

Socialist Challenge

STOP THE WAR WITHDRAW THE FLEET

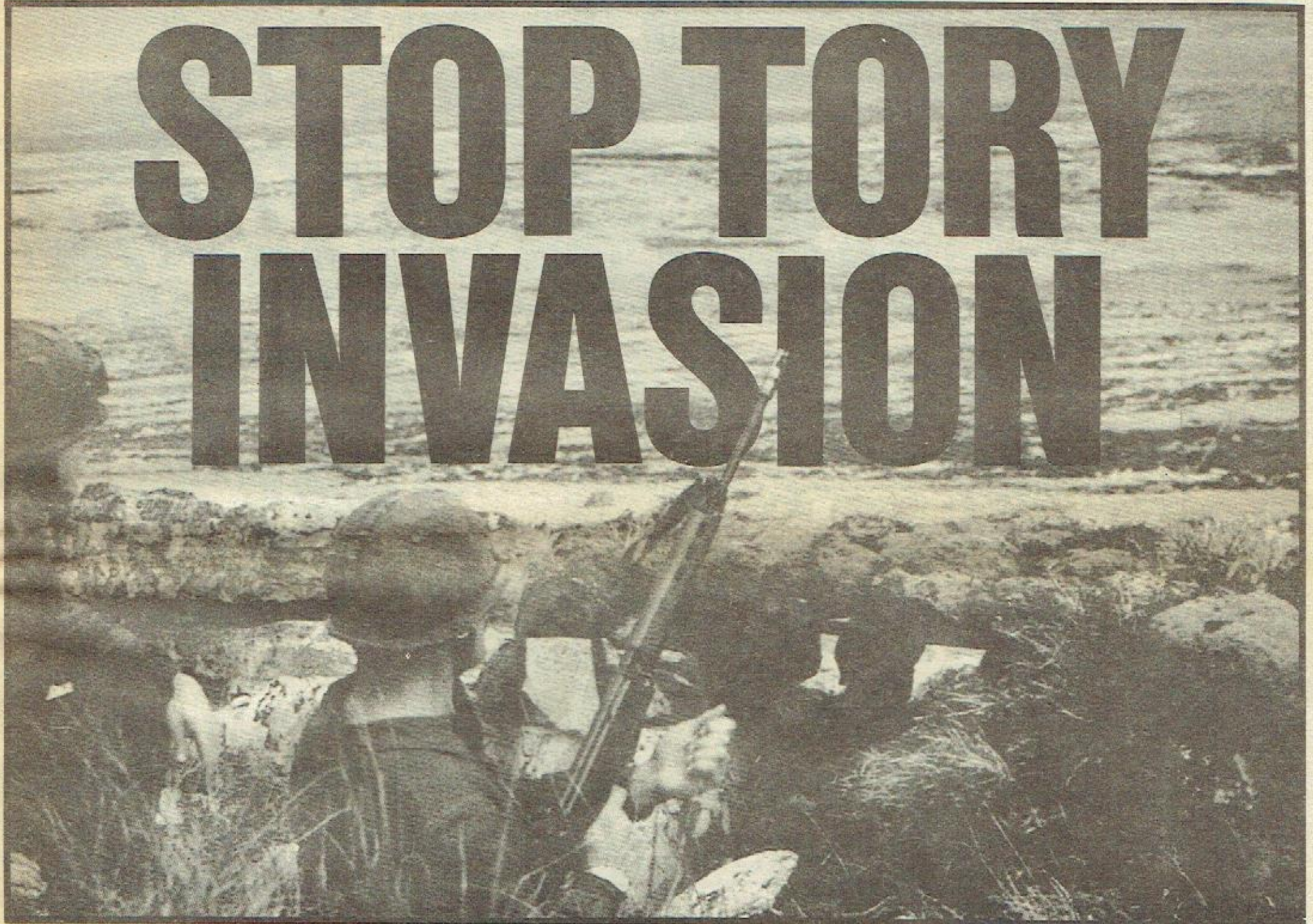
**Demonstrate
this Sunday**

Assemble Tower Hill 2.30

March down Fleet St

Called by Falklands ad hoc committee

STOP TORY INVASION



COFFINS PREPARED

By our railway correspondent

A corner of the curtain has been raised on the lunatic lengths which Thatcher is prepared to go over the war in the Malvinas/Falklands by certain moves now being taken in the railways.

In London, the Bounds Green carriage depot has been asked to put itself on a state of readiness. It is geared to converting mark 2 sleeping carriages into hospital trains within 60 hours.

In the Southern region, evidence has come to light that preparations are underway to transport large quantities of coffins to South of England ports.

There also seems to have been certain moves to prepare for conscription of certain BR personnel. There's a circular in existence asking for the listing of non-essential personnel — with particular emphasis on skilled trades. Traditionally BR employees have been used for their maintenance skills in all three services.

All army reserves have received telegrams to report for duty and Royal Navy reserve members have been called up.

Editorial

AS WE go to press, Britain was closing in on the Malvinas/Falklands. A full scale invasion simply awaits the engineering of the breakdown in negotiations at the United Nations.

Thatcher will do everything to avoid a negotiated settlement. It is a scandal that the Argentinians should be asked to make any concessions. The Malvinas are Argentina's. Yet, Tory policy throughout has systematically pitched for a crushing Argentine defeat.

The islands are now being systematically bombarded from British ships a mere 10 miles off the coast. Commando units are already on the islands blowing up communications equipment, attacking gun emplacements and destroying sentry posts. This constitutes an invasion.

Britain has no right to these islands and must be forced to withdraw forthwith.

**FIGHT
THATCHER
NOT ARGENTINA**

The local election results are a damning indictment of Michael Foot's leadership of the Labour Party. The argument that the war should be backed to win votes has proven to be complete hog-wash. Blood is just as much on Foot's hands as Thatcher's. It is this British and Argentinian workers' blood which has transfused new life into this decrepit government.

There are good grounds for thinking that a decisive lead will find a deep response. The sewer press has chosen to highlight the 70 per cent of people that would support an invasion of the Malvinas/Falklands. They fail to point out the much more significant figure of only just over a half (55 per cent) would support such action if there is loss of British life. And if pigs had wings, they could fly!

In the event of such deaths — which there will be — Labour could win a decisive majority if it put the fight against Thatcher at the centre of its attentions.

Foot has presented his support for Thatcher's war as a means of helping Argentinian workers overthrow Galtieri's junta. This is utter hypocrisy.

Real support to Argentinian workers means

- Hand back the Islands — something demanded by Argentinian workers as well as Galtieri.
- Hand over all British assets — plundered from the sweat of Argentinian workers.
- Cancel all Argentinian debts to British

banks — to stop British bosses sponging off the backs of Argentinian workers.

This is a socialist and internationalist policy. These ideas should be drawn together into a plan and put to a joint meeting between the TUC, the Labour Party and the Argentinian trade union federation, the CGT.

This would signal stepping up the war against Thatcher on all fronts — against Tebbit, unemployment and especially against her policy of colonial plunder. For it is in order to maintain Britain's predator role in the world that the working class is facing such a vicious war on the home front. The two things go together. Thatcher will be overthrown by defeating her war.

All socialists should put resolutions to Labour parties and trade unions for:

- An immediate unilateral ceasefire
- Immediate withdrawal from the Malvinas/Falklands
- Immediate withdrawal of the fleet
- Labour to break from any support for the Tories' war

Such resolutions to be linked with calls to action to all working people to mobilise against Thatcher's war through rallies, pickets and demonstrations.

But it also has to be said that Michael Foot has now squandered any claims to speak on behalf of British working people. He must be challenged for the leadership of the Labour Party and removed.

All out 23 May — make it the big one!

THE MEDIA AND THE MALVINAS

Lies, hysteria, racism

By Phil Hearse

THE DAILY MIRROR, a confused and vacillating newspaper, which generally reflects the views of the Labour leadership, launched a vicious attack on the Sun newspaper last Saturday. It was replying to the accusation made by the Sun that the Daily Mirror, the Guardian and Peter Snow of the BBC were guilty of 'treason' for not supporting Thatcher's war crusade enthusiastically enough.

Said the Mirror: 'The Sun is to journalism what Dr Josef Goebbels was to truth', and suggested that every copy of the Sun should carry a government health warning: 'reading this newspaper may damage your mind'.

The editor of the Guardian, Peter Hetherington, said that the Guardian would not reply since 'Sun readers don't tend to see the Guardian and vice versa'.

What infuriated the Mirror of course was the fact that it, together with the Guardian and the BBC has supported the war effort, albeit in the case of the Mirror and the Guardian with slightly less over-the-top 'Nuke Buenos Aires'-style enthusiasm. The Mirror staunchly defended its own patriotism. Both papers supported the sending of the fleet.

The truth is, despite the Sun's ravings, that the whole of the media, both TV and press, have engaged in an orgy of social patriotism. As Tony Benn rightly pointed out, BBC news bulletins have been turned into half-hour long propaganda broadcasts for the Ministry of Defence.

MoD spokesperson, the sinister and creepy Ian MacDonald, has been turned into a media cult figure and given unlimited time to purvey the government's heavily censored accounts of what is going on.

Obvious lies have been taken as good coin — for example the claim that the Argentinian patrol boat blown out of the water by Sea King helicopters with the loss of 50 lives had 'opened fire on a helicopter'.

If anything, the ITN news bulletin have been even worse. Alastair Burnett, Thatcher supporter, former editor of the Economist and ITN superno is given free rein to make his own comments at the end of each edition of 'News at Ten'.

But without doubt the crudest and most demented has been the Sun. Its reporter on board HMS Invincible Tony Snow wrote 'Up yours Galtieri' on the side of a sidewinder missile and the Sun proudly announced that it was this missile which had brought down an Argentinian Canberra bomber.

The Sun's racism has



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

The MOD's Dalek gives the news

been crudely displayed in its systematic use of the term 'Argies' to describe Argentinian soldiers — thus 'British Warship sunk by Argies', '1200 Argies drown' and so on.

When it comes to some 'analysis' of the war the Sun is just as demented: 'Argentina is in the grip of uncontrollable desires, fuelled by impossible fantasies...'

Unlike of course the Thatcher government, which as everyone knows is perfectly rational in its belief that Britain is capable of hanging on to the Malvinas, ruling the waves and teaching the 'dagos' a lesson they won't forget.

Racism intruded into a BBC news bulletin which seriously warned that we had to take into account that Argentinians are 'sort of Latin American

Italians' — and as all right-thinking TV viewers know, Italians are excitable, given to uncontrollable passions and regularly throw up posturing dictators.

The whole sickening business has been given a filip by Thatcher's statement in the Commons that much of the news media coverage has been 'deeply offensive' because reporters insisted on referring to British troops as 'the British' rather than 'our troops', 'our boys' or whatever.

Last Monday Francis Pym also weighed in against the BBC bizarrely accusing it of bias against Britain. Tuesday's Daily Mail published a series of interviews with people who were 'outraged' by the BBC's coverage. They were a 51-year-old bank manager from Aldershot



(!), a 39-year-old auditor from Chatham (!), a 26-year-old marketing manager from Billingshurst and a 69-year-old chartered accountant from Richmond Park Surrey. Clearly a cross section of the British people!

The Daily Telegraph last week published an article explaining that Washington was baffled by both the British and

Argentinian lies about what was really happening in the war. These lies are systematically conveyed by ITV, BBC and all the press. Never has the power of the media to whip up public opinion been so clearly demonstrated. Last Sunday's demonstration got it right by marching to

the BBC. The left must continue its own counter-offensive against the reactionaries in the media. And most of all it must redouble its own efforts to get out the truth.



Socialist Challenge FUND DRIVE '82

Never has the need for the revolutionary press been more graphically demonstrated. Socialist Challenge right from the beginning of the Malvinas crisis has hammered away at the insanity and injustice of the war hysteria. On this page we show how the popular press has dealt with the issue. But Socialist Challenge doesn't have Rupert Murdoch's millions — in fact we're desperately short of money and lead a hand-to-mouth existence. So if you agree with us on the Malvinas please ensure that we have the ammunition to fight back — money to ensure that our paper comes out and fights back. If you've been meaning to send us the odd pound or two, but haven't quite got around to it, then this of all weeks is the time to do it.

Now back the truth...

Their morals and ours — look at the figures and send your donation to Socialist Challenge now!

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

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

Name.....
 Address.....
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 Union/CLP (if any).....
 Send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



Our thanks this week to:

Swindon	£34.00
Brian Slocock	39.00
JA Vandor	5.00
P O'Sullivan	4.00
Bath	37.00
Middlesborough	15.00
Malcolm, Haringey	10.00
Wakefield	40.00
Brent	100.00
Islington	110.00
D Power	2.00
West London	250.00
TOTAL	£596.00
Weekly target	1230.76
Total so far	£3126.00
Total should be	£6153.80
Shortfall so far	£3027.24

WHO CAN overthrow the junta in Argentina? The Argentina working class, with a valiant revolutionary tradition, has a better track record than the British navy. No-one symbolises this better than Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, the best known revolutionary of his time.

Che embodied the achievements of a new generation of Latin American fighters. An internationalist who left his own country to make revolution in another land, he came to socialism independently of the 'official' communist parties.

Leaving his medical studies at home he travelled the sub-continent and saw how American and British imperialism shaped and distorted it. Arriving in Guatemala in 1954 he was won to socialism. A mild reform government under Jacobo Arbenz was invaded from Honduras for offending the mighty United Fruit Company.

'The United Fruit Company, the State Department and Dulles — they were in fact one and the same — unleashed the dogs of war,' said Che.

He made his decision: 'to become a revolutionary physician, one must first of all make a revolution.' On 2 December 1956 he landed in Cuba with Fidel Castro from the tiny boat *Granma*.

Arbenz had been deserted by his own army and by capitalist politicians. In the Sierra Maestra, Che argued that the revolution should rely on the poor. To carry out its promises to them, the guerrilla army should replace the old, career army and get rid of the 'traitors in their midst' — the Cuban bourgeoisie.

Right

The revolution proved him right. Castro broke up the large landholdings and distributed them; closed the casinos and brothels; cut electricity and phone tariffs in half; halved rents and made it illegal to own more than one house.

It was convincing proof of what revolution could do. But the guerrillas had installed a cabinet of liberals who now called for a 'purge of communists'. Fidel resigned, and mass demonstrations forced his reinstatement and the resignation of the bourgeois prime minister Urrutia.

Technicians, professionals and small

businesspeople fled. The USA embargoed Cuban sugar; Castro nationalised all US assets. Then, on 17 April 1961, two US navy ships sailed into the Bay of Pigs with a mercenary task force of five American ships, two battleships and three freighters loaded with tanks, artillery and 1500 troops.

But this time there was no capitalist army to welcome them. The guerrillas armed the people — who drove out the invaders. Che had been proved right, and Fidel declared that Cuba was now to be a socialist republic.

Danger

Che's originality now came to the fore. The new republic was under siege. Blockaded by the USA, it turned to the Soviet Union to sell sugar and buy oil. But this brought another danger: that the political line of the Russian bureaucracy would suffocate and isolate the revolution.

Che fought the Kremlin's influence. A furious polemic was joined around the development of the Cuban economy. On one side stood supporters of the 'economic reforms' in Russia, like Foreign Trade Minister Alberto Mora and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, now Deputy President. They called for 'material incentives' to increase production.

Guevara — and the Trotskyist Ernest Mandel, who joined the debate at the Cubans' invitation — said this would create a new bureaucratic layer. Che argued for 'moral' incentives — pride in the collective achievements of the revolution. No incentive should be introduced which divided worker from worker or permitted individual enrichment.



Che Guevara — Argentina's revolutionary

By Alan Freeman

Cuba's backwardness, it was said, made this a 'utopian' project. Che countered that the world level of productive forces was the most decisive fac-

tor. Cuba should end its isolation by extending its revolution. Its gains should be guarded at home by building a new leadership, formed in direct con-

tact with the masses in the struggle for production.

From this came Che's famous call for 'One, Two, Many Vietnams' which led Cuba to launch a

world wide armed struggle movement in 1966. From it, too, grew his concept of a 'new man' emerging from the struggle against underdevelopment.

Not all Che's ideas bore fruit. He did not live to see the Nicaraguans transform the Cuban experience into an insurrection model of revolution; his own heroic attempt to repeat the Cuban experience in Bolivia failed when the people ignored his small band, leading to his capture and death.

