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Socialist Challenge

22 SEPTEMBER

ALL



OUT

The Tories are in a corner over the health dispute. The majority of people inside and outside the NHS support the demand of the health workers. Now the vote of the normally conservative Royal College of Nursing has left Fowler and the Tory cabinet, up the proverbial creek, without a paddle.

The TUC is beginning to muster its forces to make Thatcher pay up. The NUM have called a 24-hour strike on 22 September. The print union SOGAT is going to shut down Fleet St. Surely the car workers, the dockers, the construction workers and the rest will follow.

The working class needs a health service that without charge, protects them and their families, from pain, suffering and premature death. They know that a run down, financially starved NHS, operating with an underpaid, overworked staff, is too horrendous to contemplate — although it is the dream of every member of the cost-conscious Tory cabinet.

Who cares about Tebbit's law

when such important things are at stake? Last month Sean Geraghty and the Fleet St. printers showed the way by making clear that the cause of the health workers and the defence of the NHS is far more important than some Tory law. Now Arthur Scargill and Bill Keys have again raised the glorious banner of working class solidarity.

Similar shows of solidarity from the rest of the TUC can make sure that there is no way that the health workers can be defeated and that Tebbit's Bill can be used to jail trade unionists.

No dispute has been as important as this since the Tories took office. It is dividing the country between those who support the Tories and those who say let's fight back. An enormous class confrontation could be on the agenda. That is why every single trade union member, every class conscious militant, and every committed socialist, has to work like hell to make sure that 22 September brings the country to a grinding halt.

FOR THE FULL 12 PERCENT SMASH THE TEBBIT BILL

Editorial

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The witch-hunt — not just an internal matter

22 SEPTEMBER will see a historic event for British labour — a virtual one day general strike in support of the health workers.

Not a moment too soon. For three years the TUC leadership has run away from a fight with the Tories.

After all this, they are at last being forced off their backsides. But this is no testament to their great leadership qualities. It is a testament to the Aberdeen workers, who held a one-day general strike on their own initiative; to the miners, steel workers and Fleet Street electricians and countless others who have risked prosecution and the sack to defend our health services.

They have had to fight their pathetic leaders tooth and nail to secure this action.

Why? Why won't this leadership fight? Is it some innate streak of cowardice? No — it is because of their politics. It is because they know that a strike movement like that of 1974 would sweep this government from office, propel a Labour government into office, and challenge it to carry out its promises.

More than anything else, our trade union leaders fear victory. They fear the extraparliamentary fury which Thatcher's class would bring down on them.

And so while with one hand they wave their members on, the other hand gets ready to stab them in the back. The witch-hunt in the Labour Party is a blow by cowards and traitors at the vitals of our movement: an attack on those in the Party and unions who do not fear victory.

The fight against the witch-hunt therefore matters to everyone: to trades unionists, women, youth, anti-war activists, the unemployed.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE calls on all its supporters to give all-out backing to the 30 October conference against the witch-hunt. Letters of invitation will shortly be available from the steering committee, and a leaflet will be given out at the 11 September gathering. We urge readers to take the following steps

- Write to the organisers for copies of the letter of invitation, including the address of local organisations which you think can be won to back the 30 October conference.
- Ensure that the matter is brought up under correspondence at wards, Young Socialists branches, union branches, Labour Party General Councils, Workplace branches and Labour Clubs.
- Contact local Labour left and trade union left groupings to ensure that the conference is publicised in mailings and in the left press.
- Take copies of the broadsheet against the witch-hunt produced by the 'Unregistered Alliance' for sale in the local labour movement.
- Turn up early to the 11 September conference, if you have been delegated, to help distribute literature for the Hackney conference. Socialist Challenge supporters will be meeting at 10.00pm at the entrance to the conference hall.
- Follow Lambeth's lead in calling a rally to win support from the Labour movement as a whole. Link the fight against the witch-hunt with building a campaigning alliance between unions, youth, and constituency parties: mobilise for the healthworkers, for the 16 October anti-Tebbit demonstration, and for anti-missile activity such as the youth march from Manchester to the Labour Party conference.

Labour Party

HACKNEY NORTH CONFERENCE ON 30 OCTOBER WINS BROAD SUPPORT

Witch hunt: fight hots up

DELEGATES from fifteen Constituency Labour Parties and observers from a further eleven decided on Saturday 4 September to resist any expulsions of Labour Party members under the leadership's proposed 'register of organisations'.

Meeting at the invitation of Hackney North Labour Party they endorsed Hackney's call for a broad conference on 30 October, one month after the Labour Party conference which is now thought likely to pass the proposed register.

Saturday's meeting in County Hall, London was packed out although Hackney had had very limited facilities to publicise it.

The main weakness, recognised by the organisers, was the small attendance from out of London: Hackney had not had enough money to circulate out of London Parties. Attendance from London itself — nearly half of all London CLPs — shows how opposition to the register is growing.

Soul

A fringe meeting is being held on Thursday evening at Labour Party conference, and the organisers are appealing for backing from those attending the 'conference against the witch-hunt' on 11 September at Wembley.

The meeting heard Hackney North MP Ernie Roberts explain that the Labour Parliamentary Association, which regroups MPs and prospective parliamentary candidates, was totally against the new register.

'We didn't take a formal decision not to register because we were led to believe that the Labour Party administration — which handles much of our work — would do it automatically whether we wanted to or not,' he said. 'But we have been told that this is not the case and we shall be discussing a request to register. I am confident we will refuse to do so.'

Ernie went on to explain how he had lived through the witch-hunts of the nineteen fifties, when CLPs were interrogated in 'Star chamber courts held in the House of Commons' and disbanded. He said the present battle was not just for the right to organise, but for the 'socialist soul of the Labour Party'.

Everyone recorded growing hostilities to expulsions. The delegate from Chipping Barnet CLP explained that after his party voted against the witch-hunt, letters from the GMC right wing appeared in the press denouncing the decision. 'As a result' he said 'even the moderates now support us.'

Dominic Johnson from Oxford explained why Oxford CLP was now opposed to the witch-hunts. A year ago, he said, the right wing controlled the party and, as many people knew, had kept socialists such as Ted Heslin out of the Party.

The left in the party responded by building the Labour Party locally as an active, campaigning party, including its Young Socialists. They campaigned in the unions to win support for their positions and, in the largest General Committee in Britain — with over 200 delegates — they had won a two thirds majority in March.

Best

Nearly everyone present said the best way to fight was to refuse to carry out expulsions, risking disbandment if necessary.

This would be a hard battle, and several delegates were worried that their CLP might change its views once conference had agreed to the

register and the NEC began to put the screws on. 'This is why the conference it being called,' explained Keith Lichfield of Hackney North, from the platform. CLPs should stiffen each others' resolve, he said, by committing themselves to joint action.

Militant supporter Laurence Coates, who represents the Young Socialists on Labour's NEC, said the CLPs should not refuse to implement expulsions but should campaign by constitutional means for the readmission of those expelled.

Vital

But as Alan Freeman from Socialist Challenge said, 'You cannot retreat endlessly while proclaiming you are advancing. Our aim should be, through the conference on 30 October, to persuade as many people as possible of the position that Hackney North has taken, of complete nonco-operation with the register. Of course there will be many, such as Militant supporters and even people who now support the register, who will become convinced of the need to resist once the first expulsions begin. The conference should be open to them; it should take delegates from everyone who is against expulsions.'

Luton's delegate agreed, pointing out that many unions had voted against witch-hunts but were going to vote for the register. If it became clear that the result was an NEC drive against the rank and file of the party, and that this in turn was going to produce a wave of disruption and disbandments, the unions would have to rethink. To ensure this happened, he said, the fight had to be taken into the unions.

This reasoning led delegates to open the conference to local union branches as well as YS's,



Joe Whelan

MANSFIELD SOCIALIST CHALLENGE supporters report the death by a heart attack on 31 August, of Joe Whelan, general secretary of the Nottinghamshire NUM, and a member of the NUM national executive committee.

Joe Whelan's death came within weeks of the Notts miners electing a left-wing majority on the area executive. Speaking at a healthworkers' picket just days before his heart attack he described the elections 'as a historic moment — the reward for years of struggle, under the stifling conditions of right-wing domination.'

Joe Whelan was a leading member of the Communist Party and this meant that Socialist Challenge supporters had many sharp disagreements with him, especially over what attitude the NUM should adopt towards the military crackdown in Poland.

On the other hand he often disagreed with the CP's views on Ireland. He used the forum of the Notts miners gala in 1981 to denounce the local MP Don Concannon who is Labour spokesperson on Ireland and called 'for the immediate withdrawal of the British army of occupation.'

Joe Whelan was not some slick CP middle class hatchet man. Like a lot of the rebel workers of his generation he believed a revolutionary party was needed. Unfortunately he accepted the stalinist counterfeit as good coin. And this inevitably marked his political views and methods.

The Socialist Challenge readers here pay tribute to Joe Whelan and to his long fight against the NUM right wing. We will do that by continuing the struggle in the mines and the factories for class policies to bring down the Tories and the grasping profit-seeking system they represent.

women's sections and socialist societies. As Tessa van Gelderen representing London Labour Briefing explained, a Party facing disbandment would have to win the support of all its affiliated organisations, who would have to take decisions to back their local party often against the pressure from their leadership. It was therefore vital to involve such bodies in the conference.

Vote

Other delegates said their parties had circulated affiliated organisations seeking their support and offering to send them speakers, and Lambeth explained that they had called a public meeting on 22 September to put their

case, which they hoped other London Parties would attend.

It was agreed that the conference should be open to everyone opposing expulsions, and that delegates should be taken from all components of local GMCs including unions. Observers should be accepted from Labour lefts and campaign bodies.

Hackney North representatives argued strongly that there should be a vote of the Constituency Labour Parties alone since it was the CLPs which in the first instance would have to take decisions whether or not to accept expulsions. It was eventually agreed, after some discussion, that facilities should be made for a separate vote for CLPs if necessary.

wing justified the flaunting of their own union's decision by claiming the decision was somehow the result of behind the scenes conspiracy by the left, trying to prevent any discussion on the issue.

Stan Chambers, delegate from Mansfield Colliery, commented: 'It's just diabolical how the right wing rave about democracy then turn round using tactics like this, ignoring the wishes of the members.'

Concannon had the cheek to say: 'I don't

know why people who are members of the Labour Party should put resolutions through their trade unions criticising it.' 'As far as I am concerned' Brian London in reply to Concannon told Socialist Challenge 'the unions are the backbone of the Labour Party, they founded it, and they should take a part in running it.' This initiative taken by rank and file militants in the Notts NUM shows what can be done to defeat the witch hunt. It also shows the methods the right wing will use to clamp down on party democracy.

Photo: MORNING STAR

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Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

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

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

No to witch-hunt says Notts area NUM

By Andy Miller

AT ITS RECENT meeting the Nottinghamshire NUM area council endorsed a resolution submitted by the Blidworth branch calling for 'total opposition to the proscribed list of organisations being set up within the Labour Party.'

The resolution had been discussed in all of the area's 31 branches, 17 of which voted for. Brian Lawton, GMC delegate to Mansfield CLP from Blidworth NUM explained why he moved the resolution.

Brian said: 'The right wing want to get rid of everyone who is trying to get progressive policies of the party. They want to push us back to the kind of policies we had under the

last Labour government.'

Mark Hunter from Welbeck Branch NUM summing up on why he supported the resolution said: 'There's only one organisation in the Labour Party that should be looked at — that's the parliamentary party!'

The Notts area vote has now raised the matter of accountability of NUM delegates to Labour Party general management committees. As Mark Hunter

explained: 'I tried to argue that this should be a mandate on our five delegates to the GMC, but I was stopped and told "you can't mandate them at all".'

At the Mansfield GMC, Don Concannon, the NUM sponsored Labour MP and shadow cabinet member, argued that NUM members should ignore the decision taken by the area committee.

A resolution supporting the register was moved by a right-wing NUM delegate in defiance of his own branch. The right

Show trials for Poland

By Brian Grogan

SHOW TRIALS of leaders of the Workers Defence Committee, KOR, are being prepared by the Polish military junta, for 'crimes against the state'. KOR played a major role in the events leading up to the formation of the free trade union, Solidarnosc. This shows the extreme desperation of the Jaruzelski regime in the aftermath of the mass demonstrations against martial law which occurred on 31 August. This was the second anniversary of the signing of the Gdansk accords which recognised Solidarnosc.

Meanwhile, mass protest actions continued in Lublin, a city in the South West of Poland, where the police shot dead five protesters in the anniversary demonstrations. The funeral, Sunday, witnessed a strike by the copper miners.

The Polish authorities tried to dismiss the anniversary demonstrations. But their extent and size couldn't be ignored. According to the *Times*, unofficial sources put the number who demonstrated in excess of 100,000, in at least 12 cities or major towns. The authorities admitted to 75,000, but since they only acknowledged demonstrations in eight cities. But by Sunday they had acknowledged that some action had taken place in 54 towns in 34 provinces.

