of repression to keep down the growing tide of anger that young people are showing. The 'hang 'em and flog 'em brigade' is getting its weapons ready for another summer of fighting on the streets.

The labour movement has to oppose these vicious proposals. It has to say loud and clear that young people are not responsible for the crisis, they aren't going to bear the brunt of the naked Tory repression of curfews and riot police.

This Tory government has nothing to offer the people of this country and it can't baton down the growing swell of opposition to it.



Last summer in Brixton. The Tories are preparing for a long hot summer as it prepares to do battle with youth and trade unionists.

Photo: G M COOKSON

Fighting the witch-hunt

REVOLUTION YOUTH fights for any current of the working class to be part of the Labour Party and opposes all witch-hunts. The best way of fighting the witch-hunt is not to go back on your positions but to argue for them openly inside the whole labour movement.

Militant should be organising with all those forces under attack at present, Peter Tatchell, Tariq Ali, as well as trade unionists who are being witch-hunted in unions like the electricians and railway workers unions.

Such an offensive has to be based on the support of the masses and on the mobilisation of the working class if necessary. It has to be based on total opposition to any witch-hunt of any grouping.

But in the end the only way to fight the attacks from the right is to get the policies of the left accepted throughout the labour movement. That's what Healey, Chapple and the others are really frightened of.

LAURENCE SCOTT • EL SALVADOR

BUILD THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS

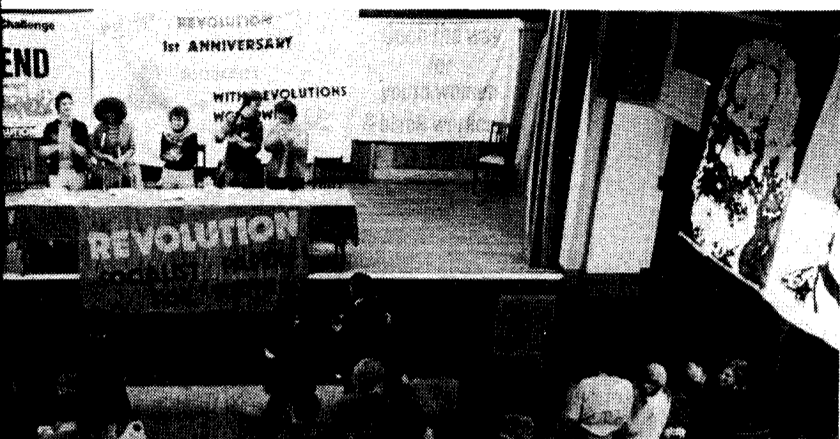


Photo: COLIN HEADWORTH

up the struggles of the workers throughout the world.

ing on that fight, instead of taking on the Tories now, there are going to be big problems.

I think there will be more riots this summer. Certainly the Tories are preparing for it. The Labour Party Young Socialists has to respond to this situation urgently. It has to involve itself with the youth who are on the streets and it has to play an important role inside the party itself campaigning for radical policies to be adopted.

There are 25,000 young people in the Labour Party today. The vast majority of them are not in the Young Socialists. They joined the party because of the developments taking place around the deputy leadership campaign, and around policies for nuclear disarmament which the YS has not been involved in.

The approach of the *Militant* tendency, which is in the leadership of the YS, is not to go out to youth, to the mass radicalisation and mobilisation of youth to try to recruit them. *Militant* is scared of a mass Labour Party Young Socialists, it is scared of losing the leadership which it holds onto very tentatively.

It accommodates to the leadership of the Labour Party in order to avoid witch hunts. So it does not favour a mass campaigning YS which is what is needed if youth are to be attracted in large numbers.

The way in which Revolution Youth would build the YS — and it's what we've attempted in those areas where we have supporters — is by taking it out to wherever and whenever there are mass mobilisations of youth. For example, during the riots *Militant* originally had the correct position but within a week it was attacking the rioters and defending the police. Revolution Youth would have defended the rioters against the police at all costs.

At the same time we would have pointed out to them that the best way forward was to join the YS and to channel that energy into a real fight against the government; to fight to change society rather than a lot of action which in the end achieved nothing.

We would also turn the YS out to those mass campaigns which are leading the fight against the policies of Thatcher and Reagan and which are composed, in the main, of young people. We want the YS to be leading Youth CND.

Revolution Youth has effectively built YCND. But because of the way *Militant* does not take this question of nuclear disarmament seriously we have not been able to win these youth to the YS.

We want to build the YS out of the thousands and thousands of young people who will greet Ronald Reagan when he visits Britain in June. This event will be the most important event in the calendar.



New pamphlet just out 20p a copy plus 15p p&pp available from Revolution PO Box 50 London N1 2XP. Write for details re. bulk rates.

The YS should be building, alongside other forces, a massive anti-imperialist contingent on the CND demo on 6 June to show Reagan what we think of him. It's not just in America that Reagan's becoming unpopular, he is the symbol in Britain and the rest of the world for American imperialism.

Youth certainly understand what Reagan's up to, particularly in El Salvador. They'll be out on the streets in their thousands to support the struggle of the FMLN in El Salvador and in protest at Reagan's policies. The YS has to build from this growing movement of youth.

For positive action for women

YOUNG WOMEN have been in the forefront of struggles against the Tories. They have fought for jobs at Lee Jeans, Plessey and elsewhere. They are in their thousands in CND.

But in the Labour Party and the trade unions, the leadership is still dominated by men. The Young Socialists should campaign for the labour movement to fight for a woman's right to work and argue that it is in the interests of *all* workers in the fight against unemployment.

We have to have positive action inside the labour movement which allows women to play a full role. The YS should lead the way.



And it's not just against Reagan, the YS should also be leading the fight against Tebbit. Many Young Socialists are trade unionists. The YS has led a good campaign against the YOPs schemes. Now it has to organise all young workers to take on Tebbit. That's the best way to help those on YOPs schemes and at the same time to recruit to the YS.

We want to take that campaign into the heart of the trade unions. The union leaders have said they want to fight Tebbit, but how? In my union, Boyd and Duffy have said they want to link up with the bosses' federation, the CBI.

But then what else can you expect from leaders who have tried to smash a strike of their own members who were fighting for jobs at Laurence Scott. It's workers like these, many of whom are young, that the YS has to support.

The union leaders should remember how they got the Tories to back down last time, in 1972,

with the Pentonville dockers. A threat of a general strike by the TUC, and they were out of jail. The miners showed last year how to stop the Tory onslaught when they struck against pit closures. The train drivers have done the same. This is how to take on the government and defeat the Tories' anti-working class policies.

Militant's sectarianism extends to movements in other countries which are fighting or have fought to overthrow the system in their countries. Unlike thousands of youth throughout the world, *Militant* are not inspired by the revolutions. It is the same with Ireland, where *Militant* has come under pressure from the trade union and Labour Party bureaucracy not to rock the boat.

Revolution Youth are international socialists. The class struggle takes place on an international scale and a defeat for the working class and oppressed people anywhere in the world is a defeat for the working class world wide.

A victory is a victory for us, and it strengthens our position in Britain. When the mightiest imperialist power, the United States, is defeated by a tiny nation like Vietnam, or is terrified by the revolution of 110,000 people in the tiny island of Grenada, that says something about the effect such revolutions have on the rest of the world.

It is a really exciting period we're entering into. There has to be a change in the YS. There are so many opportunities to build the YS. This conference has to take the YS onwards towards supporting CND and the women's right to work event, and against Reagan and Tebbit, and to get the youth involved in these campaigns into the YS.

This is where the YS has to base itself, instead of on small propagandistic type meetings. It has to become a real campaigning force that gives a lead to the thousands of youth who are taking on the Tories in the factories and on the streets.

Why the Young Socialists should turn to Youth CND

The Labour Party, particularly the leadership, has not carried out policy adopted by conference to commit the next Labour government to unilaterally disarm. CND involves hundreds of thousands of people, many of whom are not members of the Labour Party or the trade unions. Many of them are youth, many unemployed. The Labour Party, and in particular the YS, can win these people to the labour movement, to the ideas of socialism, if it is actively involved in these campaigns.

Photo: PETE GRANT



Why a member of Youth CND should join the Young Socialists

Revolution Youth is fighting in the Labour Party and the Young Socialists for commitment to CND and YCND. If CND and YCND are to be successful they have to win the support of the labour movement. The Labour Party has a vital role to play because of its links with the trade unions. We have to fight inside the party now to make sure the next Labour government is actually committed to nuclear disarmament. A member of YCND can play a vital role in changing YS policy and helping to ensure that Britain gets rid of nuclear weapons.

Jam tomorrow

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By Grant Keir

'Better stop dreaming of the quiet life — 'cos it's the one we'll never know ...' Paul Weller's singing comes sailing over a badly mixed and distorted sound of the rest of the Jam at Birmingham's Bingley Hall.

It's Saturday night and the majority of the audience is wearing 1960s mod fashions, is aged between 12 and 25 and is savouring every moment of the most politically and musically interesting band to emerge from the 'punk' (as opposed to 'reggae') revolution of the late 1970s.

Hanging from the back of the stage is a banner with 'Transglobal Unity Express' written on it. Most of the songs are off the new album 'The Gift' and although it has only just been released, everyone seems to be mouthing the words. 'Imagine if tomorrow, the workers went on strike, not just British Leyland, but the whole world, who would earn their profits? who would make their bombs?'

What makes 'The Jam' so enjoyable is that stylistically they borrow from the exuberance and confidence of the '60s mod and tamla motown sounds but mix it with the political realities of the 1980s.

To continue to quote more lyrics from the album would fail to give an impression of the power and logic of the songs and would give credence to the idea that 'The Jam' are chanting 'right-on' slogans over a backdrop of sound.