He did not see the twin upsurges of 1968 in France and Czechoslovakia. He concentrated on the third world, and had no strategy to link up with the working class struggle in the urban centres of the world.

Conflict

Nor did he grasp the vital importance of an organised clash of ideas in a transitional society — which marked the early years of the Russian Revolution.

As Mandel had pointed out, socialist planning requires that the people confront major political and economic decisions in the shape of alternative options — rather than a government proposal to be accepted or rejected. Cuban planning remains plagued by unnecessary blockages which the leadership acknowledge, but have so far not overcome.

Power

More seriously, this meant that the popular power which developed in Cuba was not able to select its representatives on a political basis.

Che's vision of a leadership refreshed and enriched by the world revolution and the struggle for production has not yet been realised despite the extension of popular power; the central leadership still comprises a small team of the original leaders of 1961.

But Che's message lives in our hearts, as well as the hearts of the Cuban people. The struggle against imperialism is worldwide. With every new victory of socialist revolution, the prospect brightens for a realisation of his ideals both in Cuba and in the rest of the world.

Invite Argentinian trade unionists to Britain, say Labour MPs

LEITH MP Ron Brown has written to Len Murray, secretary of the British TUC, asking him on behalf of a group of Labour MPs to invite representatives of the Argentinian trade unions to come to Britain.

Five delegates representing the CGT — the main trade union federation in Argentina — have been touring Europe to open a dialogue with their counterparts there.

On 15 April they gave a press conference in Brussels at the headquarters of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, at which they issued an appeal for discussions with the British trade unions with a view to resolving the conflict in the interests of workers in both countries.

TUC

The British TUC deny having been approached by the CGT, but the CGT claim that their approach was rejected by TUC delegates in Brussels and later at a European trade union conference in the Hague.

'We support the claim of the Argentinian people

to the Malvinas', said CGT press secretary Ricardo Perez, speaking in Madrid last week, 'but this does not mean we support the junta now in power'.

'One thing must be clear' he said, 'the CGT did not come to Europe as representatives of the junta.'

The junta offered to fares, they refused and paid for the visit themselves.

Perez explained that his union had suffered fierce repression from the junta. Rejecting a call from Economy Minister Aleman for a wage freeze and a 'war economy', Perez asked 'how can wages be frozen even more

than what we've already suffered? If this is a war economy, then we workers have been under a war economy for six years.'

Marches on a huge CGT-organised demonstration in Buenos Aires on Monday 26 April took up Aleman's call with the slogan 'Echamos a los ingleses, echamos al Aleman' (We've thrown out the English, let's throw out Aleman). 'Support the Malvinas, but not the dictatorship' was another popular slogan. In the last few weeks, explained Perez, the trade unions had more freedom to organise than in six years of military rule.

Junta

'People in Europe believed that by supporting the claim to the Malvinas we were supporting the junta, he said. 'We have never supported it.

Some European trade unions have difficulties in understanding how we can take this position. But the CGT did not call a truce in its battle with the junta. We are not giving it a blank cheque.'

British workers have more in common with Argentinian workers than with their governments. Socialist Challenge thinks it is vital that the CGT's call for a dialogue does not go unanswered.

Please put motions to your Labour Party branch and trade union branch calling on the TUC and Labour Party to invite the CGT to Britain for discussions; and keep Socialist Challenge informed of any motions passed so that we can forward the information on to the CGT and to backbench MPs who are taking this issue up.



Che's sister Celia was held up at Heathrow for five hours as a potential 'undesirable alien' when she came to Britain to plead for Argentinian oppositionists.



REAGAN RECEPTION COMMITTEE

FILM & PUBLIC MEETING **LET'S STOP NEUTRON RON**

FILM: El Salvador - another Vietnam

SPEAKERS: Ken Livingstone
Illyd Harrington
Pat Arrowsmith
Speaker from
El Salvador Solidarity Campaign
TUESDAY 18 MAY 7.30pm
ANSON HALL corner of Chichele Rd
and Anson Rd, Cricklewood
ENTRANCE FREE



3 weeks

Movement against war takes off

OVER 100 people with only 5 days notice packed a meeting in Swansea under the demand of 'Stop the war now'.

Plaid Cymru MP Dafydd Ellis Thomas explained: 'This Tory war is an act of imperialist aggression. Britain is using gunboat diplomacy to hang onto its colonial possessions.'

He went on to denounce the leadership of the Labour Party for whipping up jingoism and also for being responsible with the Tories for arms sales to the junta. He was particularly critical of the lack of initiative by the TUC in responding to the call of the Argentinian union federation for a meeting to work out an independent working class initiative for resolving the crisis peacefully.

Wayne David, secretary of the Wales Labour Coordinating Committee also condemned the war — although he thought that the United Nations should resolve the sovereignty question.

A committee to mobilise against the war was set up with representatives from the CND, LCC and Plaid Cymru among others. It will hold a mass leafletting to build for a demonstration Sat 15 May starting 10.30. Demo leaves 1.00 from Castle Gardens.

The meeting agreed to a suggestion from Socialist Challenge supporters to lobby the Wales Labour Party conference due to meet 22 May. The lobby will demand that the conference takes a position against the war and for a recall of the fleet.

As with most of the activists now being organised up and down the country the actions of the committee will include building for the 6 June anti-Reagan demonstration called by CND.

In **MANCHESTER** Public rally, Free Trades Hall, 16 May 8pm.

Main speakers: Judith Hart and Colin Barnett, secretary of North West TUC.

Organised by Greater Manchester Ad Hoc Committee against the War.

Sponsored by 5 MP's, 12 councils, trade union officials and Greater Manchester CND.

In **BIRMINGHAM** the Ronald Reagan Reception Committee has called a demonstration for 11 May. Malvinas/Falklands will be a major issue.

In **SHEFFIELD** Rally 'Stop the War, withdraw the fleet, raise your voice for peace' Friday 14 May 7.15 AUEW House.

Main speaker: Joan Maynard MP, and Mick Elliot, CND.

In **LIVERPOOL** Merseyside CND trade union/Labour Party committee rally 'Jobs not Bombs' Wednesday 19 May 7.30 AUEW Hall. Main speakers: Phil Holt, secretary, Liverpool POEU and Pat Kane, Socialist Challenge.

In **EDINBURGH** 'Stop the War Committee has been formed. People from many different organisations came together to organise opposition to the military action in the South Atlantic. The Committee aims to ensure that the growing opposition to Thatcher's war is expressed rather than ignored.

Public meeting Thursday 13 May 7.30pm in Edinburgh University. Ron Brown MP and Alex Hood local Labour Party councillor, Rev D Forrester, Professor of Christian Ethics and others will speak out against this war.

On Saturday 22 May at 11.30am a march will leave Waverley Bridge for the Caly Cinema.

Misunderstanding

● ARTHUR Mowatt's letter (29 April) shows a total misunderstanding of the situation in relation to both Argentina and Britain.

In Britain the Tories have not, as he suggests, had a policy of 'rapid decolonisation'. Rather they have been forced to capitulate in the face of massive independence movements who reject the right of the British to govern them. The suggestion that the Tories have been in the process of 'getting rid of the Empire as quickly and as cheaply as possible' is a complete misinterpretation of the facts.

Britain did not give up Rhodesia/Zimbabwe easily! It was the result of a long and bloody struggle by ZANU and ZAPU and the Zimbabwean peoples. We should exploit the situation that Thatcher and her government find themselves in by re-affirming our opposition to imperialist colonialism and supporting Argentina's claim to the islands.

Only in this way can we hope to turn the present hysterical nationalism into informed internationalism.

In Argentina too, ede Mowatt has the same abstract analysis. He states the 'victory for Galtieri means strengthening the junta and no one else' and then goes on to suggest that the task force should be successful in re-occupying the islands!

It shouldn't be forgotten, however, that Argentina's claim on the Malvinas goes further back than Galtieri and is an issue which unites the entire country. A defeat for Argentina will only lead to a further strengthening of the fascist junta's hold on the population.

MARK SMITH
Preston

Negotiations now?

I SEE that Socialist Challenge is supporting the demonstrations called by the 'Peace in the Falklands Committee'. Obviously all opponents of Thatcher's war-drive should be organising and demonstrating against British imperialism's actions in the South Atlantic, and that means working with all those forces who want to 'Stop the War', which is one of the two demands being raised by the Committee.

The Committee also calls for 'Negotiations Now' which is a demand socialists should not agree with, as we do not consider that our ruling class has any right to be negotiating on the future sovereignty or status of the Malvinas. To grant Britain the right to negotiate means legitimising their rights over the islands which they stole in the last century.

Let us build the biggest possible opposition to imperialism in the South Atlantic which means that we cannot insist that we only demonstrate and march with those who support the programme of revolutionary Marxism. At the same time let us fight inside that movement for the maximum support for our anti-imperialist programme.

BOB PENNINGTON
Southwark

● Tory support: skin deep

BEING known as a CND supporter at work, people who don't know too much about me get the idea I must be a 'peace freak'. I even got a Christmas card with a dove on it because someone thought it was appropriate.

Anyway I've been asked a couple of times what I would do if I got called up to fight. Mostly I say that they wouldn't want me because I'd be on the side of the Argentinians. There's not the hostile jingoistic response in the factories that the Sun wants us to believe. When the Sheffield got sunk a lot of people said they thought Thatcher was doing a good job, that was obviously why the Tories got a good vote in the local elections. But that support is only skin deep. It is only there because there seems to be nobody saying anything else.

If the only option is to fight a war against the 'Argies', the Tories are the best people for the job.

They've got a record of war mongering and brutality that everyone knows about. If the Labour Party explained that the Malvinas belonged to the Argentinians and called for the withdrawal of the fleet things would be different.

As soon as you start discussing the issues people agree. If not for any other reason than the Sheffield's sinking cost 30 lives and £6 out of the wage packet of every British worker. It's a stupid war. The empire should have been buried long ago. A lot of people are going to Spain for their holidays, very few of them think that Gibraltar is really a part of Britain.

James B
Manchester engineer

● A dialogue has begun

I HAVE never seen a situation where people are so keen on the news. In my rail depot, the radio is going all the time. But the propaganda about the war sometimes has a different ef-

fect than you might think from reading the Sun.

Last week, Francis Pym was justifying such massive forces to deal with the Falkland crisis. He explained that if they didn't then Gibraltar would be next, and then ... the Caribbean. At this a number of black workers picked up their ears.

'Yes', said one, 'that's what it's all about. Britain keeping what's not rightfully theirs everywhere in the world.'

People are of course swayed by the jingoism, and very confused about the question of sovereignty. Most disturbing for many is finding themselves on the same side as the Sun — given the fact that it fed the slander campaign against rail workers during the recent drivers' action against flexible rostering.

But many are asking questions. A dialogue has begun.

Rose Bennet
Hackney

● Fly-post Socialist Challenge cover

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE supporters in Birmingham have found a new way to get our message across on the Falklands crisis. Last week, we plastered the city and the colleges with the covers of the last four issues of Socialist Challenge. This has made quite an impact.

With the striking slogans against the war, many people stopped to read the articles. Keep it up.

Stewart Richardson
Birmingham

● Nothing to do with Socialism

PLEASE maintain your opposition to the Falklands war. The killing of Argentine conscripts in defence of a remnant of imperial honour has nothing to do with socialism. Your information about the CGT proposals was particularly interesting.

AUEW Acton

ARTHUR SCARGILL, PRESIDENT OF THE MINERS' UNION

'BRITAIN has no right to start talking about sovereignty over islands which are 8000 miles away. We are being used as cannon fodder in an international conflict which can only be resolved by negotiation and diplomacy.'

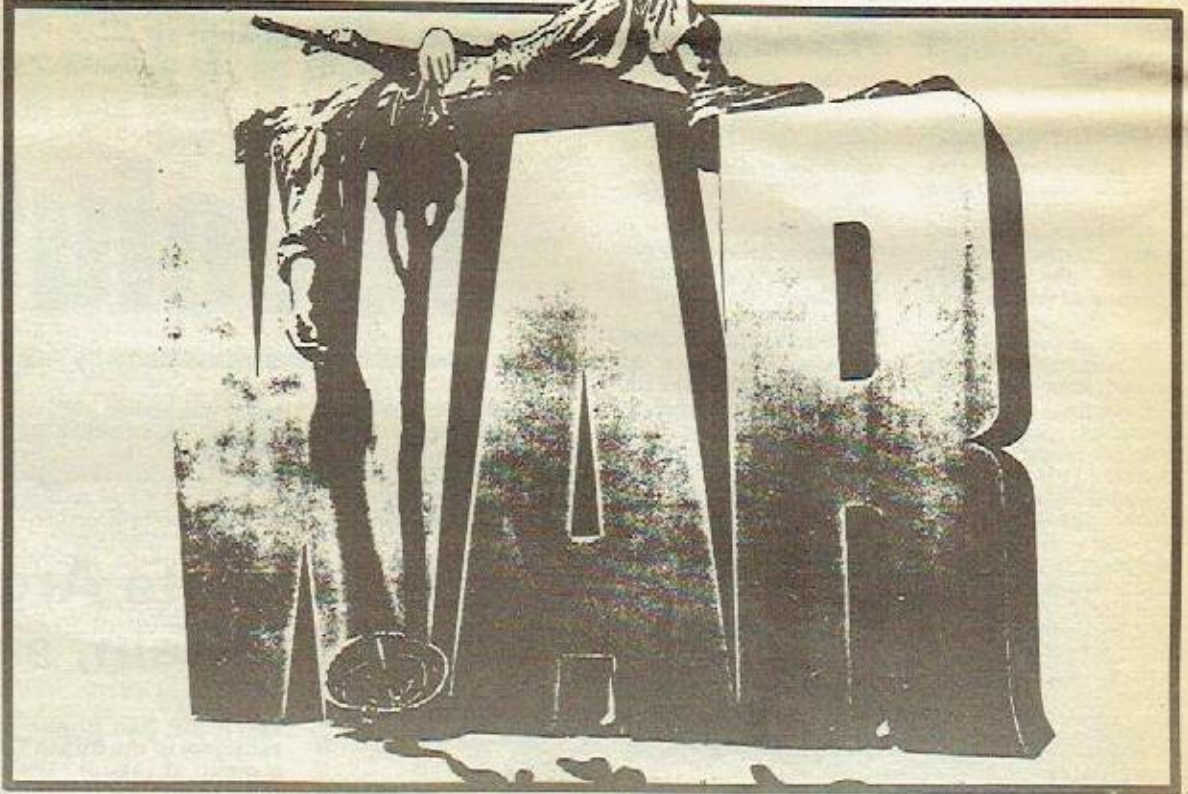
There should have been no task force sent and it should be recalled. The matter should be resolved through the United Nations. We should take account of what the islanders want and recognise the dangers that will arise if we continue with this madness.

The Tories are generating jingoism on an unprecedented scale, aided and abetted by the capitalist press — who are beside themselves in at-

tacking Argentinians — and this sickens me.

Tragically it may only come home to people when thousand of young men are killed. We have seen the price of British imperialism over the years. I thought we had learned the lesson in the Labour and trade union movement.

I want to see every trade union leader come out and condemn this Tory madness which could lead us into a nuclear holocaust.' *Labour Herald*



Peter Heathfield ▶ Bernard Connelly

Convenor, South Yorkshire Crafts, BSC

'THATCHER launched this Falkland adventure in order to get her reputation back here at home. I don't think she's been successful in this. To trade a modern cruiser like the Sheffield for an old crater like the Belgrano is not a good exchange.'

Thatcher has launched this as a roadshow — probably in a conspiracy with Galtieri. The sinking probably got a bit out of hand. We must recall the fleet and get negotiations going otherwise the whole thing will escalate.

In a Tory Party Political Broadcast last week, they claimed that

waiting lists for hospitals had declined. If this is true it's because of thousands dying from hypothermia and other illnesses as a consequence of Tory cuts.

So too with this Falkland circus. If its her answer to the unemployment problem she's onto a loser. Most of the kids joined up either to get a

trade or get off the dole — or both. No-one joined up to get killed.

We have a few lads still training as apprentices. We're probably the only people in the whole of British Steel that still has them — and we are fighting management's attempts to chop them. They say there's no money. Well, just put up a bit of the cash from this Falklands adventure.