The size of the demonstrations was even more remarkable given the intimidation and outright repression. Six people were killed, well over 100 injured, many seriously and a whopping 4,050 people arrested. Heavy sentences are being handed down to many of the arrested demonstrators.

The level of intimidation and repression can be gauged from the following report from *Le Monde* 'In Varsovy, practically under state of siege from early on, the population began to gather at the meeting points designated by Solidarnosc, at 4 o'clock

on Tuesday afternoon. The demonstrators, numbering several thousands, were immediately and violently charged by the anti-riot units of the militia which made massive use of tear gas and was equipped with gas masks'.

Lublin

This scenario was repeated up and down Poland. And, as we know in Lublin the police even opened fire on the demonstrators. It was impossible for the authorities to write off the militancy which was expressed. So they fell back on the ludicrous explanation that these demonstrations did not involve 'real workers'. Lets listen to *Le Monde* again, reporting from Gdansk: 'At the exit to the Lenin shipyard, Tuesday afternoon, 5,000 of the 10,000 workers that made up the morning shift gathered around the monument dedicated to the workers killed in the riots in 1970. For an hour they chanted slogans which left no doubt as to their sentiments: "Free Lech (Walesa), lock up Wojczech (Jaruzelski)", "End the state of emergency", "Free the interned and the condemned", "Freedom for Poland, bread for the people", "The Pope must come to Poland", "Solidarity will win"... Then, no sooner

had a police officer given the order for the demonstrations to disperse, than the air was filled with detonator bombs, tear gas and smoke bombs. (The demonstrators moved off). In the midst of the multitude of tear gas grenades and smoke bombs, they were joined by numerous other people from the town and responded (to the police attacks) by throwing stones and bricks. They even erected barricades with benches and dustbins. In the face of permanent harrying by the police they resisted for five hours'. But of course, for Jaruzelski the Lenin shipyard workers are not 'real workers'!

In reality the demonstrations show the continuing massive support for Solidarnosc. It shows the authority which the newly reorganised national leadership in the Temporary Coordinating Committee (TKK) has achieved.

Gas

This development is a disaster for the Jaruzelski regime. Because it comes on top of its failure to stem the economic crisis. In the first four months of this year industrial production fell by 10.2 per cent compared with the same period last year, which already marked a major decline. This figure was despite the increase in coal production. Production of foodstuffs and animal fodder have declined markedly, despite being given priority. Thus, given the government decree doubling of the cost of living, revenues have declined by 25 per cent.

This is the background to the decision to go for show trials of the KOR



The beginning of the pro-Solidarnosc march in Warsaw. Within minutes it was viciously attacked by the anti-riot police.



The scene as the police attacked the march.

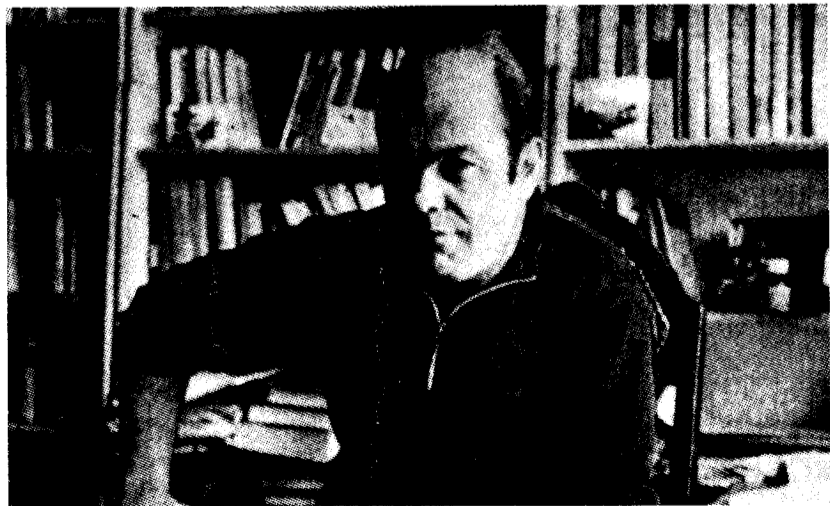
leaders and to intensify repression. They have clearly abandoned the illusion that they could split off a collaborationist wing of Solidarnosc with the help of the Catholic hierarchy. In fact Solidarnosc militants and leaders have further radicalised during the eight months of martial law. In an unprecedented development, the TKK openly criticised Archbishop Glemp, the leader of the Polish Catholic Church for his overtures to the regime. This is the first time for decades that the Church has been criticised by another recognised authority.

The ability to mobilise in the way that they did will stimulate Solidarnosc to develop its resistance to the regime. Already it has developed its underground structure to the point where it is organised in nearly every factory and neighbourhood. It has numerous publications and sporadically broadcasting radio stations in a number of cities — not just the highly publicised one in Warsaw. The debate about how to bring down the regime and the preparation of an all-out general strike will therefore intensify over the next months. As the Gdansk shipyard workers chanted 'Solidarnosc will win'!



ZOMO, the hated paramilitary police. These thugs were the main forces to attack the protesters. Workers in Gdansk chanted: 'Gestapo!' 'Nazis!' Jaruzelski is dubbed Zomosa.

Jaruzelski v KOR



KOR leaders like Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, Henry Wujek and Jan Lytinski are being charged for 'trying to overthrow the state' and advocating terrorism. But the facts show the absolute reverse. Jacek Kuron, recently released a statement arguing that 'a widespread, well organised resistance movement is the Polish people's only chance. Only such a movement can be party to a compromise (with the regime)...can restrain a wave of terrorism.'
Adam Michnik has been equally as forthright. In an interview last month with the German magazine Der Spiegel he was quoted as saying 'It is not terrorism that is needed in Poland, but a broadly based underground movement with the goal of rebuilding civilian society.'

Stop the missiles

Countdown for Blackpool

YOUTH MARCH



THE COUNTDOWN to the start of the North West youth march for 'Jobs not Bombs' has begun. It leaves Manchester on 23 September heading for the Labour Party conference in Blackpool. It culminates at a mass Labour CND lobby of the conference on 26 September. Receptions are being planned in most places en route. There will be a gig every night for the marchers and local youth. Barbara Green has been in Manchester helping to organise.

THINGS HAVE really started moving this week in Manchester. Over 50 marchers have signed up in the last three days alone. A CND supporter here has given us a 3 ton van to use during the march; a local students union has given us an office; loads of bands have offered to play

on the march for expenses only and even a number of Labour Party MPs have been pestering us for things they can do — none of them as yet have offered to march with us!

We've been down to local dole offices, leafletting and going round the

factories for support. At Gardners, a big engineering factory, the workers there who have been in and out of fights with the bosses to defend their own jobs and are now faced with redundancies again, were dead keen to support the march. They gave us money and are going to try and get a delegation onto our Sunday lobby of the Labour Party conference on September 26.

Chlorides in Salford are another factory with problems of their own. They have had 1,000 redundancies in the last two years — and now the management want more. They are going to fight and

the first step is to support our march. They took collection sheets and leaflets and have promised to do all they can for the march.

The LPYS are doing a national mailing of all their branches this week. Sponsorship from union branches is still coming in. These now include the North West region of the transport union. Youth CND and LPYS branches up and down the country are out on the dole queues and in the factories leafletting and building support for the march.

The El Salvador Solidarity campaign has

agreed to send two marchers. Other anti-imperialist organisations like the New Jewel youth organisation and the General Union of Palestinian Students have been invited to bring along their banners and raise their demands and protests on the march.

If you want to come on the march, or to sponsor it, give us desperately needed finances or any other details, phone or write to: UMIST, Students Union, Sackville St., Manchester 1 (061 236 9114 extension 48) or Jim, 48 Swindon Close, Gorton Manchester (061 236 9114) See you on the march.

March unites LPYS and YCND

With the arrival of Cruise, 1983 is going to be the most important year for YCND. With the witch-hunt in the Labour Party, the 1982 conference could be one of the most decisive in the history of the LPYS. The youth march to the Labour Party conference has had some success in bringing the LPYS and YCND together.

For YCND to get rid of the missiles it has to build a mass campaign on the streets directed at the labour movement. For the LPYS to become a mass campaigning socialist youth movement, it has to place itself at the head of that campaign. Success here would be the best defence against the witch-hunt.

Recently, Jim Coutts, ordinary officer of the YCND National Committee spoke to the national organisers of both organisations. Annajoy David was speaking to *Revolution*, a socialist youth paper, and Andy Bevan of the LPYS spoke to *Second Generation*, the national magazine of YCND.

Annajoy explained 'I was very pleased that the LPYS backed our march. I would like to see closer links in the future. We will certainly be encouraging our members to work with the LPYS. We would hope

that the LPYS leadership will do more to get YS members involved with the local work of YCND.

Andy Bevan explained the reason for LPYS support to the march: 'We supported the youth march because of our 1981 conference decision to support CND and its activities. We want to give our support for all those YCND initiatives that call on the LP to stick to its guns. We are asking LPYS members from the north west to go on the march saying to YCND that we think that a Labour government committed to unilateral disarmament will stop the missiles. If you agree with that you should also come on the 16 October LPYS demonstration in Liverpool called to protest unemployment'.

Lets hope that the youth march and the 16 October demo mark the beginning of a great relationship.

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Why I'm marching

Paul Wongsam is an unemployed black youth from Cheatham in Manchester. He told Jim Coutts, the march organiser, why he'll be out on the road 'I'LL BE marching because the only thing you can do is protest. Anyway, it will take away the boredom for a while. They are going to replace Polaris with Trident and install Cruise missiles. They say they are a deterrent, but really they threaten us with a nuclear war.'

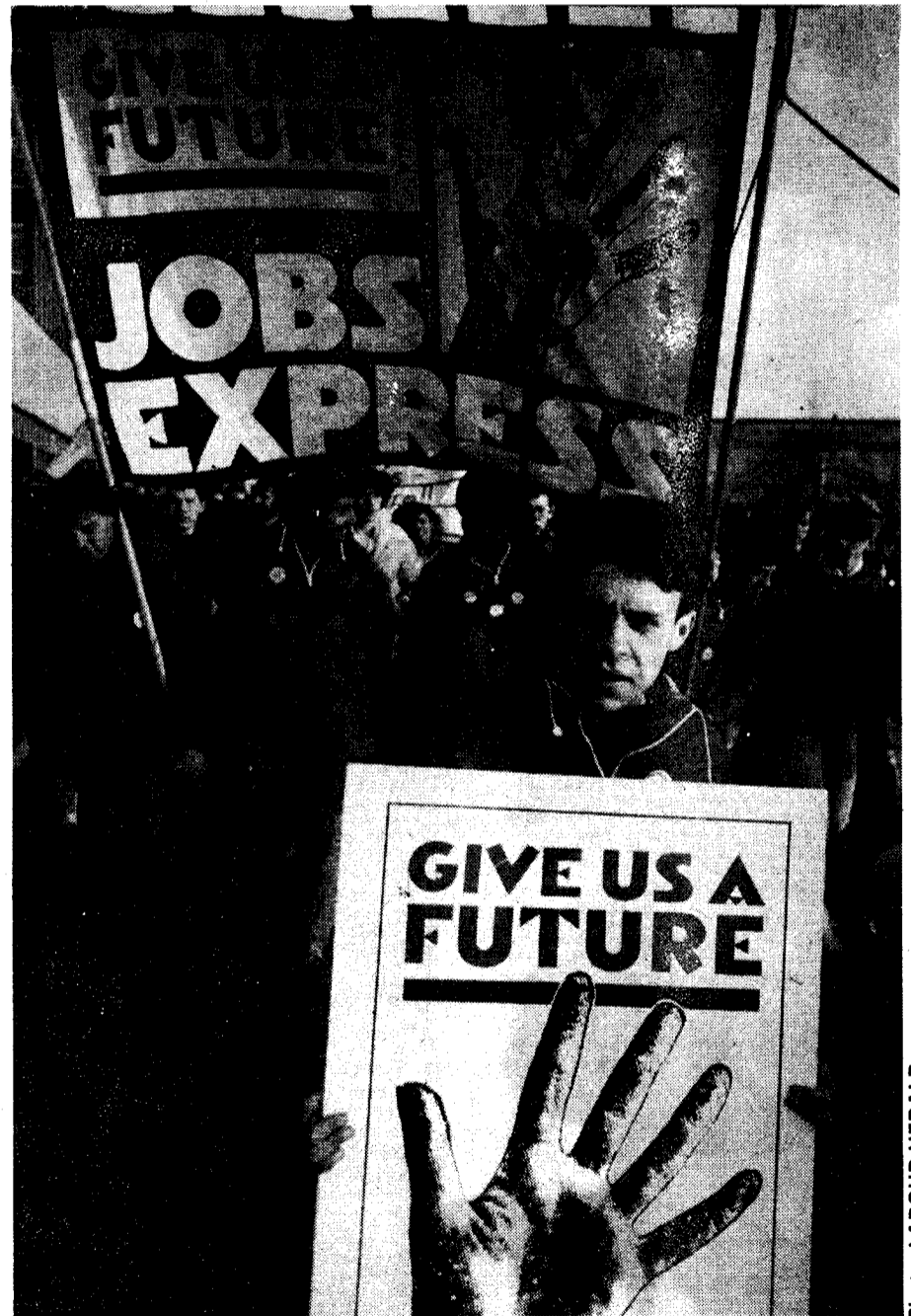
They are all a waste of money. They are just going to scrap Polaris when Trident comes. All that money just down the drain. I've been unemployed for six months and get £16.50 from the dole. I give £10 of that to my mum. So I'm left with six and half quid.