This is not the case. Neither politically nor musically are The Jam in the rut of banality. Time and again stress is laid on the need for practical, well thought out political activity to be added to the current feelings of youth anger and resentment as they existed in last summer's riots — and still exist in Thatcher's Britain today.

The Jam recently played for the Right to Work campaign during the Youth Lobby of Parliament to complain about YOPs. They also played for CND on last year's huge demonstration in London. They will also play when Reagan arrives in Britain to show their opposition to his being here.

Weller: an old-fashioned male hero

By Simon Lockwood

I'VE NEVER been that sure of The Jam. Their stuff has always been too stylised, too self-conscious. Except for their best songs, they've always sounded uncomfortably like the sum of their own influences.

Not helped by the shrill production, their new album 'The Gift' tends to reinforce this idea of formulae at work. The songs have 'interesting' construction. The tunes are 'catchy'. The arrangements are 'varied'. In the context of the album though all these qualities take on an arbitrary flavour. The use of horns, steel drums and the disco guitar seem tokenistic — merely ways of broadening The Jam's fundamental hard rock sound.

The irony of this is that not only do The Jam sound as claustrophobic as ever to me, but the musical balance submerges Weller's own significant lyrics.

The left's current interest in The Jam stems from two developments — their gigging for the CND and the Right to Work, and the unashamed political slant of Weller's new lyrics. But haven't we been through all this before with The Tom Robinson Band, The Clash, The Beat? Are we any further down the road?

Interestingly, Weller's sensibilities tie in more with the sixties generation of pop rebellion and in particular Ray Davis of the Kinks.

The imagery is pseudo-poetic social realism: the fightback is non specific rear guard — against 'the establishment'.

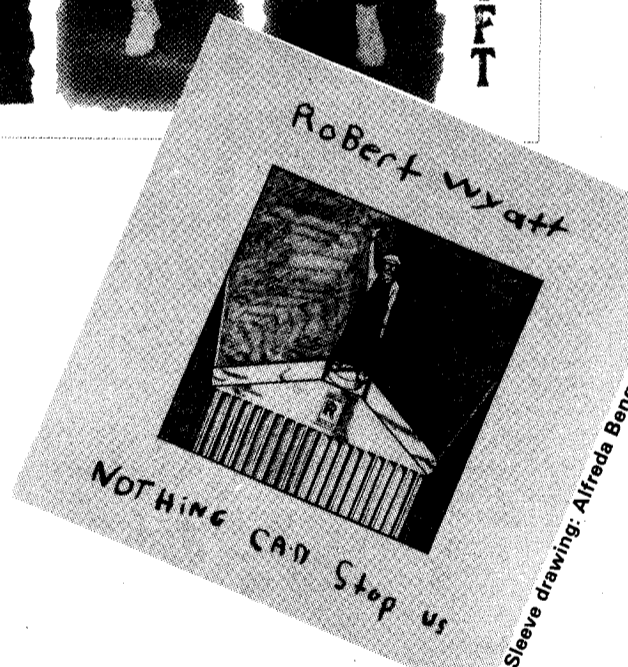
The real political significance of The Jam is that they are not seen by the thousands of youth who follow them as particularly political. The fact that they sing about and support campaigns against the threat of nuclear wars, the ravages of unemployment, the base stupidities of racism and fascism, merely indicates that a whole generation of youth is now becoming acutely

aware of these problems and the need to do something positive about them.

At the risk of turning The Jam into a political slogan the last verse of the Trans Global Express does sum it up:

'Get this trans-global express moving and see our marvellous leaders quiver

they know that if it happens their lazy days are over the day the working people join together we'll all rest much more easy the responsibility you must bear when it's your future in your hands maybe a hard one to face up to but at least you will own yourself!'



closer to my idea of true radical pop.

It is a beautiful sounding record — homogenous yet diverse, witty yet haunting, clear yet dense. It's a kaleidoscope of Wyatt's musical and political interests; two Latin American political anthems, a chic song 'Trade Union' written and sung by the Bengali group Dishari; indeed, only one of the tracks 'Born Again Cretin' is written by him.

Inevitably, the focal point is Robert's own singing. There is no distance at all from the lyrics, yet his vocals are so unmannered that one is still able to extract the full power of these deeply committed songs.

This is nowhere more evident than in 'The Red Flag', a song which I had shamefully never taken seriously before. Wyatt reinvents the song and unveils its true dignity to me for the first time.

Paul Weller is an old-fashioned male hero; Robert Wyatt isn't.

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NOTTINGHAM: Mushroom Books, Heathcote St, Hockley.

SOUTHAMPTON: October Books, Onslow Road.

YORK: Community Books, Walmgate.

Commemoration of Bobby Sands MP guest of honour Owen Carron MP plus other speakers. Thursday 6 May 7.30pm in the McNamara Room, the Irish Centre, Murray Street, Camden Town, NW1.

LABOUR Committee on Ireland — Scotland Two public meetings with Bernadette McAisley, Tue 20 April, 8pm The Chaplaincy Centre, Edinburgh University, Edinburgh, Wed 21 April 7.30pm, STUC Conference, Perth.

Middle East Books, Palestine: Facts in Focus (65p), Holocaust Victims Accuse (£2.00), Arabs of Palestine (75p), Nazi-Zionist Collaboration (£1.80), Begin & Co. (£1.50). Cheques/PO's payable to 'BAZO-PS'. Write to G. Mitchell, 90, John St., Glasgow G1.

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Cuba

Socialist Challenge will next week be printing a reply to the correspondence on Cuba.

COMRADE PHIL HEARSE'S article (SC 11 February) on the Cuban and Nicaraguan stance towards the Polish crackdown and his subsequent defence (Letters 18 March) invert the approach to the Cuban leadership that Socialist Challenge has pursued so far.

Up till now we have emphasised the revolutionary character of the Cuban leadership and its break from peaceful co-existence as practiced by the Kremlin. We have explained that its positions on the reformability of those bureaucratically degenerated workers' states like Russia and Poland is in contradiction with their revolutionary positions, particularly in Central America.

Only revolutionaries see 'breaking their isolation' through extension of revolution. The evolution of the Cubans has been fantastically positive.

How can Phil square this with the astonishing statement that 'the close ties with the Soviet Union has more and more made its mark on the way that the Cubans see the world' and that 'they have internalised a crucial element of the Stalinist world view — the "two-camp" theory'?

Phil himself spells it out: the two-camp theory considers the 'socialist bloc' rather than the international working class as the main bulwark against imperialism! But how does this apply to Central America where the Cubans advocate a policy of rel-

develop, as best we can, a fraternal argument with them. For Phil, only denunciation is in order.

The Cubans are in agreement with, and indeed inspired, the Nicaraguan FSLN and the Salvadorean FMLN. These people, unfortunate as it may be, take similar positions to the Cubans on the Polish crackdown. Phil is prepared to say these are revolutionaries. Why not the Cubans?

The Cubans are the only other current in the world which bases its orientation in Central America on the fight for socialism. The state capitalist views of the British Socialist Workers Party, for example, lead them to rule out the



Phil now puts the matter in a diametrically opposite way. According to his scheme, the Cubans generally follow a line of peaceful co-existence (that is, of stalinism), but for reasons of 'self-interest', have broken from peaceful co-existence in Central America.

It is totally ridiculous to explain the Cubans 'breaking their isolation' by extending the socialist revolution on the basis of some 'empirical' accident. The Russians and Chinese broke their 'isolation' by accommodating with imperialism.

This was not an 'empirical' accident, but due to the fact that this coincided with the interest of a bureaucratic caste. The Cubans did it our way

ing on the masses? This Cuban approach is anti-pathetic to any notion of 'two-campism' — as anyone will know who has studied the Chinese revolution, the Spanish revolution or the 'two-camp' policy of any Latin American Stalinist Party.

How do revolutionaries sum up the contradictory stance of the Cubans? We must recognise their break from Stalinism but also recognise that they have not come to terms with it. Not having come to terms with the heritage of Stalinism precisely leads to errors like those in relation to Poland. But recognising them as revolutionaries who have broken with stalinism leads us to

possibility of a socialist revolution in an underdeveloped country. The Communist Party stands for the establishment of a 'democratic stage' whose results in country after country have been bloody defeat — as we saw in Chile.

The question which is therefore posed for all supporters of the Fourth International is whether we will be able to link up with the new generation of revolutionaries of action — and in the process of common actions and dialogue rub off whatever warts disfigure them.

Cde Phil's position was a determined step back from that challenge.

BRIAN GROGAN
Hackney

Uncritical support?

CONGRATULATIONS on your coverage and analysis both of Poland and of Central America.

Gary Erlisker's letter is both unfair and stupid. It is unfair because *Socialist Challenge's* reporting of the countries he mentions has in fact been extensive and helpful. It is stupid because he ignores the unfortunate fact that a successful revolution in a backward, impoverished country, largely dependent on the Soviet Union for economic survival, does not automatically produce socialist thinking on the highest level.

Many Cubans already regard the ideas of the Fourth International as

'sectarian'. Would they change their minds, or would the cause of socialism be served, if *Socialist Challenge* were suddenly to give Castro uncritical support?

A central problem for revolutionaries since the late 1920's has been that they cannot point to a model, a country where a successful revolution has led to a society which 'looks good' to the ordinary worker. But if critical support is a hard idea to get across, it is at least more practical than uncritical support, which has disastrous consequences.

In Poland, a model which ordinary workers

can identify themselves with has begun to take shape. Even here, of course, we have a duty to criticise wrong ideas within Solidarity (and we also have to recognise, such is the imperfect state of the world, that many Polish workers undoubtedly would regard our ideas as 'sectarian').

But Phil Hearse is right to emphasise the importance of the Polish revolution — the success of which, among other things, would most certainly help to popularise 'sectarian' ideas about Stalinism, in countries like Cuba and Nicaragua.

