

# Socialist Challenge

# Defend abortion rights

A NEW anti-abortion bill has been introduced into parliament by the hereditary peer Lord Robertson of Oakridge. He is a 52 year old merchant banker. The bill is sponsored by the virulently anti-abortion organisation, the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children.

It's aim is greatly restrict the grounds for abortion by slightly amending the 1967 Abortion Act. Section 1 of the Act would then read '... that the risk of pregnancy would involve serious risk to the life of the pregnant woman, or if injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman or any existing family is substantially greater than if pregnancy were terminated.' (amendments in italics).

This move is a serious attack on a woman's right to choose. The labour movement must be alerted to mobilise immediately and massively to defeat this bill. A defeat for women will be a setback for the struggle of the whole working class. It will be a major step forward in the Tories drive to put the burden of the crisis onto working people. It will help undermine the unity of working women and men in the struggle against the Tories.

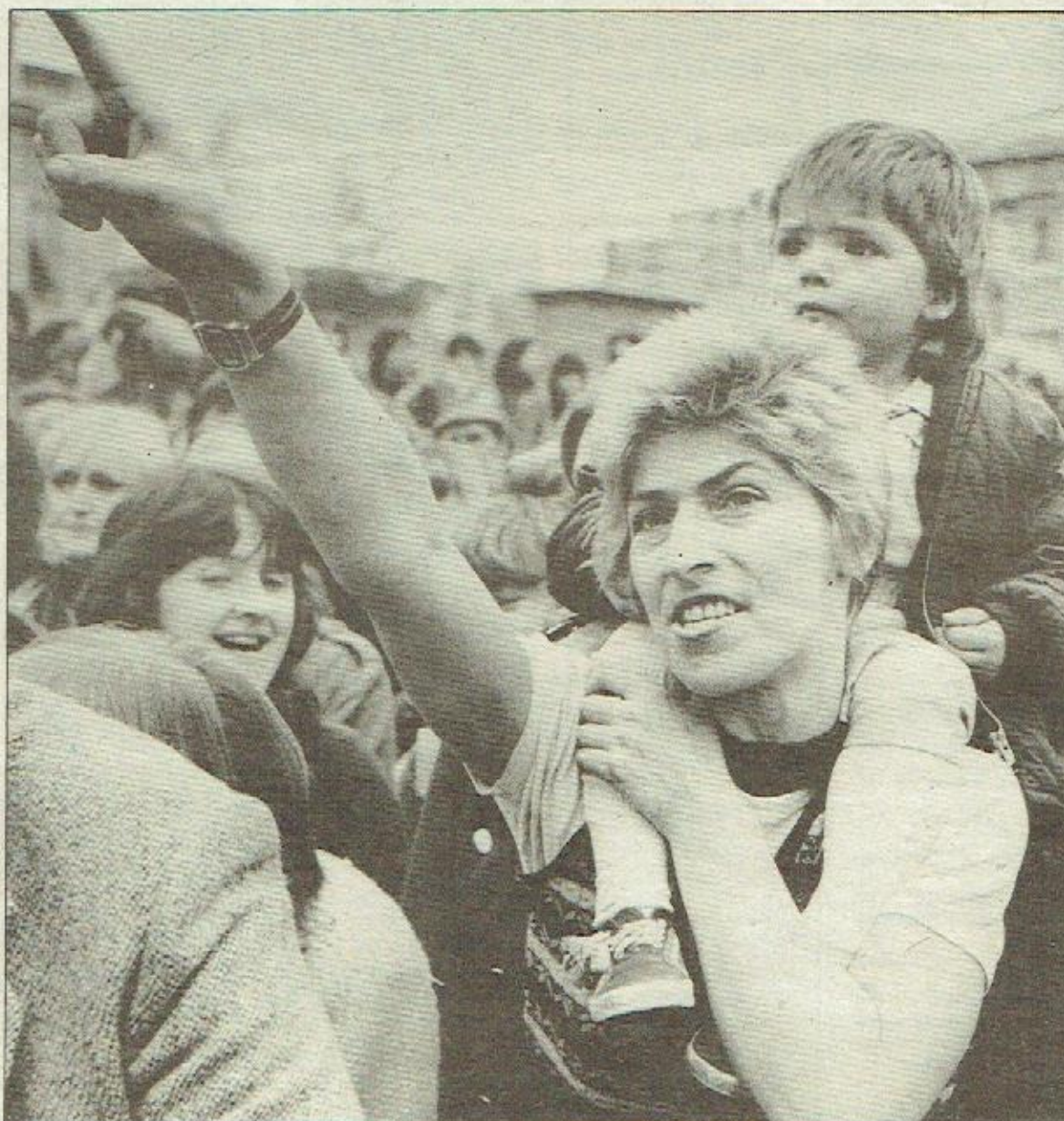
Failing this, the anti-abortionists are pushing an amendment which would cut the time limit from 28 to 20 weeks. It was their opinion after the failure of the Corrie attack in 1979 that if they had limited their first move to such an amendment, it would have passed.

Normally a bill from the Lords would have little chance of becoming law without being given government time. But the bill's timing coincides with private members choosing bills.

The private members ballot is dominated by militant anti-abortionists. John Corrie, Norman St John-Stevas, Ray Witney and Donald Stewart are all well known for their anti-abortion views. There is already tremendous pressure from SPUC and others for one of these MP's to take an anti-abortion bill.

This would be very dangerous as it would shorten the parliamentary procedure considerably.

Last time, the mobilisation of the labour movement not only defended a women's right to choose but, by forcing the bills withdrawal, also gave the Tories a bloody nose. There is every reason why we should do it again.



## The Luton 'horror story'

By Leonora Lloyd

ONCE AGAIN an abortion 'horror' story has hit the headlines. In Luton, an allegedly 34 week old foetus has survived and is now to be fostered. But what the Tory gutter press didn't tell us was the situation of the mother. Abortions can be done at any time to save the mother's life.

In this particular case, the abortion took place in a hospital which normally refuses to perform abortions after 11 weeks — referring them to a charity clinic.

If the story has a familiar ring, it is because the anti-abortion organisation, LIFE, always manages to discover similar stories when a new anti-abortion bill is on the horizon, or an election is approaching.

In 1970, as part of a pre-election campaign, Norman St John-Stevas (who has drawn second place in this years private members bill ballot) discovered a private clinic selling fetuses for research — used mainly to discover the causes of neonatal deaths and for cancer research.

Similar lurid stories were used in the book *Babies for Burning*, copies of which were sent to MP's in 1975 as part of the campaign for James White's 'abortion amendment' bill.

1975 also saw a report, of a foetus supposedly left alive for 17 hours. Prolonged investigation by the DHSS failed to locate the source. But by then the story had fulfilled its purpose.

With 1978 the Benyon bill, a story went the rounds of an abortion performed at a Barking hospital where, LIFE alleged, the living baby which resulted was left to die. The truth was that the woman had the abortion to save her life, that a caesarian had been performed so that the baby could also be saved, and it was put into an intensive care unit. Few of the papers which had the horror story ran the true facts when they came out.

But the greatest number of shock horror stories was reserved for the Corrie bill in 1979:

- 25 March: crying 20 week foetus at Wanstead hospital
- 20 April: 22 week foetus left for two hours at Whiston hospital
- 27 April: doctors fight for life of 23 week girl foetus aborted at Barnsley General hospital.
- 18 October: 23 week miracle foetus survives abortion at St Peters hospital, Chortley (it soon dies)
- 24 October: 24 week boy foetus survives for 'short time' at Glasgow Royal Infirmary.

In each and every case, investigation shows that the stories are falsified and distorted. But they serve well in whipping up hysteria.

The anti-abortionists use these stories to campaign for lower limits — which they see as the most popular of their demands. Yet later abortions — after 20 weeks — account for less than two percent of all abortions. They are performed for the most serious of reasons.