I don't think the unions have done enough to protest against and stop unemployment. They really haven't been doing anything.

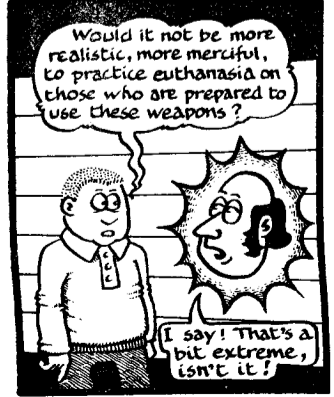
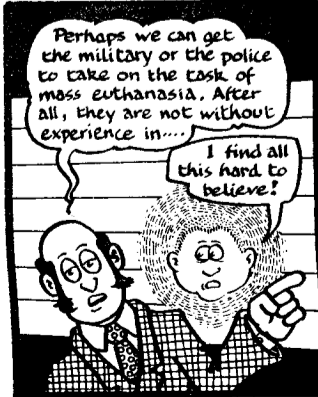
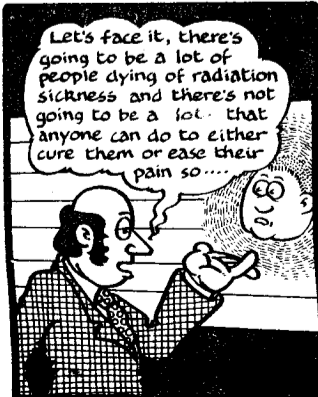
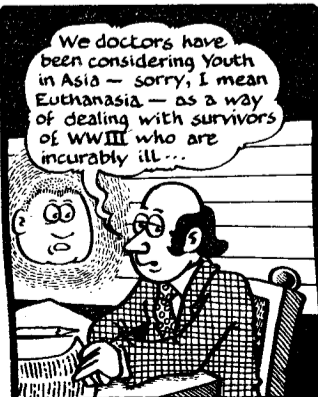
I'm glad the riots happened. These showed everybody the amount of frustration and pressure that was building up. They were the biggest protest so far against unemployment. But they were not just about that. They were against people being trod on by the police. But I don't think they'll happen again. The police have got too much power.

I wouldn't join the Labour Party as it is now. The people who run it don't do anything for people like me. They do things for the middle class. They ignore young people, black people and people on the dole like me. If Tony Benn got in, things might be different. He is more radical and wants to do away with nuclear weapons.

The papers try to tell you things the way they want you to see them. They were all for the Falklands. But most of my friends were against the war. If it had been up to me, I would have given the islands to Argentina. They say the PLO in the Lebanon are terrorists, but they are really freedom fighters. They say the missiles are a deterrent, but Reagan is our main enemy. I hope the march will get these things out.



The TUC's Jobs Express raised the hopes of many youth, but they were badly let down. The North West youth march is a way to continue the fight.



TUC must break with the Tories

Give us a victory!

'As far as we are concerned the TUC and the General Council are the head of the movement and therefore we expect them to give us a lead.

'I don't think the troops are unwilling. This is the time we have to show the Tories that we're prepared to fight back and not just knuckle under.'

This is how Sean Geraghty summed up the tasks facing the 114th TUC Congress taking place in Brighton this week. The Fleet Street electrician's leader's words were backed up by a MORI opinion poll published on Monday.

Asked about support for the health workers' strike action 50 percent of trade unionists supported sympathetic strike action. And that's without any systematic preparation by the union leadership to mobilise their membership for the 22 September day of national strike action with the health unions.

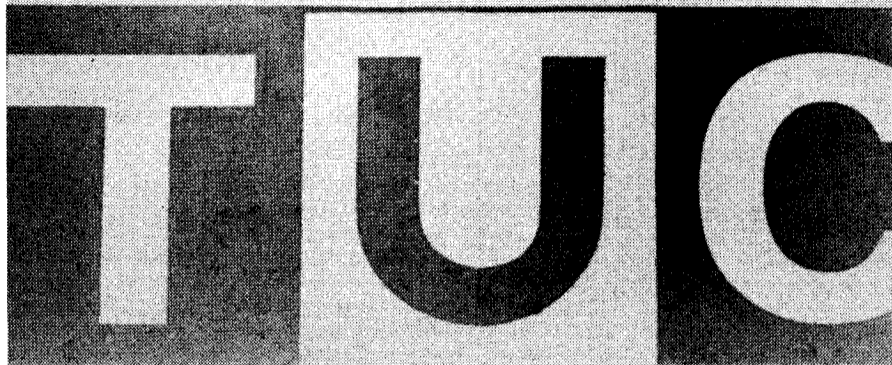
The bosses have evidently been taken by surprise by the scale of the backing for the General Council's call for strike action on the 22 September.

But the TUC leaders are under tremendous pressure from their membership for an effective response to the Tories' offensive.

That pressure has been given voice in the high councils of the TUC by Arthur Scargill who has declared that if backing the low paid and defending the trade union movement means confronting the Tories anti-union laws then so be it.

Support

The support which Scargill's argument enjoys in the ranks of the labour movement has been proven by the veritable queue of general secretaries now presenting themselves for



But the show of militancy cannot conceal the fact that the TUC is facing decisive tests at this week's congress.

Trade union membership has declined to 11,006,000, a loss of over a million members in the last four years. But the pro-

portion of workers organised by unions has remained the same — 53 percent. This shows us that Thatcher has failed in

the main project laid out in the policies on which she was elected into office — the cracking of the organised resistance of the trade union movement.

But the union movement cannot continue to sustain the type of setbacks which the Tories have inflicted in the last few months.

Decisions

At its last Congress the TUC took a number of left decisions on issues such as fighting unemployment, privatisation of nationalised industries and coordination of the struggles of the public sector unions.

But again despite opinion poll evidence that 49 percent of trade unionists want to see the TUC pursue its campaign against Tebbit's anti-union laws TUC activity has been minimal. The same applies to the campaign on unemployment, where confronted with a real issue of jobs on the railways the TUC leaders engaged in the most shameful act — betrayal of

ASLEF's strike.

This is why the systematic mobilisation of the trade union movement: for the one day strike on 22 September is vital for the whole future of the unions. Actions of this type can begin to put the Tories on the defensive providing a new confidence in the ability of the unions to defend their members. Failure to achieve mass backing will give the Tories the opportunity to put the boot in.

22 September can start a movement to force the Tories from office. This is what the right wing of the TUC leadership fears above anything else. They know that dismissing the Tories in such a way would open the way for the election of a Labour government which would be compelled to make massive concessions to the working class.

It would also encourage the rapid development of a left wing in the unions and the Labour Party which would threaten their present domination of the labour movement.

Scottish workers blaze trail

ONE thousand delegates from mainly west of Scotland trade union branches and workplaces pledged unanimous support to the call of the Scottish Trade Union Congress for widespread solidarity action on 22 September.

All the major industries, factories, and public service unions were present at the meeting on Friday 3 September. The idea put forward by George McCormick of Rolls Royce Hillington, that the government platform rested on defeating the health workers was a consistent theme of the conference.

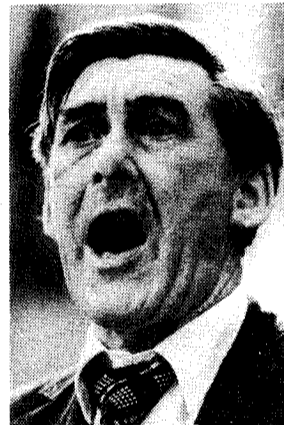
Jim Airlie of the AUEW saw it as a battle for the whole working class to win, saying that if the health workers went down, other workers would go down with them. Stressing the importance of this fight he explained 'working people are crying out for leadership.'

John Walker of ASLEF said: 'If a one-day stoppage was not enough,

the labour movement's responsibility was to stop altogether.' He also added that the campaign should then go on to remove the Tories and elect a Labour government.

Govan shipbuilder's leader, Sammy Gilmour, also insisted that there must be an indefinite strike if there was no settlement by early October.

Mick McGahey, presi-



Mick McGahey

dent of the Scottish NUM told the meeting about a triple alliance meeting he attended which was

discussing action on how to save steel jobs. The first item on its agenda said Mick 'was a complete stoppage to support the health workers on 22 September.'

Coal

'Not a pound of coal moved in Scotland on the day of the last solidarity strike with the NHS,' he told the conference. And he repeated 'not a pound of coal will move on 22 September.'

Ronnie Scott from the FBU explained that firefighters in the Strathclyde area had been operating an emergency only service for over a

week now in support of the health workers. He hoped that a meeting of Scottish firefighters due to be held on 9 September would extend this action across the country.

The Glasgow South West district hospitals joint shop stewards committee must have been more than pleased with the conference which certainly reacted well to its leaflet calling for 'the TUC to call for an indefinite strike of all health service workers with emergency and accident cover only.' It also urged the TUC 'to call on all the trade unions to take solidarity strike action' with the health workers, and asked for this action to be made official.

Glasgow greets Thatcher

By Murdo Ritchie

FIVE HUNDRED noisy demonstrators greeted prime minister Thatcher when she arrived at Glasgow's Holiday Inn last Wednesday, 1 September.

Prominent among them were healthworkers demanding payment of their claim and steelworkers fighting redundancies and closure at BSC Clydebridge and Parkhead Forge.

Many more would have been there if any proper demonstration had been organised. But the Scottish TUC leadership rejected that course. Led by general secretary Jimmy Milne, a member of the Communist Party, inside they went instead for a meeting with Thatcher — to tell her she should mend her ways and impose import controls.

Even some STUC leaders thought this was going a bit far. Tom Dougan, Scottish regional organiser of the engineering union, tried to get the meeting called off but was unsuccessful.

Dougan rightly pointed out: 'How can we expect to get help for the

jobless from the person who has created their misery? What we want to do is concentrate on getting her out of office.'

This was the spirit in which Edinburgh Leith MP Ron Brown stood in Thatcher's path at the top of the hotel steps and in his own words 'told her she was not welcome in Scotland and that she should get back to her bunker'.

For his pains, Brown was floored by security men and dragged away to a police van shouting, 'Is this Poland?' He was held for six hours and then charged with committing a breach of the peace.

Later Tony Benn came down in between signing



Labour MP Ron Brown being dragged off by the police

copies of his book and going to speak to the Trades Council. He told the

demonstrators that he was there because solidarity was the key to resisting the

Tory attacks. Different sections of the movement had to support others who were going into struggle, 'as the miners are supporting the nurses, and as the whole movement should have supported ASLEF'.

STUC

Tory policies, he said, 'are deliberately designed to create mass unemployment and turn the clock back 100 years'. 'There are no solutions to be found in the Holiday Inn', he declared as the STUC leaders were still trying to persuade Thatcher of the error of her ways!

As Benn pointed out, 'What we need is a Labour government as committed to the interests of our people as she is to hers'. Particular applause greeted his call for a Labour government to cancel Trident and get rid of the US nuclear bases — which is about all the Tories are prepared to spend money on in Scotland.



Photo: G M COOKSON
'Confront the Tories' says Scargill

A great example from Hemel

By Hemel Socialist Challenge supporters

AFTER the ASTMS call for a national demonstration to support the health workers — a call now taken up by the TUC — members of Hemel Hempstead Labour Party and the trades council got together with local hospital workers to build a large contingent. It is in fact hoped to book a special train to go to London for the demonstration.

Support for the idea is growing, particularly in the local trade union branches. A public appeal to sponsor health workers for the demonstration has already raised £76. This was done by collecting fifty pence pieces in the town's streets last Saturday.

We intend to build a really big contingent from here to show that the local workers and the local people are behind the health worker's claim.



Published by Hodder and Stoughton, price £8.95

Bennism with its pants down

By Bob Pennington

WHEN THE EDITOR of *Tribune* writes a novel about the election of a Bennite-type Labour government in a crisis-torn Britain, in the year 1989, I have to be interested. And, I must admit that Chris Mullin's novel: 'A Very British Coup', is interesting. In fact I read it cover to cover at the first reading.

Mullin describes the victory of a left Labour government led by Harry Perkins, an ex-steel worker from Sheffield. But this is a very different Labour government than you and I have ever seen. It is pledged to get rid of the US bases in Britain; it intends to get out of the EEC and favours abolishing the House of Lords, the honours list and public schools. The government also intends bringing the pension and insurance funds under public control so they can be used for industrial investment.