ARNE GUNNARSEN
Bergen, Norway

Letters letters Letters Letter: letters LETTERS

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Write to SC letters, c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Rape in Cuba

I AM SICK of reading in Socialist Challenge that rape has been eliminated (or 'virtually eliminated' as Dave Smith told us in issue 239) in Cuba. It is clear that huge gains have been made by women in Cuba and this must have had a huge effect on the general con-

sciousness about women's position in society.

But to assume (and assumption it must be as we are never given any facts) that sexual relationships have been so radically changed that sexual coercion and oppression have been eradicated is nonsense. It would take

years and years for that to happen in any society.

Rape is not only something that happens late at night in a dark street. Women all round the world have been challenging that myth for years. Rape, in its broadest terms, is unwanted sexual attention. Most rapes take place in the home by males known to the woman, including husbands. Most rapes are also not reported.

Maybe it is the case that women are safe to walk the streets at night in Cuba. That in itself is fantastic. But the logic that flows from a uselessly narrow definition of rape leads to an unnecessary glorification of the gains of the Cuban revolution, which we wholeheartedly support.

LAURA MITCHELL
Oldham

Militant Win or destroy?

I'M WRITING about Mike Leveson's letter about the *Militant* (SC 239). I found some of the opinions expressed and language used most disturbing, and as a SC supporter myself believe his approach to be dangerous.

The points Mike made about the political failings of *Militant*, and their own success in winning supporters, were fair enough I guess; also his conclusions about avoiding resolution-mongering and instead turning the LPYS and unions outwards to mass action, taking up the oppression of black people and women, and actively campaigning over international issues.

Yes, I think that's the way to convince the *Mili-*

tant group of our policies.

But listen to what else he says. *Militant* 'has to be politically confronted ... won over, and the organisation marginalised and if possible destroyed. Later he talks of 'the way to take up and break' *Militant*.

The connection between 'winning over' and 'destroying' an organisation eludes me!

Such talk evokes echoes of the Moscow show trials, and of the short leap, during the Civil War in Spain, between the Stalinists talking about politically eliminating or destroying (bad enough!) the anarchists, the POUM and the Trotskyists, and actually doing it, as they murdered Andres Nin and countless others.

Our movement should have had enough experience of being physically attacked, prevented from organising or slandered by Stalinists and bureaucrats in many countries to have some sensitivity on this question.

Let me restate a couple of things Socialist Challenge stands for: the right of all currents in the workers' movement to free expression of their ideas, both under capitalism or in any workers' state.

We are also against the use of violence within the workers' movement, and to my mind that includes verbal violence, which is yet another way of intimidating someone from expressing their opinions.

Mike might reply that I'm nitpicking and that it was a mere turn of phrase. Nevertheless, it's a pretty insensitive, arrogant and sectarian turn of phrase at a time when *Militant* and the rest of the left in the Labour Party are suffering the brunt of a witch-hunt launched by those who would very much like to 'destroy' and 'break' all of us together, whatever paper we sell.

I would be pleased if the editorial board would print a disclaimer of those particular ideas I've mentioned in Mike's letter.

D E PASSINGHAM
Burnley



Solidarnosc member Piotr Kozlowski meets Mick McAuley, convenor of Ferranti Measurements Oldham on a recent factory tour

SWP and Solidarnosc

IN AN otherwise excellent set of reviews on Solidarnosc (18 March), Davy Jones made a rather hurried comment regarding the Socialist Workers Party work on Solidarity. 'The SWP has done and is doing next to nothing to build solidarity work.'

This does an injustice to the individual comrades and branches of the SWP who have supported the Polish workers. They have, however, received poor and wrong leadership.

This is due to the incorrect evaluation of the SWP in regard to solidarity

committees and working with militants in the Labour Party. The SWP thinks it is irrelevant whether you make substantial sections of the Labour Party into campaigning organisational bases.

The workers movement here has much to

learn about workers' democracy in Poland. It is not enough for the SWP to complain from the sidelines about the Labour Party not making this an essential issue.

A SINGH
Newcastle

Iran's victory threatens imperialism

By Brian Grogan

IRAN HAS scored a major victory against the invading Iraqi forces in the 18 month old Gulf war. Iranian officials have made clear that they have no intention of entering into Iraqi territory. But the Iranian revolution threatens nonetheless to engulf Iraq — much to the consternation of imperialism.

The three wave Iranian counter-offensive against the occupying Iraqi Fourth Army corp began on 22 March in the Dezful-Shush region of Khuzestan. The 20,000 Iraqi troops were routed.

The Iraqi army was more numerous and far better equipped than that of Iran. According to the *Guardian*: 'Apart from a few tanks, the Iranian's heaviest weapons appears to have been jeep-mounted recoilless rifles'. The difference in morale of the two armies was a decisive factor.

Huge crowds came out in Tehran to celebrate the victory on the occasion of the third anniversary of the founding of the Islamic republic. Iranian leaders called for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein of Iraq. But in a speech read out by his son to the crowd, Ayatollah Khomeini made it clear that Iran harboured no aggressive intentions against any other country.

Earlier, the Iranian President Hojatoleslam Ali Khomeini declared in a radio broadcast that Iran had no designs on Iraqi territory. 'It is the Ba'athist mercenaries who attacked our country and occupied parts of it. Aggression is not in keeping with the dignity of the

Islamic Republic', he said. 'The Moslems of Iraq are Iran's brothers,' he added. 'Our support for them does not mean that we will take our forces into Iraqi territory'.

Saddam Hussein had originally gone into Iran on the pretext of a border dispute over sovereignty of the Shatt-Al-Arab waterway. But his real aim was to reverse the gains of the Iranian revolution and prevent its inspiration leading to his overthrow.

In this situation, the repulsion of the invasion by the independent mobilisation and organisation of the workers, peasants, oppressed nationalities and army ranks was the chief task of the day.

Without in any way giving political support to Khomeini (opposing the voting for war credits in the Majlis, for example) revolutionary Marxists in Iran proposed the arming of the masses as the best way to defeat the counter-revolutionary intervention of the Iraqi Army.

It is despite the restrictions which the Khomeini regime placed on such mass mobilisations that the military victories of the recent past have been won. In doing so they have struck a blow against the reactionary Ba'athist regime, bringing closer the

The morale of the Iraqi troops can be accurately gauged from the fact that one 12-year-old can guard several thousand.



prospect of the demise of Saddam Hussein.

The reactionary Arab states and imperialism will also receive a body blow from any definitive Iraqi defeat. Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan have all given backing to Saddam Hussein, bankrolling the gargantuan costs of the war. Jordan not only provided arms but also dispatched a 'volunteer' force.

led the US to increase their aid dramatically to counter-revolutionary groups trying to overthrow the Khomeini regime.

The *New York Times* recently reported on support for covert actions 'which include financing two paramilitary units composed largely of Iranian exiles in eastern Turkey adjacent to Iran, providing several million

have had extensive contact with the former president and his entourage in Paris'. Bani Sadr is in an

alliance with the Mojahedin who have been responsible for a bombing and assassination campaign against the top leadership of Khomeini's Islamic Republican Party.

On 16 March representatives of the Revolutionary Prosecutors Office in Iran began confiscating copies of *Kargar*, newspaper of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) from news-stands in Tehran. On 26 March it was declared illegal for 'defaming the Islamic Republic, publishing lies', and slandering the judicial authorities'.

The HKE supports the Iranian revolution and has been active in opposing imperialist attacks on Iran.

Armed men came to the shop where *Kargar* is printed on 15 March and arrested the printer, Mohammed Bagher Falsafi. His whereabouts are unknown. Falsafi has been a member of the Iranian Trotskyist movement for ten years.

The previous issue of *Kargar* had contained an extensive interview with HKE leader Bahram Ali Atai, who had just been

The recent Iranian military victories will be a signal for the stepping up of attacks on the Iranian revolution. It is the task of socialists to oppose these attacks.

released from Evin prison. In the interview, Atai reported that secret executions had been carried out at the prison. He said torture was practised including hanging people from the ceiling with only their toes touching the floor. Atai and other prisoners were whipped on the feet, he said.

The HKE has filed a lawsuit calling for a halt to torture, illegal detentions, and executions. The confiscated *Kargar* issue reported on this lawsuit and on harassment of the HKE by the authorities.

Those who support the Iranian revolution and defend it against imperialist attack should send telegrams calling for Falsafi's release to Hojatoleslam Mousavi Tabrizi, Prosecutor General, Revolutionary Courts, Tehran, Iran. Copies should be sent to Jomhuri-e-Eslami, Tehran Iran.

Socialist Organiser and Poland

By Davy Jones

IT IS VERY SAD when fellow comrades from the revolutionary movement commit serious errors of political judgement. But it is irresponsible to let them pass without comment. Such is the case with the incredible gyrations of policy on Poland from *Socialist Organiser* in recent weeks.

Things began to turn sour when out of the blue *Socialist Organiser* announced in its 18 February issue 'the first national labour movement demonstration in support of Solidarnosc' to be held in London on 13 March. It called for every trade union and Labour Party to back this march called at four weeks' notice.

Socialist Challenge was somewhat mystified by this call as a few days previously we held a joint meeting with *Socialist Organiser* to discuss Polish solidarity work at which a march on this date was never mentioned, and where we agreed to work as closely as possible in future on the Polish issue. Neither were any of the major solidarity committees around the country ever consulted about this 'national' march.

Socialist Challenge estimated that such a march would be a flop, thereby setting back that wing of the solidarity movement in this country aiming to base the campaign on a labour movement orientation. We therefore tried for some weeks to persuade *Socialist Organiser* to think again, but to no avail.

While it attracted some paper sponsorship from a few labour movement bodies, though from none of the local solidarity committees, the march was a fiasco. This 'national labour movement demonstration' had the grand total of 300 marchers, less people than *Socialist Organiser* claims as supporters around the country.

We consider that an objective balance sheet of the march would have to conclude that it was a sectarian stunt which in no way strengthened those fighting for a labour movement orientation for the Polish solidarity campaign.