You've got a few arm-chair warriors but most people see the thing as a tragedy rather than a call to arms.

General Secretary of the Derbyshire miners speaks to Socialist Challenge

'I AM most concerned about the escalation of the conflict and fearful that the Tories are seeking a military solution.'

I have no time at all for the fascist junta. But it is evidently virtually impossible for Britain to try to preserve a relic of its colonial past. I am in favour of the immediate withdrawal of the fleet. I am also in favour of the withdrawal of Argentinian troops and getting the United Nations to mediate the problem.

I am most concerned about the wishes of the Falklanders themselves. This is something which seems to have been lost in all the military activity.

It is unfortunate that

many labour leaders have identified with the Tories. Accordingly many working people are getting the wrong impression. This is re-inforced by the torrent of warmongering hysteria from the Tory press — especially the tabloids. If there was a positive lead, then there would be a totally different attitude.

All labour movement organisations should be asserting maximum pressure on the parliamentary leadership to demand a peaceful and socialist alternative to the crisis. This is very important.'

Interview with the parent of a soldier



Since the sinking of the Sheffield and the beginning of loss of life, opinion is beginning to turn against Thatcher. The popular press and television present the image of parents, proud to have sons give their lives for this crazy war. Graham Barnetson interviewed G Sutherland, the father of one of the soldiers going out to the South Atlantic on board the QE2, who gives a different view.

Your son is in the army and being sent to the Falklands?
Yes he is in the Scots Guards. They got sent out on board the QE2 on Tuesday.

He joined the army after having worked in an electrical firm. He joined up because there was nothing doing in civvy street. He joined the Guards because that was my regiment.

Is this his first posting?
No he'd two tours in Northern Ireland and just survived that by keeping his head down.

What do you think of the crisis?
The islands have belonged to Britain for 150 years. The Argentinians are wrong — you can't achieve anything by war. But the war should be stopped now. The only way forward I can see is immediate withdrawal by both armies and negotiations through the UN.

The government is only doing one thing. By sending out troop ships — and the QE2 holds a hell of a lot of men — they are going to escalate the crisis into total war. We should negotiate for peace.

Would your son agree with that?
I think so. I've only talked with him over the phone. I'm a delivery driver and won't get home till Thursday so that I won't see him before he finishes his leave.

I might never see him again. Would you like to lose a 21 year old son?

Resolutions

Liverpool Trades Council calls for ending sovereignty

WE WOULD like to bring this excellent resolution to the attention of Socialist Challenge readers. It was passed by Liverpool Trades Council on 15 April.

'This Trades Council condemns the war of the Tory government against Argentina — the sailing of the fleet to the Falklands and the sanctions on Argentina — as an imperialist adventure.

It is an attempt to maintain a base that was seized from Argentina over 150 years ago.

The policies of this war-government are neither concerned with military repression in Argentina nor with the interests of the Falklands population.

The Trades Council condemns the jingoistic support of imperialism by the Labour leaders. A victory for Thatcher's government abroad will mean increased aggression against the workers at home.

We therefore demand of the TUC and the Labour leaders that they stand by the principles of socialist internationalism with a policy of: 'Down with the war! Mobilise the working class to bring down the Tory government.'

We recognise the sovereignty of Argentina over the Falkland Islands and call for the recall of the British Fleet.'

...and in Sheffield

The following emergency motion was passed by Sheffield Trades Council at its meeting on 27 April.

Sheffield Trades Council condemns Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands and Britain's attack on South Georgia.

This Trades Council recognises that Britain took the Falklands by force 149 years ago and that the UN in 1967 called upon Britain to negotiate decolonisation. Thus, Sheffield Trades Council calls upon the Government to:

- Stop all preparations for war and withdraw the task force.

- Seek a peaceful settlement through the UN, under the terms of Security Council Resolution 502.

- In any such settlement, guarantee the safety of the settlers and offer them the right to return to Britain with compensation.

'I APPEAL TO THE RETURNING CREW OF THE SHEFFIELD'

Many of the soldiers and sailors fighting in the South Atlantic did not join up for that reason. For many youth, the armed forces seem to be the only alternative to a life on the dole. In denouncing the British war machine, socialists do not denounce the workers in uniform. Ex-able seaman Pete Roberts D/099492 relates his experiences of previous British military action to the present situation in the South Atlantic.

WHEN I heard that the British government was sending the navy to help 'self-determination' in the South Atlantic, it sounded like a sick joke. It reminded me of my own time as a member of Her Majesty's forces in the Caribbean during a very different event: when the islanders of Anguilla stood out for the right for their own administration after independence had been granted to the islands of St Kitts — St Nevis — Anguilla.

We were on a tour of the Caribbean to show the flag. The federal government in St Kitts appealed to the British government to intervene to re-establish its presence after the populace of Anguilla, headed by prominent figures on the island, called for independence.

We were diverted to Antigua to take on supplies and 70 paras to make up an invasion force. Two ships then went to Anguilla and made a dawn raid on the island. The leaders of the revolt were arrested and a garrison established: but then supplies could not be landed because Anguillan aircraft kept flying low over the landing strip. So our job was to ship in supplies

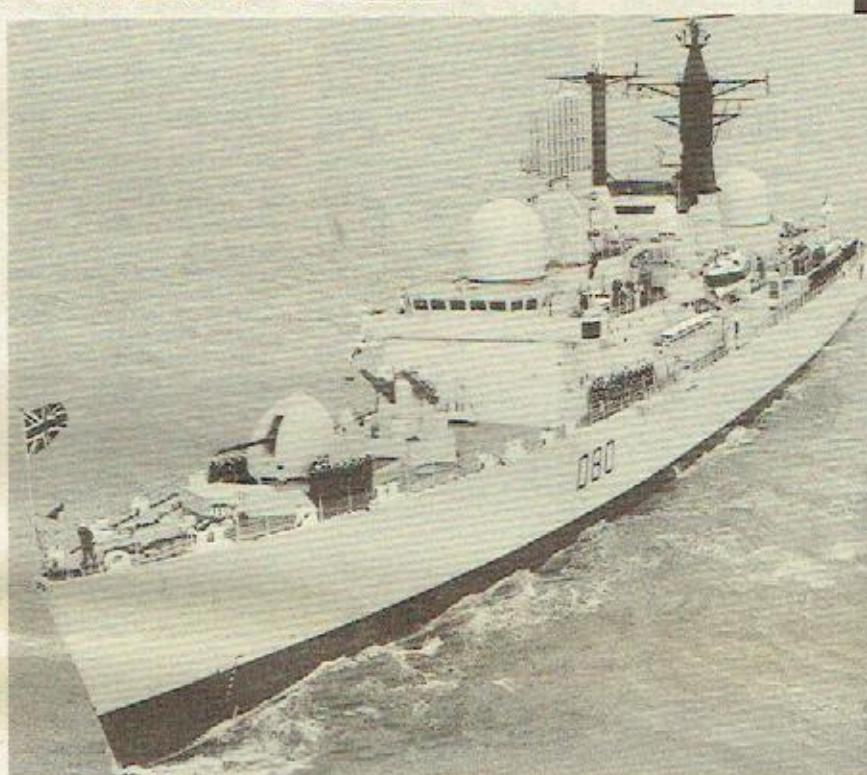
(beer) while reinforcements flew in from Bermuda, in the person of a squadron of British bobbies.

The occupation itself met little resistance in this instance. But when I was on action stations during practice, I got a real feel for how the sailors must be experiencing things in the South Atlantic just now. This is why I felt badly for the crew when I heard that the Sheffield had been hit.

On action stations, you have four hours on, four hours off; you are confined very claustrophobically to the ship, sleeping in your clothes all the time, and you never see the open air.

The press are putting over the image of a highly-trained, highly-skilled force but the truth is that you have only gone through these motions during practices. The reality is chaos and panic. Only the officers really know what is going on and everyone else is just part of a machine, going through the motions mechanically.

One of my responsibilities was damage control. I had to stand in an anti-flash suit with a sort of white hood and a thing like a miner's helmet,



The Sheffield

shouting instructions and information to HQ over a microphone while the ship was blacked out and they decided whether or not to close down various compartments in it — even if there were men in them.

The result was total chaos, even in peacetime, and I cannot imagine what it must have been like out in the South Atlantic where there is no land to break up the weather.

After a certain amount of time, under that sort of weather condition, life

becomes completely abominable: water everywhere, you can't put anything down on a table, and morale would by now be at a very, very low ebb.

I felt an immediate sympathy with the men in the Belgrano too as soon as the news came out. The submarine's failure to stay around to pick up survivors is a contravention of the United Nations convention. Every sailor feels an immediate sympathy with other sailors who have gone into the water,

and in the conditions in the South Atlantic they could have been able to survive only minutes.

Eighty per cent of the recruits to the navy don't join to take part in battles; they join for trips round the world: miners' lads, unemployed youth going out because there are no other prospects. Lads from places like Corby, Scotland and Liverpool where unemployment is high would make up a high proportion of those out there.



The General Belgrano

I just don't think they should be there. Every wish of every sailor in that fleet will be to get out; there is nothing worse than being used as an agent in a war where you have no interest in it, where the populace is against you, and where you are just a number with no rights, no control: just a cog in a machine.

The first time I really began to look at what we were doing politically was when I went to South Africa. I had a couple of

black friends on board and when we got ashore I wasn't even sure if I could speak to them or be seen with them. After coming back from the Caribbean it just reinforced my impression that the white man's role was that of an oppressor and was seen by the locals as a hated tyrant.

I would make a personal appeal to the returning crew of the Sheffield to think very carefully, as I have done, about what they are being used for.



National demonstration called against the war

By Brian Grogan

Three thousand people took to London streets for the second successive week last Sunday to hear Tony Benn call for the immediate withdrawal of the fleet.

Benn exposed the present 'phony war' which has broken out in the press. Benn accused both the BBC and ITN of being 'mouthpieces of the Ministry of Defence'. In this context it was quite appropriate that the demonstration went to the BBC to hand in a note protesting its biased reporting.

He charged Thatcher's talk of negotiations as being 'just a smokescreen'.

She had been bent on war from the beginning and was determined on a fight to the finish, said Benn.

Benn claimed that 'the British people support us'. And indeed there is evidence that support for Thatcher's war is declining. A poll conducted for Week-end World indicated that there had been a drop from over 60 per cent to 55 per cent of those who thought loss of life was justified to retake the

Malvinas-Falklands. Of course the rest of the press chose to highlight the 70 per cent of people that supported the re-taking of the Islands if no loss of life was involved. And pigs could fly if they had wings!

A further blow to Thatcher's so called principle of Britain's claim to sovereignty over the Malvinas-Falklands was delivered over the weekend by the Argentine Ambassador to London. Eduardo McLoughlin claimed in an interview on Irish radio that Britain negotiated the

ceding of sovereignty to Argentina in 1968. Arrangements had reached such a stage that Lord Chalfont was to have visited the islands to explain the agreement.

● The ad hoc committee against the war in the Falklands has called a national demonstration and major rally 23 May in London. Assembly Hyde Park 2pm. March to rally in Trafalgar Square. The ad hoc committee is sponsored by CND, nineteen national organisations and nineteen MPs.

3000 people demonstrated in London against Thatcher's war 9 May.

Stop the war! An appeal to Militant supporters

By Alan Freeman

EVER SINCE the Labour Party right wing began their witch-hunt, Socialist Challenge has defended *Militant's* right to exist, organise, sell and be heard in the Labour Party.

But this doesn't absolve us, as socialists, from responding when *Militant* endangers workers' interests.

Militant's conduct in the war means that this right of criticism is now a duty: for it verges on class treachery.

Not once has *Militant* called for the recall of the fleet or an end to hostilities by Britain.

To *Militant* and those in the Young Socialists who confront its leadership we say: this stand runs directly contrary to the interests of workers in Argentina, in Britain and throughout the world. It is the opposite of a class stand. It is the opposite of a socialist and internationalist position. It plays directly into the hands of the Tories and the right wing of the Labour Party. If adopted by the Labour Party left it would set back the cause of socialism in Britain for a decade.

We call on *Militant* supporters to reject its position, to join the growing anti-war movement, commit the YS to join it, and commit the Labour Party and trade unions likewise

Resign

Militant has a single answer which it opposes to all others. On 16 April it explains: 'Labour must demand the resignation of the Tories and a General Election. The election of a Labour government would itself be a tremendous boost to the workers' movement and a step to the overthrow of Galtieri.'

Beyond the election of Labour, we are told that a socialist Labour government could 'reach out to Argentinian workers and appeal to them to overthrow the junta.' The basis on which it should do this is the 'nationalisation of the 200 monopolies under workers' control and management, the abolition of the House of Lords and the Monarchy, and the institution of a democratic plan of production.'

Not once does *Militant* call for an end to the war. Not even its socialist programme for Labour includes this demand.

This is a socialist disaster. For even if we accept *Militant's* own view of the conflict — as a struggle between two more or less equal powers in which workers should take no sides — the very minimum demand for socialist internationalists should be that its own

government stop the war. How on earth could a Labour government appeal to Argentinian workers whilst prosecuting a war against them? Even Lenin and the Bolsheviks, involved in an inter-imperialist war, proposed peace as the first action of a socialist government and the foundation of an appeal to unity with workers in other lands.

Moreover, *Militant's* omission of the demand for an end to the war is not a mistake, a typing error, a lapse of memory. *Militant* accepts the basis of the British claim; it accepts that Britain has a legitimate territorial interest in the South Atlantic. This is spelt out in the 7 May issue, where *Militant* — like Socialist Challenge, but for very different reasons — rejects the idea of a United Nations solution.

But for *Militant* the alternative is not a British withdrawal. It is, as explained by Ted Grant, 'a socialist federation of Britain, Argentina and the Falklands.' On this basis, we are told, British workers can appeal to Argentinian workers for unity.

This is a lie. Every current in the Argentinian workers movement has supported the claim to the islands, regardless of whether they support the junta or its actions.

No British government which maintains the British claim on the islands can possibly gain a hearing amongst Argentinian workers. No unity between the two working classes is possible while the British labour movement supports the present war.

Militant's position leads it to reject the only road to socialism in Britain at this moment: a mass campaign against the war.

'Any other policy' than its own, we are told, 'like appealing for "peace" to a Tory government, would be like asking the lion to lie down with the lamb.'

This is a spurious argument and *Militant* knows it. When you strike for higher wages, you don't expect your bosses to agree with you. When *Militant* itself built a campaign to demand better conditions for YOPs workers, they did not claim Norman Tebbit would become the workers' friend.

Of course socialists make demands on the Tories: because we know that a mass movement can force them to concede or

fall from office.

Free

Moreover *Militant* have forgotten Marx's own dictum: 'No nation that oppresses another can ever itself be free'.

We ask *Militant* supporters: do you seriously imagine that we will achieve a socialist government in Britain while the present wave of hysteria goes unchecked? Do you seriously think Thatcher has been weakened by the lack of a fight against this war? Do you seriously think Denis Healey is now in a worse position inside the Labour Party than before? Do you not understand that only a huge movement of protest against the war can turn the tide against Thatcher's war hysteria, and only such a movement can put the left in the Labour Party on the offensive again?

Militant steers within a hair's breadth of saying it opposes not the war as such, but the Tories' conduct of it.

It calls on workers to 'place no confidence in the Tories to fight the junta.' But what does this mean? That a socialist government can be trusted to win the war? That Ted Grant at the helm of the *Hermes* could send Seadarts at Galtieri instead of his workers in uniform?

This goes beyond anything *Militant* have done in the past. Not merely does it fail to organise mass action against the Tories: it provides a socialist excuse for what they are doing. This is more than a mistake: it is class treachery.

We call on the *Militant* to step back from this terrible course. We ask it to re-examine its past tradition and follow through the consequences of the Marxist position on war.

It knows what this position is, for it proudly featured in the 30 April issue, which reprints an article from the 1980 May Day issue:

'Principled opposition to the murderous, plundering role of British imperialism, a precondition for any tendency claiming to be socialist, has been consistently maintained,' it says. Until now! Not a word against the sinking of the *Belgrano* or the bombing of the Port Stanley airfields is to be found in the paper.

Is the murder of hundreds of Argentinian workers in uniform not to be counted as part of Britain's murdering role? Even the liberal bour-

geoisie was appalled at these bloodthirsty and brutal actions!