Not only does Harry Perkins and his cabinet have a more socialist programme than any of their predecessors, but they appear to have few illusions about the capitalist state. In his election speech, Perkins says: 'To win real power we have first to break the stronghold exerted by the ruling class on all the important institutions of our country.' Reading that, I thought — that's not bad for starters!

But knowing about the power of the establishment and being able to deal with it is quite a different thing. Right from the beginning the people who control all the important institutions, in collusion with their American allies, get to work on the new government. A run on sterling is organised. The air force bosses plot and scheme with the US top brass to stop the bases being dismantled. A trade union leader, who has connections with US intelligence, calls a go-slow, normally this leader is about as keen on strikes as Frank Chapple. The cabinet are spied on by the intelligence service. Their sex lives are investigated by means of phone taps, tailing, and by ordering the prime minister's police body guard to burgle his home. The media, including the Beeb and ITV, unite as one against the government, even supporting the go-slow!

Finally the government is brought to its knees. Perkins is framed by the head of D15 because of a past love affair and is forced to resign. He is replaced by his chancellor of the exchequer, a 'safe' man on D15's payroll — strange how in life as well as fiction, Labour has a habit of getting right-wing chancellors of the exchequer.

A self-satisfied Director General of D15 is able to say: 'Everyone should feel proud... There had been no tanks on the streets. No one had gone to the firing squad... It was a very British coup.'

Up to here Mullin has done a good job as a novelist. Without preaching a political sermon he has given the reader a real insight into the power and the ruthlessness of the British establishment. But I must confess I do get worried when he writes about the Labour lefts. In this book they are the fated rabbits to the weasels of the establishment. As the state tightens its grip the lefts obligingly roll over. Nobody seems to have any idea of how to fight the state, and what is even worse nobody tries.

I am not asking for some fairy tale ending like: 'Socialist Challenge supporters overthrow state in last desperate charge and rescue spineless Bennites'. But I do think Mullin might have shown that there are always some people prepared to fight back. Surely such a radical Labour government would never have been elected in the first place unless it had the backing of powerful social forces and leaders who enjoyed a mass base — where were they at the time of the debacle?

Now such people do not always win, but they leave some important lessons for the future. Unfortunately all we will remember about Harry Perkins and his cabinet is that Bennism got caught with its pants down! — not exactly an inspiring message for the next generation of socialists.

The Labour Party - TUC Liason C

Labour's P

THE DEFINITIVE VERSION of the Alternative Economic Strategy has been produced. It appeared in July and it's called *Economic Planning and Industrial Democracy: the framework for full employment*.

It was drafted by the Labour Party-TUC Liaison Committee as a report to the Labour Party and TUC conference. It is signed by everyone from Terry Duffy to Tony Benn: the leadership of both the TUC and Labour Party will try to unite our serried ranks around it to win the next election.

It will almost certainly be endorsed, almost unanimously, by the Labour Party. Nevertheless, in this article ALAN FREEMAN argues that it should be rejected by the left, and that we should campaign in union branches and Labour Party branches for an alternative: a programme of action in favour of the most widely accepted demands of the Labour movement, to remove the Tories and secure a Labour

government that can be forced to carry them out.

The Liaison Committee Report, cooked up in the same pot as the Bishop's Stortford agreement — and with the same good faith from Messrs Healey and Duffy — will become a noose to strangle the voice of the rank and file as a prelude to the betrayal of any progressive content it may have.

This betrayal is already implicit in the compromises made in the report, which call, not for *worker* control, but *joint* control by employers and employees.

In other words, it cannot function without the employers' agreement. It gives them the weapon with which to blackmail us into submission and implement their 'very British coup'.

There is an alternative: here we explain what the Liaison Committee says, and what we propose in its place.

Full employment and social justice

The declared aims of the plan are:

- 'Rapid progress towards full employment for both men and women.'
- 'Major improvements in the structure of the economy as a basis for lasting growth and development.'
- 'Greater social justice and the removal of poverty and inequalities.'
- 'More democracy and participation in economic life.'

The causes of the crisis

Previous economic weakness is the result of the priorities of large firms, who have a large and growing share of the market, and whose 'investment policies have been geared to the consolidation of market positions rather than developing new markets'.

This has 'been accompanied by a short sighted approach by the financial sector to the investment needs of industry... plant and machinery has become increasingly obsolescent, and our industry and services have deteriorated.

Short-term commercial considerations with little regard for wider economic and social priorities have perpetuated the vicious circle of low investment, low productivity and low growth... The extent of this collapse is unparalleled anywhere in the developed world.'

The immediate aim: an expansion of the economy

The first measures which a Labour government should take are to spend £9bn in the nationalised industries to create new jobs and provide social services and provide a basis for industrial growth.

The need for planning

Planning is 'about taking decisions in a better way to meet economic, industrial and social needs... (it) is therefore a process which must involve the people affected by decisions. It entails providing the framework for releasing initiatives, co-ordinating them and improving the performance of British industry. This means:

- 'Co-ordinating the activities of

What the Labour Party and TUC propose



What is the alternative?

The immediate task: an action programme

The Labour Party and unions should campaign for clearly identified and popular measures, with three aims:

- An immediate dramatic improvement in the living and working conditions of working people, to restore the right to work, freedom from the fear of nuclear war, and an equal right to free social services.
- To blunt or remove the most dangerous unaccountable instruments with which the ruling classes will resist these measures.
- To give working people the means to struggle for and implement these measures themselves, against the attacks being made on them by the bosses and their Tory government.

Many such measures are already Labour movement policy; but the leadership refuses to organise a real fight to achieve them. Therefore we must organise that fight ourselves and force the leadership to back it — or replace the old leaders.

So what we propose is a programme, not just for legislation by a future Labour government — if there is one — but to be acted on now, to serve as a basis for united struggle. The success of this struggle is the best guarantee that a Labour government will be returned.

Plan - who's it for?

Government, and relations between Government and industry, within a policy framework aimed at restoring full employment and boosting long-term growth;

- 'intervening with powers to ensure that industry makes the best contribution to our economic strategy', and;
- 'promoting greater social justice in a more open and equal society.'

There are two aspects to planning: 'overall management of the economy, through policies for public spending, tax rates, interest rates and the exchange rate' (what are usually termed Keynesian demand management policies, the conventional practice of Labour governments.); and 'changing the behaviour of the individual enterprises which exercise such a powerful influence on the economy' (influencing their investment and corporate strategies.)

A third goal of planning is identified later on: to 'ensure that economic expansion is not short-circuited by shortages, whether of raw materials, components, finished goods or manpower.'

What the Liaison Committee means by planning

The Liaison Committee's main proposal is to bring together all aspects of planning into a single department, the 'Department of Industrial and Economic Planning'. It will supervise, and in some cases organise, both aspects of planning: demand management or macro-economic measures to expand the economy, and the direction of investment.

It will concentrate on trying to influence companies' policies by concluding planning agreements with them, covering purchasing policy, import penetration, investment plans, pricing strategy and training policy.

It will have 'carrot and stick powers' to persuade companies to reach agreement, such as powers to provide or withdraw capital assistance. However, it will have no powers to compel industry to obey its directives.

In addition the Liaison Committee proposes that at the centre of the government's planning methods will be what it calls 'industrial democracy and accountability'; workers will be

drawn into the process of discussing the plans of both government and industry, and will be given new statutory rights to do so. New bodies will be set up in the labour movement to implement these rights.

What the Liaison Committee means by industrial democracy:

The key phrase, which recurs throughout the document, is 'joint control'. Workers will be party to discussions about companies' investment and other plans, but they will not have the final say. The idea of a 'planning agreement' is central to this view of industrial democracy. Representatives of government, unions and management will meet together to reach agreement, not just on working conditions but on industries' investment plans.

But if agreement is not reached, there are very few sanctions which can be used against management. Workers have a right of representation on boards of management and a right to be consulted; but no right of veto. If the company does something they don't agree with, they have little recourse. However, some new rights are proposed:

A right to information on:

- 'The financial position of the enterprise as a whole and of the individual subsidiaries and workplaces. Information should cover cost structures; gross and net profits; cash flow; assets; liabilities; allocation of profits; details of government assistance; transfer prices transactions with parent and subsidiary companies.'

- 'Investment plans; details of actual and likely closures, takeovers or mergers; developments in the range of activities of the enterprise as a whole and subsidiary parts of it.'

- 'Pay and benefits, conditions of service and manning levels. In addition information on future plans, the implications for employment and the corresponding manpower measures proposed should be provided.'

A right to consultation:

- 'Decisions affecting the operation of the enterprise... eg. closure, rationalisation, merger or new investment - must be communicated to the workforce within a minimum notice period of 90 days.'

- 'No such decisions should be implemented until the trade union representatives of the workers affected by them have had a chance to respond within a set period of 60 days.'

- 'If the workers affected propose alternative strategies to meet the circumstances underlying the decision, there will be an obligation on management to meet the workers and discuss these options within a set period, with a view to reaching agreement.' Management will be 'under an obligation to state and explain their reasons for taking a particular approach.'

In order to co-ordinate labour movement involvement in the plan, and to win a 'right of representation', the Liaison Committee proposes to establish *Joint Union Committees*, which it calls JUC's by company, and by region. These will be 'typically composed of both full-time officers and lay members'.

The report does not say to whom they will be accountable, or what will be the powers of the full time officials. The function of this body is to represent all unions in negotiations with management about company plans, and to exercise the rights to information and consultation described above, and to seek representation on company boards of management.

Public ownership:

The report's commitment to public ownership is vague in the extreme. It states that 'Labour Party and TUC policy contains a number of proposals for extending public ownership. New public enterprise will be developed in key sectors.' It should be noted that Labour's Programme '82, which is the other main policy document likely to enter into the manifesto, proposes the nationalisation of one bank, and makes no specific reference to nationalisation of any named firm, or even to the extent of nationalisation.

Planning trade and foreign relations:

The Liaison Committee proposes that selective import controls be used to control trade. There are no proposals for joint international action by trade unionists nor for a specific policy of seeking expansion of trade through bilateral agreements with the Third



World, the Comecon countries, China or Cuba.

National Economic Assessment:

To prevent inflation as a result of the growth of the economy, there will

be a 'national economic assessment'. Decisions will be taken about the share of national income to go to wages, profits, new investment and public spending. There is no guarantee that this will not be used as the basis of a new voluntary incomes policy.

Where should we begin? There is no better place than the health workers' own campaign for decent wages. Labour's conference could do no better for our election prospects than to commit the whole membership of the Party to join in all actions in support of this claim.

What programme of action do we propose?

- No missiles, no nukes: refuse Cruise, scrap Trident: unilateral nuclear disarmament and the removal of American bases.
- Jobs not Bombs: immediate spending of £9bn in the nationalised industries to create new jobs and get the economy going, and restore lost social services: a thirty-five hour week.
- Positive discrimination to secure an equal right to work and equal pay for women and black people: and to secure a right to work at trade union rates for youth.
- Repeal of all Tory anti-trade union legislation.
- Nationalise the banks, finance houses and insurance companies.
- For a trade union right to information concerning all corporate plans or changes in work practice, and for a trade union right of veto over them.
- Nationalisation without compensation of all companies sold off by the

Tories: the Labour Party and unions to draw up a named list of leading multinationals to be taken into public ownership.

- Withdraw from the Common Market.

How to win

Many in the left and in the Labour Party will have different views on how these demands may be secured. Socialist Challenge proposes the following additional measures which are not labour movement policy, but to which the labour movement can be committed if there is a policy struggle, and which will be the best way to win the demands of the action programme.

- Joint Labour Party-Trade Union action: the Party and unions should set up campaigning links at all levels to organise and support mass action, including industrial action, to win the demands of the action programme. The first step should be a huge campaign to win the healthworkers' claim.
- Renounce all voluntary or compulsory restrictions on wages.
- There should be a complete break with the overseas piracy of our own bankers, investors and armed forces, which alienates hundreds of millions of foreign workers from linking up

with us, and which provides business in this country with a weapon to blackmail the labour movement by exporting its capital.

All overseas investments should be surrendered to the government of the country in which they are located and the labour movement should establish direct links with the foreign employees of all companies operating in Britain, seeking a common struggle for planned production and the expansion of trade.

- It is utopian to expect to renounce Britain's nuclear role without a break with US foreign policy and with Britain's conventional great power role. Britain should renounce NATO and withdraw all forces abroad, including from Ireland.

- Legislation to bring the initiative into the hands of the labour movement in relation to all company, planning, as a means to implement Clause IV of the Party constitution calling for 'The best possible system of popular administration.'

Popular planning

The TUC Labour Party Liaison Committee is right to say that a long term solution to the problems of the economy requires planning, and that the goals of any successful plan should be social need, and not profit.

However, if social need is really to take precedence over profit, no plan will work which leaves effective veto powers in the hands of management or the Civil Service. The experience of the last Labour government shows that the Civil Service mandarins are committed to the needs of business and finance and that top management serves the needs of company shareholders, not the employees. Experience also shows that both management and owners will fight tooth and nail to resist any attempt at planning.