All this might have been water under the bridge but for the actions of *Socialist*

Organiser at the Polish Solidarity Campaign annual general meeting. Socialist Challenge supporters went to the meeting to clarify whether the PSC could be transformed into an adequate instrument for organising the solidarity movement. We assumed *Socialist Organiser* had the same intentions.

The political basis and practice of the PSC was ambiguous — sometimes stressing a labour movement orientation, at other times welcoming anti-imperialist politicians on to their platforms. Nor did the PSC have a democratic structure giving a democratic structure giving a full say to the local solidarity committees like those in Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield which have real roots in the labour movement and which have organised the successful workplace tours around the country.

Last week's *Socialist Organiser* claimed that 'it is difficult to assess the conference ... there are some grounds for thinking that the PSC may yet be able to play such a role (of building a broad working class/labour movement campaign which formally dissociates itself from the cold warriors)'.

Such an interpretation is ridiculous. The PSC conference was presented with three resolutions on political orientation. Only one of them called for dissociation from cold war warriors like Thatcher and Reagan and it was overwhelmingly thrown out. The main counterposed motion, moved by Robin Blick (described by *Socialist Organiser* as a 'Leninophobe'), said the campaign should be open to all those supporting independent trade unions everywhere.

When questioned as to whether this ambiguous resolution meant seeking support from non-labour movement forces like the SDP, the movers emphatically answered yes, and viciously attacked the notion of the campaign dissociating itself

from Reagan and Thatcher as 'narrow and sectarian'.

Even when the solidarity committees all explained that the only way they had been able to spearhead taking Solidarnosc speakers into the factories and workplaces was by differentiating themselves from Reagan/Thatcher, the PSC's individual membership massively voted for Blick's resolution. They followed this up by voting for a constitution which keeps all the power in the campaign in the hands of the London-based individual members.

It is not difficult to assess the PSC conference at all. It is quite clear that it has refused to oppose the pro-imperialist hypocrisy of Reagan and Thatcher on Poland; it has refused to base its campaign on the labour movement; and it has refused to adopt a democratic structure. There are therefore no grounds whatsoever for thinking that the PSC can play a useful role in the future.

We cannot allow to go unmentioned the appalling comments in last week's *Socialist Organiser* about Socialist Challenge. The article had an even-handed approach to the 'skirmishing' between Socialist Challenge and the PSC leaders, despite the fact that the meeting was the occasion for an orchestrated witch hunt against Socialist Challenge. Worse, some Trotskyists, specifically Socialist Challenge supporters, are mentioned in the same breath as the trade union bureaucracy, Stalinism, and Reagan/Thatcher as among the 'problems in organising solidarity with Solidarnosc'. Have the comrades of *Socialist Organiser* lost all sense of proportion?

Finally, we would appeal to the *Socialist Organiser* comrades to think again. We believe that you should return to the traditional positions of our movement on every aspect of support for the workers in the bureaucratised workers' states. That would mean not supporting a campaign that refuses to dissociate itself from the imperialists, not calling for one's own 'national labour movement marches' with no real support from any other forces.

We still believe and hope that Socialist Challenge and *Socialist Organiser* should work together in building the largest possible labour movement support for Solidarnosc.



In the aftermath of the recent defeats, King Hussein of Jordan has visited Baghdad promising the fullest support. President Mubarak has declared that Egypt supports Iraq 'as an Arab country'.

Blockade

It is evident that US imperialism will not either stand by. Their economic blockade which has resulted in major hardships for the Iranian people is clearly not enough. As the *Guardian* explained: 'The State Department, reflecting concern that Iran's recent victories over Iraq could eventually alter the political balance in the Gulf region, has called for urgent negotiations'.

It is this deepening concern over the potential of the Iranian revolution to inspire revolts in the rest of the Arab region that has

dollars a year to Iranian exiles groups.'

The larger of the two paramilitary exile groups supported by the CIA has 8000 men and is led by Rear Admiral Ahmaf Madani. He was chief of the Iranian navy under the Shah and then Khuzestan province after the monarchy was overthrown where he directed the bloody suppression of strikers. The other group consisting of 2000 men is led by General Bahra Aryana, chief of staff of the Iranian army under the Shah, responsible for the wholesale slaughter of tens of thousands of workers and others.

US support doesn't only extend to monarchist groups. The economic journal *8 Days* reports that 'US sources say Washington, Baghdad and Riyadh would all like to see Abol Assan Bani Sadr restored to power in Tehran and US officials

Solidarity Committees with Solidarnosc

Glasgow Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Ian McCalman, 18 Mossgiel Rd, Glasgow G43. Ring 041-632 1839.

Edinburgh Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Edinburgh & District Trades Council, 12 Picardy Place, Edinburgh.

Greater Manchester Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Jon Silberman, 51 Montrose House, Crete St, Oldham, Lancs. Ring 061-620 2885.

Leeds Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Dave Feickert, 28 Roundhay Mount, Leeds 8, Yorkshire. Ring 0532 490927.

South Yorks Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Rab Bird, 279 Ellesmere Road, Sheffield, S4 7DP. Tel 0742 617174.

Nottingham Labour Movement Solidarity with Solidarnosc, c/o 3 Elm Close, Nottingham.

Birmingham Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Roger Murray, 28 Blackford Road, Birmingham 11. Ring 021-773 5396.

Coventry Solidarity Committee, John Fisher c/o ASTMS, 26 Queens Rd, Coventry.

Oxford Labour Committee on Poland, 468 Banbury Rd, Oxford. Ring 0865 58238.

Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, 10 Park Drive, London NW11. Ring 01-458 1501.

Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Box 23, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8.

Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group in UK, 64 Philbeach Gardens, Earls Court, London SW5. Ring 01-373 3492.

Labour Poland Solidarity Fund, c/o Co-operative Bank, 110 Leman St, London E1.

Women in the mines — another view

THE DEBATE among our readers about whether women should work underground in the mines has been joined by EILEEN MURPHY of Bolton, Lancashire who has written a play about the women surface workers at the Wigan pits. She disagrees with the views put forward by Jack Lavin in issue 238 of Socialist Challenge as she explains....

In writing my play I made use of Angela John's extensive research (*By the Sweat of Their Brow* — Croon Helm) and I interviewed 40 women who had worked on the surface between 1910 and 1956.

Women were barred from surface work in the Wigan area in 1954. Arthur Munby made a study of them between the 1850s and 1880s, so there is documented evidence about the attitudes of the women themselves to the work on the surface, and of some of them to the underground work they had done previously.

Shocked

The 1842 Act excluding women from underground work was rushed through not because of working class agitation 'won after years of struggle' as Jack Lavin claims but because the middle class was profoundly shocked at the findings of the commission sent in to investigate child labour in the pits.

Some of the shock was right and Jack Lavin is correct to insist that there should be no romanticising of the conditions.

But a good deal of the horror was offended Victorian morality separated by class, geography and

tradition from the mining communities for whom they were legislating.

In Victorian England it was enough for a woman to wear trousers, work alongside men and get dirty, for her to be condemned.

Jack Lavin's assertion that 'the campaign wasn't so much about replacing women with men but about eliminating the worst jobs in the pits' is so generalised as to be extremely suspect.

Coal

Certainly, in Lancashire men and boys were 'drawing' coal to the main roadways as the women had done, until well into this century.

Of course the women continued to evade the law and work down because they needed the money (that's why men work down, too, isn't it?), and there were numerous women who didn't want to return to underground work.

But Munby's research shows that there were some who would have preferred to work down.

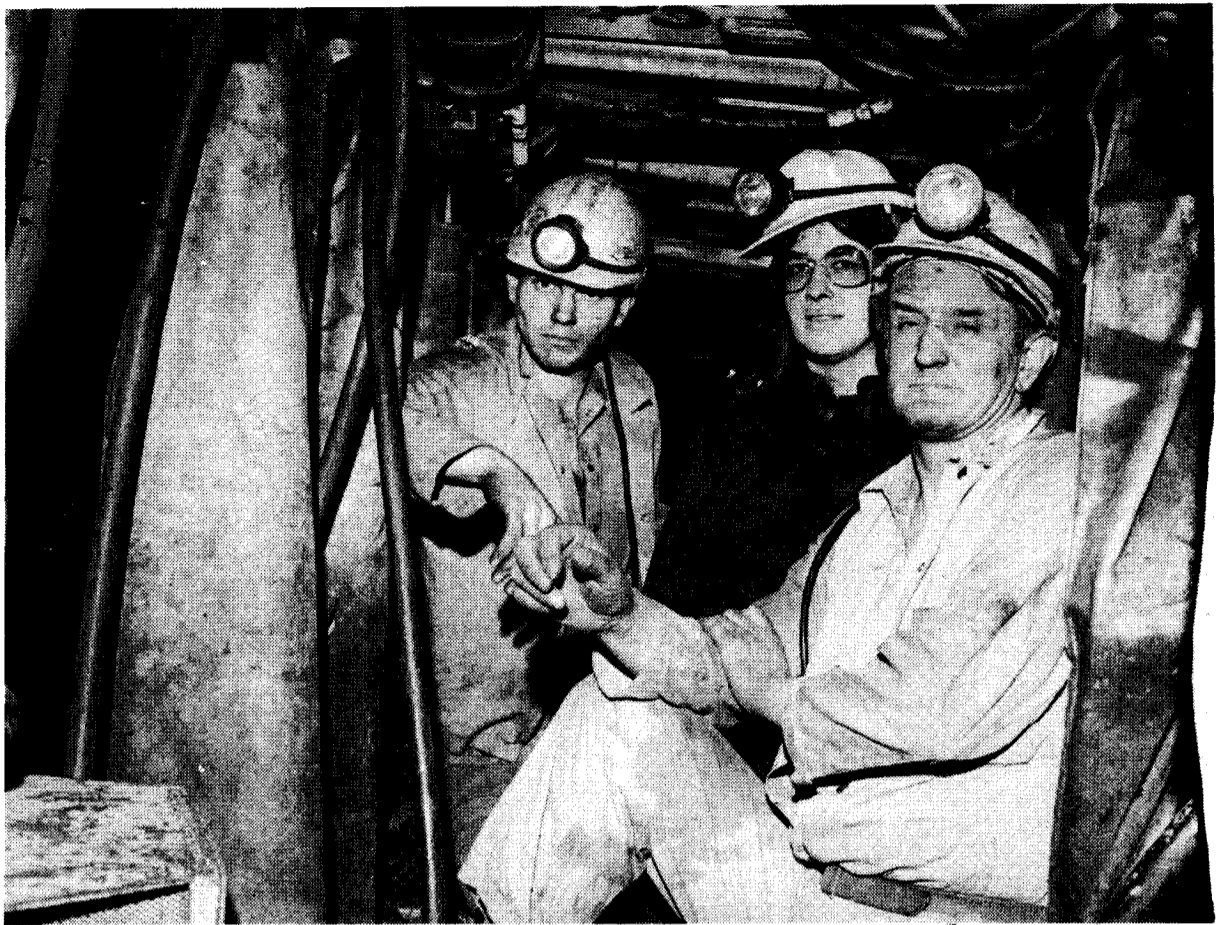
With regard to surface work we have much more information about women's preferences.