What's more the anti-abortionists campaign fiercely against walk-in day care clinics and other proposals designed to make early abortions easier to get — creating a catch 22 situation.

The fact is abortion organisations like LIFE and SPUC, want to stop legal abortions altogether. They will use whatever tactics they can, including lies — both in an outside Parliament.

Any and all attacks on our existing abortion rights must be resisted. We must defend the right of any woman to have an abortion at any time.

## What to do?

By Jude Arkwright

WE URGE Socialist Challenge readers to take up the following measures through their trade union, Labour Party branches and womens' sub-committees. Get them to:

- Write to sponsored MPs urging them to publically oppose the Bill.
- Circularise all the members alerting them to the Bill and the need to campaign against it.
- Get them to write to local Community Health Councils, trades councils and local councils to ask them to take action against the Bill.
- In the event that the Bill reaches committee stage, to contact the National Abortion Campaign and Labour Abortion Rights Campaign groups in the area, with a view to setting up a local labour movement campaign.
- Get your local Labour Party or trade union to call a meeting inviting other organisations in the area to launch a campaign.
- Affiliate to NAC and send in money to help campaign against the Bill. Organise fund raising activities.
- Finally, we must put out the call on the Labour Party NEC and the TUC to organise a national demonstration with other pro-choice organisations.



# Editorial

PO Box 50, London N1 2XP

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## Unity against witch-hunt rejected

THE LABOUR STEERING COMMITTEE AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT has rejected a request from Labour Against the Witch-hunt for co-operation against the witch-hunt. LAW wrote to the Steering Committee proposing an exchange of delegates between the two committees to facilitate joint action, as agreed at its founding conference on 30 October.

The Militant-dominated Steering Committee is now at a cross-roads, and the problem of unity will come to the fore at its regional conferences this weekend. At the 30 October conference delegates overwhelmingly rejected Militant's proposal that the new campaign wind up and merge into the Steering Committee by sending one delegate to it.

Militant have portrayed this as divisive. But as we explained at the time, delegates did not vote against unity: they voted for creating a body which would be genuinely and democratically accountable to labour movement bodies. Unity between the two committees would be easy to establish if this principle were accepted by Militant.

The rank and file will judge the outcome of the 27 November conferences by two criteria. First, will they create democratically accountable bodies at local level?

Second, will they defend all the left, including constituency parties such as Hornsey threatened with disbandment?

Constituency Parties who are now creating local liaisons by conferences such as that in Southwark and in Brent, parties such as Bermondsey and Hornsey, need an organisation which is answerable to them, and aligns itself with their struggle.

The signs are hardly encouraging. If the Labour Steering Committee really wants unity, why has it rejected the very first step in this direction?

Nevertheless it would be a mistake if those fighting the witch-hunt were to react to this sectarianism by ceasing to fight for practical unity with Militant. It is at least encouraging that several leading LAW activists have been invited to address the 27 November regional conferences, and it is to be hoped that the practical steps towards unity being proposed by LAW will be accepted by these conferences and by the Steering Committee.

If not, Militant's leaders will continue cutting its supporters off from those who can best defend them.

## JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

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

Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

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

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

## Defend freedom — Tory style

IMPORTANCE: Hugo Young sees no 'British interest' in 'even a 1,000 man garrison in the South Atlantic'.

Why then were decisive naval actions fought in those waters in both world wars?

Since Panama is so vulnerable, then there is a British and Western strategic interest of first importance.

John Biggs-Davison MP (Con) for Epping Forest

Sunday Times 21 November 1982

Three quick questions for our readers:

1. How far are the Falkland Islands from Panama?
2. What is Panama 'vulnerable' to?
3. Did you really think the Tories were sending 3,000 troops to defend freedom in the South Atlantic?

First correct answer gets a Penguin.

# Labour Party

## 'Civil war if NEC continues purge'

'UNDER NO circumstances will we tolerate any further interference in our democratic right to choose our own candidate.' With these words Ann Coltart, chair of Bermondsey Labour Party explained the position which their executive would be taking when they meet with Russell Tuck, David Hughes and other party officials before the Labour Party NEC to listen to the Labour leaders' demands that they drop Peter Thatchell as Bermondsey's candidate.

She was addressing a press conference held jointly by Labour Against the Witch-hunt, Bermondsey Labour Party and representatives of Hornsey Labour Party to announce campaigns to prevent the Labour Party proceeding with its witch-hunt.

Hornsey Labour Party, which has been given until 31 December to remove Tariq Ali from membership of the Labour Party or be disbanded, have written to the NEC to ask for a meeting in order to find out the basis of the NEC's case. Jeremy Corbyn explained that so far the Labour leadership had failed even to explain its reasoning.

'Not only is their demand contrary to natural justice', he said, 'but it would have incalculable effects on Labour's elec-

tion prospects. Hornsey is one of the largest and most successful Labour Parties in Britain, with over 1200 members. During the GLC election we had 700 canvassers out, and the results can be seen from the size of the vote we won.'

Disbanding Hornsey would deprive two Labour parliamentary candidates — Michael Meacher and Jeremy Corbyn — of membership as well as eight Haringey councillors — and three Labour Lords.

'If the executive presses ahead with expulsions or tries to disband local Parties,' said LAW secretary Keith Lichman, 'it will provoke civil war and seriously damage Labour's election prospects.'



John Golding: His promise to purge CLPD has put cat among pigeons



Dennis Skinner: 'Labour parties should deluge NEC with protests.'

Photo: DAVID FOWLER

This was backed up by MPs Alan Roberts (Bootle) and Dennis Skinner, who told the press that he would be opposing any attempt to go any further down the witch-hunt road at Wednesday's NEC. 'Once we accept one scintilla of John Golding's

ideas,' he said 'we will be going down the road to McCarthyism. I hope Labour Parties will indicate the party headquarters with requests that they fight the Tories instead of this useless campaign against our own supporters.'

Messages of support for Hornsey and Bermondsey Labour Parties are urgently needed. Send a copy to the NEC and one to either Bermondsey and Hornsey local parties, or to Labour Against the Witch-hunt at 11 Wilderton Road, London N16.

## LAW News letter

LAW is bringing out 5000 copies of a special newsletter directly after the NEC. It will contain articles explaining Bermondsey and Hornsey's case, arguments against the expulsions of Militant supporters, and for the defence of the Young Socialists. It will also contain model resolutions and a form for affiliation to LAW, as well as details of LAW's first national council meeting on 12 December. Order now from LAW, 11 Wilderton Rd., London N16

## National Council meets

LAW'S NATIONAL COUNCIL is to be held on Sunday 12 December in County Hall, London. Has your CLP affiliated and chosen its delegate yet? Also entitled to delegates are all trade union branches who attended the 30 October conference; the LPYS branches can send observers. Apologies for a gremlin last week: we inadvertently referred to the National Council as a 'national conference'.



Ernie Roberts has now successfully moved a motion committing Tribune Group to oppose expulsions or disaffiliations.

Photo: JOHN STURROCK

## LAW tells NEC: 'Drop witch-hunt'

Labour Against the Witch-hunt  
11 Wilderton Road  
London N16  
19 November 1982

To The National Executive Committee

Dear Comrades,

On behalf of hundreds of Constituency Labour Parties we ask this meeting of the NEC to unite the Party behind its democratically agreed policies for an overwhelming Labour victory in the coming General Election.

We therefore ask you to cease all organisational measures against Party members and Constituency Labour Parties, which can only disunite the Party, inhibit its growth, bring it into disrepute and weaken its election prospects.

The legal obstacles to the expulsion of Militant supporters prove in our view that the register is unworkable. It can only lead to the suppression of legitimate rights of individual Party members to organise and present their views to the Party, to the denial of Constituency Parties' rights to the candidate of their choice and to a long and destructive legal wrangle in the Party. We ask the NEC to proceed no further with expulsions under its terms.