Therefore although it will be necessary to call on management expertise until a genuinely popular administration has been brought into being, the ultimate power of decision will have to rest with those who work in industry.

The Joint Union Committees proposed by the TUC should be created, provided they are accountable to the union rank and file: but they should seek, not *joint* control over industry but workers control. This means that all information about the company should be fully available to all members of the workforce and that the democratic bodies of the union should have the final say in all financial or commercial decisions affecting their needs or the working of the plan.

To give effect to this veto and prepare lay workers to take over the administration and management of industry, the labour movement should fight for *two-thirds representation of workers on all boards of management and for the right to hire and fire all management*.

It will be impossible for workers in a single plant or combine to ensure that production for social need takes place unless there is a link up between workers in all sectors of production, co-ordinated by the government. The TUC and Labour Party should set about preparing this link up by:

- Calling meetings of elected trade union representatives by company, region and sector to prepare company, sector and regional plans. Representatives of the Labour Party, community and oppressed groups should also be involved in these discussions.
- Committing itself to support any workers who take action against an employer who fails to meet statutory obligations to the employees or to implement the requirements of the plan.
- Committing itself to nationalise the leading multinationals and large companies, and in particular to nationalise any company found to be acting contrary to the requirements of the plan.

Where you can buy Socialist Challenge

Scotland

ABERDEEN: SC available at Boomtown books, King St. For more info ring Bill 896 284.
EDINBURGH: SC sold Thur 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrews Square and bottom of Waverly steps 4.30-5.30; Sat 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forrest Rd. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.
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HAMILTON: SC sale every Sat 1-5pm outside Safeway, shopping centre. For more info contact John Ford, 53 Elliot Crescent, Hamilton or Paul Youngson, 18 Forrest Crescent, Hamilton.

Wales

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BIRKENHEAD: SC on sale at Labour Club, Cleveland St, Thur nights; in precinct outside Littlewoods, Sat 11-12.
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BOLSOVER: Cross Keys, every Fri 8-9pm, Bluebell 9-10.
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BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. More info Box 2, c/o Fulmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.
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HUDDERSFIELD: SC sold Sat 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.
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MANCHESTER: SC sold 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER at Gorton and Droylesden markets 11am-12.30 Sats and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.

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BANGOR: Rainbows, Holyhead Road, Upper Bangor, Gwynedd.
BRADFORD: Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Sandgate.
BRIGHTON: The Public House, Little Preston St.
BRISTOL: Fulmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol 6.
BIRMINGHAM: Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth, Birmingham.
DURHAM: Durham City Co-op Bookshop, 85a New Elvet.
ILFORD: South Essex Bookshop, 335 Ley Street.
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OXFORD: EOA Books, 34 Cowley Rd.
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LIVERPOOL: News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool L1.
LONDON: Central Books, 37 Gray's Inn Rd; Colletts, Charing Cross Rd, WC2; Paperback Books, Brixton and

MANSFIELD: Fri 3-4pm, Stockwell Gate, Sat 10.30-12 Westgate. Four Seasons Shopping Centre Sat 10.30-12.
NEWCASTLE: SC on sale every Sat 11-1pm outside Fenwicks. Also available at Days of Hope bookshop, Westgate Rd. Every Friday outside Newcastle University between 1-2 and outside Newcastle Polytechnic between 12-1 every Monday.
NOTTINGHAM: SC sold every Sat 12-1 pm Slab Square. For info phone 863916.
OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities, Tel: 061-682 5151.
OXFORD: SC sold Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.
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SOUTHAMPTON: SC on sale Sat 10am-12 noon at Above Bar Post Office (Shopping Precinct).
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SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat, Regent St (Brunel Centre).
TEESSIDE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newfare, Linthouse Road, Middlesbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.
WOLVERHAMPTON: SC sales on Thur/Fri at Poly Students Union from noon-2pm and British Rail 4.30-6pm; and Saturday near Beatties, town centre from 11am-2pm.
YORK: on sale every Thursday, dole office Clifford Street, 9.30-11; University Vanburgh College 12-2; Saturday at Coney Street 11-1.

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BRENT: SC sold Willesden Junction Thur 4.30pm.
EALING: SC sold Thur, Ealing Broadway tube, 5-6pm.
ENFIELD: SC at Nelsons newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.
HACKNEY: SC on sale on estates throughout Hackney, at public meetings, and local factories. Contact us c/o PO Box 36, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8 2NF or phone Megan or John at 359 8288.
HILLINGDON: SC sold Fri, 4.30-5.30 at Uxbridge tube station; Sat 11.30-12.30 in shopping precinct, Uxbridge.
HOUNSLOW: SC sold outside Hounslow East tube, every Wed 5.15-6.15pm.
ISLINGTON: Every Fri, 8.15-9am at Holloway Road tube and Highbury tube.
KILBURN: SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square, and Thursday 8.30am at Queens Park tube.
LAMBETH: SC sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.
NEWHAM: SC sold Sat 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Mkt, Upton Park.
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WEMBLEY: SC sales Fri 6.45am at North Wembley BR Station.

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PORT TALBOT: McConville's Newsagent, Station Road.
NOTTINGHAM: Mushroom Books, Heathcote St, Hockley.
SOUTHAMPTON: October Books, Onslow Road.
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SOCIALIST CHALLENGE POEU Supporters: Day School and National Fraction — 'The Fight Against Privatisation', 12 September 11am-4pm, Cromer Street, Community Centre, Near Kings Cross Station. For Information Contact: POEU Fraction C/O Socialist Challenge

RELEASE DAVID KITSON
 Free All South African Political Prisoners. Called in support of the non stop picket of the South African Embassy, Trafalgar Square, Tuesday 14 September 7.30pm. Camden Centre. Opposite Kings X station. Admission 50p. Speakers from Kitson family, from the picket and Fight Racism Fight Imperialism. Details from Fight Racism Fight Imperialism, BCN Box 5909 London WC1 3XX

SOCIALIST SOCIETY summer school 10-11-12 September, University of London Union, Malet St WC1. Workshops from 1.30 Friday till Sunday afternoon. Speakers feature Tony Benn on 'the programme we need' (Sun 10.30 to 1.00); Ken Livingstone on 'A national plan for local government' Tariq Ali speaks on 'proportional representation: threat or challenge' (Sat 1.30 to 3.30); Alan Freeman on 'Towards an alternative foreign policy for Labour' (Sat 1.30 to 3.30); Megan Martin on Central America (Sat 1.30 to 3.30); Davy Jones on Oppositional Journalism (Sat 4.00 to 6.00); Greg Benton on China (4.00 to 6.00) and Oliver MacDonald on 'The Soviet Union and the arms race' (Fri 4.00 to 6.00) Plus Moshe Machover, Hilary Wainwright, Robin Blackburn, Andrew Gamble and Anthony Barnett.

Letters Letters Letters

Lebanon debate

'Not just a military decision'

A NUMBER of comrades responded sharply to the position put forward in the articles by Ros Kaplan and myself in which we argued that the PLO should not abandon West Beirut (SC 257).

Some of the arguments were serious, some — notably from comrades Kelly and O'Brien — were just abusive nonsense. Let's deal with some of the nonsense first.

Rich Palser and Bisi Williams say that my time 'would be better spent attacking the counter-revolution of Israel and the USA than attacking the PLO'. In fact, week after week we have done just that, including in issue 257 which the comrades complain about.

Six weeks before the Israeli invasion we devoted a back page to an article by myself which predicted that the Israelis would invade and that the USA was complicit in this coming invasion.

Headline after headline has denounced Zionism and US imperialism — so keep a sense of proportion, comrades.

The question is whether we should criticise the PLO leadership at all. Some comrades appear to think not. I think that within the framework of solidarity we have a right and a duty to analyse and criticise.

It is those comrades who argue that no criticism of those in struggle is permissible who are the real 'romantics'. At any rate, refusal to criticise petty bourgeois nationalist leaderships has nothing whatever in common with socialism.

Kelly and O'Brien ask: 'Can't Hearse tell the difference between a set-back and a defeat?' Unfor-

tunately yes, but they don't seem able to. To argue that the crushing defeat of the Palestinians at the hands of an ascendant Zionism is merely a 'set-back' is to understate it. Since this touches on a crucial difference of assessment it is worth going into.

The Zionist state launched this attack because the framework for solving the 'Palestinian problem' through the Camp David agreement had reached a complete stalemate, through the resistance of the Palestinian masses in the occupied territories and the opposition of the rejectionist front.

Israel has now gone for a unilateral 'solution' to the Palestinian 'problem' — that of attempting to militarily crush the PLO. This is linked to a much wider plan, daily discussed by Sharon et al in the Israeli press, to re-settle

the bulk of the Palestinian population on the East Bank of the Jordan — in Jordan itself.

This involves bringing all the Arab regimes in the region to heel, making Lebanon into a puppet regime and generally enforcing a Pax Israel on the whole of the Arab East.

This project has profound implications for Lebanon. It means a genocidal attack on the whole Palestinian population of Lebanon to expel them from the country, and the destruction of the leftist militias by the Phalangists in alliance with the Israelis.

The 500,000 Palestinians in Lebanon and the leftist militias have nowhere to go. They will now have to stay and fight. It is not a question of 'bravery' but of the facts of life. And the evacuation of the Palestinians from West Beirut makes the next stage of the operation all that much easier for the Israelis.

What has happened to the PLO militias is very

obvious. They have been scattered throughout the Middle East, where they will be dependent on the good will of the bourgeois Arab nationalist regimes, who will attempt to control them. They will be unable to launch military operations (from Tunisia, South Yemen?). Their central co-ordination and command structure are shattered.

Now of course this doesn't mean a final, total defeat. But it is rather more than just a 'set-back'.

The long term reason for this situation is well explained by Martin Meteyard. The PLO's strategy has been reliance on the Arab bourgeoisies rather than mass mobilisations of the oppressed Arab masses.

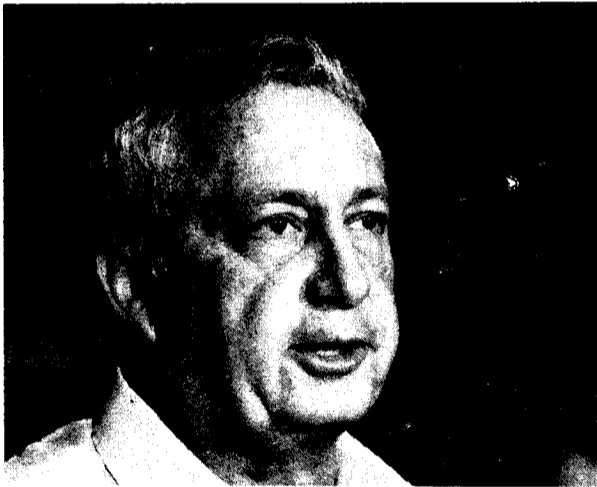
Martin makes some good points about the necessity for orderly retreats in some situations. I did not of course mean to imply that retreats are never necessary, that it was always right to stand and fight.

But war is the extension of politics by other means. Some military decisions are not just 'tactical' but of crucial political importance.

At stake in Lebanon was not just the fate of the fighters in Beirut, but of the whole Palestinian population and the leftist militias — not to mention the remaining Palestinian fighters in Tripoli and Bekaa valley. Martin says 'a retreat is only justified as a way of preparing a new offensive'. Maybe I'm wrong, but just now I'm not entirely sure that this present retreat can be explained in quite that light.

Perhaps we were over hasty in suggesting that the Palestinian fighters should not abandon Beirut. But those people who think the decision was correct should make that assessment in full knowledge of the consequences. The attack on the Palestinian population in Lebanon is just beginning, not ending.

Phil Hearse



Israeli 'Defence' Minister Sharon



PLO leader Yasser Arafat

'A major set-back'

I am replying to comrades D Kelly, J O'Brien, M Meteyard, B Williams and R Palser in Socialist Challenge 259, criticising Phil Hearse and my articles in Socialist Challenge 257.

In these articles we supported the position of the Lebanese section of the Fourth International (RCG) who appealed to the PLO to stay in West Beirut and fight alongside the Lebanese left, muslim and national movements to halt the Israeli invasion.

I wrote as a militant in Palestine solidarity work in both Britain and the Middle East for six years. I can testify that my view is not just a personal one nor an idiosyncrasy of the RCG but a widely held view in Lebanon and with Palestinians under Israeli occupation. Why?

Because the battle is not just with the PLO but with the Arab peoples and in particular the people of Lebanon. Williams and Palser display the height of ignorance. They say about the RCG '... the statement ... is very brave,

although if they attempt to fight, then there will soon be no section ...' But unlike the PLO they have no choice! Where do you propose the Lebanese resistance should go? They are Lebanese people; the majority are not Palestinians. Their country is Lebanon. They face a future fascist state and Phalange repression with the aid of Israel on a horrendous scale — possibly the worst Lebanon has seen and occupation by the Zionist army.

Already the Phalange are discussing, if not preparing, the expulsion of massive sections of the Lebanese Muslim community — exactly what Israel would like to see.