Several of the women I

interviewed had started work in the cotton mill but moved to the pit top and preferred it. Only one had not liked the work. Their unanimity is striking and they certainly didn't glamorise their work to justify their feelings.

Mary Zins' confidence that 'British miners and the National Union of Mineworkers will defend its women workers which is the principle of the unions' (SC no 238) is largely wishful thinking.

The union led the attempts to exclude women from surface work. In Wigan the men were divided but the majority of areas joined with those



Mary Zins down Walbeck pit in North Nottinghamshire

bosses who did not employ women, to try to get the women out.

The women's support came from their own unanimity, some local miners (at all levels of the union hierarchy) suffragettes and suffragists and the owners who paid them low wages.

Most of the women

were not in the union in 1887 and 1911 when the two most serious parliamentary attempts were made: however the Wigan women became members in 1918 and we would have thought that attempts to exclude them from their jobs would have given way to the full protection of the union.

But in the local NUM

minutes there is evidence that union negotiators frequently tried to persuade the owners to debar women from certain jobs.

The local agreement between the National Coal Board and the NUM (1954) which removed women from surface jobs altogether was instigated by the union supposed to represent the women.

They were picked off pit by pit, some redeployed in the kitchens, most made redundant.

With the number of surface jobs dwindling, there was no sign of opposition from the men at this sacking of a whole section of the membership.

Jobs

I haven't spoken to a single male pit worker who has claimed that the women could not do their jobs.

But in Wigan just 25 years on, when mechanisation has made both surface and underground jobs easier, the overwhelming male attitude is 'it's not a job fit for a woman' — the old Victorian moral judgement — kindly, paternalistic, and much more difficult to fight than outright aggression.

Joe Gormley last year said: 'We worked too hard and too long to get women and kids out of the pits to put them back there now, and I bloody well won't have a woman down a mine as long as I'm president.'

Those of us who remember the pin-up debate with Scargill are afraid that, despite their own differences, Arthur and Joe will be at one over this.

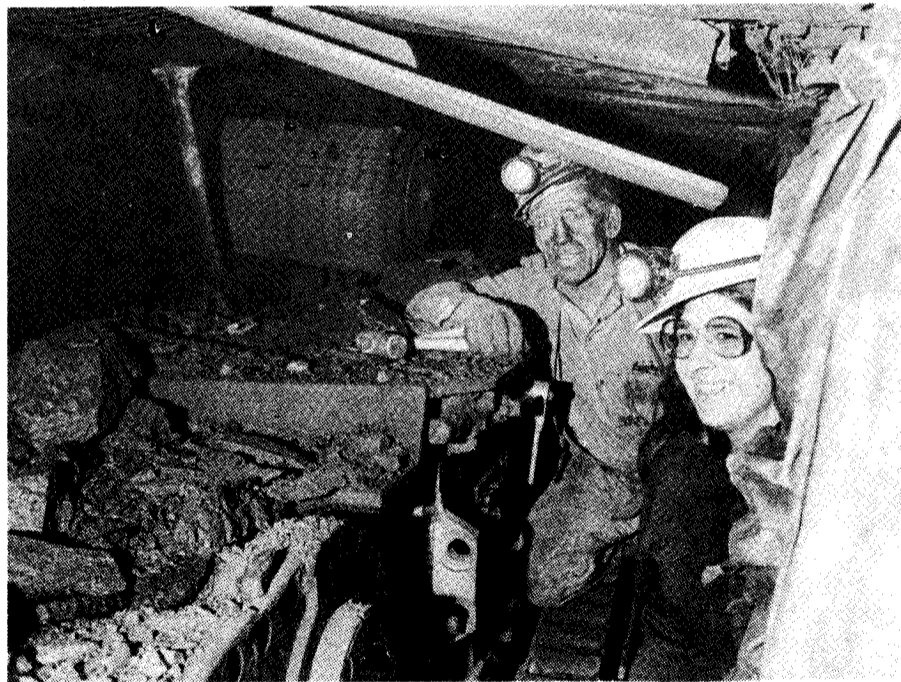
But maybe not — don't let's prejudice, but don't let's glamorise the record of the union with regard to women any more than we should glamorise the work.

That will be of no help to any women who attempt to break back into pit work in this country.

Finally, it is not illegal for women to be employed on the surface.

The exclusion of women from those jobs was done at local level and, as far as I understand, could be overruled by a national law such as the Sex Discrimination Act.

If you are interested in Eileen Murphy's play, it is called 'Pit Brow Stir' and is produced by Pit Prop Theatre which can be contacted at Atherton 892910.



Why socialists support positive action

WE reprint here an extract from a new edition of the pamphlet, 'A Woman's Right to Work: the case for positive action' produced by Socialist Challenge and Revolution, the socialist paper for youth.

It is available at 50p each from the Other Bookshop or plus 15p postage from PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

SOME socialists argue that demands for positive action are divisive — that they place women's demands at the expense of men's and are therefore not class demands.

We disagree. Women organising for their rights are a challenge to the system of divided labour, a system which is against all workers' interests.

The Militant tendency in particular thinks positive action is a substitute for class action through the trade unions and Labour Party. They argue that such demands divide the working

class.

But the working class is already divided. Women and ethnic minorities are the most exploited section of the workforce. They are constantly dragged in and out of the workforce depending on the state of the economy.

Positive action demands challenge this. They challenge the role of women as a reserve army of labour for capital and assert the right of women to a permanent place in the workforce. This benefits all workers since full employment cannot be achieved while women remain a reserve army of labour.

Positive action increases women's status in the job market and within the trade unions. It gives us more bargaining power. This doubles the strength of the trade union movement as a whole.

In some industries in the United States the inclusion of

women in male-dominated areas has acted as an impetus to fight for better safety and better training facilities for all workers.

Positive action challenges the notion that it is women's biology that prevents them from achieving full equality. This is a Tory and reactionary argument and women have proved that they are quite capable of doing any job a man can do.

It is the bureaucracy of the trade union movement who argue that such demands on positive action are divisive because they have already accepted the share of the cake offered by the bosses. Well, women and male workers alike want the whole bakery. Positive action demands a greater share.

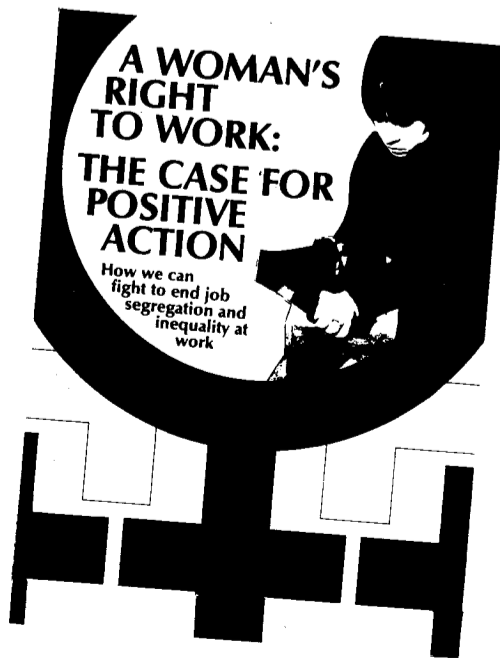
We also fight for a Labour government committed to socialist policies — for a 30 hour week with job sharing. Only such national solutions can challenge

the anarchy of the bosses' system.

Demands around positive action are seen in this context. Fighting discrimination means fighting for unity of the working class to achieve all our goals.

When women decide they have had enough, when they start to fight back who do they really challenge? It's the bosses who don't want to pay better rates, it's the bosses who don't want full employment.

Action for goals and targets to force the employers or the government to hire women, demands that they pay. If an employer claims that there is a job shortage and that this agreement must be at the expense of other workers then the trade union movement should fight to defend those jobs — not ask women to pay.



Teachers against the bomb?

By Jane Shallice, East London delegate

AFFILIATION to CND will be the first motion to be debated at the annual conference of the National Union of Teachers at Scarborough.

The motion, proposed by the Socialist Teachers Alliance, was voted top of the agenda. Despite the clear support for affiliation, however, it is likely to be opposed most strongly by teacher members of the Communist Party, whose journal *Education Today and Tomorrow* has argued that backing CND is 'divisive', 'disruptive' and will lead people up 'a blind alley'. For them 'the unilateral part of the peace motion is not only wrong in itself; it will afford some people the chance to attack the very discussion of disarmament at conference.' In other words the journal is more concerned not to upset the

right wing NUT leadership than to fight against the threats posed by Thatcher and the cold war warriors of the Tory Cabinet. The CP's support for the motion could be crucial in getting it through — this would place teachers at the centre of the campaign against the Reagan visit.