But *Militant* lays the blame for these deaths at the feet of the junta! 'The workers and soldiers are pawns in the interests of Argentine big business which the junta was set up to defend,' they say on 7 May.

In the name of socialist internationalism, comrades, think again! Whose interests does the junta defend? Argentine big business? There is no Argentine big business. It is either owned or beholden, lock, stock and barrel, to Western big business.

rightly say. But they go on to argue that it depends on 'The class relations in the two countries.'

Marx, Lenin and Trotsky always said that class relations between countries, not inside them, determined the attitude to war. And within a week we find, on the front page of *Militant*, the headline 'workers cannot but condemn the Argentine invasion of the Falklands.'

Confrontations are always the result of underlying relations of conflict or oppression, and Marxism's task is to analyse these before pointing the finger of blame. The capitalists can always manipulate circumstances so as to make themselves appear as the peaceful party when in fact their oppression and greed has provoked the incident concerned.

When workers occupy a factory, do we denounce it as an act of aggression? Does this alter if the owner has been in possession since 1833? No: we say that the bosses own the factory only because they have used the threat of police violence for a hundred and fifty years to take from the workers the fruit of their labour and call it their own.

We follow the law of our own class, which says that the workers have a right to own what has been made with their labour, and the natural resources to which this labour is applied. The 'aggression' is the product of injustice: this is the Marxist message.

Revolt

Nor is this changed if the act of revolt is ill-advised or counter-productive for socialism. Whatever socialists had to say about the riots, they made it clear that the blame lay with the Tories, for creating the situation where the youth had no other recourse. Did *Militant* carry a banner headline saying 'workers cannot but condemn the riots?' No — but it is the logical next step.

But *Militant* knows these things. It knows how Marxists take sides in war. The fact is that it has taken sides: it has taken sides with Maggie Thatcher because it believes that the junta is the main enemy facing all workers.

Comrades, you have it completely upside down, Maggie Thatcher is a far greater threat to the workers of the world than Galtieri. Stand beside her in this war and you will never bring socialism to Britain.

Militant

LPYS conference
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WAR OVER THE FALKLANDS?

RECORDING

Socialist Challenge

LABOUR MUST STOP THATCHER'S WAR

JOB'S NOT WAR

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Stop Thatcher's War Drive
Britain out of the South Atlantic



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THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

FALKLANDS WAR NOW LIKELY

May Day Centre pages: The fight for socialism is international

Declare wa unemploy

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INSIDE

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Labour must STOP THATCHER'S WAR DRIVE

Militant

FULL SCALE WAR OVER FALKLANDS

Health workers fight poorly wages

MARCH AGAINST RE

LOCAL ELECTIONS

Labour: off course for victory

By Tessa van Gelderen

LABOUR has suffered a body blow in the local elections last week. In the middle of the most unpopular government for decades, the Labour Party was unable to win back control of councils it had lost to the Tories four years ago.

Undoubtedly, the Malvinas-Falklands crisis played a major part in the results but that is no consolation for Labour. It has been the treacherous role of the Labour leaders who have tail ended the Tories' policies on the Malvinas-Falklands that boosted Thatcher's support. Why vote for the monkey when you can elect the organ grinder?

In fact, simply from an electoral point of view, Labour's position on the Malvinas-Falklands has been disastrous. First it supports the sending of the task force, then it raises its hands in horror at anyone getting hurt. Did Foot and co think it was just a game?

This utter hypocrisy has done nothing to persuade large numbers of working people not to follow a jingoistic line.

depressing. Labour did relevantly better in its traditional strongholds. The north of England and Scottish results show that. Even in those areas where Labour did not make the gains it had expected to, Labour's vote stood up and even increased in the strong working class wards.

Despite the vicious campaign against him and the loss of overall control in Lambeth, Ted Knight personally received a magnificent vote. And of course Labour achieved an outstanding victory in its almost complete annihilation of the SDP in Islington.

All this indicates that Labour has kept its traditional base since the last general election, in particular winning back votes from the Tories. Tory

LIVERPOOL was the first area where the Liberals took over. The results are the beginning of the end of the road. The Liberals had embarked on a Tory budget. Many people saw through the campaign of vilification against the Labour left and voted for those candidates supporting socialist policies. The Falklands issue was in people's mind; Labour would have won two more seats in the Wirral if it hadn't been for that. It was a reflection of how jingoism was used.

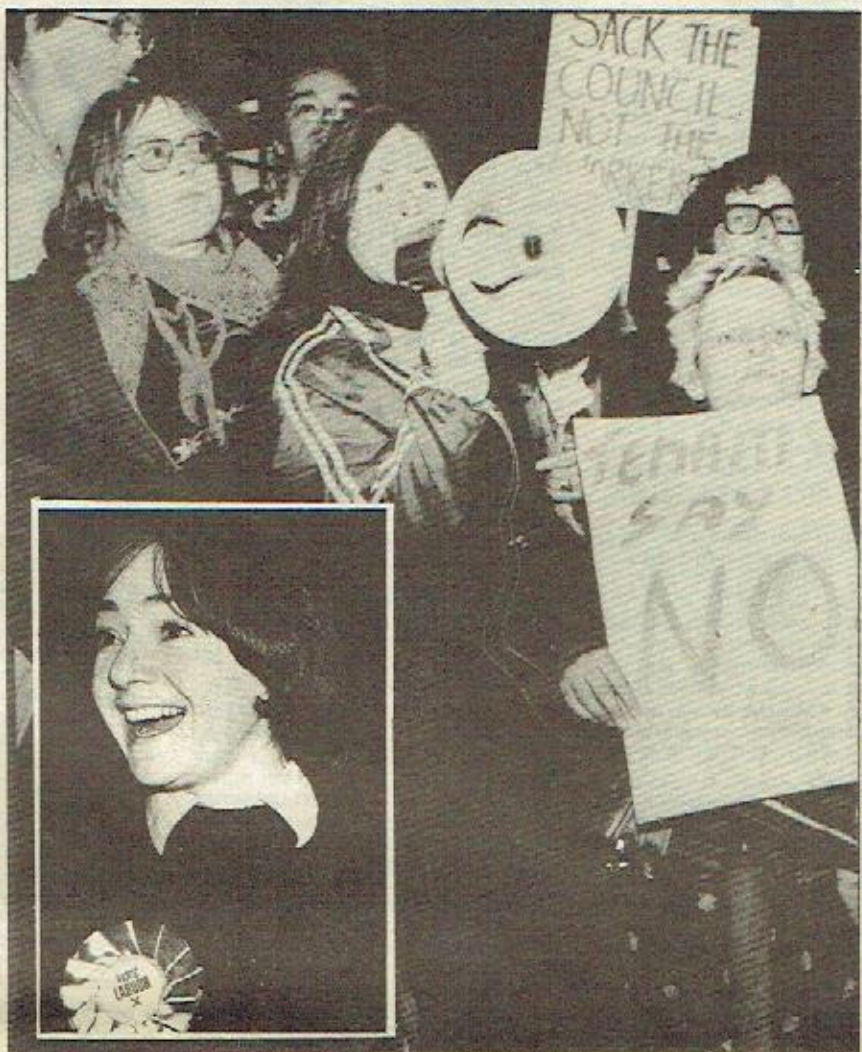
John McCabe Merseyside County Councillor

But the Malvinas-Falklands issue is not the only factor for Labour's set back at the polls. Labour failed to make gains in even highly marginal areas like Wandsworth in South London where the issue of privatisation had been brought to the fore and local government workers were involved in industrial action.

At the same time Labour can have some crumbs of comfort; the results were not uniformly

votes now seem to be at the expense of the SDP, rather than Labour.

But the results in left councils like Walsall, Lothian and Lambeth offer little comfort to the left. These councils have held back from directly confronting the government. Their inability to do so has been reinforced by the right inside the party who have consistently refused to abide by conference decisions and have led a witch hunt in the party.



Islington's council workers' action against the SDP-led council helped in Labour's victory (insert: Margaret Hodge, newly elected council leader)

Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

They have been aided and abetted by the right wing trade union leaders who have been unable to defend the jobs and living standards of their members. The left's inability to confront both the right wing inside the

growing danger that the left will pull back from the victories it has made so far. This has to be prevented.

It will be the consolidation of those gains that will lay the only basis for the working class once more

document delayed.'

Benn went on to argue that the best way for the left to fight now was around a campaigning document that took up the crucial issues facing the labour movement: Falklands, unemployment, defence, the Common Market and Tebbit.

Tony Benn might not be right in his predictions on what will happen to Militant and Peter Tatchell. But his message is clear: the left has nothing to lose and everything to gain by advancing down the road it has set out on.

NOW the Tories have taken control of Birmingham City Council they will be vicious. They will cut jobs, introduce privatisation and so on. The results show that the Falklands are about a lot more than an island in the South Atlantic. It also undermines the argument that the Labour Party should be ultra moderate to be successful at the polls. Birmingham City Council has been the most ultra moderate council and it lost to the Tories.

Claire Short, prospective parliamentary candidate for Handsworth, Birmingham

labour movement and the Tories has led local councils to retreat in the face of Heseltine's attacks.

Rates have gone up while services have been cut and jobs have been lost. It is perhaps not a coincidence that where the Alliance did the Tories' job even better than Labour, Labour was able to make significant gains.

The SDP was virtually annihilated in the London Borough of Islington, while Labour became the largest party on Liverpool council, delivering a blow to the Liberals. Where the Alliance has been tried and tested, the electors don't want to know.

But that is little consolation for Labour Party members who are licking their wounds all over the country. There is an ever

placing its faith with Labour. Tony Benn summed up the situation Labour faces over the next few months at last week's meeting of Labour Liaison '82: 'Militant will be ex-

The message is the same for local councils. Lothian, Walsall and Lambeth gained nothing by not taking on the Tories, in fact they have made substantial losses.

The Malvinas-Falklands issue has delayed the impending

THE RESULTS for Labour nationally were a disaster but for Islington it was a triumph. It was a total vindication that Labour is still the only party which represents working people. The 10 per cent swing to Labour was a vote of confidence. The result was also a complete vindication that SDP is not wanted. When forced to put themselves forward electorally they are resoundingly defeated. The SDP's record though short was disastrous. The SDP has no right to be there.

Margaret Hodge, newly elected Labour leader, Islington council

elled,' he predicted, 'Tatchell won't be endorsed and Michael Foot will try to get Labour's policy

crisis in the Tory party. However, when the storm begins to break over Thatcher's head, as it must

undoubtedly do, then Labour has to be ready to present itself as a credible alternative.

an end to Britain's imperialist roles.

That means fighting for socialist policies now.

Where Labour has managed to keep, or in those rare instances

THERE is some consolation for Labour in the way the SDP has been demolished. It's not used to defeat and this will destroy the bandwagon effect. But it is extremely worrying that the Tory vote held up. The reasons go far deeper than simply the Falklands issue.

Nigel Williamson, London Labour Briefing

That means continuing the fight against the witch hunt and for Labour's election manifesto to include those policies passed by conference. That means Labour standing four square behind unilateral disarmament, for withdrawal from the Common Market, against any incomes policy and for

has gained control, of local councils, there is now the opportunity to show the working class that the Tories can be brought to its knees.

The right inside the party will try to advance its position. The left has to stand firm and fight for the party to adopt and implement socialist policies.

John Strauther

JOHN STRAUTHER, a Trotskyist for over twenty years, died in tragic circumstances in Liverpool last month. He was a supporter of Socialist Challenge and the Fourth International and was active in the Labour Party and NALGO. Most recently he had been involved in the revival of CND, a movement he remembered from his youth.

John joined the International Socialists in the early 1960's at a time when Britain was coming out of the Cold War period but when revolutionary socialists were still a tiny minority in the labour movement. This played an important part on his political thinking. He wanted the major far-left groups in Britain that had grown rapidly in the late 60's to fuse together. He left the IMG after four years membership and could not remain in the SWP either.

He was always active in supporting workers struggles in Liverpool. This set him head and shoulders above many other socialists who were always keen on talk but less so on action.

John was principled and fought for his view even when this left him isolated. His loss is shared by us all.

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Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth council. Nationally the results for Labour are not so cheerful

By
Judith Arkwright
and
Judith Woodward

WOMEN'S LIBERATION - A CLASS ISSUE

WOMEN have come a long way since the 19th century when Sylvia Pankhurst was first organising working women in the East End. We've got the vote, we've got 'free and easy' divorce, we've got the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts and the Common Market regulations on women's employment. We've got women into parliament and now we've even got a woman prime minister. We've got equality — or have we?

The capitalist economic crisis is hitting the whole working class — but it is hitting women the hardest. Despite acts of parliament, despite (or rather because of) a woman prime minister, unemployment and cuts in social services fall harshly on women as they work harder — especially in the home — to fill the gap.

Abortion rights are under attack, rape and violence against women are on the increase. In the United States the pattern is the same. Women are becoming senators and even judges, and are even allowed to mine coal, but abortion is virtually illegal in some states, both contraception and abortion are very difficult to obtain for young people and the Equal Rights Amendment will not be passed.

Every time capitalism gives women something with one hand it takes it away with the other. In order to fight for our liberation as women we have to fight the social structures that keep us in chains. Maggie has taught us that we don't need Tory prime ministers. Whose side you're on depends on which class you're in. Unfortunately the Labour leadership does not offer a clear alternative. They may have appointed a shadow minister for women's affairs, but they have not said what they are going to fight for and how they are going to organise women.

And there is a problem with the way that some people inside the Labour Party see the fight for women's rights — they tend to reduce it to getting more women into positions of power and influence within the party and parliament.

It would be a pity if the fight for positive discrimination within the party's structures was reduced to this, and if women in the party saw their main task as that of challenging male prejudices, getting men to give up their privileges in the family and so on. It isn't just a question of 'educating' men — it is a matter of fighting the social structures which dictate that women's role is in the family, in a position of economic and social dependence.

The modern women's liberation movement was born out of the struggle of workers and students all over the world in the 1960s. It did a great deal to start to challenge women's subordinate role. It identified the role of women in the family and at home as the major expression of their subordinate role. It changed the lives and attitudes of many working class women and men alike — it began to challenge the whole idea that women's biology meant that they had an inferior and subordinate role in life.

But the women's movement did more than just change attitudes. It began again the process of organising tens of thousands of women in defence of their rights, which had not been done in Britain since the suffragettes.

The women's movement also forced the labour movement into action on women's rights, in however a limited way, and despite the fact that not many working women were active in the women's liberation movement.

The abortion campaign was a watershed for us, and we proved that abortion rights and women's liberation were class issues, issues which confront the ruling class and benefit the working class.

This is important today because once again class lines are starting to divide the women's movement internationally. For example, the National Organisation of Women (NOW) in the United States, (a mass organisation — it recruited 80,000 people last year) has a leadership which argues that in the face of the war preparations of Reagan, far from opposing the draft, women should be drafted into the armed forces as well!

This is not at all in the interests of women, but only in the interest of the US ruling class, and its preparations to use armed force against the developing revolutions in Central America and the Middle East. Such a leadership has nothing worthwhile to say to the mass of working women.

There are some important lessons to learn from the suffragettes if we

want to take forward the building of a mass women's movement with a clear class line in the future.

The women's movement at the beginning of the 20th century in Britain was a mass movement. In 1908, one quarter of a million people marched into Hyde Park to demand votes for women. Yet this mass movement was eventually delivered into the hands of the ruling class instead of carrying the fight for women's liberation to its logical conclusion.

In 1913 the workers of Dublin were locked out by the bosses. At the same time Countess Markiewicz started organising the nationalist women of Ireland in the *Cuman na Banh* — women's nationalist leagues. At this point, suffragette leader Christabel Pankhurst came out against Home Rule for Ireland instead of identifying with the struggle of Irish nationalist women. Instead, Christabel said the suffragettes would support the reactionary Unionists and their leader Carson, simply because Carson was in favour of votes for women.

In 1914, when the first imperialist war broke out, the suffragettes supported the war effort. They ended up calling for a rapid return of a Tory government. Instead of the movement developing into a powerful force to challenge the whole of women's role in society, it came to a whimpering full stop, co-opted by the Tories. It was derailed by its leadership's failure to deal with major class issues.

How did this happen? How did Christabel, who started as a member for the Independent Labour Party, end up as a Tory candidate?