Should the Lebanese people accept this? They have no intention of passively accepting this fate. They are continuing

the struggle. But without the PLO they are in a much weaker position.

The real problem is that the comrades, despite disclaimers, endorse the political line of the 'moderate' PLO leadership.

The heroism of its militants is not in question. But its political line has resulted in enormous difficulties for the future struggle. The PLO took a political decision to leave Lebanon, not a tactical-military one as these comrades seem to think.

Their military withdrawal was undoubtedly tied in with the new US proposals for a settlement of the Palestinian struggle.

The main terms of the Reagan settlement are as follows: Self-government for the Palestinians in the Israeli Occupied Territories (West Bank and Gaza Strip) in association with Jordan — not an independent state.

No Israeli annexation of the Occupied Territories — not Israeli withdrawal. Immediate freeze on the building of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip — not the disbanding of already existing ones.

This is neither a just nor a lasting settlement, but a guarantee of further Israeli expansionism. Socialists must oppose it and demand the withdrawal of all imperialist and Zionist forces from Lebanon and the Occupied Territories.

The US plan, which has so far the approval of the conservative Arab regimes, shown for example in their willingness to debate it at the Fez Conference this week, in effect demands PLO and Arab acceptance of the State of Israel and its continued presence in the Occupied Territories.

In other words it would be a major set-back in the struggle to liberate

Palestine. But the moderate PLO leadership's outlook has left it wide open to this manoeuvre. In return they will get nothing but a diplomatic recognition worth no more than the scrap of paper it is written on.

Meanwhile the war continues in Lebanon. Zionism is on its biggest expansionist campaign since 1948; imperialism is on the offensive and the US is trying to neutralise the Palestinian revolution in order to secure and strengthen its own interests in the area. Both are trying to redraw the political map of the Arab East.

Understanding this will place us in a stronger position for building long term solidarity in the labour movement — when we recognise exactly what the Palestinians, Lebanese and Arab peoples are up against.

Ros Kaplan

Washington presses war on Nicaragua

By Fred Murphy

US imperialism's war against the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua continues to escalate. Towns and villages in northern Nicaragua have been beset by Somozaist terror attacks for months. Now, air raids against major cities have been attempted as well.

* On 19 July — the third anniversary of the Sandinista revolution — an unmarked aircraft flying from Honduras fired two rockets at a concentration of storage tanks holding 800,000 gallons of highly combustible fuel in the port of Corinto. The rockets failed to hit their targets; had either done so, the entire population of the city could have perished in the resulting fire. Corinto, which handles three-quarters of Nicaragua's foreign trade, would have been reduced to cinders.

* On 24 July, a force of about 100 counter-revolutionaries crossed the Honduran border and attacked the town of San Francisco del Norte in Chinandega Province. Armed with Belgian rifles, M79 grenade launchers, and small mortars, the attackers besieged the town for two and a half hours, killing 11 militia members in battle and capturing three others and slashing their throats in the town's plaza. Eight more militia members were also captured and dragged across the border before regular Nicaraguan troops could arrive to provide reinforcements.

* On 27 July, a second aerial bombing attempt was launched, this time against Nicaragua's only oil refinery, on the western edge of Managua. The attacking aircraft was detected in time to



FSLN leader Tomás Borge

be driven off by anti-aircraft fire and planes from Nicaragua's small air force. Destruction of the refinery not only would have been a devastating blow to the country's economy, but the resulting fires and explosions could have killed thousands of Managua residents.

Besides these attacks, Nicaraguan Junta Coordinator Daniel Ortega made known in his address to an anniversary day rally of 100,000 in Masaya that the armed forces and Ministry of the Interior had thumbed a large-scale plan by the counter-revolutionaries to seize the Atlantic Coast port of Puerto Cabezas and the new Miskitu Indian settlements at Tasba Pry.

Behind all these attacks stands the Reagan

administration in Washington. While the full scope of Washington's collusion in the terror raids from southern Honduras remains shrouded in secrecy, a few more details have begun to emerge in the US capitalist press.

Commenting on the stepped-up aggression, *Washington Post* columnist Stephen S. Rosenfeld wrote 6 August that 'it is hard to avoid the impression that the Reagan administration is cranking up something like a slow-motion Bay of Pigs invasion as a part of a multifaceted plan to destabilise Nicaragua.'

The operation entails not a single dramatic assault across a beach but, it seems, a slow flow of many hundreds of former Somoza national guardsmen back and forth across the long, rugged land border between Honduras and Nicaragua.

Attacks

The mounting attacks form part of a plan presented by the CIA to the US National Security Council last November and subsequently OK'd by Reagan. According to an account published in the *Washington Post* last 10 March, at least \$19 million was allocated, and the CIA was directed to begin to build and fund a paramilitary force of up to 500 Latin Americans, who are to operate out of commando camps spread along the Nicaraguan-Honduran border.

It is now clear that this was but the thin edge of the wedge. Some 5,000 counter-revolutionary troops, organised in large units and possessing sophisticated weapons, are now operating out of the southern Honduran camps. Moreover, the direct US military

presence in Honduras has been stepped up dramatically.

In response to the US-Honduran manoeuvres and the US-sponsored military buildup along Nicaragua's northern border, the Sandinista government issued a note of protest to the State Department in early August. It pointed to the manoeuvres and to the published accounts of the CIA's covert-action plan as clear examples of the serious attempts to destabilise Nicaragua.

The protest said the manoeuvres 'confirm the interventionist attitude of the United States toward the Central American region and further represent a clear and open provocation, which appears to be aimed at causing an unnecessary war between Honduras and Nicaragua, with unforeseeable consequences.'

A Nicaraguan diplomat in Washington told the *Miami Herald*, 'All of these elements have forced us to realise the inevitable. The United States is fortifying Honduras for a first strike against Nicaragua.'

The mounting attacks leave the Nicaraguan people no choice but to strengthen their defenses and prepare for full-scale war. On 14 August, the Sandinista government ordered militia units to report within ten days for intensive training. The Sandinista People's Army remains fully mobilised. Civil defense preparations are under way in all factories, schools, and neighborhoods.

The July air raids against oil installations pointed up Nicaragua's vulnerability in face of the Honduran air force, the most advanced in Central America with a dozen French Super-Mystère fighters. Honduras is also scheduled to receive six US A-37 light-attack aircraft and is reportedly seeking US F-5 fighter jets as well.

Phalangists come to power

By Phil Hearse

THE NEW LEBANESE president is Bashir Gemayel, leader of the Christian Maronite 'Phalange' militias. He was elected in the wake of the Israeli invasion, in a farcical 'election' in the Lebanese parliament.

His election was under the auspices of the Israelis — they made it abundantly clear to the other Lebanese Christian factions that they would tolerate no one else.

Since the civil war in 1975-76, the Phalangist militias have collaborated openly with the Israelis against the Palestinians and the Lebanese left. To understand the background to the civil war and the character of the Phalangists it is necessary to take a look at the history of the Lebanese state, and the origins of its religious, confessional, character.

As early as the 13th Century the Druze Arabs — the dominant force among the Lebanese Muslims who are the majority in Lebanon — had control over much of the area of what is now known as Lebanon.

Their rule was disturbed only by the invasion from Egypt in 1585 during which 60,000 Druze Arabs were killed. Druze rule was that of a feudal aristocracy.

The Maronite Christians — descendants of the Christians of Palestine at the time of Christ — came into the region as agricultural labourers and small traders and artisans. But the area was firmly under the domination of the Druze princes. The Druze sect maintained its monopoly on power with all the esoteric fervour characteristic of this kind of religious sect.

Druze domination of the region was however disrupted by the eruption of the 'Maronite offensive' between 1842 and

1860 in which the oppressed Maronite masses fought for power.

In this war confessional loyalty merged with class conflict. In 1864 the war was given a new twist with the dismemberment of Lebanon by the French.

The Maronites had been defeated militarily, but the French moved in to protect them. They created a Maronite enclave (petit-Liban) which survived until the first world war, when the Ottoman Turks overran the region.

After the war the region was re-divided by the British and French. A new Lebanese state was founded, with the roles reversed. Imperialism ensured the domination of the Maronite Christians as a bulwark against the Arabs.

Clergy

The Maronite traders, landowners and clergy formed the ruling class. It is out of the post-First World War redivision that the present political alignments have come.

The confessional character of the state is institutionalised through a precise division of the parliament to apportion each of the 16 recognised religious groups a definite number of seats. The overall balance however ensures a continuing majority for the Christians.



Palestinian fighters leave West Beirut. Inset, Phalangist leader Bashir Gemayel.

Gemayel's father, Pierre Gemayel, organised the right wing of the Maronites into the Kata'ib Party which vied with the equally sectarian PNL (National Liberal Party) for domination of the Maronites.

The Phalange militia

attached to Gemayel's party was created under the direct inspiration of the rise of fascism in Europe, following Gemayel's visit to the Berlin Olympics in 1936.

The domination of Christian politics by the

Phalange stems from the civil war of 1975-76. By the 1970s the Muslims were clearly a majority in Lebanon, yet the Maronite rulers refused all attempts at reform.

Moreover the left wing in Lebanon, almost entire-

ly Muslim and organised in Kamal Joumblatt's Lebanese National Movement, was powerfully aided by the re-location of a large portion of the Palestinian militias in Lebanon, following their defeat in Jordan in September 1970.

While both sides maintained their Beirut enclaves intact, the Muslim and Palestinian militias were rapidly victorious in the countryside. The Maronite-dominated state was in danger of defeat and collapse.

But the Lebanese National Movement was prevented from securing its victory through the intervention of the so-called 'Arab peace-keeping force' — namely the Syrian army. Doing the dirty work of imperialism the Syrians ensured that the Maronite positions were defended and the question of political power in Lebanon was unresolved. Now the Israeli invasion has resolved it.

Militia

The Phalangist militias are integrated with the Israeli army at every level. Many reports from the Tripoli area speak of Israeli officers giving orders to Phalangist troops. During the siege of Beirut, the Phalangist militias joined in with Israeli infantry.

Lebanon under Gemayel will be an Israeli puppet state pure and simple. In return the Maronite landowners will keep and extend their power. The future for the Palestinian refugees and the Muslim population — the majority — is however extremely grim.

Gemayel has, like his father, been prepared to utilise every method of terror against both Muslims and opponents in the Christian community. Maronite domination was created by imperialism. Like the Zionists, the Phalange remain the

Socialist Challenge — an appeal to our readers

To keep a revolutionary newspaper going requires a long struggle and many sacrifices by our supporters. As we have pointed out many times, Socialist Challenge unlike the capitalist press has no subsidies in the form of advertising revenue. It has no automatic nation-wide distribution network and relies on the week-by-week sales of our readers.

In a time of capitalist recession, when printing costs are constantly rising, it is difficult to keep our head above water. Despite the many contributions by our supporters to help us, Socialist Challenge has had to come to grips with the financial facts — and take some difficult decisions.

Over the past year or so we have been losing on average more than £500 per week. Obviously we cannot sustain such a loss indefinitely. So we have decided to cut down the number of pages to 12 between now and Christmas, and to reduce the number of journalists by one.

This is precisely the opposite direction to the one we want to go in. But we are determined that these changes should only be short term. And for big events in the labour movement we shall return to the 16-page format.

Between now and Christmas our supporters will be discussing various proposals to change the format and style of the paper.

The first of our 16-page specials will be the issue after next (issue 262). This issue will be printed a day early and be in the hands of our supporters by the morning of Wednesday 22 September — the day of action in support of the health workers.

It is also the issue which coincides with the start of the Labour Party conference and will be packed with news, facts and interviews about the health workers struggle and the Labour Party witch-hunt. We want all our supporters to be on the streets at the demonstration on that day — especially the mammoth Central London demonstration — and we shall be printing thousands of extra copies to ensure that demand is met. Next week we shall publish more detailed plans of our extra sales effort.

In the meantime we have two interim tasks for our readers. Send us some money. Put us in a good position to relaunch the paper on a 16-page format after Christmas. Socialist Challenge is doing a vital job in the labour movement. As ever, without more money we cannot continue to do it.

Second, don't forget Steve Faulkner the Red Trotter. Steve is making what is undoubtedly one of the most heroic gestures in the history of the revolutionary movement in the Birmingham marathon to raise money for Socialist Challenge. Already hundreds of pounds of sponsorship money has come in. But Steve needs more so write to us at PO Box 50, London N1 2XP for sponsorship forms.

Bonanza T-shirt Sale!

**Grand clear out —
everything must go...**

In order to make space we are offering fantastic bargains on our T-shirts:

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- Ray Gun Reagan (black on white)
- Fourth International Symbol (red hammer and sickle & 4 on yellow)
- (The Fourth International symbol is also available in red on white)
- Black and white, Unite and fight (black on white)
- Fight Racism (red on white) — small size only

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Bankers predict worse slump to come

World ends soon—official

By Alan Freeman

TWO WEEKS ago, with the Tories rejoicing over falling interest rates and proclaiming — yet again — that an upturn was just around the corner, Socialist Challenge said the changes heralded a worse slump.