Undoubtedly the teachers' union is at a major crossroads. In the current salary claim, the right wing executive called the whole union into action — not to achieve the claim, but to get the management to agree to arbitration. Despite the fact that the Thatcher government still has a right to veto any arbitration award, the NUT leadership greeted arbitra-

tion as a victory. The conference must clearly get to grips with a real strategy for defending teachers' pay. Clearly the grand old Dukes of York (and nearly all of them are men) who run the NUT have no idea how to do it.

Votes

In the recent executive elections the votes for the majority of sitting executive members actually declined as did the number of votes cast. The one exception was Outer London, where Socialist Teachers Alliance member Ken Jones, Secretary of Barking & Dagenham Association, was elected for the first time to the executive.

The Barking and Dagenham Association

has been on strike for six weeks in defence of teachers' jobs and the union members have so far forced the Labour council to reduce the threatened job loss by at least half. This is an exemplary fight which should demonstrate to all that a fightback against the Tory initiated cuts is possible. Their fight is not over and others are to come. At the annual conference the Socialist Teachers Alliance will be arguing for motions on pay and cuts which aim to make a reality of a united public sector alliance against the Tories, and which prepares for the fight against the proposed Tebbit legislation. It is clear from a number of executive amendments that the left has forced the union to adopt policies on a range of issues which represent a step forward — on racism and equality for women — but on some central issues the essentially right wing nature of the leadership shows through. They refuse to back campaigns in defence of the 1967 Abortion Act or to campaign against the racist legislation of the Immigration Acts.

The election of Ken Jones and the return of Bernard Regan in Inner London, together with the votes achieved by other left candidates, most notably Tony Harrison in Greater Manchester and Colin Adams in Outer London, reflects the membership's search for an alternative strategy.

Wultex workers on strike

By Matthew Creighton
SHOP FLOOR workers at Wultex factories in Huddersfield and Horbury have come out on strike. Members of the AUEW and the Boiler-makers' Union, the hundred strikers, are determined not to see their wages cut this year as they were last year. They have rejected a 7.4 per cent offer.

But the main stumbling block, say strikers on the

Huddersfield picket line, is their demand for a sick pay scheme. They have been requesting one for 5 years but have got nowhere.

The Australian-owned company, which makes mining equipment, is certainly profitable. Within weeks of the wages settlement last year which lost the workers money, profits were registered for nearly £1m.

'Maggie Thatcher says that if we produce more we can be paid more. This company is getting thirty per cent more work out of us, for less money,' said a striker in Horbury. The dispute is now official. The

next steps are to organise blacking of Wultex products by the NUM, and of any sub-contractors who may scab on the strike.

Lyons Bakery dispute

By Matthew Creighton
SIXTEEN hundred bakers' union members in Wakefield and Barnsley are in dispute with Lyons' Bakeries. They are an official strike after rejecting a wage cut in the form of a 7.2 per cent pay offer. The

union has lodged a 19.5 per cent claim which would have made up the pay lost in previous years.

'We're out till we get a decent offer from the company', was the feeling firmly expressed on the picket line in Wakefield.

The Wakefield Express, doing its best to weaken the strike, has given its front page lead over to management's claim that jobs are threatened by the strike. But the strikers aren't impressed. It is clear to them that if orders are lost, it is the fault of management, in failing to act reasonably and to at least maintain their wage levels.

Labour victory and Poland dominate NUS conference

By Chris Bertram and Ian Hawkins
LAST WEEK'S conference of the National Union of Students at Blackpool saw a sweeping victory for the National Organisation of Labour Students. Previously the union leadership has been dominated by an alliance of the Communist Party and Liberals, but this time NOLS candidates won all 7 executive places that they contested, marking a widespread feeling that students needed a more fighting leadership against Tory attacks.

The enthusiasm of rank and file Labour students was tempered however by doubts over whether the Clause 4 leadership of NOLS is prepared to break from the policies of the Left Alliance. These fears were reinforced by NOLS' decision to support certain Left Alliance candidates for full-time posts and to transfer their votes to Tory

and Liberal candidates in the name of 'pluralism'.

This concern of NOLS members was also shown in the high vote for Labour Party member and Socialist Students Alliance (SSA) candidate, Sarah Veale, for Welfare vice-president, who easily defeated Trevor Gill of the Left Alliance who had the backing of Clause 4.

NOLS supporters in the colleges will have to build the maximum self-organisation of students to force the new NUS president Neil Stewart and his team, to unite students against Tory policies, on the cuts, student autonomy and on international issues such as Poland and El Salvador.

In fact it was the issue of Poland and solidarity with the independent student union, NSZ, which polarised the whole conference, including the NOLS caucuses. The NUS executive ignored the appeal of the NZS representative at the conference not to send an NUS delegation to a Moscow meeting where the state-controlled union would be present. Many NOLS members were appalled when the NOLS caucus voted to stand a candidate for election to this delegation.

In response, Socialist Challenge supporters together with rank and file NOLS members, and other socialist currents, decided to stand a candidate on the basis of boycotting the election. They explained that solidarity with Polish students did not intensify the Cold War, rather it was those 'socialists' who refused to defend Solidarnosc

that let Reagan and Thatcher off the hook.

That the Tory government is no friend of the Polish students was underlined when the Thatcher government refused to let another NZS representative enter the country to attend the conference. When outgoing president David Aaronovitch ruled that even if the boycottists were elected a delegation would still be sent to the meeting, a large number of delegates walked out of the hall in protest.

It is clear that Poland will be a major issue at the NOLS conference next week. The divide on Poland runs right through the middle of the Clause 4 group. Revolutionary internationalists within NOLS should continue to fight for solidarity with Solidarnosc and to remove those who equivocate or side with General Jaruzelski.

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Darcus Howe

'Thatcher and Whitelaw have no authority in the black community'

ONE YEAR AFTER the Brixton riots there is widespread debate on community policing and 'law and order'. At the recent enormously successful First International Black Radical and Third World Book Fair, Toni Gorton talked to Darcus Howe, the editor of *Race Today* about how the black movement views the 'law and order' debate.

What do you think of the demands by the GLC leaders for greater accountability by London's police?

The big issue with the police is not calling for their accountability but calling for a massive reduction in police power. This is avoided by all.

There should be a ban on stop and search. This power should be removed by the British parliament.

However, this can't be won without the mass mobilisation of the black community and its allies — and this is on the agenda. Do you think there will be more uprisings this summer?

I don't know if there will be, but if there are I know where I stand.

But we do need to advance to another stage, we

can't remain here forever. Some issue will arise especially over the extension of police powers which might even possibly extend to an international campaign.

A mass movement is developing now, generated from within the New Cross campaign and similar ones that will transcend this stage and go further.

Out of that dynamic will come another stage of political action against the state institutions such as the police and the courts.

Yes, but in the face of the current developments — the use of racist crime statistics, new moves on law and order and so on — is what you're saying enough?

But against your examples I would say that the events

of last summer, the campaign around New Cross, the Black People's Day of Action, this Book Fair — ideas are being generated.

These two worlds face each other and the contest is on — in the context of British society — not up in the sky.

The writ of the present government doesn't extend to the black community. Thatcher and Whitelaw have no authority in the black community and that is bound to extend to the community as a whole because blacks are not 'queen bees' who exist separately.

But in the face of the sharp threat posed by Thatcher isn't more required now?

We have to answer this from within our own historical logic. We're well poised to make an historic intervention into organised political activity. Within the next five to ten years there will be a breakthrough.

One thing that is required now is revolutionary patience and foresight and we have that in abundance in the Alliance (Race Today Collective, Black Parents Movement, Bogle l'Ouverture). We have now established ourselves as a formidable force.

What about your relation to the organised labour movement?

We're part of it: as black workers we're influenced by and we influence what happens in British factories.

There is an enormous political contest in the labour movement against those who have dominated it since 1926. I see this as a major task which we don't enter from a position of weakness.

Is the black community concerned about recent developments?

I don't think they're concerned but watching and waiting to intervene. There is a watching which denotes anxiety and hopelessness but I haven't seen that anywhere.