One reason was the attitude which prevailed inside the labour movement and most importantly among the leaders of the Labour Party. Although working women were organised around the fight for the vote, the trade union and the Labour Party did not come round to it until it was too late. Without the powerful ally of the organised labour movement and with the active hostility of sections of the labour bureaucracy, people like Christabel were driven into the arms of the Tories and the ruling class.

Christabel herself did not have the same broad view as her sister Sylvia and did not see the importance of organising working class women. She stated that 'a working women's movement is of no value. Working women,' she said, 'are the weakest of their sex. Surely it is a mistake to use the weakest for the struggle. We want picked women the very strongest and most intelligent...'. This sort of policy for winning women's rights, winning friends and influencing people is still practiced today in organisations like NOW.

And this is precisely where Christabel has been proved wrong. Look at the working women in Nicaragua and their role in throwing out the Somoza dictatorship. Or the all-woman guerrilla contingent in El Salvador which recently routed an all-male contingent of soldiers of the military dictatorship. These women are far from being weak!

And in this country it is women like Anwar Ditta fighting for her rights as a black woman, women like those at Lee Jeans, Plessey and Lovable Bra who will fight in the most determined way for their demands.

These are the women who will fight most consistently for women's liberation and they must provide the



base of the movement that we have to build. It can only be women, and first and foremost the most oppressed women who can determine their demands. As James Connolly said: 'None are so fitted to break the chains as those who wear them, none so well equipped to decide what is a fetter. In its march towards freedom, the working class must cheer on the efforts of those women, who feeling on their souls and their bodies the fetters of the ages have risen to strike them off, and cheer all the louder if in its hatred of thralldom and passion for freedom, the women's army forges ahead of the militant army of labour. But whosoever carries the outworks of the citadel of oppression the working class alone can raise it to the ground.' Only the destruction of capitalism can ensure lasting gains for women's liberation.

Today we are beginning to see the emergence of a much broader movement of women within the labour movement itself, where demands for women's liberation are being articulated. This is reflected in women's committees inside the unions and the women's sections of the Labour Party which are growing. It is reflected in unions taking up issues like abortion and sexual harassment. It is reflected in the way in which women are prepared to fight this government. Despite the recession and its effects on women's employment, women are joining the unions at twice the rate of men.

Traditional roles in the labour movement are being challenged by such things as the demand for positive discrimination, creches and so on. The debate on positive action is posing an all-out challenge to the way women are traditionally used as a reserve army of labour.

These changes are beginning to lay the basis for a mass movement of women within the labour movement — one which will not meekly ask for the re-distribution of wealth between men and women or just fight for a change of attitudes, but will challenge capitalism as a whole.

Unfortunately there are socialists within the labour movement who see this as a recipe for saying that women have to wait for socialism before they can demand their rights. This is exactly what the suffragettes were told by the likes of MacDonald and other Labour leaders. What dangerous nonsense! Women must begin the struggle for their liberation now.

Suppose that women had not struggled for the right to vote? All workers would have been set back by the denial of this basic democratic right.

If women had not struggled to defend abortion rights in the last five or six years we would have been set back

WE MAY somet haven't gone a l by getting the v let up and these the trade unions us. And it's all o tion for a woma Labour Party fes Saturday 5 June

Coaches are towns including train from Man Coventry, five f

If your Labour transport yet th

Why not get your workplace from Ferrantis is currently on stri

Chocolate facto organise a deleg

Let's take th have a festival b of this Tory gov a hundred years ing to organise



Women strikers at Lee Jeans won



for decades — not only in the fight for women's liberation but in the interests of the working class as a whole.

If women and the labour movement as a whole do not organise now to fend off the attempts to use women as a reserve army of labour by showing us out of the workforce — then the whole fight for full employment would be finished before it started.

The way forward is the building of an autonomous women's movement to spearhead the demands of women. Such a movement will have many different expressions from trade union committees, Labour Party women's sections, women organising in the factories to fight for their jobs and for the particular needs of women in struggle, women in women's groups, community groups and so on.

Such a movement will include

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March to the Women's Festival

Assemble at County Hall, Waterloo from 10.30 to move off at 11. Go to Battersea Park.

The march is called by the Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work and co-sponsored by the South East Regional Council of the TUC.

ALL OUT 5 JUNE - MARCH FOR

Sylvia Pankhurst

An exhibition of Sylvia Pankhurst's work is on at The National Museum of Labour History, Limehouse Town Hall, Commercial Road, London E14. 5 May-5 July.

By Jude Woodward

THE MASS MOVEMENT of women for votes is rich in lessons for socialists today. Most of these lessons are summed up in the understanding and political developments of Sylvia Pankhurst who was born 100 years ago last week. In contrast to the rest of the suffragette leadership Sylvia drew out the real lessons of the struggle for the vote by becoming a communist.

That Sylvia is one of the few revolutionary leaders to emerge out of the British class struggle is testimony to two facts: first, the fight for women's votes represented one of the highest points in the political mass struggle in Britain; and second, it illustrates concretely the revolutionary dynamic of the struggle for women's liberation.

Sylvia's development towards revolutionary Marxism was in direct contrast to the line of march of the rest of the suffragette leadership. Her own sister Christabel represents the main stream.

Christabel ended up adopting both the Tory party and an extreme form of radical feminism (votes for women and 'chastity for men' becoming her favourite slogan).

Despite this, Christabel dropped the struggle for the vote to take up jingoism as soon as the first world war began. How did the same mass movement take Sylvia in one direction and Christabel in another?

Sylvia's development was no accident. Rather, she represents the real historical potential of the mass struggle of women for the vote — a massive potential that was squandered and betrayed by the narrow mindedness of the British labour leaders of the time.

The movement of women for the vote preached a depth of mobilisation in Britain unequalled elsewhere in Europe.

For example in 1908 three quarters of a million women and men marched through London for women's votes. It became an issue in who formed the government.

The 'woman question' was driving a wedge into the hearth and home of the ruling class. But the suffragette leadership — with Sylvia the exception — did not want to break from the British ruling class. They looked to the Tories to grant women the vote, not to the newly formed Labour Party.

Sylvia Pankhurst was virtually alone in drawing the correct lessons. The root of her differences with the rest of the WSPU (the suffragettes) was on the social base of the struggle.

In 1906 Sylvia was sent south to 'rouse London'. She immediately booked Conway Hall for a massive rally and went to the downtrodden women of the East End to win support for it. Later her mother and sister tried to put a stop to the rally. They didn't believe Conway Hall could be filled.

But the East End women marched into central London and Conway Hall was filled to overflowing.

As the WSPU leadership increasingly turned to tactics of individual terrorism and militancy Sylvia continued to organise mass actions based on large assemblies of working class women and men.

This orientation to the mass of women was eventually reflected in Sylvia's attitude to the suffragettes. Despite raising the slogan 'votes for



Sylvia Pankhurst

women' the WSPU did not fight for full womanhood suffrage. The law that they looked for was to extend the existing franchise to women — a measure that would have enfranchised rather less than half of all adult women.

This demand fitted in with the approach of the WSPU which saw the vote as being implemented by a Tory government. The more limited the demand, the more likelihood it had of being carried.

Unfortunately, Sylvia, alongside Keir Hardie, fought for this position at countless Labour Party conferences, always meeting the same opposition. The right wing argued that this was a 'bourgeois' demand and that the Labour Party should fight for full adult suffrage. All those forces who opposed women's suffrage gathered behind this banner.

In 1906, Margaret MacDonald (wife of Ramsay) took the first step to organise women in the Labour Party in the Women's Labour League. This organisation was explicitly counter-

posed to the activities of the WSPU.

In turning away from the mass of women and looking to the Tories the WSPU abdicated the leadership of women in the Labour Party to those who opposed women's votes.

Only after years of suffragette struggle was Sylvia able to decide: '...that a grave mistake was made in leaving the field of adult suffrage — the true field of the labour movement — to those who were either hostile or indifferent to the inclusion of women.'

She pointed out ironically that in the end there were no separate stages, womanhood suffrage was granted alongside full male suffrage in the same legislation.

If the WSPU had fought for votes for women as the leading edge in the fight for full adult suffrage then the labour leaders would not so easily have jumped off the hook.

As it was, the Labour Party became more entrenched in economism. In a classic example of wicked narrow mindedness the Labour group of MPs in 1906 decided to advance a bill protesting the earnings of steel smelters in preference to a women's suffrage bill.

That was the end for the Labour Party as far as the WSPU leadership was concerned.

As Sylvia concluded: 'Had other counsels prevailed then, the Labour Party might have given a great lead for a manhood and womanhood suffrage reform bill.'

Further than this the Labour Party failed in its first great political test. Sylvia, rather than break with the

labour movement ended up breaking with the Labour Party. Her Workers' Socialist Federation played a central role preparing for the launch of the British Communist Party.

However, the betrayals of Labour led Sylvia to adopt extreme 'leftwing' positions — that communists should boycott parliament and the Labour Party.

Lenin's book *Leftwing Communism — an Infantile Disorder* contains a weighty polemic explicitly against Sylvia Pankhurst's position.

In the end Sylvia herself was a victim of the political backwardness of the British working class. Without the aid of Marxist theory which she was never trained in, her views could only develop as a response to her own experience of the class struggle. Such lessons are only ever partially correct. No British Marxist party existed then that could teach her anymore.

Sylvia also suffered from the isolation of the British socialists internationally. She was not linked into the Second International, nor part of its massive debates on feminism being led in this precise period by women like Clara Zetkin and Alexandra Kollontai.

The conclusion formed in this debate would have been of infinite aid to Sylvia. Armed with these understandings and international links the suffragette struggle might have produced in Sylvia Pankhurst a leader of truly international stature. It would have been a real step on the road to the formation of a new revolutionary leadership for the British working class.

es feel that as women we further towards equality. But the fightback hasn't. We're beginning to get the Labour Party behind to support the demonstration right to work and the on women's rights on

ming from all the major ose in Scotland, with a ster, eight coaches from Leeds.

arty hasn't organised make sure they do it soon. nsport organised from a coach is coming down Manchester and women in the Famous Names in Bristol are hoping to on.

portunity — not just to to protest at the policies ment which takes us back to show that we're go-fight for our rights.



Photo: G Cookson

ry for all women

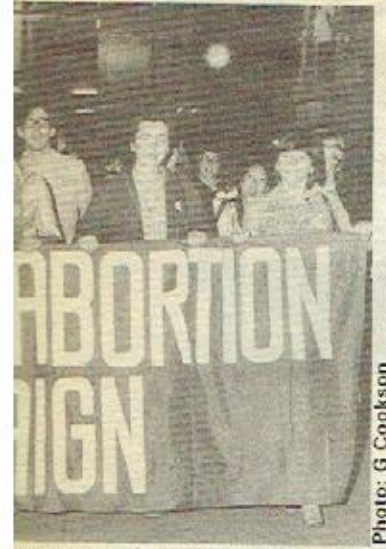
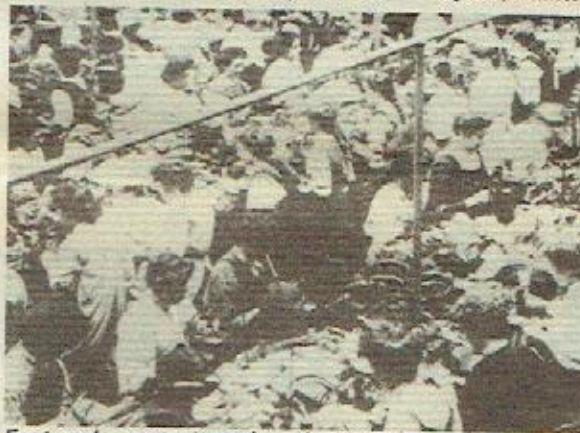


Photo: G Cookson

women struggling at all levels against their oppression. We must learn the lessons of the past and argue for such movement to grow up in the heart of and alongside the labour movement self. Working women inside the labour movement must be the core of this fight.

The mass demonstration called by the TUC against the Corrie anti-abortion bill in 1980 and the Labour Party festival for women's rights on 5 June point the way forward because they offer the opportunity for women to push for and organise around our demands for a woman's right to work and a women's right to choose within the labour movement as a whole.

It is testimony to the struggles of our sisters in the past and in the present that the labour bureaucracy has been forced to listen to our demands and organise around them.



East end garment workers in 19th century



Supporter of the East London Suffragettes in 1919

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Additional reading on the suffragettes:
The Suffragette Movement — Sylvia Pankhurst Published by Virago Press.
One Hand tied behind us J. Liddington and J. Norris Published by Virago Press.

A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO WORK

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 Socialist Challenge Rally
 Thur 27 May 7.30

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MERSEYSIDE CND TU/ALP committee 'Stop Reagan' public meeting. Wed 19 May 7.15pm AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool. Speakers: Phil Holl, secretary Liverpool POEL; John McCabe TGWU and Merseyside County Cllr, Sadie Blood, NUPE, St Helens; Paul Kane, electrician, recently returned from Grenada.

FALKLANDS CRISIS: Communist Workers' Organisation public meeting Wed 19 May 7.30pm, Hackney Trades Club, 96 Dalston La, Hackney.

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'BOBBY SANDS MP', chanted 3,000 people on last weekend's march to commemorate Sands' death as they passed the House of Commons at Westminster. Among other slogans on

the march was 'Hands off Northern Ireland - Hands Off Argentina'. Speakers at the rally after the march included Ken Livingstone, leader of the GLC, and Owen Carron MP.

Photo: Pete Grant

Irish government gets cold feet over Falklands

Since the Falklands-Malvinas crisis began the Irish government has veered from backing Common Market sanctions against Argentina, to demanding an emergency UN security council debate following the sinking of the General Belgrano. James Bruin looks at the hypocrisy of so-called Irish neutrality.

Ireland's foreign policy can only be explained by the effects of its unfinished break with Britain. The Irish economy was distorted under British rule with all the investment going to the industrialising North, and then entirely disrupted by partition. It has never recovered.

When trying to 'go it alone' produced no economic progress the Irish bosses turned to foreign investment. The '60s saw inducements given to multinationals and then Ireland entered the EEC.

The Irish Development Association gives massive State handouts with vir-

foreign policy and monetary union would have compromised Swedish neutrality.

On the military front too Irish 'neutrality' is wearing thin. Since the development of the Soviet 'backfire' bomber which is capable of launching nuclear attacks on Britain, the British government has been looking to improve its radar defence system.

The Irish government duly obliged. Earth satellite stations have been opened up in County Cork, Sligo and Donegal giving British defence access to the Irish communications of the entire length of the West Coast of Ireland.

Further, when a resolution declaring the use of nuclear weapons to be a violation of the United Nations Charter recently came up before the UN Assembly, Ireland was the

only country to vote against - along with 18 NATO allies.

Such positions are embarrassing to the Irish government. It has already increased 'defence' spending by 800 per cent in the last ten years to £450m, and entry to NATO would demand a further trebling of this sum. The overwhelming majority of the Irish people are opposed to breaking with Irish neutrality and entry into NATO, even if the army officer corps is keen on the idea.

When the Irish government backed EEC sanctions against Argentina the Republican sentiment was to immediately support Argentina. Volunteers were reported to have gone to the Argentine embassy in Dublin to sign up!

And when the British government finally admitted last week that it was

one of its submarines that had dragged an Irish trawler under the sea, anti-British feeling put greater pressure on the Irish government.

The only time that an Irish government has ever pursued anything like a socialist foreign policy was when the provisional government established by the Easter Rising of 1916 backed James Connolly's view that Britain's involvement in the first imperialist world war provided the best opportunity for breaking its hold over Ireland.

An Irish government guided by those principles would think twice before sending the fleet half way across the world! When even the Irish government with its own contradictory 'neutrality' gets cold feet over the Falklands, this just goes to show the bankruptcy of Thatcher's policy.

Malvinas war moves show imperialist threat to humanity

Statement of the Fourth International

BY ITS response to the Argentine government's moves to assert sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, the British government has already endangered the lives of thousands of people, threatened an entire oppressed nation with humiliation and slaughter, squandered hundreds of millions of pounds that could have relieved mass deprivation in Britain, and increased the dangers to world peace and therefore to the lives of tens of millions of people.

In all the bloody annals of British imperialist arrogance, there are few, if any, crimes so reckless and insensate. But these crimes are not simply the responsibility of the reactionary Thatcher government in particular or British imperialism in general.