The decision to deny Bermondsey Labour Party the right to stand Peter Thatchell, its democratically selected candidate, for Labour in the coming bye-election will only fuel the media-orchestrated campaign against the local Party. We will work flat out for a Labour victory in Bermondsey and request the NEC endorse Peter Thatchell and drop all proposals for an imposed short-list.

The threat to disband Hornsey Labour Party risks crippling Labour in a vital marginal seat. Experienced and respected members of the Hornsey Party such as Michael Meacher and Jeremy Corbyn will have their credentials as candidates called into question, again weakening Labour's election prospects in vital seats. We request the NEC to withdraw the threat of disbandment.

Finally, we are appalled by the public declarations by a leading NEC member, John Golding, that the Militant report is a 'one-off' job and that the target of future expulsion attempts will be the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

This stands in flat contradiction to the promises given by Jim Mortimer, Michael Foot and Roy Hattersley that the register would not initiate a witch-hunt and that individuals would not be expelled for their political views. We ask Michael Foot and the NEC to assure the Party that these declarations are not their policy and that the proposals voiced by John Golding will not be pursued.

We repeat that we pledge ourselves to work all out for a Labour Party victory and warn the NEC that the suicidal course of expulsions, disaffiliations and threats to legitimate candidates cannot but plunge the Party into protracted civil war. We call on the NEC to call a halt to the witch-hunt at this meeting and mobilise the Party to defeat the Tories.

Signed,  
K. Lichman  
Labour Against the Witch-hunt



## LABOUR'S ELECTION PROGRAMME

# Foot's social strategy: can it be done?

AMID strong hints of a spring election, Michael Foot and David Basnett have relaunched Labour's Programme with a promise to cut unemployment to one million by 1988.

The policy, announced last week, was rounded out by Peter Shore on Tuesday. Using that modern-day oracle, the Treasury computer, he says it can be done without the economic crisis the Tories confidently predict, by spending Labour's promised £9bn on social services and public sector investment — with an incomes policy.

The announcement is the first imaginative step taken by the Labour leadership since Callaghan resigned, and if a concerted campaign is conducted around it, it will go a long way to removing Thatcher from office. But the Tories will, of course, go in with all the guns blazing to say that it cannot be done. Are they right?

There is no doubt that a spending programme would cut unemployment temporarily. But the 64,000 dollar question is: what next? It was one thing to march forward without drastic new measures but with radical reform programmes in the 1960s and 1970s when the economic crisis had not bitten so deep.

Now, especially with the experience of the Wilson/Callaghan government to refer to, many traditional Labour voters ask a simple question: will such a programme work? Isn't it going to provoke massive inflation (as it did in 1974), a run on the pound (as it did in 1975) and a sharp U-turn (as it did in 1976)?

The answer turns around what Labour will do when the IMF and CBI put on the pressure. Will they cave in, as in 1975 — or will they take additional steps needed to bring the banks and CBI under Labour's control, instead of vice versa. And there's the rub. Two vital steps are omitted from Labour's programme which will be essential if the package outlined by Michael Foot is to be achieved. These steps are:

- The nationalisation of the banks and financial institutions
- Serious measures to mobilise working people to take control over investment decisions by large-scale industry.

The Labour leadership believes it will not need such measures because by borrowing to finance expansion it can produce a new boom. This isn't very convincing. If the election programme is to have any credibility, therefore, the left will have to prove itself able to win the battle for these additional measures during the life of a Labour government, through a combination of extra-parliamentary mobilisation and a struggle to replace Labour's right wing leaders.

Why were these additional measures needed? First we must look at what the Tories have done to the economy. Thatcher's strategy was very well explained in an article by John Harrison in *Marxism Today* for July 1982.

Despite the monetarist ideological cover, he says, what the Tories have done is to 'crash the economy'. Their aim is to destroy

working class resistance and shake out unproductive or uncompetitive capital, thus laying the basis for a substantial rise in productivity and profits for domestic industry.

But by doing so they have gone further than usual in a postwar slump. They haven't just laid machinery off. They have broken up factories and sold off the machines. The crash has been truly phenomenal.

As John Harrison points out: 'Output fell by more than in any other downturn for over half a century, including the crash of 1929-32 ... Manufacturing output fell by a colossal 15 per cent in the twelve months from December 1979. This compares with a maximum fall in any single year of the 1930s of only (!) 5.5 per cent.'

### Chronic

A crash on this scale should make us cautious about simply carrying on where we left off. The chronic postwar problem of British industry has been poor competitiveness, provoked by underinvestment: insufficient up-to-date machinery.

But now there are not only new machines — half the old ones have been broken up and even some of the newer ones too. John Harrison explains that despite the apparently sensational rise in productivity last year, almost entirely due to harder working, speed-up and so on, 'British unit labour costs (the conventional measure of competitiveness) are still 35-40 per cent higher than in 1979, and the UK was hardly a record-beater then.'

This low competitiveness is not because the British workers are high paid. On the contrary, they are now about eighth in Europe.

Productivity is low fundamentally because we do not have modern machines.

If this is not corrected, government-financed expansion can only result either in a flood of imports produced by better machines abroad, or in very high prices at home because workers are forced (by import controls) to buy badly-produced home goods.

Of course it could be corrected if the government, and the unions, took charge of investment. And if they drew up a plan of investment, geared to supply the needs created by Labour's spending on social needs, the economy could expand to meet new demand in a relatively smooth way.

So it is possible to implement Labour's programme using socialist means. It is, to say the least, much harder to do it by capitalist means. This involves guaranteeing profits for private capital. Capitalists are quite rational: they invest where they can get the highest profit. And for fifty years now, this has meant abroad.

Everything in Labour's programme would make this worse. It would only become profitable to begin large-scale new investment at home if the working class's resistance were completely smashed. To put the figure on this, we need only study the demand advanced by the CBI: for a thirty per cent real wage cut. And Labour could never deliver such an attack successfully; indeed it is doubtful whether anything short of fascism could do so. So there will be no incentive for new investment.

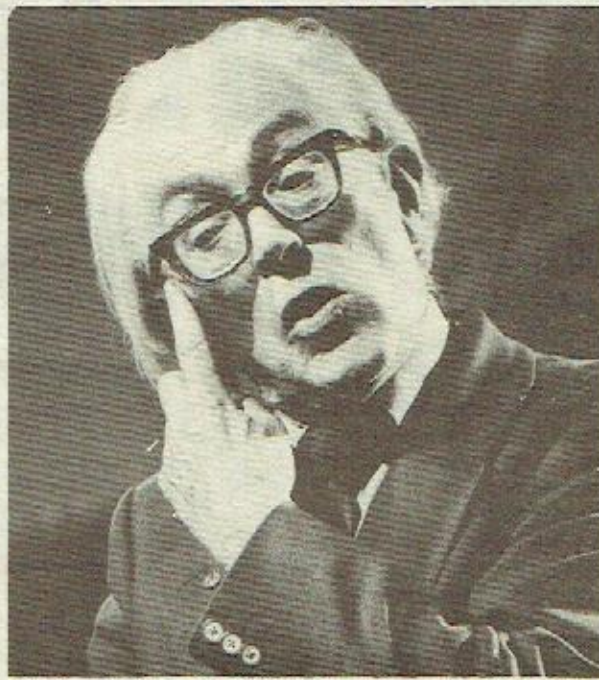
Worse still, however, the banking sector — which has grown massively under Thatcher — would bitterly resent the imposition of exchange controls

which Labour would have to re-establish, and the loss of profits which would result from letting the pound sink.

It is geared to overseas investment and, as in 1975, would use every bit of influence it possessed to try and unseat the government.

Labour would thus face a combined assault from industry and bankers, which it would be unable to match unless it was prepared to take them over.

We can summarise the problems Labour would face by a very simple analogy. Thatcher has crashed the economy: and Peter Shore wants to un-crash it. But you can't put a crashed car back on the road without some drastic garage work. It isn't the same shape. And the sooner we have a Labour leadership that understands this the better.