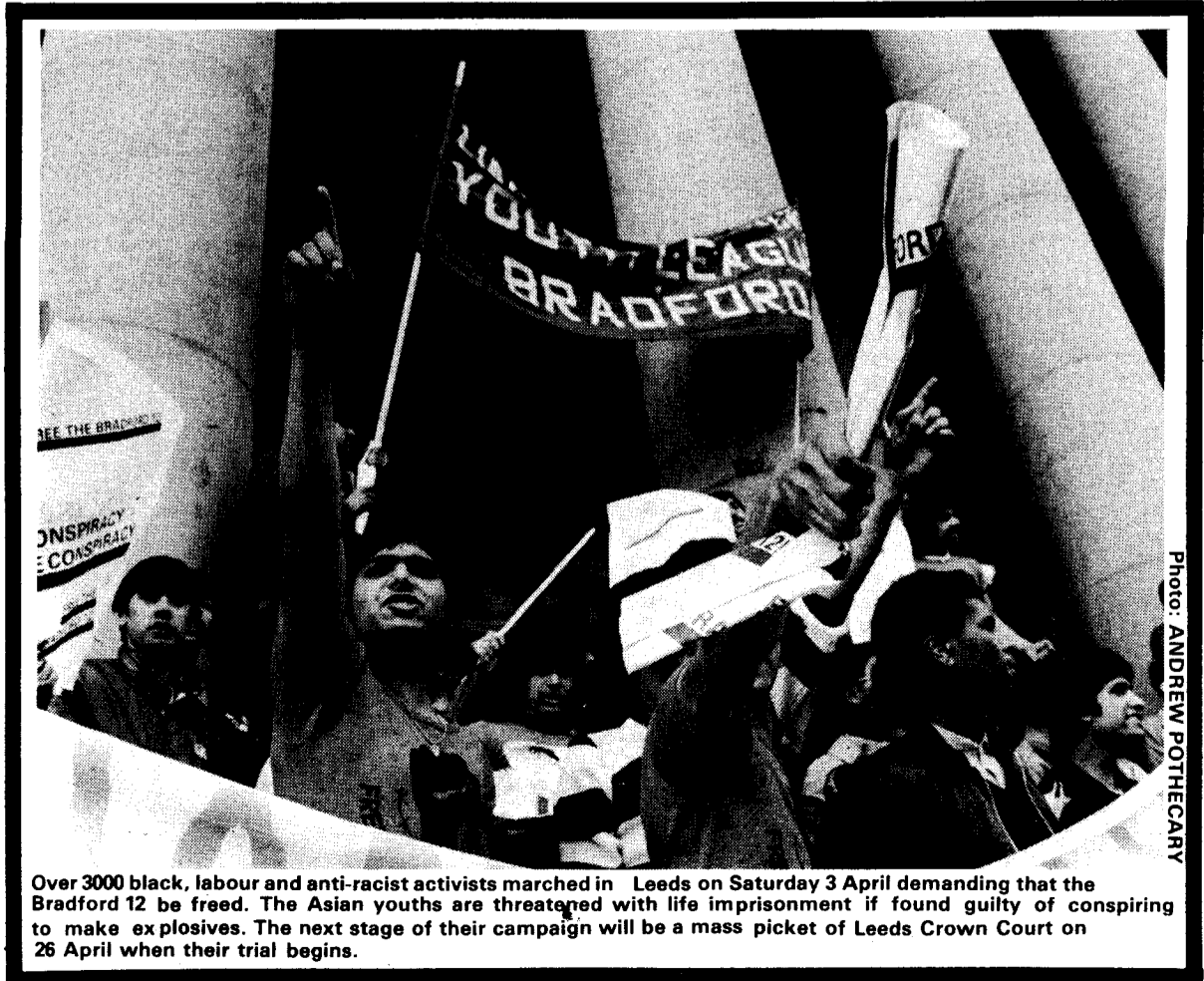


Photo: ANDREW POTHECARY

Over 3000 black, labour and anti-racist activists marched in Leeds on Saturday 3 April demanding that the Bradford 12 be freed. The Asian youths are threatened with life imprisonment if found guilty of conspiring to make explosives. The next stage of their campaign will be a mass picket of Leeds Crown Court on 26 April when their trial begins.

MASSEY FERGUSON Sitting in to fight the sack

By Pat Hickey

MORE THAN 3000 Massey Ferguson workers in Coventry have gone into occupation to stop management plans to sack 140 people.

Massey Ferguson had tried to achieve a cutback of 800 in the labour force in their UK operation by voluntary redundancies.

Most of these were in the Coventry plant.

But the area has already been hard hit by the crisis in the car in-

dustry, with the closure of BL's Canley Plant, big cuts at Talbot, and the spin-off effects in component companies.

The result is that Coventry has, in the space of four years, gone from being an area of full employment to having an unemployment rate of over 17 per cent.

As you approach Coventry by train a peeling notice board proudly announces 'Coventry the City of Skills and Opportunity'. It is now a city with plenty of skills but no opportunity to use them.

With no prospect of finding alternative work the 'golden handshake' offered by Masseys did not get the required number of volunteers. So they turned to compulsory redundancies. A mass meeting of the 3000 manual workers re-

jected this move and voted with only 100 votes against, for occupation of the plant until the threat of sackings with withdrawn.

In response to this management has withdrawn the offer of voluntary redundancy to those who would have got more than £2,000. They have also stated that if the occupation continues after 5 April work will be transferred to Massey's French plant.

The unions are demanding that the company introduce a work sharing system, but Masseys seem determined to push ahead with their plans. No doubt they are encouraged in this hard line by the fact that the jobs massacre in the West Midlands has gone through with little resistance.

Only at Ansell's was there a fightback, and that was sold out by transport union regional secretary Brian Mathers. The main unions in Masseys are the TGWU and the AUEW. One of the first tasks for the strikers will be organising to ensure that the officials cannot sell them out.

This will mean campaigning for support throughout the labour movement. The dispute will need to be turned out to the wider labour movement as rapidly as possible, and some of the lessons of the Laurence Scott struggle drawn on.

The strike committee would have much to learn from the LSE strike committee who are pushing forward the Rule 14 Campaign against Boyd and Duffy's sell-out policies.

Laurence Scott workers face new attack

By Pete Clifford

SHOP STEWARDS who led the Laurence Scott battle in Manchester are facing a fresh and united attack from their employer and union leaders, which could be a foretaste of things to come under Tebbit's law.

Over a month ago, convenor Denis Barry and five other stewards received a bill for £6,800 for the eviction from their occupied factory back in August. At the time they were rightly preoccupied with fighting the scabbing operation organised by Anderton's police force which finally broke the strikes.

They passed on the matter to their union's district committee. Just a month previously the Plessey's sit-in in Bathgate Scotland had been successfully maintained against legal threats, so there was some hope in the Laurence Scott camp.

But last week, just before they were due to appear in court to contest this, a bombshell came: a letter from Sir John Boyd, AUEW general secretary, informing the district committee that not only would the union not meet or contest any claim for costs following 14 July, the day the union executive made the strike unofficial, but they wouldn't even provide legal aid.

Billy Partlan, senior steward, summed up their anger: 'The unions are giving Tebbit grounds he's not entitled to. Plessey's fought and won that an occupation is a legitimate form of industrial dispute. Now the membership is being attacked again and

all the union leaders can do is pontificate in public against Tebbit, while we pick up the tab.'

Billy Partlan explained the background to this: 'We occupied the factory on the recommendation of local engineering union officials, they told us this was the best form of industrial dispute. When Boyd made the strike unofficial he acted out of rule. By withdrawing the union's solicitors he also acted out of rule. In fact the union's solicitors continued to act for us after 14 July. That the dispute was unofficial was contested in any case and only ratified by the union's national committee in November.

'The union must take responsibility, they contested the eviction and they should contest this bill or take the consequences. If the shop stewards are made liable it's a deterrent for others to fight. This is just what Tebbit wants.'

Shop stewards are appealing for financial aid to fight this. As Billy Partlan says: 'The fight against Tebbit starts now by supporting and defending people such as ourselves.'

Trade unions and Labour Parties are urged to send financial support to the LSE joint shop stewards, 20 Roundcroft, Romiley, Cheshire.

'Shutting the gate and taking a stand'

JIM DUNN, the transport union shop steward convenor at Massey Ferguson spoke to Valerie Coultas.

'Management refused to accept our work sharing proposals. We've done worksharing before.

'The difference between worksharing and a cut in pay is that one is imposed on you by someone else whereas the decision to workshare is a self imposed decision to save jobs.

'The main issue has to be to take a stand against compulsory redundancies. If they speed up the track they'll have to bring back that labour. If it's been laid off then they can't take it back. But if we've won worksharing the work will be there.

'Everybody else in Coventry has accepted redundancy; they cried into their beer in the pubs. This action is about shutting the gate and taking a stand.

'This city had the biggest engineering complex in England. What's happened to it? I used to come to work with huge traffic jams. Where are they now?'



Railworkers strike to save union militant

By two Kings Cross guards as told to Toni Gorton
IN A flash unofficial strike on 1 April, around 1000 railworkers stopped Kings Cross station dead for nearly 24 hours against a management suspension of leading union militant Steve Forey.

At the end of the day management was forced to withdraw the suspension and reinstate him.

Steve Forey, a driver, was a main spokesperson for the union during the recent ASLEF dispute. He led the blacking action against *The Sun* newspaper and has been defending ASLEF members on disciplinary charges as part of his job as LDC (shop steward). He is also the health and safety representative.

Management, who have been engaged in a campaign against union activists since the ASLEF dispute, demanded that Forey restrict his union activities and ask permission before leaving the depot.

They called for a meeting with him but refused him the right to be accompanied by another union member. He refused to attend.

On 12.45 Thursday 1 April the area manager, Charles Wort, went to the LDC's room, suspended Forey and ordered him off the station. Within minutes the workforce responded.

12.45: Immediate walk out by both guards and drivers. Signalmen agree to support.

Messages go out along the line for crews to get

14.30: At reconvened mass meeting train crews are informed that despite agreement with British Rail regional headquarters at York that Steve Forey be reinstated, local management maintain the suspension.

18.00 hours. 20.00: Mass meeting convened to hear report back from meeting with management.

Steve Forey has been reinstated and all charges dropped.

Management offer to pay all train crews who sign on for duty a full shift pay. They will not pay those who booked off on earlier shifts.

The meeting demands that everyone be paid or

the strike will continue until 08.00 hours Friday morning.

21.00: Mass meeting told that management refuses to pay. Strike continues. Pickets arranged to cover depot until 08.00 hours.

08.00: Mass meeting debates whether or not to return to work. Some members argue that we should continue the strike until management agree to pay us.

Both the LDCs argue

that we should return to work having secured our main objective. Steve Forey says: 'We've showed up the area manager as the April Fool.'

A message was sent to the signalmen thanking them for their support and saying if they need our support in the future we'll be right behind them.

Also decide to immediately respond to any further attempts at victimisation.



Lord McCarthy: his tribunal should be reporting any day now to BR's consternation

back to the station. Arrangements are made for signalmen to walk out at 13.30 and a mass meeting to take place.

13.30: Signalmen from Kings Cross box 'pull the plug' thereby halting all movement of trains between Peterboro and London.

Mass meeting endorses strike call. ASLEF headquarters informed of dispute.

The meeting recommends the signal box returns to work to enable train crews to get to their home depots.