In the heady days of postwar boom this would have been greeted as a prophecy of doom from a dogmatic Marxist. But we live in a changing world, and last week Denis Healey joined with us in forecasting a world banking crisis.

Now, however, the *Financial Times* has gone a bit further: it asks if the world has ended. 'There is a still small but well-informed school of thought, mainly of financial rather than economic analysts,' it says, 'who say with some confidence that it has.'

'Recovery is nowhere in sight,' it goes on. 'We have embarked on a slump and that is why interest rates are falling.'

Why hasn't the IMF 'cured' the slump? The FT quotes a disgruntled Treasury official: 'The IMF's answer is that everyone must become more competitive with everyone else.'

Monetarism only works when it is applied to one country, which can use it to boost its bankers at the expense of others, whilst smashing up its working class so as to make its industry more competitive. But when all the capitalists try to do it, we end up at square one — with seventeen million unemployed.

It's a bit of a problem. You see, capitalism is a competitive system. Now, we dogmatic Marxists have a solution to this problem: a planned economy. But though Margaret Thatcher has been friendly with the Russians of late, we don't think the Tories are about to endorse the Communist Manifesto.

The slump is a product of capitalist competition on an international scale.

This has profound implications for socialist strategy. For thirty years

the West has maintained a long boom, despite capitalism's limitations, by surrendering overall control of financial and military matters to America. America became the world's cop and the world's banker.

But the banker is bankrupt and the cop can't even deal with the riots in America's own backyard.

Moreover, America has paid an important price. Her rivals such as West Germany, and above all Japan — the only country whose economy is now reviving — have built up their domestic industry to the point where it challenges American industrial and technological supremacy.

Dollar

These second-line racketeers no longer trust the mighty dollar because — rightly — they don't believe the underlying strength of the American economy can back the dollar up. Pax Americana has ended.

Competition between blocks of national capital has resurfaced with a vengeance, and almost every major conflict in the world today has a bearing on the struggle between these blocks of capital.

The first and most obvious sign has been the growing trend towards trade war. American demands for import restrictions on steel from Europe are being met blow for blow with threats of counter-restrictions from the Europeans.

Now, according to the theorists of the Alternative Economic Strategy, import controls ought to lay the basis for world expansion. Strange to say, the result has been falling demand for steel on both sides of the Atlantic, fall-

ing trade, and another twist to the spiral of the slump.

The second effect has been a differentiated response to the third world revolt. Thatcher and Reagan conspire to smash the 'communist threat' in Central America because their two ruling classes engage in the same kind of robbery — piracy.

The German and French, who specialised in fraud whilst their senior partners cornered the market in mugging, took a more 'civilised' attitude in Central America.

Fraud calls for the confidence of the victim, which is difficult to win if your cash is too visible.

The third and most spectacular effect of inter-imperialist competition has been the open, blazing row over the Russian pipeline. 'Wounded by a friend' says Thatcher — that is, stabbed in the back by a fellow thug.

Thatcher's commitment to the war for civilisation did not quite extend to a Kamikaze assault by what's left of British industry, who are heavily involved in trade with the Eastern bloc and would like to trade more.

There has been just the slightest suggestion that America's approach to sanctions — which says that it's OK to buy American grain but not European turbines — might be motivated by the self-interest of the American wheat growers rather than a tactical difference on how to preserve democratic values.

Just to rub the point in, the *Economist* has dubbed the American argument 'mercantilist'. Mercantilism, in case you didn't know, was a primitive economic theory subscribed to by ignorant feudal monarchs. It is a precursor of monetarism, but slightly more sensible.

Interimperialist competition is having an equally dangerous effect on the world banking system. As we explained two weeks

ago, monetarism did not cause the supply of money to dry up internationally. Bankers who could not lend to British or American industrialists went on an orgy of speculative lending to the third world countries.

This benefitted the banking sector of those countries with highly developed banks, at the expense of the third world countries, at the expense of the domestic industrialists of those countries, and to the advantage of multinationals who set up branch plants in third world countries financed with loans from the world banking system.

Monetarism, which was most strongly backed by the two banking nations — America and Britain — cut two ways. Bank profits surged. British 'invisible income' — from financial and commercial operations — now accounts for over half Britain's trade surplus.

Banks

The banks alone earned £3.5 bn abroad last year. But international lending by these banks provided an outlet for capital exports from the technologically most advanced nations. The dollar and the pound paid, in Mexico and Argentina, for German car plants.

British and American financiers now face a choice between catastrophe and disaster. If they demand stiff restrictions on the international money supply, a large number of third world countries will default. According to the *Financial Times*, during the Thirties over 70 per cent of Latin American countries defaulted. Already the *Economist* says Argentina is 'drifting into hyperspace'.

Not only does this threaten a tremendous crisis of confidence in the banks which are lending to these countries; it also calls

for such drastic attacks on the peoples of these countries that the prospect of a revolutionary upheaval, or of a nationalist and anti-imperialist reaction, becomes a very serious threat.

If, on the other hand, the banks respond as they have done by 'creating' new money — floating new loans from Western governments — an alternative danger looms.

If money can be created for Mexico then why not Germany? Why not France? Why should these capitalists be forced to suffer because the American and British bourgeoisie have failed to sort out their economies and smash up their working classes?

The demand of the continental bourgeoisie is for America to expand the world money supply so they can benefit. Once again the Brandt report is being dusted off, and the pathetic, hypocritical cry goes up 'alms to the third world!' Translated into European this means 'recycled credit to the European multinationals!' If Brandt and Healey had the slightest real concern for the dependent countries it would be arms, not alms, that they would call for.

America loses both ways. Reagan is therefore driven to political strongarm tactics. Thatcher has to decide whether to be the strongarmed — or the strongarmed.

Faced with this awful dilemma, the *Financial Times* is reduced to whimpering platitudes combined with desperate cynicism. 'When will the world end?' it asks, and gives the stirring reply 'not yet.' We take a different view: we don't want the world to end, we don't believe it will, and we want to make it socialist to stop it ending.

But then, we are only dogmatic Marxists — and who believes dogmatic Marxists in this day and age?

Oxford unemployed mugged

'AMAZING DOLE FIDDLE' screamed the *Mail*. 'Amazing dole swoop' echoed the *Sun*. Tory ministers cheered the police for smashing a '£1.5m social security racket' in Oxford last week.

172 of the 286 arrested were kept in jail, denied the right to contact a solicitor and 'treated as if they were guilty before being tried.' They were handed summary sentences of 30 and 60 days after a huge police operation which included setting up and staffing a complete fake DHSS office.

There is a small question. Why does it take half of Thames Valley police to discover that three hundred people are signing on from the same house? The answer is that the alleged 'racket' was not the reason for this James Bond-style operation.

Homeless people, people forced to sleep rough, had been using a hostel address to get a few extra pounds. The DHSS and police knew this for years. They turned a blind eye because the council failed to provide night shelter facilities, and prosecutions would have brought light on this embarrassing fact.

But the last few months were different. Why? Because the claimants' union was actually doing something for the unemployed of Oxford. The cops didn't have the nerve to take on the claimants as a whole — so they picked on the most inoffensive, defenceless section of the community — homeless people. As the claimants' union said 'the real crime these people have committed is to be homeless and unemployed.'

Doesn't it make you proud of the boys in blue?

Four scroungers who won't be jailed

ANOTHER less publicised case won't get quite so much police attention: Alexander Howdens, one of the top five insurance companies, has been at the centre of a major fraud scandal since its takeover by Alexander and Alexander Services of the USA.

Howdens is a bit more reputable than Oxford claimants; its chair, Raymond Posgate, is the second most highly paid person in Britain. In one month he earns as much as all the arrested claimants got in one week. But it seems some of his colleagues resented his high earnings.

Alexanders have just announced, in a wounded tone, that Howdens is £14.6m short. An emergency audit has revealed 'irregular accounting practices and business transactions' — in other words, fiddling — on a truly grand scale.

The problems surround a subsidiary called Southern Real Estate of Panama. Four Howden senior employees held shares in this company on an 'undisclosed basis'. When Howdens was taken over, a settlement was arranged with these four gentlemen. But sadly 'certain assets to be transferred under the agreement have not been received,' and 'the value of some of the assets received appears to be less than originally contemplated.'

In other words, they wretched on the deal, lied about their side of it, and stung their new partners for a cool \$25 million.

Some people are a little hot under the collar about this. 'Various legal remedies and insurance claims are being considered' by the American company.

But after all, our dear police don't exist to worry about trifling sums like £14 million, now do they? It's only enough to buy houses for all the Oxford claimants instead of jailing them. Much more important to screw the poor bastards to the wall for the loss of one tenth of this amount.

That is why you won't see a fraud swoop in Panama, or distressed bowlerhatted city folk being carted off to the nick. In fact, the Economist is quite pleased at the whole business, which it considers one in the eye for a 'brash American company'.

But then, it ain't what you do but who you are — isn't it?

The National Front under a guise applied for a stall in Brick Lane Market and this was granted by the Tower Hamlet's controlled Labour Council.

As soon as the stall was set up NF and other racist literature appeared. This caused an immediate uproar, particularly amongst the local Bengali population and a number of the Jewish stall holders in the market.

Responding to the reaction of the Asian and Jewish minorities, the local labour movement called for a meeting of all those against racism in the Borough. A march was organised — the biggest in Brick Lane since 1978.

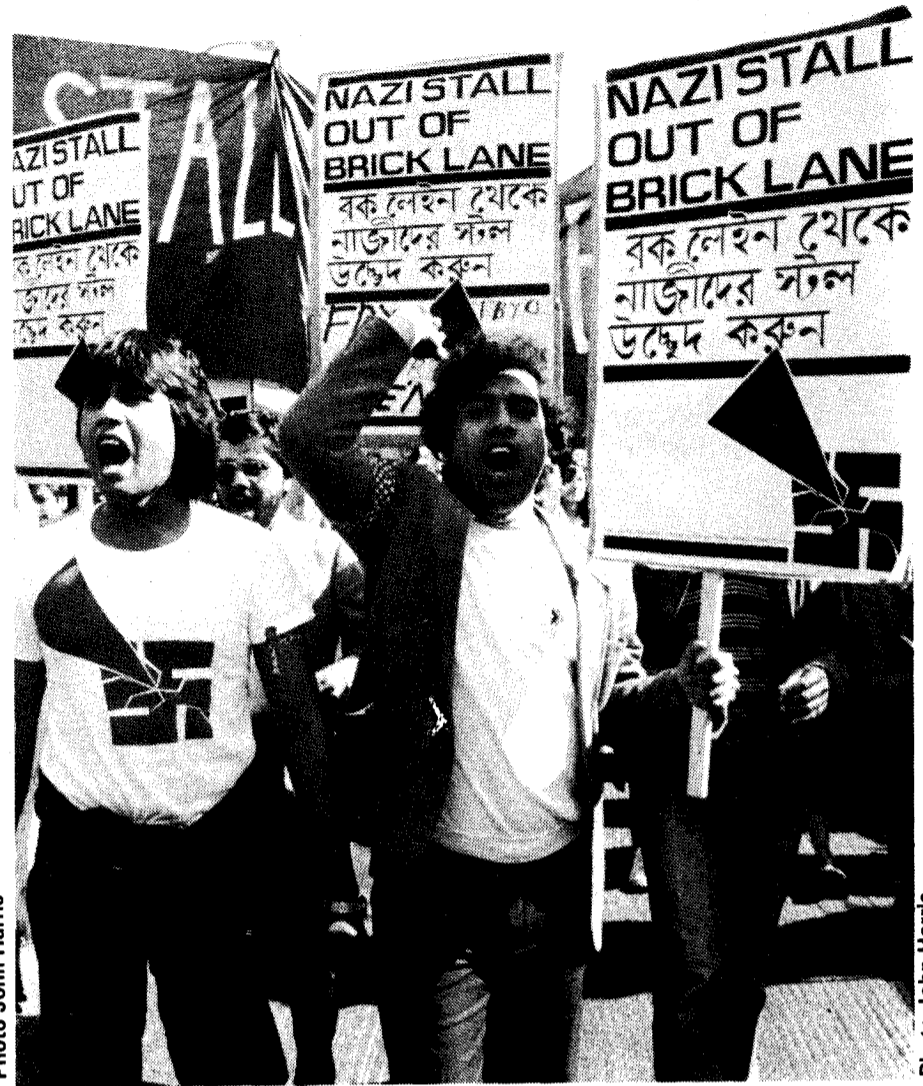
But the stall still remains, the Labour Council claiming that it cannot revoke a permission for the stall, hide behind legalities so the racist abuse continues.

Somehow Tory Councils can always find a way of banging the left, irrespective of the legal niceties. Why is it that Labour allows capitalist law precedence over the rights of ethnic minorities? Maybe the Tories are just that little bit more loyal to their class?



The master race!