A puzzled Foot. Wondering how to implement Labour's social programme?



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

## YCND — a growing concern

By Andy Buchanan

Youth CND is now working on its largest and most important project so far — a national march and carnival in opposition to Cruise and Trident to be held in London on 7 May 1983.

Youth CND's national membership stands at around 11,000, and 400 more young people are joining every month. Growth is so fast that the YCND National Office is having difficulty keeping up with the formation of new groups.

The growth shows that opposition to imperialist nuclear war plans among young people, and among young workers in particular, is widening.

The chauvinism whipped up around the Falklands war, and the government offensive aimed at stopping CND organising in schools has failed to stem the tide of anti-war feeling amongst youth.

Moreover, the leadership of YCND has been willing to take up the issue of the imperialist wars now going on, whilst maintaining its focus on Cruise and Trident. For example, YCND conference in May broke up early so the participants could go to the first national demonstration against the Falklands war. In July, the YCND National Committee passed a resolution condemning the Israeli invasion of the Lebanon.

This event should act as a focus for

the activities of the whole anti-missiles movement in the year when Cruise is due to arrive in Britain. It could provide an invaluable springboard for further mass demonstrations against the missiles later in 1983.

The leadership of YCND is already getting down to the work of building the march and carnival. Its National Committee last week agreed to write to the Labour Party Young Socialists and to the major national trade unions to get their support. They are aiming to build on the breakthrough made last autumn when the I.P.Y.S National Committee, along with a number of Labour MPs and union bodies gave their support for the YCND 'Jobs Not Bombs' march to the Labour Party conference.

The YCND National Committee is also planning to give the carnival an international dimension by getting delegations of young people from the European peace movements. This opens up the possibility of making links with those fighting the imperialist war drive in the Third World.

Unfortunately, YCND's determination to build the carnival is not matched by CND. The carnival doesn't even get a look in on the agenda for the CND conference. This raises grave doubts about the willingness of the CND leadership to back up the activities of its militant youth wing.

## Whither the block vote?

ALEX KITSON'S proposals for re-forming the system of representation to Labour Party Conferences with the aim of giving the constituency parties a fairer deal might not be the ideal solution to the problems but it has the merit of opening the issue to discussion.

It is important that this should be taken up at all levels in the Labour Party and in the unions.

In the 1930's the Militant Labour League (no relation), a left wing group in the Labour Party, sympathetic to the Fourth International, put forward the following proposals. Trade unions would be represented at National Conference, not nationally, as at present, but through their local Labour Party branches. This would, of course, require some re-organisation of Labour Party structures.

There would, for instance, be factory sections

which, like the wards, would send their representatives to the Management Committees.

This would abolish the present artificial division between the industrial and political wings of the movement. Delegates would go to conference from the constituencies primed with the genuine grass-roots views of the membership.

By paying their affiliation fees direct to the local constituency parties, the local apparatus would be

strengthened which could lead to more vigorous campaigning on political and industrial issues which confront the working class and increased membership recruiting.

The details would, of course, have to be carefully worked out, but this proposal provides a framework for action which could transform the Labour Party and make annual conference genuinely representative of the real views of the rank and file in the Party and the unions.

### Local

The workers in the trade unions would still be able to play a dominating role in the party but would exercise this through the local organisa-

tions and not through the bloc vote.

Through their active participation in the political discussions in the wards and management committees, they will become more aware of the many issues which arise outside the factory gates, racism, sexism, rates and rents etc. (Of course, racism and sexism also exist inside the workplace, but I am referring to the wider issues, such as abortion, immigration laws, etc.)

Non-industrial worker members of the local parties would be more aware of the struggles in the work-place and become more actively involved.

Charlie van Gelderen.



## Thornett sacking - defeat for car workers

By Pat Hickey

**AT A MASS MEETING on Thursday 18 November Cowley workers voted overwhelmingly against taking strike action in defence of Alan Thornett. The result is a big step for BL management in their plans for the Cowley Plant.**

Alan was dismissed for allowing his HGV licence to lapse, a relatively minor offence which in no other case would have resulted in dismissal, for a worker of 20 years service.

one is suffering in the plant'.

This is, of course, the real point. The sacking of Alan Thornett was an important part of management's plans for the Cowley plant. Over the last few years BL has been moving to concentrate production at Longbridge and Cowley.

The closures of Speke, Canley and Rover SD1 plants were part of this plan. Cowley is an ideal plant for this kind of concentration because it had body and assembly facilities side by side. It has a capacity of 750,000 cars a year.

Unfortunately for BL it also has a militant history. It was the only plant in BL to reject the 2 year pay deal pushed through earlier this month. And with more work coming into the plant and new workers being taken on, the likelihood of a fightback was growing.

So BL moved one of its top hatchetmen in, Tom Grey who had introduced sweat shop conditions and virtually eliminated the role of shop stewards in the SD1 plant prior to its closure.

Indeed a big factor in the workforce's decision to accept redundancy there was the gruelling conditions on the tracks.



Alan Thornett

In Cowley the role of the shop stewards has been consistently undermined. Under the productivity agreements which the national officials foisted on the members, mutuality on manning levels has been eliminated.

The workers are simply told 'That's the job. If you can't hold it there's plenty on the dole who can'. Facilities for stewards

have been progressively withdrawn, and the stewards are subject to continual harassment and intimidation.

Despite all this the Cowley workers have fought back. The week before Alan was sacked there were walk-outs in the North Works against intimidation, and there have been over 50 'downers' in the last six months. It

became necessary to step up the level of intimidation.

This was all the more necessary because production of the new range of medium cars — the LM10 — starts next week. Up to 1000 workers will be started for this car. This was bound to boost the confidence of the workforce.

BL intends to have very high productivity for the LM10. This means hard-line management and sweat shop conditions. Sacking Alan, the steward most prominently associated with a fighting opposition to BL was an essential part of establishing the 'management through fear' which is BL's plan for Cowley.

Cowley workers have suffered an important defeat without a fight. But BL has not yet won the war. The build-up of work in the plant, and the increase in the workforce will help create the conditions for a fight-back. It will inevitably increase the self-confidence of workers, by improving their bargaining position. There is a hard fight ahead. But BL would be wrong to feel complacent. Militants in Cowley must now take up the cudgels that Alan has been forced to drop.

## THE MINERS' VOTE

Since the miners' ballot there has been a continuing debate on the reasons why the miners voted no.

Celia Pugh puts her opinion on this matter.

whilst Pat Hickey in closing the debate, replies for the editorial board.

### Celia Pugh

**NO ONE would argue with the assessment that the NUM ballot vote was a defeat for the miners and a set back for all the working class. However, the editorial statements, and Pat Hickey's contribution (SC 270) go further.**

The editorial in SC 268 argues, 'Undoubtedly the miners' decision represents a turning point ... The majority of miners were not ready to be an industrial battering ram to bring down the Tory Government.'

The front page of that issue explained that the Tories 'have the miners out of the way for now' and that 'Neither the Labour Party nor the trade unions can progress an inch further in the fight against Thatcher ... unless the left organises an all out fight to remove the right wing traitors'. Pat Hickey explains that 'an organised left across the unions fighting the right', a 'cross sectoral organisation' is essential.

This is a deeply pessimistic picture of the state of the anti-Tory struggle today. It argues that until the right wing leaders of the trade unions are removed and an organised cross sectoral left wing built, industrial action to challenge the Tory Government is ruled out — or at least will not move 'an inch forward'.

In the article quoted by Pat Hickey (SC 267) I explained, 'Some miners are apprehensive about the results of the 28th ballot. They are concerned that their leaders waited too long to start the campaign that linked the pay and closure issues'.

In their letter Dick Hall and Mark Hunter explained the drawbacks in the running of the campaign and the manoeuvrings of the right wing. As Mark himself explains in SC 267, these weren't just problems of administration. They related to the political issues raised by the vote.