It is also decided to continue the strike by train crews to 0800 hours when a further mass meeting will be held.

Mass picket is set up. 16.30: Management request meeting with local reps and a full time official of ASLEF. Meeting set for

Tricia, ASLEF, and Jane, TSSA, railworkers at Kings Cross

AT Kings Cross feelings are running strong. Management miscalculated the strength of feeling.

The area manager took on the strongest section of the workforce — we won — but the next time he will try on the weakest. But if anything like this happens we'll all go out again.

This thing has been building up for a long while now. People are being disciplined for nothing.

One person was brought up before the area manager for not pulling the chain in the loo.

Another was brought in for chewing gum. The manager demanded he take it out of his mouth, so he did and threw it on the manager's carpet.

It's all things like this. 'Wart' as we call him even tried to sack a TSSA LDC for incompetence.

This manager was put into Kings Cross to clean it up but he's done us a favour. The workforce has never been so united and all because of his attacks on individuals and our elected leadership.

Steve Forey, ASLEF driver, at Kings Cross

WE won the day! The workers aren't happy about going back without settling the pay issue but there isn't any alternative.

The important thing is that we've established the principle of no victimisation.

It may be that this attempt to victimise me was a testing of the water as far as finding out how the workers will respond to an attack by the British Rail Board. But they've found the water boiling hot.

It's backfired. This is the first time for example that the signalmen have been with us so solidly. I can't remember such unity.

The picketing was more widely supported than during the official strike earlier this year.

I think this is because the workers feel under the hammer from management who have been virtually running a campaign of terror. They've had enough.

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Socialist Challenge

TUC won't scare Tebbit

By Toni Gorton

'THE big question is: what are we going to do in the face of this declaration of war by the Tories?' This challenge thrown down by Arthur Scargill, newly elected president of the miners' union, received the feeblest of replies from the massed ranks of the leaders of Britain's trade unions, meeting in Wembley on 5 April.

A vague atmosphere of worry hung over the conference of executives of TUC affiliated unions meeting to discuss their response to the Tebbit

Employment Bill. But the worry never translated itself into a clear guide to action for the millions of workers whose hard-won rights for trade

union organisation are under threat.

The main provisions of the bill include banning industrial action arising from:

- disputes other than those between workers and their own employer
- disputes outside the government's definition of industrial relations questions

It will also be used to:

- force strikers back to work on pain of court orders, fines and even imprisonment
- open up the unions to be sued for huge sums of up to £250,000
- reward non-unionists dismissed under a 100 per cent membership agreement to claim sums up to £20,000 from union funds

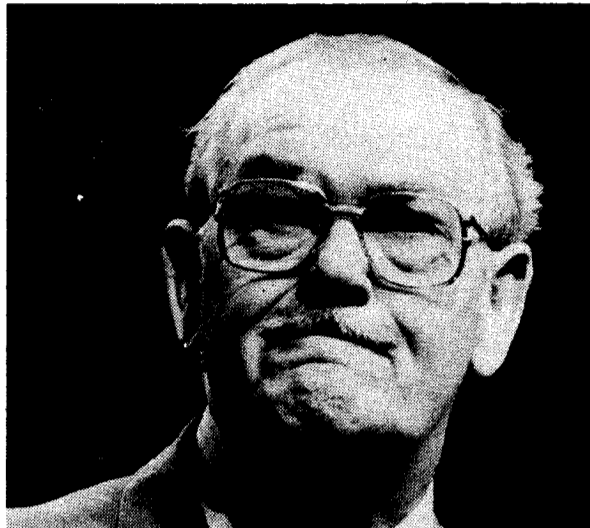
- bar a closed shop agreement which doesn't win the support of more than 80 per cent of workers in five-yearly ballots
- allow the bosses to give four days notice to striking employees without recourse to an industrial tribunal.

These staggering restrictions will become law in June without any serious challenge by the TUC.

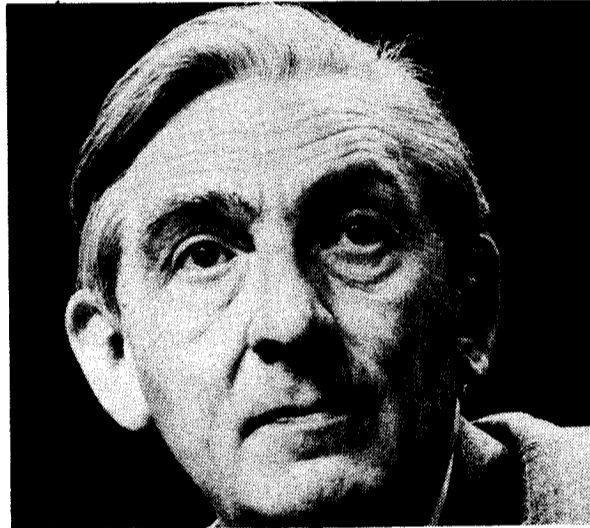
Despite this the trade union leaders have faced very little criticism. The picket of Wembley, calling for a mass lobby of parliament, organised by the Liaison Committee for Defence of the Trade Unions mobilised fewer than 300 mainly from left groups.



Arthur Scargill, miners' president



Terry Duffy, rightwing AUEW leader



Len Murray, TUC chairman

All photos: GM COOKSON

Inside, David Basnett of the general workers' union warned that 'we're on the edge of a precipice and we've got to stop sleep walking'.

The TUC has been acting more like the walking dead!

Instead of a co-ordinated campaign of mass activity directed against the Tory government involving public meetings, demonstrations, lobbies, petitions — the TUC has settled for polite talks, a 'tomorrow we'll struggle' line and a wistful reliance on the next Labour government to repeal Tebbit.

Still without proposals to mobilise mass working class action against the bill before June, the General Council presented an eight point plan to undermine its implementation.

Key to this is a campaign to convince the bosses that the bill is not in their interests.

Sid Weighell of the railworkers' union went a step further by arguing that the TUC campaign should be co-ordinated with the bosses.

Other main points include:

- informing the rank and file about the implications of the bill
- no participation in secret ballots or acceptance of public funds for ballots
- stronger inter-union co-ordination and consultation

- possible financial aid for unions faced with legal action
- no co-operation with industrial tribunals on union membership questions
- establishing a Campaign and Defence Fund with a levy of 10p from every union member

Finally, if all else fails, the TUC will consider industrial action but 'not to bring down the government'.

Len Murray, general secretary of the TUC, would 'welcome' public concern bringing about an early election and a Labour government being elected.

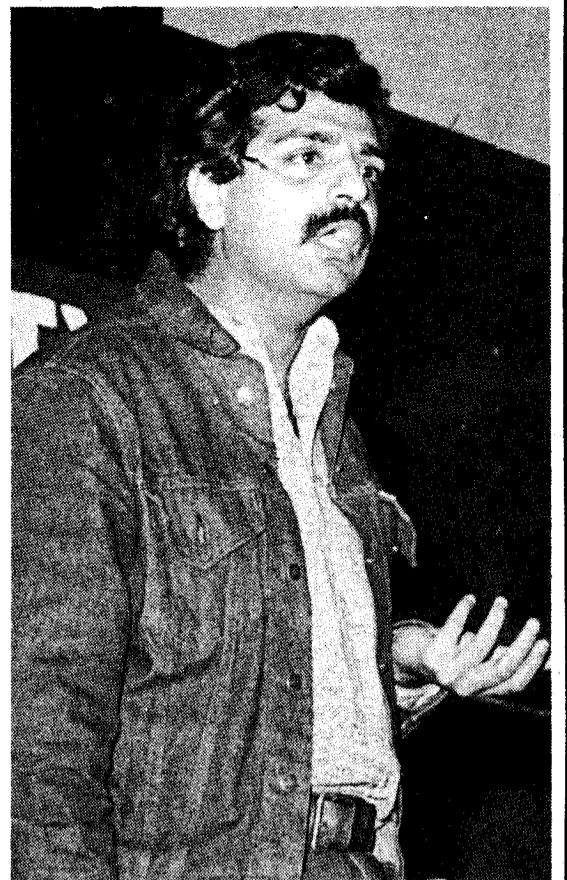
The unanimous agreement by the executives with the TUC plan reflects a common need for unity in the face of this vicious attack.

However there is no real agreement on some fundamental questions such as how far to go in defying the law and whether the funds shall be used for a political campaign or paying legal costs.

Indeed, some unions declared that they will not be held back by the TUC if industrial action is called for.

The sheer hypocrisy of many of the union leaders was topped off by engineering leader, Terry Duffy — who has for years sabotaged the right of AUEW members to have any say in their union.

'If you want democracy,' he said, 'you take your orders from the bottom.'



No witch-hunts Support Tariq Ali

By Tessa van Gelderen

TARIQ ALI has once again been refused membership of the Labour Party by the organisation committee. With the National Executive almost certain to endorse that decision, and with Hornsey Labour Party facing possible disbandment, the left has to repond immediately.

Tariq Ali has been denied membership solely on the grounds that he is a revolutionary socialist. Failure to launch a massive campaign in support of Tariq Ali will open the flood gates to the witch-hunting of the right.

This is not only an attack on Tariq's views but on the democratic rights of all members of the party to hold positions at odds with the leadership. It is the regime of the thought police.

A defeat on this question will be a setback for those who are fighting to get the Labour Party committed to a manifesto for the next election that stands by conference policy: the scrapping of Cruise and Trident; withdrawal from the EEC and no incomes policy.

These are the gains that the left has won. It is these policies that will win thousands of workers to support Labour. That is why the right has to be defeated now. That is why Tariq Ali has to be defended.

At a time when local Labour parties are suspended during elections, comrades should be preparing now to send an avalanche of motions to the NEC at the first possible opportunity. Labour Party members in the unions should take this up immediately.

Next week Socialist Challenge will be carrying an interview with Tariq Ali.

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