Nazis in Brick Lane



Bengali youth oppose NF

Anglo-Saxon attitudes

By Hilary Driver

THE BBC, in an unusually bold move, have at last realised that the best way to influence the TV-watching millions is to put on documentaries at 11.25 on a Sunday evening. The average Socialist Challenge reader would probably say it proved that the BBC was riddled with racism, an accusation they would no doubt hotly dispute to the end of opening hours in the local wine bar. But in spite of the late hour of showing, *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* — a documentary looking at racism in schools — was well worth seeing.

Described as chilling in press pre-views, the programme's aim was to look at unconscious prejudice, and at how some teachers and schools were tackling it. A group of white 15-year olds were encouraged to talk freely on race:

● Blacks take all our jobs, there are so many coming in

● They should be sent back where they belong
● Just because they're born here doesn't mean they're British

When asked to estimate the number of black and coloured immigrants in Britain, the answers ranged from 10 to 30 million! The commentator points out that only 4 per cent of the population

are non-white, that half of these were born in Britain and that the majority of immigrants are white.

Different attempts at multi-national education were looked at in both primary and secondary schools, with the emphasis on 'getting at them when they're young'. A Moroccan student described her experiences of racism in school and the lack of support she'd had from teachers because they weren't prepared to take on racism. The emphasis was on changing individual teacher's and student's attitudes.

The education system was considered in isolation

from the outside world — from massive dole queues, rotten housing, low wages and racist immigration laws. The impression that was given was that racist ideas are inevitably rooted in the white subconscious, and could be combatted by exposing them as morally wrong. This approach on its own is useless. As Marx said, ideas don't just fall from the sky, but are rooted in the material conditions all around us.

To begin to challenge the consciousness of the mass of people, including youth who learn most of their ideas and attitudes outside of school, there are more concrete pro-

blems that also need tackling. Institutionalised and State racism are difficult nuts to crack. Organising one-off Asian cookery classes in schools, however useful to the individuals involved, won't challenge racism by itself.

Reforms in the schools are a necessary step towards an integrated multi-national education system. But such reforms on their own are doomed to failure. As a black woman teacher at the end of the programme pointed out, most attempts of this sort result in tokenism at best. As she said, 'liberalism is our worst enemy'. And the BBC has got dollops of that!

Welsh women march against unemployment

By a marcher

Last Saturday, the campaign for a woman's right to work, received a huge boost when 150 women, men and children marched 15 miles through South Wales.

The march was organised by the women's rights committee, and had the support and backing of the unions, the Labour Party and women's groups in the area. The basis of the march was to protest against women's unemployment, but the women were also against the Tory government and its policies.

It was sent off by Dora Cox, a veteran of the South Wales hunger marches of the twenties. This 80 years old young woman, reminded us of the gains of the woman's movement from the days she first marched. She urged us to fight to keep these gains and to go on and extend them, with the first priority being the removal of the Tory government.

Brian John of Pon-

typridd trades council brought to the march the support and solidarity of the trade unions.

The women chanted and sang along the long route, raising the issues of unemployment, equality and positive action, and the call against nuclear weapons rang clear.

Tired and exhausted we finally reached Cardiff to be greeted by a welcoming crowd which included health workers, the Mayor, members of the local county council and trade unionists.

The march had shown the determination of women to fight against unemployment and that determination and enthusiasm it stirred will now be added to the People March for Jobs in two weeks time.



Welsh women march for jobs.

Socialist Challenge

South Africa plots against Angolan Government

revealed by N'Nda beni

A MASSIVE plot to overthrow the MPLA regime has been uncovered. The influential Portuguese weekly *Expresso* 7 August reports that the operation, code-named 'Kubango' was master-minded at a secret meeting in London last April between representatives of the South African Secret Service, dissident members of the Angolan administration, members of Unita and FNLA, and an envoy from a group of Washington-based Cuban exiles.

According to *Expresso* the scheme envisages a military invasion of Angola, synchronised with a seizure of power in Luanda by dissident elements within MPLA.

The planned invasion will follow the strategy pursued during the 1975 war with two invading columns, one entering Angola from Zaire in the north and the second from Namibia in the south. The northern column would consist of about 500 mercenaries, transported first to Gabon and then to Zaire where they will link up with the FNLA.

The operation has been planned with detailed precision. From the north the column would move rapidly to Ambriz, on the Atlantic coast, north of Luanda, where they would probably come into conflict with Cuban troops. From there they would move on to the capital to coincide with an expected rising.

From the south, the Unita forces, reinforced with mercenaries, would also march on Luanda. This group would go into action at the same time as regular South African troops launch an attack deep into Angolan territory, allegedly against SWAPO bases.

The large-scale South African invasion which began on 2 August and which has preceded by air raids against Cahama and Tchibemba on 21 July may well be the softening-up

process of this operation.

At the London meeting it was agreed that while 'Kubango Operation' would be attributed to opposition elements within Angola, it would be co-ordinated by a general staff in which South African army officers would predominate. South Africa would also finance the whole plot, the initial cost of which is estimated at US\$5m.

Among the aims of the operation is the replacement of the present Angolan regime with one more sympathetic to the West and with South African interests. The conspirators are relying on some of the current MPLA leaders playing a part in the future power structure; the ending or drastic reduction of support to SWAPO, particularly in the military field — support would be restricted to declarations of principle and diplomatic recognition. Namibian refugee camps would be withdrawn 450km. north of the Namibian border.

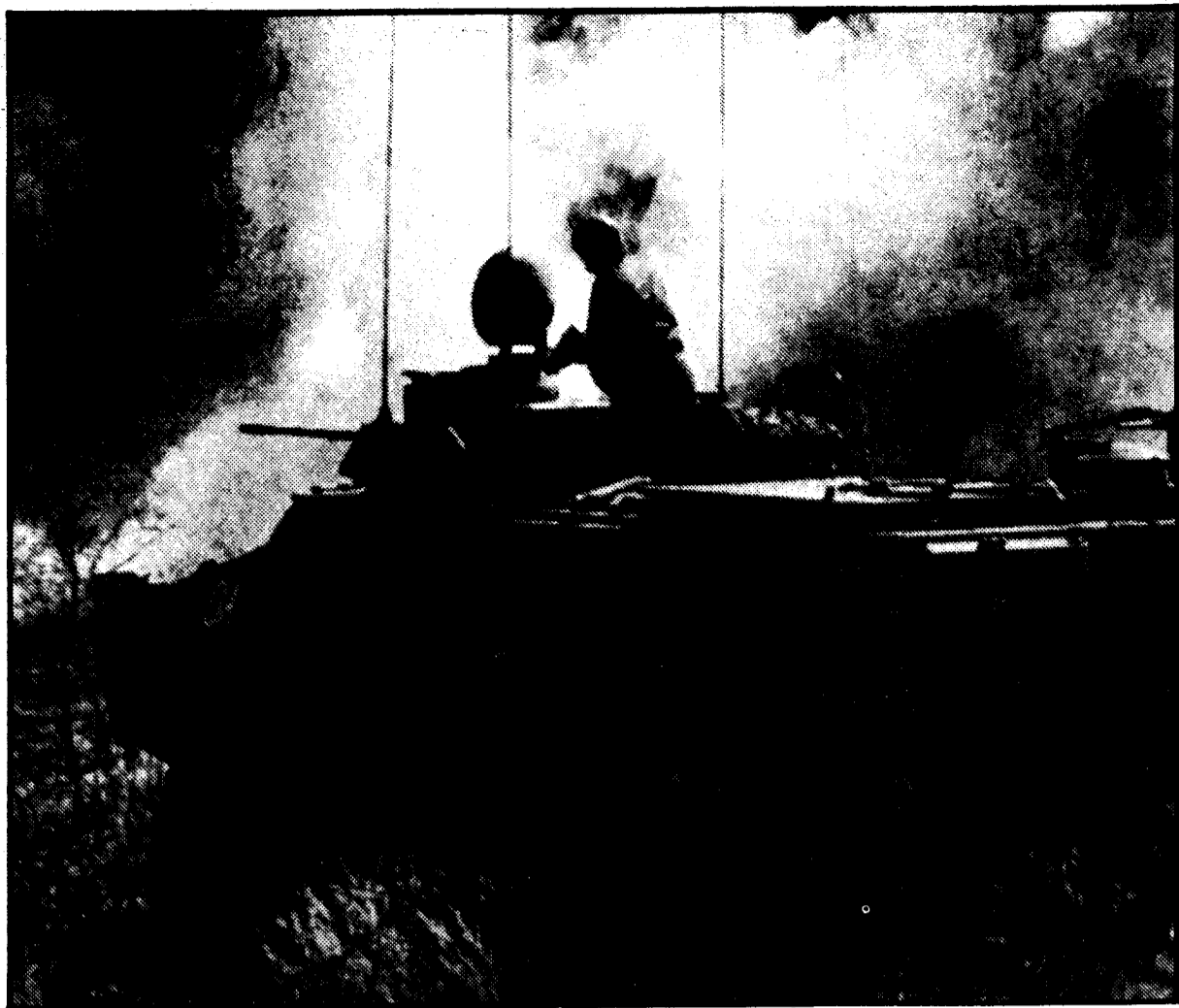
The new 'Angolan' regime would also accept the Western plan for Namibian independence and would adopt a softer position towards South Africa in international bodies. To give some credibility to the indigenous nature of the revolt, the new regime would not immediately recognise the Pretoria government but it would

pursue a policy of peaceful co-existence with South Africa. The establishment of full diplomatic relations is scheduled for a later stage.

The new government would attempt to negotiate the recall of Cuban forces and, eventually, a power-sharing arrangement with Unita and FNLA.

According to *Expresso* the operation could be launched in August or September and, in addition to the current large-scale invasion, South Africa has certainly massively increased its forces along the Namibian-Angolan border. Early this month, the Angolan Defence Minister Pedro Maria Tonha, also referred to the increasing presence of mercenaries among the South African forces.

Expresso also claims that it has evidence that Lisbon has served as one



South African armoured personnel carrier during incursion into Angola.

of the main bases for the plotters against the Angolan government. Various meetings have been held in the Portuguese capital where details of the operation has been planned and funds channelled to cover external costs such as recruiting mercenaries. There have been several meetings in Lisbon between Victor Fernandes, a leading Angolan dissident and Gary van Dyke, in charge of European affairs for South Africa's National Intelligence Service (NIS — formerly BOSS).

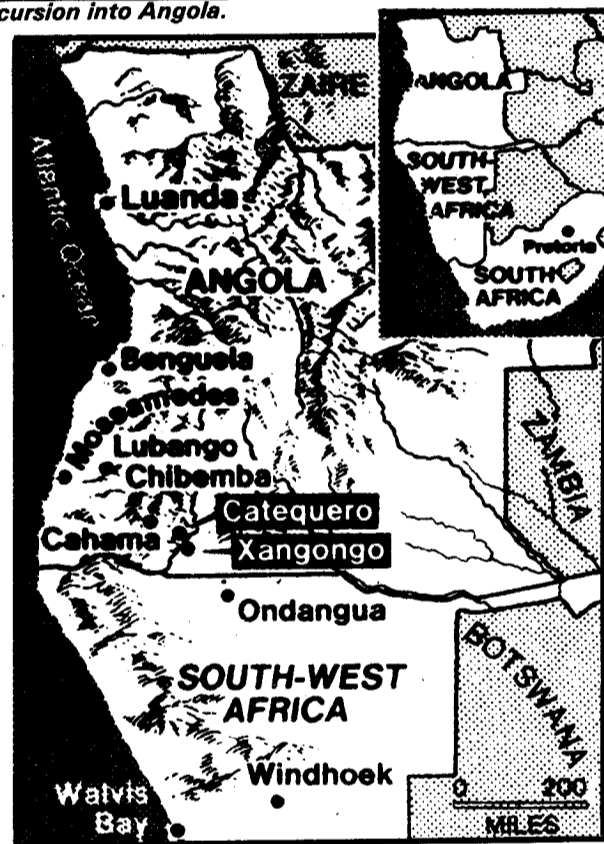
Fernandes also visited South Africa in June and July, where he met with van Dyke and other leading figures in NIS. According to *Expresso*, the South African embassy in Lisbon is also involved in the conspiracy.

In charge of the military planning is South African Brigadier Jack Rollins. While in South Africa, van Dyke and Fernandes had meetings with Rollins (whose real name is James J. Koos Kemp). He is a top NIS man, running

the counter-espionage branch of the secret service. Rollins was also in Portugal towards the end of May.

Frank Sturgis, one of the five men who broke into the Watergate headquarters of the Democratic Party, would also appear to be involved and he stayed at the Hotel Roma in Lisbon under an assumed name for several months. In its 14 June edition, *Newsweek* alleged that Sturgis is currently 'working with Cuban rebels and Nicaraguan exiles'.

A member of the Portuguese government has told *Expresso* that the Portuguese authorities were aware of the conspirators' movements in Lisbon as well as their objectives. This has led to strained relations between Lisbon and Luanda. On 10 August the Angolan Ambassador in Lisbon lodged a complaint with President Eanes. This was followed by a denial from the Prime Minister's office that they were aware of what was going on.



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