He said, 'It's tragic because if we fought on the issues ... we could win it'. So, when Pat argues 'Every miner knew the issues' he misses an essential problem with the ballot. As Ken Capstick (Yorkshire NUM) told Socialist Challenge, the miners voted on wages and not on pit closures. They either didn't believe the warnings of major NCB pit surgery or weren't confident

a Government which invests in new seams and pits, which subsidises coal production and organises an integrated energy policy'.

This is not to confine the issues to the NUM in a 'sec-

toralist approach' but to outline the kind of alternative policies and Government needed to give confidence to the whole of the working class in their fight against the Tories.

### Pat Hickey

**CELIA PUGH'S REPLY misses the point. It returns to a completely sectoralist explanation of the defeat. Nowhere does she look at the overall situation in the class.**

Ken Capstick has a more realistic appraisal, when he referred to the defeats in British Leyland and Rail. In this fight miners knew that they needed the support of other sections of the class.

The trade union leadership is not an unimportant factor in that. As Ken put it, 'If the TUC didn't back the train drivers, would they back us?' must have been in the minds of many miners. We failed to convince them of their obvious ability to win. Exactly.

Even the campaign waged by the (majority) of the NUM leadership was not able to turn the situation around, and go on the offensive against the Tories. Celia's points on pit closures will not stand up to scrutiny either. She says that the miners 'either didn't believe the warnings or weren't confident that there was an alternative to NCB arguments that unprofitable pits are not viable'.

This is explained by the right wing leadership 'for over twenty years'. Closures have been an issue since '79. In Spring '81 miners struck against closures and forced the Tories to climb down. The hit list was known before the ballot. And I think it is clear that a majority of miners are prepared to fight on this issue. But the ballot result is a clear warning that the miners cannot substitute for the working class.

That is why we argued for the left organising an all out fight against the right. This does not mean that struggle against the Tory Government is either ruled out or cannot move an inch forward 'until the right wing leaders of the trade unions are removed and an organised cross sectoral

left wing built'.

It does mean that the left must organise to present a clear alternative to the sell-out policies of the right. The existence of such an alternative struggling for leadership would present the possibility of challenging the TUC's betrayals and so would be a huge boost to the militancy and self-confidence of workers in every sector.

Central to such a will be the question of what kind of government? This will mean taking up the issues of policy and leadership. Celia's points on this are also hopelessly sectoral. Unfortunately, there is not going to be an NUM-led government. A left-Labour government has to be fought for across the class. It is on this issue that Scargill, Buckton, Benn have failed. They have not organised at the base of the movement for a fight against the right.

Sectoralism has no answers. Within the NUM the campaign to mobilise against pit closures must go on and be intensified. But as the ASLEF dispute showed, it has to be combined with a fight against the right across the movement.

Preparation now to ensure that the TUC cannot repeat its betrayal of ASLEF will be the best guarantee of a fight on closures being successful.

That was the missing ingredient in the ballot. It is the missing ingredient in the class as a whole at the moment.

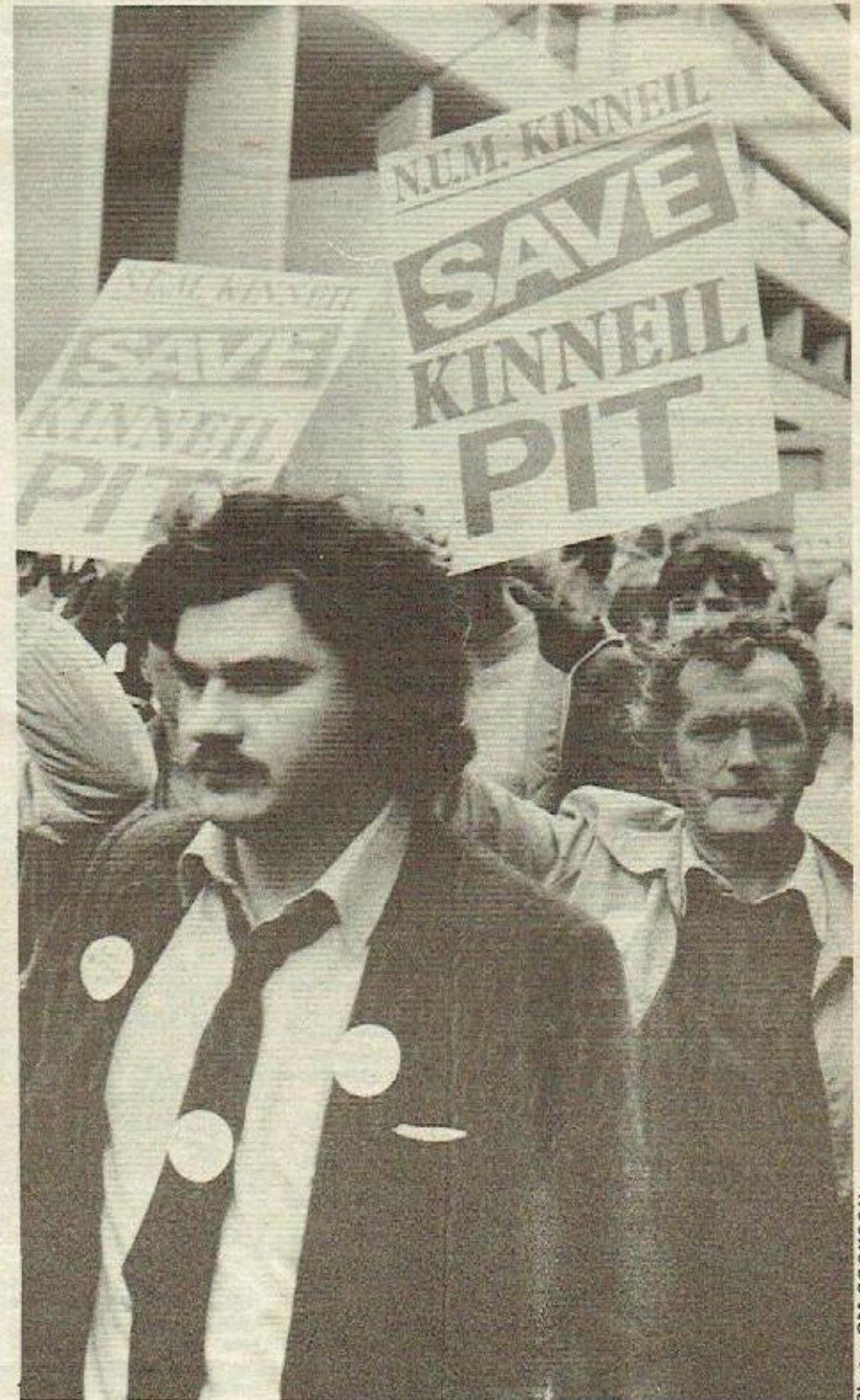


Photo: GM COOKSON



## 'CND belongs in the factories'

WORKERS at Massey Ferguson CPO in Manchester have organised a factory branch of CND. Their experiences provide a lead for what the future of CND can be. Pete Jackson talked to its founders 'A group of us started talking about disarmament and third world countries — how we should do something about the amount of spending on these weapons when millions are dying every year' explained Charlie Dunbar.

Brian Hodgkinson went to see the anti-nuclear film, *The War Game*. Inspired by its message, he joined CND and took a petition round work. 'People got talking about it and some wanted to join. Our first move, though was to try to get affiliated through the shop stewards. This was narrowly defeated'.

Brian thought the stewards had made a mistake. 'We decided: To hell with their idea that unions shouldn't be involved in CND'. With the help of a few sympathiser stewards, we were able to set ourselves up in July last year'.

In forming a CND group, they shocked some

people 'At first we were shouting it from the rooftops' explained Brian 'Many people thought we were a load of balloons, some even thought we'd founded the whole CND movement. Now they are coming round to accept us. We were bringing CND into the place where people spend most of their time. Now we have more arguments about it than anything else'.