The dominant world imperialist power, the United States, has thrown its weight behind them, offering even logistic support to the British task force. And the other imperialist powers have backed the British action.

Thus, the Malvinas war represents a response of the world imperialist system as a whole. This is a dramatic sign that in its decay, imperialism is becoming not only more murderous but more and more dangerously unstable.

The clashes of powerful air and naval forces that began in the first days of May off the Argentine coast have already revealed great political and material weaknesses of the world imperialist system.

Thus, they have set deep tremors in motion that will continue regardless of the immediate outcome of a conflict that has escalated unexpectedly into a major world crisis, and which could quickly lead to much larger explosions.

The weaknesses of the world imperialist system are shown precisely by the fact that such a crisis could blow up over an issue such as the Malvinas. None of the governments involved have any fundamental conflict of interests there, and the interests of all of them are fundamentally threatened by the explosion of a crisis that could shake imperialist control of a vital region to its foundations.

In particular, this crisis comes when the US faces a major revolutionary threat in Central America, and obviously was counting on

the help of Argentina, which has had one of the stronger military dictatorships in Latin America.

If this regime falters, the US could lose more than an ally. Argentina is a major, semi-industrialised country, and at the start of the last decade it went through three full-scale urban uprisings. Moreover, the Brazilian dictatorship, right next to Argentina, which has been the other main bulwark of reaction in South America, has been breaking down in recent years, and faces the development of a new mass revolutionary workers movement.

Why, then has the move of the Argentine government to assert sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands touched off a major crisis for imperialism?

Two years ago, in fact, in the so-called 'Ridley Plan', the British foreign office recommended to negotiate Argentine sovereignty over the islands in return for a lease-back agreement. Provided the oil surrounding the islands is exploited by American and British oil companies, as it would be, this would not have threatened basic imperialist economic interests.

Today, however, the British imperialists have responded to what was originally a token Argentine occupation by sending a massive military machine to the South Atlantic and initiating armed actions that could have the most far-reaching consequences on international military lineups and domestic politics.

Some of the most modern military equipment in the world is being used to attack the forces of a semi-colonial country, with which other semi-colonial countries throughout the region have been compelled to express their sympathy.

The US's carefully constructed facade of Pan-American solidarity, its main diplomatic and ideological cover for intervening in Latin America, has been shown to be utterly false. It is left without a rag of 'good neighbourly' pretence to cover its imperialist operations. It even felt obliged to offer logistic support to the British military offensive.

Thus, the US has been obliged to pay a staggering price as regards its international policy in the continent. And the position of the peoples of Latin America struggling against imperialist domination has been greatly strengthened.

This course of events can be understood only by looking beyond the immediate moves in this conflict to the whole situation

This crisis hits not only the weakest but also the most powerful Latin American states. Gross Domestic Product in Brazil fell by 3.5 per cent in 1981, after an average rise of 6 per cent in the preceding three years and industrial production crashed by over 9 per cent.

Estimates for the Chilean economy predict an absolute decline in production for 1982, after an average 8 per cent annual increase in 1977-80. The Uruguayan economy grew by only 1.3 per cent in 1981, and will probably shrink this year, after an average 5 per cent a year expansion in 1974-80. Mexico has been severely hit by the oil price fall.

In Argentina, this general economic crisis has been worst of all. In 1981,

home to risk an unpopular joint military operation with US imperialism in Central America. It desperately needed to justify itself and its massive military spending by using its high priced hardware for something that it could hope would be popular among the Argentine masses.

It is poetic justice that Galtieri and his military butchers have got themselves into big trouble by their illusions in the strength and flexibility of imperialism, in the self-confidence of the imperialists in today's world.

The only reason that the junta dared to risk retaking the Malvinas was that they believed that Britain would make only a formal protest, or at most display a little token sabre



Thatcher's notion of 'defending democracy'

and worry about its imperialist allies, even the much more powerful US, afterward. And there is no honour among thieves.

On the other hand, British imperialism was too weak to be able to tolerate the sort of affront represented by the Argentine landing in the Malvinas. The country has three million unemployed. It has the lowest standard of living of any country in Western Europe after Portugal, Spain and Ireland. Its traditional economic structure is collapsing. The British masses over the last decade have suffered continual and drastic declines in their standard of living.

In this situation, the British capitalists need a government that can look tough, like it is firmly in control and will put things in order regardless of the price.

The Argentine takeover, therefore, was a severe blow to the reactionary Thatcher government. From the first day of the crisis, Thatcher knew that if she did not do something drastic to restore the tough image of her government, her whole political project was in danger of collapsing.

So, for the sake of the credibility of a reactionary government, British aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines were sent 8,000 miles to bring death and destruction to the South Atlantic.

For a century, a British population many, many times the number of the few hundred on the Malvinas have lived peacefully in Argentina.

The British aggression now endangers not only the inhabitants of the Malvinas but the British community in Argentina. The Argentine population will be enraged by this insult to their country.

The generals could continue to look for relatively easy targets. And the fact of the matter is despite the British government's attempt to do a replay of the siege of Lucknow in Star Wars style, despite even the fact that the British military could wreck a considerable part of the world, British imperialism is quite incapable of maintaining a

foothold 8,000 miles from the home island in face of the hostility and bitterness of an entire continent.

There is no way now that the Malvinas can be kept British. Pearls of far greater price had to be relinquished by the British Raj in the face of far less odds.

The Thatcher government's claim that it is defending democracy and law against a lawless dictatorship is also absolutely untrue. That doesn't mean that the generals are not dictators; far from it. But their action had a democratic effect. It represented the aspirations of millions and millions of Argentines and tens of millions of Latin Americans. Moreover, it divided the forces that maintain the oppression of the Latin American masses.

After five years of one of the most brutal and total dictatorships in the history of Argentina, the masses of people got a chance to come onto the streets again to demonstrate for something that is their democratic right. And this can create a tremendous power that will push the dictatorship further into conflict with the very forces that it depends on for its life, the imperialists.

For the workers and socialist movement in Britain and throughout the world, the Malvinas crisis means great opportunities. It shows how fragile the world imperialist order is, and how precarious also is world peace. It shows the threat of mass murder that hangs over every people in the neocolonial world who demand the least democratic right or concession. It shows the increasingly reckless displays of military power in which the capitalist governments capable of destroying the world feel obliged to indulge in order to maintain their decaying credibility.

The movement in Britain and the rest of the world must mobilise to defend the Argentinian people and themselves to defend all humanity and its possibilities for the future.

From International Viewpoint



Most modern military equipment in world used to attack semi-colonial country

in Latin America and the general crisis facing imperialism today.

The Argentinian military dictatorship retook the Malvinas after 150 years of British occupation as a direct result of its own deep internal crisis. With mounting discontent coming to a head in the powerful demonstrations of 30 March in Buenos Aires and other cities, the dictatorship sought to gain popularity by satisfying the long-felt just demand of the Argentinian people for undisputed control of their national territory.

But the crisis of the Argentinian dictatorship is only one of a whole series that are developing in Latin America. The 'economic miracles' of the 1970s achieved by the iron-fisted procapitalist policies of the Latin American dictatorships have staggered to a halt amid \$110bn in foreign debts. Latin American Gross Domestic Product fell by 2 per cent in 1981, after rising by an average of 5 per cent a year from 1977-80.

the economy as a whole shrank by 6 per cent and manufacturing production fell by 14 per cent. Inflation, at over 130 per cent, is the worst in the world.

As this crisis has deepened, the revolutionary movements in Central America have continued a rapid political and military advance.

Under these circumstances, the policy of US imperialism under Reagan was clear. Washington made a double-or-nothing bet on military dictatorship and repression.

In this respect, the Argentina junta was a key card. For months, the US has been trying to prepare the way for the use of Argentine troops in El Salvador, either alone or as part of a wider international force. It was to try to save the Argentinian dictatorship from the consequences of its action in the Malvinas that Haig made his mammoth shuttle diplomacy between Buenos Aires and London.

But the junta knew that it was too weak to

rattling. It assumed apparently that the British government was strong enough and self-confident enough to take an insult from a subordinate regime that needed to look tough to its own people in order to continue doing its job for its imperialist masters.

Lion

But if the British government no longer had the old imperial confidence, if the lion's tail had become too sore from frequent twisting, then the US presumably could be relied on to bring the British to their senses. After all, it had an enormous stake in the Argentinian dictatorship, as the preparations for using Argentine troops in Central America showed.

However, on the one hand, Britain remains one of the most powerful and ruthless states in the world. It possesses the third most powerful navy of any country. It is quite able and determined to defend its own interests first,



Workers' spring begins in Poland

AS THE Polish workers prepare a 15 minute general strike across the country on Thursday, the Catholic Church hierarchy has again shown its true colours. Last weekend Archbishop Glemp echoed the accusation of the military apparatus that the recent mass May Day demonstrations were the work of 'manipulators' and troublemakers. We reprint an article by Cyril Smuga from a recent *International Viewpoint* on the current situation in Poland.

Almost six months after the military crackdown in Poland, led by General Jaruzelski, the bureaucracy is still far from claiming victory:

'The situation is extremely complicated. We are still very far from celebrating victory. We could still find ourselves faced with things, with events, phenomena that we can't even imagine just now. Comrades, anything is still possible. Comrades, what you say is terrifying.'

This extract is from a recording of a meeting between the military commissar for Polish radio and television and the party members who work there. It is a better testimony than any long explanation to the disarray of the military junta which took power on 13 December. The same commissar continued: 'The state of war will continue in Poland until the party is renewed. I am not talking about the party bureaucracy, which can come back quite fast, but the situation at the base in the big enterprises.'

The party, the essential instrument for controlling the society, has been disastrously weakened. Since August 1980, it has lost more than two-thirds of its members. In the

plants, it is more and more limited to managerial personnel and paid officials. Today, its mass base is increasingly concentrated in the state apparatus.

The attempt to rebuild social organisations under the boot of the bureaucracy has got nowhere. The 'Social Commissions', established in the enterprises to fulfil what the bureaucracy considers are the functions of a trade union — to distribute potatoes in winter and organise holiday camps — have been unanimously boycotted.

Attempts to get the activists elected to the workers councils before the crackdown to explain to workers that although their standard of living has gone down, they are now going to get a voice in the management, a very limited one, have also failed. The bureaucracy cannot get anyone to do this.

There are more goods in the shops now. After a 300 per cent price rise, the workers cannot afford to buy much. But production has fallen to catastrophic levels. The Central Statistics Office reports that the big enterprises have only reached 40 to 45 per cent of the projected targets. This is partly owing to the passive

resistance of the workers.

For example, in Silesia, 50 per cent of the workers have followed the union instructions to sabotage production. But this drop in production is also a result of the disorganisation created by the state of siege restrictions. Many enterprises are closed two out of every three days because they lack the necessary parts and raw materials.

This inability to 'normalise' the situation has increased differences within the bureaucracy.

These differences stem from the contradiction which has existed since December between the old and the new power structures. All state structures have been paralleled by military structures. There have been conflicts between the old state and party apparatus, anxious to hold on to their privileges; and the military apparatus who see the opportunity to get new privileges in their new functions.

The old party apparatus has succeeded in establishing armed groups under the name 'Political Self Defence — PUWP' which are independent from the repressive apparatus of the military regime.

The army, put at the forefront of the political scene, is becoming demoralised. Desertions are growing among soldiers who are in their third year of service and for whom the end is not yet in sight. At Elblag a deserter opened fire on police. It took two hours for a battalion of police to overcome him.

Solidarnosc has embarked on work among the soldiers. Their leaflets are widely distributed, calling on the soldiers to refuse to carry out orders that they

disagree with. Equally significant, bulletins of the union report the formation of informal groups within army units.

Solidarnosc, which was badly disorganised by the first wave of repression, is reorganising within the enterprises and the local neighbourhoods. The Socialist Resistance Circles (KOS), formed by five people who develop others in a pyramid structure, are growing. More than 1,700 clandestine journals appear regularly.

Strikes and work stoppages are growing in number. Every month between the 13th (anniversary of the coup) and the 16th (anniversary of the killing of miners at Wujek last December) demonstrations take place throughout the country. The roads, factory walls, workrooms are regularly 'decorated' with slogans hostile to the junta. The militia has formed special teams to remove them every morning.

In other ways Solidarnosc is reorganising. A National Commission of Resistance has been formed, so that proclamations are now signed by leaders known in different regions. Provisional regional leaderships have been formed in other regions. The results of this have not taken long to come. On 13 April the call to stop work for 15 minutes was widely followed in at least 10 regions.

Discussion on strategy and organisation for the movement has moved beyond the regional level, which has contributed much to the depth of the discussion.

So, Solidarnosc continues. And, more than ever, Polish workers need international solidarity from other workers.



Scenes from the Solidarnosc demonstrations in Warsaw last week

South Wales miners celebrate May Day

By Barry Wilkins

THE Aberdare, Rhondda and Merthyr District lies at the militant heart of the South Wales coalfields. Every year these miners celebrate May Day with a social event, a demonstration and a rally.

Solidarnosc Solidarity Committees

Glasgow Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Gordon Morgan, 59 Durward Avenue, Glasgow G41. Ring 041-649 8958.

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 Feckert, 28 Roundhay Mount, Leeds 8, Yorkshire. Ring 0532 490927.

South Yorks Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Rab Bird, 279 Ellesmere Road, Sheffield, S4 7DP. Ring 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 Road, Coventry.

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

Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, 10 Park Drive, London NW1. 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.

Tyrone O'Sullivan, secretary of the District Joint Lodges Committee, chaired these celebrations. He called for the utmost militancy in the fight against the Tebbit Bill and stressed the importance of a much greater involvement of young miners in the union and its battles.

Emlyn Williams, president of the South Wales NUM expressed his confidence in the determination of the South Wales miners to resist the Tebbit Bill. 'If they want to take us, we are ready,' he said. 'We will not accept these restrictions on our trade union rights.'

He argued that the miners must give a lead in this fight and again he hammered home the lesson of January 1980, when the Wales TUC postponed and then cancelled industrial action against massive steel redundancies.

Following his recent successful tour of South Wales Piotr Kozlowski from Solidarnosc, the Polish independent trade union, was invited to return as a guest speaker at these celebrations.

He brought May Day greetings to the miners and their families and explained how Polish workers had spent the May Day weekend.

Tens of thousands had demonstrated in nearly a dozen Polish cities against the Jaruzelski military regime and demanded the restoration of the rights of Solidarnosc. Once more he impressed

the miners with his call for socialism, freedom and democracy and not bureaucratic dictatorship and got a warm ovation.

Ioan Evans, Labour MP for Aberdare gave his best wishes to Piotr and expressed hope that greater democracy would come to Poland in a peaceful way.

Jack Collins, general secretary of the Kent miners, and the main guest speaker, explained that new threats of closure were being made in the Kent coalfields. He won applause when he said the Kent miners knew they could depend on the support of South Wales miners for industrial action to defend Kent pits.

Unfortunately Collins also took the opportunity to attack Solidarnosc and those British workers who support the rights of Solidarnosc.

He claimed that in doing so they line up with Reagan and Thatcher. However this did not convince many miners. Several argued vigorously with Collins that Polish workers have the democratic right to their own independent trade unions.

These May Day celebrations showed that miners in South Wales are determined to defend their jobs and union rights. The popularity of Solidarnosc badges and the warmth shown to Piotr indicated that this commitment also extends to the Polish workers.

Robert Havemann

Solidarnosc and socialists the world over lost an important ally when Robert Havemann died last month. We reprint below his obituary in the recent issue of the French *Inprecor*.

With the death of Robert Havemann on 19 April 1982 the opposition movement in East Germany lost its best known representative, in many ways its symbol. Robert Havemann was one of the great physicists of our time, a specialist in photosynthesis.

Condemned to death by the Nazis for spying for the Soviet Union he saved his life because the German army became interested in his theoretical work which he was allowed to continue while he was awaiting execution. Liberated by the Red Army in the fall of Berlin on 2 May 1945 he became a member of the Communist Party.

Living in West Berlin he was appointed Director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, the prestigious centre for research in the natural sciences in the old German capital city. But from 1948-50 he was the victim of McCarthyism: under pressure from the American military authorities he was stripped of his positions on the pretext of his belonging to the CP and his election to the first Chamber of the People in the young East German Republic in 1949.