'Certainly at first you couldn't walk through the place without someone pulling you'.

Part of the reason for the groups impact is their effective organisation. Secretary John Gilmore explained 'At our first meeting with 10 there, we

lected officers. Each member was charged 20p a week and for that given a regular copy of *Sanity*, CND's magazine.

'From our weekly meetings held in the dinner breaks, we organise the members to go on marches. We went to the big London one and the Blackpool 'Jobs not Bombs' march. We print a monthly newsletter which goes all round the factory and we have a small lending library in the factory with pamphlets and books'.

Not surprisingly, management were not too pleased. 'They tried to block us using the factory social club to show the *War Game*' said Brian, 'but we won out and 30 came along, getting us a few new recruits. Now we have a membership of 25'.

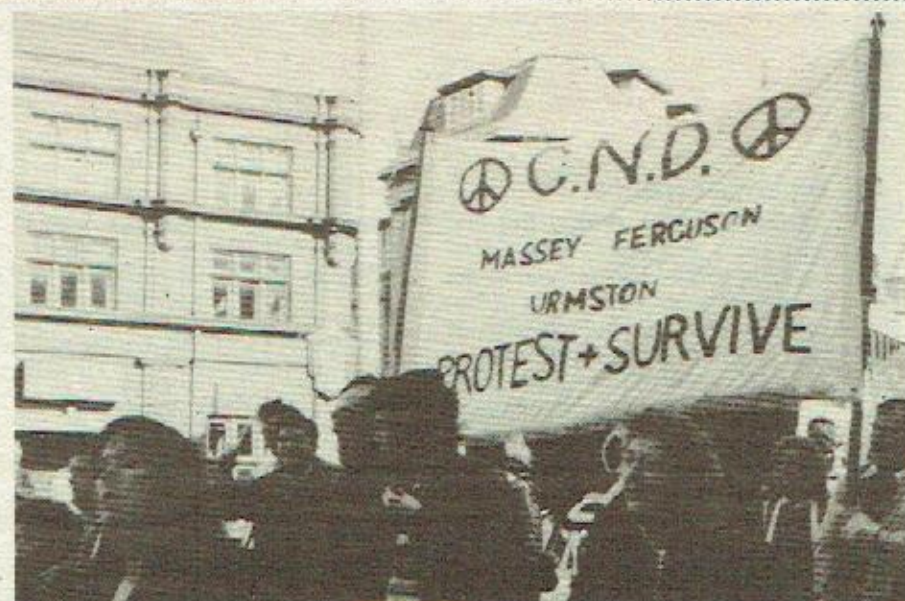
The arguments against them are forceful. Charlie explained, 'What we came up against every week is "what about the Russians?". Most people can be sympathetic to stopping Cruise but still believe in the

need for deterrence'

When the Falklands war happened 'the shit hit the fan' as Brian put it. 'We seemed to get all the flak. A lot of people were arguing that this showed why we needed nuclear weapons'.

15 months after the group was established, their bulletins are still being pumped out — and read all over the factory. 'We've put CND on the map' Brian judged. 'Beforehand, people weren't bothered, now we've taken the arguments into the factory'.

As Charlie explained 'Its better having a CND group in the factory. Many stewards committees back CND which is good, but that's the last members hear of it. No-one else but working people have the real power to stop this. A change of government is necessary, but not a Labour government like the last one which is influenced by the people with money. Its us who's going to change this and get a Labour govern-



Massey Ferguson's CND demonstrate against nuclear weapons

ment that works for us.' Deputy convenor Steve Taylor is convinced of this 'The unions must back CND. Our two main unions are the engineers and the general and municipal. But their leaderships are hopeless. The lead has got to come from the rank and file. If we can get this issue taken into the branches, districts

and stewards committees, we can get their multilateralist positions changed to support for complete disarmament.

'Since the Labour and TUC conferences, people can see a lot of support for the issue. I think it'll be easier to take it into the workplaces. I can foresee a change of heart by our stewards. In fact, we've

recently backed the people of El Salvador — the issues are the same.'

To achieve this, the message from Massey's CND is plain. As Brian Hodgkinson put it 'CND belongs in the factories'.

For speakers from Massey Fergusons CND, contact: John Gilmore, 31 Braken Close, Locking Stumps, Warrington, nr Manchester.

# Starvation or struggle in steel

By Celia Pugh

IN 1972 the British Steel Corporation employed over 200,000 workers. By next year, a decade long jobs massacre will have reduced this to at most 75,000. On 11 November, the BSC bosses met to review their Corporate Plan to achieve this target by carving 20,000 jobs from the present 94,000 workforce.

Death notices were instantly served on 427 jobs at Craignuk in Lanarkshire, adding to 263 redundancies announced earlier this year; on 1,286 jobs at BSC Round Oak Dudley, which will close by Christmas and on 600 Corby tube jobs, adding to the thousands of Corby workers made redundant by previous closures.

But most devastating was the option of total closure of the Ravenscraig plant in Motherwell Scotland, with the loss of 4,400 steel jobs.

Response to this proposal was swift. The 'Save Scottish Steel' campaign was launched, involving the local labour movement, church political and business figures. Even the leader of the Scottish Tory Party signed up.

The campaign points out that 20,000 additional jobs could go in industries that service Ravenscraig, including coal and rail.

Last month every steel plant in Britain was brought to a halt by a national one day strike against closures. The government is now clearly nervous about major resistance if they try to shut Ravenscraig.

They may try to deflect this by spreading the redundancy load across the five major plants in Teeside, Scunthorpe, Scotland and South Wales. This could involve partial closure of the rolling mill or steel production side at Ravenscraig. But steelworkers have seen these tactics before. Slim-down proposals led to starvation and partial closure and then to find strangulation.

Ravenscraig convenor Tommy Brennan explain-

ed last week, 'Partial closure is tantamount to total closure. We feel there is a set up here and we've got to be wary of that'. His misgivings were confirmed within days, when the industry ministers of the Common Market countries met in Denmark on 18 November and agreed a further package of closures.

Previous targets, which have guided British Steel boss McGregor, aimed for a 16 million tonne cut in steel-making capacity by 1985. The Commission meeting increased this cut to 30 or 35 million tonnes, with 20 major rationalisations' resulting.

The total rationalisation cost was set at £10

have had much luck. The EEC Commission has set July '83 as the job-cutting target date and has made it clear that sanctions will be taken against Government's whose aid is not marched by capacity shedding rationalisations. But undoubtedly he will try some manoeuvre to stave off this closure for a short period for electoral reasons. But this will not save Ravenscraig.

So, British steelworkers are set for hard times unless they lay plans for firm national resistance. The one day strike last month was a start and Scunthorpe, River Don and Round Oak workers have pledged a fight.

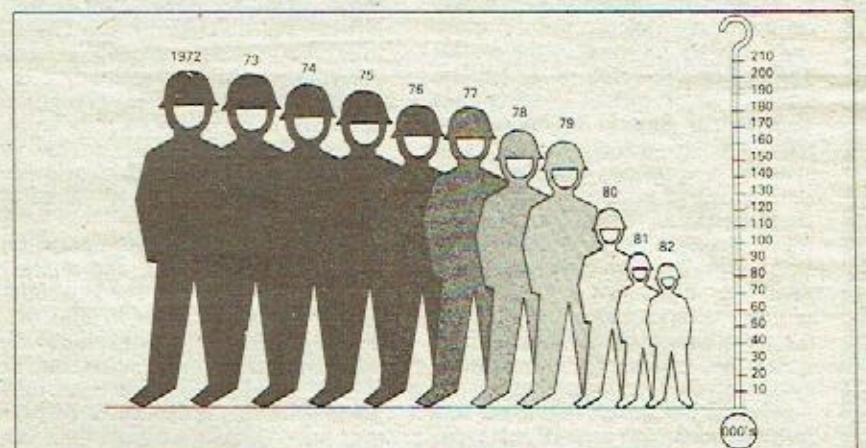
Sadly the leadership of the main steel union the ISTC has learned few lessons for, the 'Save Our Steel' protest campaign that failed to save major steel plants like Corby and Shotton.

ped from 21.5 million tonnes to 12 million tonnes, and productivity shot up as more was squeezed out of fewer workers. In this time, imports increased by only 0.6 percent to an estimated 4.4 million tonnes, which can hardly explain the 100,000 job losses over three years.

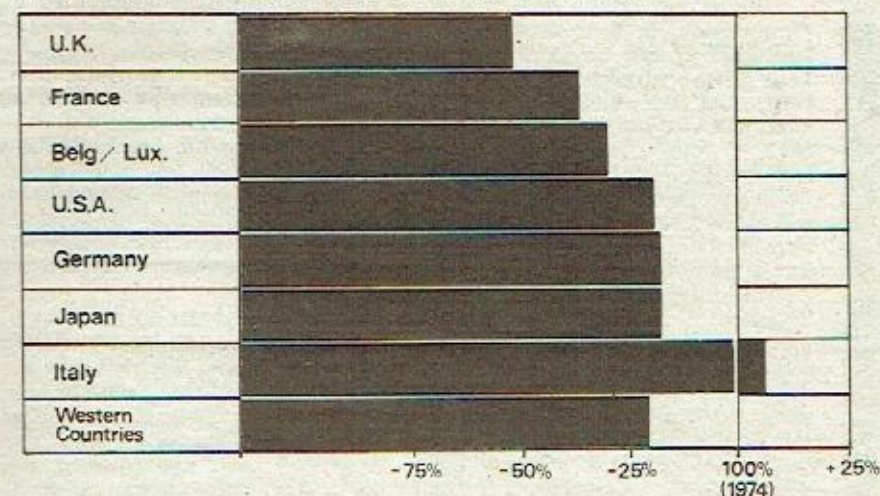
Steel union leaders are bemoaning the fact that, of the 110,000 jobs lost through Common Market rationalisation in the last three years, 100,000 of these have been in Britain. Perhaps it has something to do with these leaders failure to lay serious plans to fight all closures, prevent small plants being isolated and for policies for a labour government to secure investment and markets for steel based on social need and not profit.

Contrast the pathetic bleatings of Bill Sirs to the no-nonsense actions of Lorraine steelworkers in

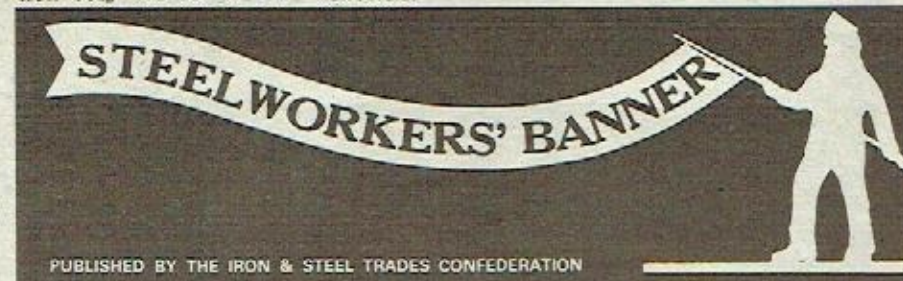
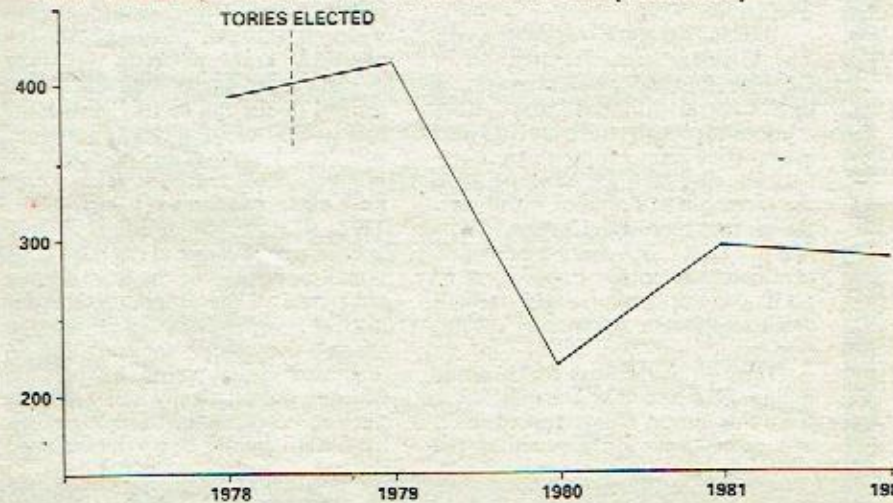
### SLIMLINE OR STARVATION?



### MANPOWER EMPLOYED (1974-1981)



### U.K. WEEKLY STEEL PRODUCTION (tonnes)



billion, with Britain accounting for one fifth of this. This means that BSC's target of 20,000 job cuts by next year, including partial or total closure of Ravenscraig is only the start.

There was speculation before the EEC meeting that Tory industry minister Patrick Jenkin may hold off major closures until after a general election for fear of embarrassing and electorally costly industrial resistance. He would attempt to get EEC backing for further cash injections to tide the Government over.

But he doesn't seem to

Steel union leader Bill Sirs is proudly parading his platform of vicars, mayors, Tory MPs and members of the business world in a common front against foreign steel imports. But imports are not the problem facing British steel workers.

World demand for steel has plummeted as the insane rules of the capitalist economy play themselves out. So in the eighteen months between the second quarter of 1980 and the end of 1981, demand for finished steel from British manufacturers fell by 30 percent. Between 1979 and 1982 UK steel production drop-

France who in September cut off all road and rail access to their town for a weekend to stop redundancies. Or the steelworkers of the Ardennes who fought pitched battles with police in their recent jobs fight. French and Belgian steelworkers have kept up this response for years, which may explain why the axe has not fallen so heavily on their heads.

These are lessons which the British steel leaders should have their noses rubbed, with steelworkers demanding national strike action now before the bloodletting goes any further.



# NUCLEAR WAR AND THE S

By Ernest Mandel

SEVERAL times during the last two years the threat of an outbreak of the third world war in the near future seemed to loom. Impressionist commentators did not hesitate to draw this conclusion. A panic wave in fact arose, particularly in certain intellectual circles. The powerful and promising anti-war movement, which is growing today in the imperialist countries, was also at least partially affected. The number of publications about a third world war already begun, underway, or on the point of ending, are countless (1).

The actual events are not unimportant in creating this panic wave. In June 1982 we saw: the re-opening of the Iran-Iraq war, the Malvinas war, the preparations for the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the growing foreign intervention in the civil war in El Salvador — without even mentioning the more or less forgotten 'little' wars. There are those in Chad, Eritrea, Namibia, the Western Sahara, not counting the civil war in Angola and Mozambique, and even this list is not exhaustive. But to conclude that the flames of world conflagration are on us is irresponsible.

Imperialism is more determined than ever to employ its counter-revolutionary violence against every revolutionary advance in the world. This takes the form of systematic armed intervention; sometimes disguised as support to one of the sides in a civil war, at other times an open massive foreign intervention.

The world imperialist system is decomposing in the throes of a profound crisis. Revolutionary conflagrations have been erupting one after the other for over a half-century, with no end in sight. Thus, the main danger of war lies in these numerous foreign interventions against revolutions in progress.

For the last decades the great majority of wars have been of this type. It is the same today. It will be the same tomorrow.

This is not in the least a new phenomenon. In fact, since the intervention against Soviet Russia in 1918-22, every revolution that has been triumphant, or on the road to important victories, has had to confront a counter-revolutionary war from outside.