He moved to East Berlin and became president of the East German Academy of Sciences, a top position in the party and the state, and the holder of every conceivable decoration. But Khrushchev's report to the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in February 1956 broke him ideologically and politically from Stalinism.

From the 1960s he held courses at the Humboldt University in East Berlin



which turned into calls for an open and critical Marxism, incorporating all the gains of contemporary science. Having suffered repression under the Nazis and under American and West German imperialism, he found himself exposed to the repression of the Stalinist bureaucracy. He was removed from all his positions, expelled from the party, put under house arrest, and isolated from his students, supporters and friends.

Robert Havemann received many offers from the East Berlin authorities as well as from the Western scientific and political milieu to emigrate. He courageously and systematically refused them in the following terms: 'I am a democratic Communist who stays in his camp.' He passionately defended the Prague Spring and the Solidarnosc movement, and publicly protested against their repression.

He represented what was best and most encouraging among the German Communists, who, without adopting revolutionary Marxism, have broken with Stalinism and remained Marxists.

UNION LEADERS SAY Hands off the Caribbean!

SEVENTEEN British union leaders have just been to Cuba, to attend an international trade union congress. Representing engineers, firefighters, miners, furniture workers, public employees, seamen, sheet metal workers, tobacco workers, transport workers and the Scottish TUC, the union leaders issued a declaration upon their return denouncing the US blockade of Cuba and Reagan's threats to the Caribbean and Central America in general.

They say: 'The threats and propaganda against Cuba emanating from President Reagan and General Haig brought great disquiet to the Cuban people.' And they declare of the Cubans: 'Clearly they want to live in peace with an end to trade embargoes and economic blockades and a withdrawal of the menacing presence of US troops on Cuban soil inside the Guantanamo base.'

Denouncing American threats to the area, they also deplore the support given to the US. They say they are 'appalled' that the Tory government has refused aid to Nicaragua and will not re-open a British embassy there.

Finally the seventeen call on the British labour movement to take up the fight to support the struggle for freedom and justice in Central America and the Caribbean. They say: 'We urge the Labour Party inside and outside parliament to continue its outright and unequivocal opposition to the British government for its support to the US cold war policies applied to Central America and the Caribbean'.

Among those who signed the statement were: Ken Gill, general secretary AUEW-TASS; Ken Cameron, general secretary of the FBU; Lawrence Daly, general secretary of the NUM; Sid Vincent, Lancashire NUM secretary; Peter Heathfield, Derbyshire NUM secretary; Alex Kitson, deputy general secretary of the TGWU; Ron Keating, deputy general secretary of NUPE; Jim Slater, general secretary of the NUS.

Socialist Challenge spoke to one of those who attended the conference: PETER HEATHFIELD, president of the Derbyshire section of the NUM.

Could you give us your impression of your visit to Cuba?

I spent a week in Cuba. I was very impressed by the role of the trade unions in Cuban society. Despite the effects of the American blockade all the evidence points to the fact that the Cuban people are benefitting from the revolution. There is a decent standard of living, no poverty at all. Education is flourishing. Many old colonial houses have been converted to kindergartens and so on. The Cuban people are steadily increasing their standard of living.

What role do the Cuban trade unions play?

Well to some degree they have a role similar to those in Eastern Europe, but in many instances it is clear that they are able to play a much more positive role in fashioning the policies of the state. Speaking with middle ranking trade union figures, they put to me views and elaborated solutions which didn't necessarily coincide with those of the 'establishment' — for want of a better word.

What weight do they give to support from the Labour movement in Britain?

Well they see it as very important to break the



May 1981 in Cuba — the March of the Fighting People

blockade, but they also are concerned to alert the labour movement in Western Europe to possible incursions by Reagan into Cuba itself. Its obvious that Cuba is not a threat to world peace nor to the United States. They made it plain that they had enough problems trying to build socialism and were not keen on an expansionist state.

But they do support the struggles in the rest of Central America and the

Caribbean?

Yes, and not only there, in the whole of Latin America. But their concern is solely with helping guarantee the right of these countries to self-determination. They are most concerned about the involvement of the CIA and the destabilisation plans aimed at places like Nicaragua and their support for the ultra right in El Salvador.

How seriously do they

take an American attack on Cuba itself?

Very seriously. In my talks with lesser officials they saw the Polish situation as being rather critical to the Cuban one. For example, they welcomed the introduction of martial law because if the Russians had gone in then they believed that Reagan would have taken this as an opportunity move directly into Cuba. They saw the introduction of martial law as a lesser evil.

I stress I was talking to lesser officials, this might not be the official Cuban view.

What importance did they put on solidarity from the British trade union movement against these threats?

Well, they thought it very important that we threw our weight onto the scales to defend the right of self-determination of all these countries. The declaration reflects this and is basically what we achieved.

El Salvador and the Southern cone US in trouble in Latin America

By Paul Lawson

THE MALVINAS crisis and the outcome of the election in El Salvador are between them causing a major crisis for the United States in its strategy for Latin America.

Two central elements of that strategy since the advent of the Reagan administration have been to secure a first anti-communist alliance in the 'southern cone' (Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and including Brazil) and to give their backing to a 'harder' solution in El Salvador — in effect to back the army.

When Carter was president his 'human rights' demagoguery against the Soviet Union caused intense problems with dealing with these two areas. The appalling human rights record in both Central America and Argentina and Chile forced Carter into some marginal public distancing from these regimes — for example after the murder of the American nuns in El Salvador American arms sales were suspended. The 1979 coup in El Salvador, engineered by the United States who gave the green light to the young officers who carried it out, was designed to meet the growing challenge of the workers movement by imposing a more 'moderate' coalition including the social democrats and the Christian Democrats as well as the armed forces — in the first Duarte junta.

Reagan and Haig have no such qualms; they give their unconditional support to the army in El Salvador while trying to maintain a 'democratic' facade. Before the 1979 coup the army was racked with corruption; when the then-president, General Romero, was overthrown, some thirty or so senior army officers went into exile with him. For the US, the central figure in the post-coup junta has been defence minister Jose Guillermo Garcia. Garcia always had more real power than the president, Duarte.

But the elections dealt a blow to any moderate facade for the new regime, with the

startling successes of the fascist ARENA party and its leader, death-squad godfather Roberto D'Aubuisson. Garcia with the backing of the United States heaved D'Aubuisson to construct a government which includes one Christian Democrat vice-president. They also threatened D'Aubuisson with a military coup if he tried to make himself president.

So the outcome is one where the faction-ridden political leadership of the Salvadorean bourgeoisie has created political chaos with contending leaderships struggling for power. In addition any pretence at a democratic facade has completely disintegrated. This can only strengthen the hand of the left wing opposition — the FDR-FMLN.



Salvadorean soldiers train in US

Given this general disarray of US policy in Central America, the Malvinas crisis could not have come at a worse time for the United States. Argentina is crucial for maintaining the anti-communist alliance in the southern cone. The protracted period of fence-sitting by the United States at the outbreak of the conflict reflected its desire to keep the alliance with Argentina tight.

Already the State Department has had mixed feelings about the political struggle which has been going on inside the Argentinian armed forces, itself reflecting the economic difficulties which Argentina has been facing.

As the world recession deepens, Argentinian industry has been particularly hit, with a flood of American imports and with US capital making deeper inroads. Thus while the landed

oligarchy have been doing very nicely from the boom in cereal exports, the urban masses and industry have been facing a hard time.

Confronted with industrial economic crisis and mass popular opposition, there is a real temptation among some of the generals to go for a 'populist' solution. This would involve a partial political break with the United States, erecting tariff walls to protect industry with the hope of partial economic recovery. This is neither in the economic nor political interests of the United States, but unfortunately for them they have played directly into the hands of those who want to follow the 'populist' strategy. A partial political break already exists with the United States backing Britain in the Malvinas conflict. The joint interests of world imperialism have triumphed over the United States special interests in Latin America.

Moreover, in the Organisation of American States, Alexander Haig was received with stony silence when he called on Argentina to withdraw from the Malvinas. US relations with most of the Latin American regimes have been damaged — not primarily because of moral indignation with the US government, but because for pro-US governments, US backing for Britain makes life much more difficult in the face of massive domestic support for Argentina.

The crisis of US-Argentinian relations has a very immediate and direct effect on Central America. The whole project, held in readiness by the United States, of using a joint Latin American force against the guerrillas in El Salvador is now a dead duck. In particular, the idea that Argentinian troops could be used is now sunk without trace.

The overall effect of the Malvinas crisis is therefore clear. Anti-US sentiments throughout the continent will be strengthened. The danger that, without the possibility of a 'Latin Americanisation' of the war in El Salvador, the US will have to send its own troops is very real.

British imperialism has done the United States a very bad turn by sending the task force. But the overheads of imperialist solidarity were never cheap.



Galtieri — a populist option?



General Haig — caught between warring allies

Famous Names boss tries to put one over

By Joseph Reddick, deputy shop steward
TGWU No 3/245 on behalf of Famous Names strike committee

THE FAMOUS NAMES confectionary factory in Greenbank, Bristol is famous for their liqueurs and famous to their employees for their low wages.

The 350 strong workforce has been on strike since 16 April after rejecting on numerous occasions the company's offer of five per cent.

The latest development of the strike is that the company have tried to disrupt and break down the solidarity of the strikers by sending out secret ballots without the knowledge or consent of the union shop stewards or the TGWU branch office.

The ballots are based on false promises and completely misleading information and the accompanying letter was personally signed by one of the five directors running the company, M Wilmot.

Our immediate reaction was to call an emergency mass meeting on 10 May of the workforce to give

them facts concerning the letters and what they were actually on strike for.

The members were also able to put across their points of view.

A motion was then put to the workforce to continue the strike which was accepted overwhelmingly.

Many members of the workforce appeared on the picketline and burned their ballot sheets in disgust.

We are building solidarity within the labour movement both in Bristol and Southport where our sister factory came out on strike a week after us in full support also rejecting their pay offer.

Up to now solidarity in the form of finance and motions of support and delegations have been coming in. We call on our comrades in the



On the picket line at Famous Names

labour movement to continue with this tremendous support.

Please send donations and letters of support to Barbara Farthing, 25 Dunster Rd, Knowle, Bristol BS4 1BY.

350 sit-in at Metal Box

By Toni Gorton

350 ENGINEERING workers are sitting-in their plant in Shipley West Yorkshire against enforced redundancies. This is the first real fight over jobs in the British-based multi-national company Metal Box.

The unions had agreed to 27 voluntary redundancies among the manual workers but over the May Day weekend the company posted notices of redundancy to 40 fitters.

According to Richard Lee, the works convenor who is also combine secretary the list, 'just by chance has three shop stewards on it. One whom they've tried to sack four times.

'The company says it selected people,' Richard said ironically, 'on the basis of proven ability and skills.

'The company has been threatening the workers with closure and saying that they won't get any redundancy pay. The funny thing is that the workforce don't seem to give a damn.

'We're still in occupation — indefinite. The company isn't backing down and we're not.

'There isn't a factory in the Metal Box chain that hasn't been affected. 9000 jobs have been lost in the last two years.

'They're taking investment abroad,' said Richard. 'They've gone to South Africa where

they're paying black workers ten per cent above starvation level. They closed down in Namibia because of political problems and have gone to Chile.

'At the same time the workforce in the UK has been held to six per cent, the chairman of Metal Box, Dennis Allport, gave himself a 97 per cent rise, from £34,000 to £67,000.

'He said it was justified because he hadn't had an increase in two years!'

Richard Lee told Socialist Challenge that 'lots of support has been coming in from the local labour movement. Bob Cryer, MP for Keighley has been very helpful as well as a number of Labour councillors.

'The other thing is that West Yorkshire County Council has shares in Metal Box so we'll be lobbying the shareholders meeting in June.

'We'll also be sending coaches down to the head office in Reading on 21 May with placards saying *Profits on the back of apartheid.*'

Frank Gorton, an AUEW shop steward at Metal Box in Hackney,

commented on the sit-in saying, 'The most significant thing is that not only have Metal Box introduced compulsory redundancies for the first time but in making three engineering shop stewards redundant they attack the whole combine.

'That the strike has been made official is a good thing. AUEW members must demand quick and effective support from the national union to win this dispute.

'In recent occupations like Laurence Scott and Staffa time proved to be on the side of the bosses.

'The courageous response by the Shipley engineers deserves the support of all trade unionists and members of the Labour Party.

'I would hope that all Metal Box trade unionists will see their future employment is also at stake and give all support to ensure a speedy victory.

'I'll certainly work to explain the issues and win support in London and urge all Socialist Challenge readers to do the same in their areas.'

For further information, official collection sheets contact the Joint Shop Stewards Committee c/o A Mackin, treasurer, 14 Westcliffe Road, Shipley, West Yorkshire, Tel 0272 550520.

Health workers - critical stage

By Dominic Johnson, NUPE convenor, Churchill Hospital, Oxford (in a personal capacity)

THE HEALTHWORKERS' pay struggle has now reached a critical stage. Angered by the miserly offers ranging from 4 to 6.4 per cent workers in all the major unions have now voted overwhelmingly to take industrial action.

The public employees union, NUPE ballot showed an unprecedented 200-1 majority in favour of action for the 12 per cent claim.

Members of COHSE have already been taking selective action for two weeks, and this week they will be joined by NUPE, NALGO and other health service unions.

The executive of all the unions now have a clear mandate to step up the fight and co-ordinate a united struggle of all health workers.

Nevertheless major problems exist. In particular there is no clear national focus or strategy coming from the unions' leaderships. The members are being told to reduce the health service to accident and emergency (A&E) service only — but how to implement this is being left to the workers to decide on a

hospital to hospital basis.

It is a recipe for partial sectional actions which do not involve the entire workforce, and which will rapidly prove ineffective and demoralising. In practice the only way to achieve an A&E service is for all-out strike action leaving essential cover under workers' control.

But this is not being spelled out by the union leaders. Moreover under today's conditions workers are only willing to strike indefinitely if they know that the rest of the workforce nationally is coming out as well with the trade union movement supporting them.

These conditions can only be achieved if the union executives adopt a clear timetable leading to all out action as soon as possible. Unfortunately no such strategy is forthcoming. A further

ominous development has been the call for arbitration by the TUC health services committee.

So far the government has rejected this but if serious action gets underway they might reconsider in order to defuse the struggle.

Arbitration means abandoning the claim for another one or two per cent maximum.

One day strike called for 19 May

THE TUC Health Services Committee is calling for a national one day strike for Wednesday 19 May and two hour stoppages every Thursday after that.

Health workers, thousands of whom earn less than £60 cannot afford less than 12 per cent, so it is vital that the union negotiators are forced to drop this call.

Widespread rank and file opposition in NUPE has now caused Alan Fisher to retract his earlier support for arbitration.

The TUC health services committee must now fall into line and make it clear that nothing less than 12 per cent will do!

Because of these deficiencies at national level, a strong rank and file leadership must be formed rooted in the mass struggles at local level, and capable of organising sufficient pressure for all out national action.

The first steps towards this have seen the emergence of a group, Healthworkers for the Full Claim with influence in many regions of the country.

Supporters of this group lobbied both the NUPE executive on 6 May and the TUC health services committee on 10 May demanding national action and no arbitration.

For further information and copies of its bulletin contact Anna Lunts, Atherton 0942-877 296, or Dominic Johnson, Oxford 0865-47624.

AUEW elections — opportunity missed

By Pat Hickey

THE AUEW elections for a replacement for retiring General Secretary John Boyd resulted, as expected, in a right wing victory. Gavin Laird beat the Broad Left candidate Ken Brett but by a much narrower majority than expected.

In 1978 Terry Duffy beat Broad Left candidate Bob Wright by 40,000 votes in the second round, and in 1980 won an absolute majority in the first round — which was undoubtedly the worst defeat ever for the left.

Laird's majority of 1,062 indicates the beginning of a shift to the left at the base of the union. The right wing course pursued by Boyd and Duffy has alienated many militants

and brought more and more of the shop floor into conflict with their union leaders.

A significant element in the move to the left has been the campaigns run by the Laurence Scott strike committee.

Laurence Scott showed how an activist campaign could be run throughout the union. And it showed, contrary to the pessimism of many in the Broad Left, that there were important

forces at the base of the union that can be mobilised for a fight given the correct lead.

From that point of view the campaign that the Broad Left ran was an opportunity missed. Brett's campaign was a very low profile affair, focussed on the need to 'adjust the balance' on the National Committee.

Ken Brett's response to Laird's narrow victory was to talk about legal action. While there is no doubt that there are grounds for suspecting the results, given the way in which the count is handled (Boyd's appointees handled it and there were no independent

scrutineers) legal action would be totally wrong.

Bringing the bosses' courts into union affairs is always a threat to the independence of the unions and this is even more the case at the moment with the Tories attempting to attack the union movement through the courts.

How can the left argue for the courts to be kept out if they themselves use them? And using the courts to resolve this matter takes the Broad Left away from the real issue — campaigning among the members to build a mass reform current based on the struggle against the Tories.

Kigass boss accuses police

By Stuart Sleath

KIGASS BOSS, Arthur Wardman, saw a policeman accept a sweet from one of the pickets outside his factory in Leamington Spa and complained that the police were not being impartial.

The dispute over union recognition and pay rates is now in its fifth week and the demands of the strikers look no closer to being met. Wardman sent a letter to each striker trying to refute many of their claims over working conditions and health and safety arrangements.

He also threatened that if the strike goes on much longer there will be 'no jobs to return to'.

The decision to make the strike official has been endorsed by the AUEW national executive committee and strike pay will be available soon.

The Coventry West AUEW District Committee has passed a motion to

introduce a 5p per week levy on all its members. This will add another £10 per week to the strike pay.

They have also organised a demonstration in support of the strikers through the streets of Leamington on Saturday 15 May.

Assemble at the Pump Room Gardens 10.30am with a mass picket of the Leamington plant at 12 noon.

Supported by Leamington and Warwick Constituency Labour Party, Leamington Trades Council and many local shop stewards committees. Mass pickets are held every Saturday at 5.30am at the Warwick factory and 7am in Leamington.



Kigass strikers say what they think of scab

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Letter

A lot the same as Kigass women

I'M A MEMBER of the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear workers and many of my co-workers saw several similarities between our situation and your report on the Kigass workers in SC 243.

Like the Kigass women we also are very low paid. Our take home pay ranges from £24 to £43 for a 40 hour week and like the women we are inexperienced in trade union work and very few of us have been on strike.

But this does not mean that women do not fight back even when they are in a union like the NUHKW which gives us no leadership.

This was illustrated last week when the button sewers demanded a higher piece rate for new work than that imposed by the management without the consent of the workers.

The union gave no support to the women and on their own initiative they completely blacked the work from going or leaving any sections of the shopfloor and refused all negotiations with the management until the rate had been increased from 23p per dozen to at least 35p.

Because the union still refused to back the women and organise them they only got 32p.

To us, this struggle shows several things: that women will fight not just the bosses but also the union bureaucracy, and that the bosses didn't just give in because of generosity.

The bosses make such enormous profits that they could double the rate. Had the women's militant action been allowed to spread around it would have brought the factory to a complete halt in a matter of hours.

You can be sure that women in Mansfield Hosiery Mills will continue the struggle against the bosses like the Kigass workers!

N SHORNE
Mansfield

Bradford 12 trial gets underway

By Paul Hutchinson in Leeds

ON 4 MAY the prosecuting counsel, Paul Kennedy, finally opened the crown's case against the Bradford 12, Asian youths who are charged with conspiring to make explosives during last year's youth uprisings.

Kennedy addressed a jury that doesn't include one person from Bradford although it now has five black jurors.

When the chants of the Bradford 12 campaigners protesting outside was heard inside the courtroom, he told the jury 'not to be deflected' by such protests and added that 'the fact that the defendants come from Asia has nothing to do with whether they are guilty or innocent'.

Kennedy gave the prosecution an account of how four defendants were arrested in Bradford city centre on the night of 11 July — Tarlochan Gata-Aura, Tariq Ali, Giovanni Singh, Sabit Hussain.

They were all charged with public order offences.

The prosecution alleges that Tariq Ali had arranged a meeting on 11 July at which it was agreed to make petrol bombs for use against people and property. The arrest of the 'leading conspirators' had prevented the plot being carried out.

The remaining eight were arrested as investigations proceeded after the discovery of bombs, found hidden in the undergrowth around St Luke's Hospital.

By the end of last week, five police witnesses had appeared for the prosecution and been cross-examined. These were the officers who had made the arrests on the 11th and Chief Inspector Ellis, who had been in charge of operations that day.

One of the officers, PC Manning served 15 years in the Rhodesian police force before coming to Britain in February 1981 and joining the Bradford force.

All these witnesses say that those arrested were part of a crowd of youths who had gathered in the city centre and shouted things such as 'kill the bastards' at the police and 'we're gonna have a riot'.

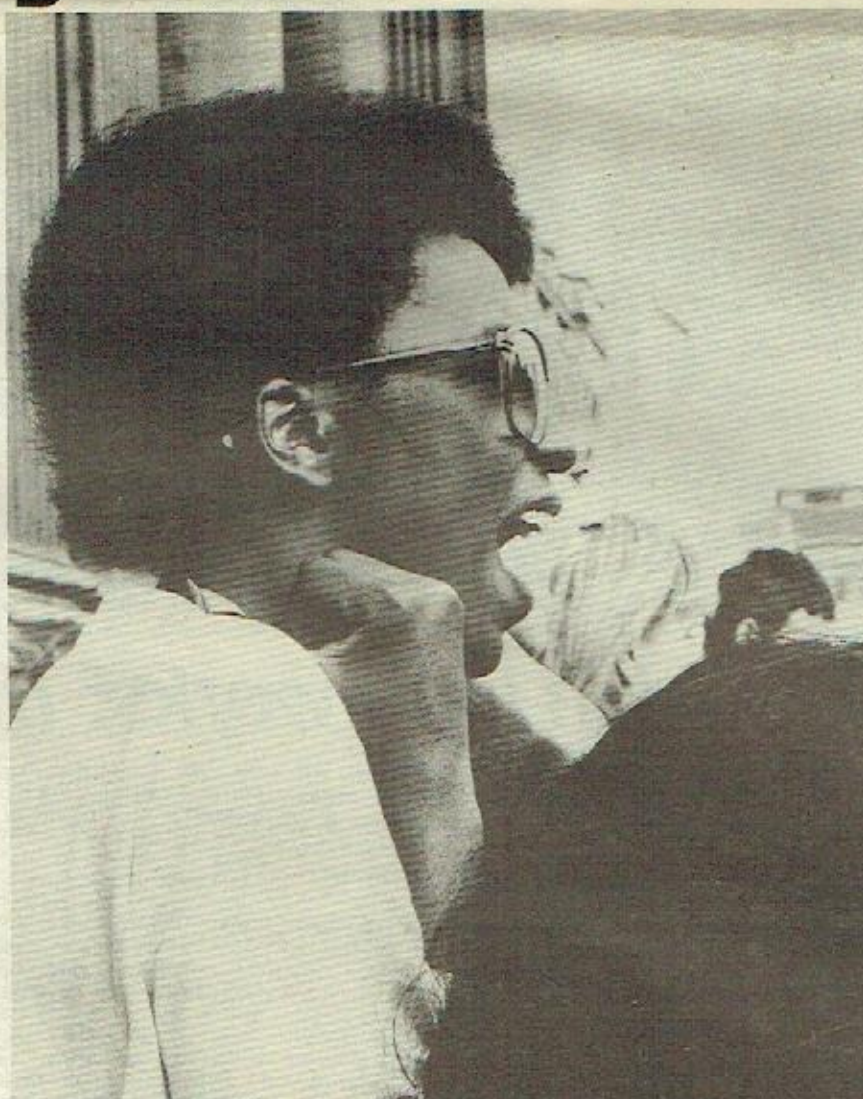
However, Mr Reece, counsel for Giovanni Singh and Saeed Amin, got Inspector Inspector Ellis to admit that 'kill the bastards' was not taken up as a chant.

Also, while PC Irvine and Inspector Ellis both said in court that they heard a chant of 'we're gonna have a riot' this doesn't appear in Inspector Ellis' only statement (dictated on 18 August from memory) and PC Irvine included it for the first time in his second statement made on 14 August.

All the police officers deny having known Tariq Ali and Tarlochan Gata-Aura before their arrest, despite the fact that both were prominent in campaigns such as those on behalf of Anwar Ditta and George Lindo. They also claim lack of knowledge of any fears within the Asian community that weekend of attacks by racists and fascists. Yet the evidence to support the contention that such fears were widespread and justified is overwhelming.

A bulletin produced by the defence campaign headed 'self defence is no offence' details some of the attacks that occurred in Bradford last summer and autumn.

Among the incidents in 1981:
10 July: Asian man stabbed and robbed. Another Asian



Mass pickets are being organised for 14, 19 and 26 May

threatened with a knife. Two white youths arrested.

24 July: Two Asian homes gutted by firebombs. Two white men charged and released immediately on bail.

14 July: Asian schoolboy attacked by 40 white youths with a petrol bomb. Only two charged — with stealing petrol and assault.

Forthcoming campaign events include a women's picket on 14 May, trade union picket on 19 May and on 26 May a picket for campaign groups bas-

ed in the black community.

Linda Vaughan, a member of Leeds Trades Council executive told Socialist Challenge: 'Leeds Trades Council supports the Bradford 12 and I urge all trade unionists to support the campaign and in particular the trade union mass picket on 19 May.'

Finally the dependants are not receiving any sup-

plementary benefits, please send donations to the campaign to help out.

Make cheques out to: Bradford 12 Defence Fund. Send messages of support and obtain bulletins at 10p a copy from the Bradford 12 National Mobilising Committee, Box JK, 59 Cookridge St, Leeds 2. Tel 0532-439500.

Send telegrams of protest to Justice Beaumont, and support to Defence Council at Leeds Crown Court, No 2, Town Hall, Leeds.

National UK Palestine Solidarity Rally

Saturday 15 May

Assemble Hyde Park, Speakers Corner at 12.30 and march to Trafalgar Square

Organised by the London office of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Transport from Birmingham leaves from Sparkhill, Aston University and Birmingham University at 9.30am.

The Maurice Ludmer Memorial Meeting

Racism today — what it is and how to fight it

Speakers include: Martin Barker, author of The New Racism; Anwar Ditta; David Edgar; Paul Gilroy; A Sivanandan; and Veronica Werr. Searchlight.

Friends Meeting House, opposite Euston Euston Rd, London NW1 Saturday 15 May, 2 to 5pm

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photo: A POTHECARY

Socialist Challenge

McCARTHY'S CON TRICK

By Hazel McPherson

THE LONG awaited Tribunal ruling on flexible rostering has finally been published. Decision number 77, as it will be known, rules firmly in favour of flexible rostering. It goes on to encourage progress on other ways of speeding up and intensifying railworkers' jobs.

In an attempt to give the ruling a sense of fairness and objectivity which it does not possess, McCarthy has laid great stress on a set of safeguards supposedly designed to deal with the traindrivers' fears and concerns.

While ruling in favour of the board and the government, McCarthy pretends to be making concessions to the drivers.

● *The majority of turns should not be above eight hours and not more than 20 per cent should be above eight and a half.* In fact 20 per cent of turns above eight and a half hours would adequately meet management's needs in terms of flexibility and lay the basis for worse to come.

● *There should be no increase in the number of turns signing on and off between midnight and 5am.* In fact the real problems begin at 5am because most workers have to leave home at 2am or 3am in the morning to go to work for a 5am start. So this safeguard will not deal with the problem of unsocial hours.

● *Rostered rest days will be guaranteed.* Anyone in any other industry would not see the guaranteeing of a rest day as a concession, but more of a right.

● *There should be no significant variation in the average earning level of drivers.* However, if the guaranteed day is lost earnings will inevitably fall. Drivers will be working longer hours for no extra pay. And that is the point of the whole exercise.

McCarthy pretends to offer a sweetener by proposing that flexible rostering be negotiated at local level with a review after 6 months; if no agreement is reached, that item will be deferred. This is precisely the agreement that NUR members already have. In fact most of the so-called safeguards are already written into the NUR agreement under the heading of 'guidelines'.

If the traindrivers' union, ASLEF, accepts these proposals, its members will be in the same dubious position as NUR members.

Many guards took the opportunity of the drivers' one day actions to express their rejection of the NUR's deal.

This aspect of the ruling provides a face-saver for the NUR leadership. But we should take note that all is not well in that quarter either. Last week at a meeting with the Board to discuss extra payment for those affected by

flexible rostering, the NUR was told that because actual savings only amounted to 5p per day per guard, payments and other rewards were in doubt. What price safeguards then?

We must understand that the Board and the government have a long-term plan for the railway industry which involves the loss of 40,000 jobs by 1985. And as the *Daily Telegraph* pointed out last Friday, 'That means taking on and defeating ASLEF'.

Finally, McCarthy gets down to the nitty-gritty with the problem of manning. The Board wants flexible rostering firstly in order to get more work for less pay. Secondly to lay the ground for drastic cuts in jobs. At present all turns of eight hours and over have to be doublemanned. Under the new proposals this does not apply till nine hours and over. The result will be a reduction in traindrivers assistants jobs.

ASLEF General Secretary Ray Buckton's response so far to the decision has been weakened. He has concentrated on the unworkability of local negotiations. Hopefully he will go on to urge the ASLEF conference next week to instruct the membership not to take part in any such negotiations.

All railworkers must understand that decision 77 is an attempt by the Tribunal to pull wool over our eyes. It offers us nothing and comes down firmly on the side of the Board and the Tories.



Railway engineering workers demonstrating in Swindon last Friday, 7 May. Involved in this wholesale attempt at job destruction are hundreds of young apprentices who will not find jobs elsewhere.

Photo: NEWSLINE

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Horwich loco works: the war at home

TWO THOUSAND workers at Horwich BR Engineering in Lancashire attended a mass meeting on 6 May, called to oppose the threatened closure of the loco works. The meeting was addressed by deputy convenor Dennis Green and two local MPs.

Dennis Green explained that the threatened closure would increase the town's unemployment by half. He promised that the stewards' committee would accept no redundancies. He argued that the workforce should not sell their jobs for they are the future jobs of today's school kids. And he pointed out that the town had been built around the works 100 years ago, and the works remains the town's main employer.

During the previous two days, committee meetings of the National Union of Railwaymen and the Confed BR Engineers

had taken place. The Confed had passed a resolution calling for strike action if BR proposals on closures and redundancies are not withdrawn. They also called upon the labour movement to fight for investment in BR, the backbone of the country's transport system. The NUR had passed a similar resolution.

At the 6 May meeting, Dennis Green demanded BR explain their closure decision. He stated that the problem is years of under-investment: the industry needs investment rather than cutbacks and redundancies. The fight is

for all rail-related industry, he warned. For the planned closure is part of an overall plan, not just to cut 6,000 jobs, but to close 3,000 miles of track and to introduce one-person trains. This could mean 15-20,000 redundancies in the next four years. In 1962, there were 30 main workshops employing 75,000. Today, there are 12 employing 35,000.

Dennis Green pointed out that BR's overall plan will reduce the number of main workshops to four or five, and will mean the deskilling of the workforce and privatisation of the industry. The Horwich works has had £4.5 million spent on it in the last three years, and is thus a prime target for privatisation. Also, BR have not kept to the spirit of the 39-hour week; 40 hours work is done in 39 hours.

Management believe they can get away with their plans, he said, by using high unemployment to undermine a fight-back.

The effect on the public of BR's proposals will be noticeable. Not only will the services be reduced, but the rolling stock will be older and less comfortable. Two-thirds of diesel and electrical multiple units are 20 to 30 years old and have already outlived their service life. What the public have to face, concluded Dennis Green, is not just lack of comfort but unsafe trains.

Meanwhile, elsewhere, the closure of the Shildon works will have the same effect on unemployment in the Durham area. It, together with the Consett steel closure, would continue the destruction of

that area's industry. Shildon's unemployment would rise to 30 per cent. The workforce there is as committed to fight the closure as the Horwich workforce.

Labour Party deputy leader Denis Healey has publicly pledged the party's support for the Horwich workers. Local MP Roger Stott has moved a parliamentary resolution which has been signed by over 80 MPs and another 120 are expected to sign.

The workforce and their leaders are determined to fight closure and redundancies. Dennis Green promised: 'We'll go all the way. We're in for a fight. We've got to. We'll either get the jackpot or the booby prize. There's no way we'll get the booby prize.'