The scope of some of these wars was much greater than the Malvinas war or the present imperialist intervention in Central America.

The new fact is not these 'localised' counter-revolutionary wars. They are the rule. The new factor is 'that represented by the Nicaraguan and Iranian revolutions. There, at least at the moment of the fall of Somoza and of the Shah, imperialism found itself, not materially or militarily, but politically incapable of intervening because of the repercussions of the defeat it suffered in Indochina in 1975.

But this paralysis was short-lived. The Malvinas war, the invasion of Lebanon, the imperialist intervention into Central America, and rather more ambiguously, the Iran-Iraq war, are far from representing a new 'international situation', or bringing us to the threshold of the third world war. Rather they represent a 'return to normal'. That is, the systematic, obstinate attempt of imperialism to pit its counter-revolutionary strength against each new advance of revolution.

The two world wars which broke out in 1914 and 1939 were different from this almost uninterrupted chain of localised wars which punctuate the

historical period since the Russian revolution. These wars proved the inability of imperialism to ensure peace for humanity. This, in fact, is one of the most important reasons for ridding ourselves of this system which emanates the most barbarous violence through all its pores. The third world war would be still more different.

The fact that the third world war will be, in all probability, a nuclear war only emphasises all the more the importance of this distinction. It gives it all the more weight.

It would be absurd to argue that the development of a nuclear arsenal capable of destroying at least twenty times the present population of the world changes nothing 'fundamental' in the 'nature of the world war', and that this will pose the 'identical tactical and strategic problems' for the world proletariat and the revolutionaries as the First and Second World Wars.

Considerable human and technical resources are needed to build a classless society. It will not be socialism that arises from the nuclear ashes, but a planet on which the predominant life will be grasses and insects or, in the 'best' alternative, a barbarous human society from which the survivors of the holocaust will move forward in an arduous and centuries-long ascent. The communist project would anyway be completely cut off from reality for a long period. It flows from this that the strategic aim of the world workers and revolutionary movement must be to prevent the world nuclear war and not to 'win' it (whatever this might mean). That is, to explain this more precisely — to do everything possible to assure that the progress of the world revolution paralyses imperialism's ability to intervene with nuclear weapons, and to prepare the way for its nuclear disarmament by defeating its political power.

However, as long as imperialism retains political power, and military and material power in the key countries, it would be utopian to think that the 'localised' counter-revolutionary interventions by imperialism can be prevented. Disarmament is only possible within the imperialist fortress that have nuclear weapons and not outside them. Only the North American, British, French, German, Japanese proletariat (Supported by the Chinese and Soviet proletariat) can defuse the nuclear weapons; outlaw any use of them, junk them, and remove them once and for all from the face of the earth.

To think anything else is to believe in miracles which will not happen: that the imperialists will always be intelligent or afraid or demoralised enough not to use their weapons of despair even though they keep the power to do so.

It is a fact that, despite the development of a more and more terrifying arsenal of nuclear weapons over the last thirty years, they have not been used until now. However, the number of 'local' wars has been growing and more and more sophisticated and murderous conventional weapons have in fact been used in them. The reason for this difference seems obvious. Those who possess nuclear weapons and can decide whether to use them know perfectly well their suicidal meaning for humanity. The general public can be fooled with the monstrous talk of nuclear wars which will 'only' cost some hundreds of millions dead and that 'those who have nuclear shelters will survive'. Those in power are not duped.

It is true that one of the partly 'rational' objectives of the mad nuclear arms race is the frantic search for nuclear weapons so 'small' and so 'clean' that their 'tactical' use in 'localised' wars would be possible without automatically unleashing a nuclear world war. Although this hypothesis cannot be totally excluded



it is extremely unlikely, and anyway would mean a horrific cost in human life and destruction.

This clearly shows that it has been the fact that the Soviet Union has built and stockpiled nuclear weapons that has saved humanity up till now from a nuclear holocaust. Without this 'balance of terror' it is practically certain that imperialism would already have used nuclear weapons against the 'Chinese volunteers' during the Korean war and the Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions during the second Indochinese war, indeed against other revolutions.

Although we believe that the

'balance of terror' has prevented for a whole historical period the use of nuclear weapons until now — and thus, the successive reprisals and escalations that would lead to the outbreak of the third world war — we do not consider that this will continue indefinitely. What makes possible a change in this situation is the increase in the structural crisis which is afflicting the world capitalist system.

The difference in the present stepping up of the nuclear arms race from that in the 1950s and 1960s is that it corresponds to an intrinsic economic need of the imperialist economy, linked to the longterm decline of the

economic situation of capitalism. In conditions of stagnation of the rate of profit and of the 'normal outlets', arms production is more and more the 'substitute market' *par excellence* that is impelling a resumption of capital accumulation.

The greater is the weight of arms spending in the imperialist economy, the greater is the pressure to increase austerity and dump the welfare state in all its forms. At the same time, the more the class struggle is exacerbated, including for immediate and defensive aims, and the more the imperialist bourgeoisie is forced to look for a change in the political regime in its



# TRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM



socialist federation) which outlaws the production of any major weapons and which is able to ensure that this rule is respected.

The 'balance of terror' increasingly loses its effectiveness, as the depression and the long-term capitalist crisis worsen, as the relationships of force within the imperialist bourgeois societies modify, as the austerity offensive and the war drive intensify. These phenomena are structurally linked.

The fate of humanity depends on the outcome of a race between the capacity of the international workers movement to overthrow the ruling power in the principal imperialist fortresses — obviously any exterior weakening would contribute to that overthrow but cannot substitute for it — to make a breakthrough in the progress towards socialism; and on the other side the attempt by imperialism to inflict decisive defeats on the international workers movement, which would leave the way open to nuclear war.

Indeed, the austerity drive and remilitarisation offensive will lead sooner or later to a challenge to the essential democratic rights of the workers movement, which in its turn would open the door to a fundamental change in the political personnel of imperialism.

As the austerity offensive accelerates, as remilitarisation increases, and as there are more and more serious attacks on the social and political gains of the proletariat in the imperialist countries — along with murderous and barbarous attacks against the colonial revolution — the 'balance of terror' tends to lose effectiveness as a principal obstacle on the road towards the third world war. As this progresses, the importance of the anti-war movement (particularly anti-nuclear war) grows to the same extent. The 12 June demonstration of a million people in New York (the biggest demonstration in the history of the United States, if not of the imperialist countries, with a million participants) is only a first indication of the potential of this movement.

Those who pedantically deny the objectively revolutionary impact of the action of these masses, under the pretext that they do not at first glance distinguish between the bureaucratised workers states and bourgeois states, that they sometimes use the jargon describing the US and USSR as 'the super-powers', putting them on an equal footing; that these masses do not exhibit 'proletarian internationalism' towards revolutions in progress (reproaches which are, moreover, partly false) fail to recognise two essential aspects of the world situation.

Firstly, it is imperialism and imperialism alone that vitally and desperately needs nuclear weapons for its counter-revolutionary military strategy. Thus, to concentrate the movement against nuclear weapons is to objectively strike a blow against imperialism.

Secondly, to the extent that they include section of the organised

workers' movement and the youth these mass mobilisations unleash an objectively anti-capitalist dynamic, independent of the phraseology used by certain of their leaders. These mass actions have imposed and will continue to press not only for objectives of unilateral disarmament (against Cruise and Pershing missiles, against the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) bases).

but also for an economic policy founded on the anti-capitalist alternative to remilitarisation and austerity — jobs not bombs, schools and hospitals not military bases, the 35 hour week through the radical reduction of the military budget, etc.

In a more general manner, the struggle against the nuclear arms race and against the remilitarisation offensive intersects, at least on one essential point, with the struggle against the capitalist crisis and capitalism in crisis. This struggle teaches the widest layers of the masses that there is no pre-ordained fate decreeing that there will be a third world war, any more than there is a pre-ordained fate that decrees that there has to be an economic crisis, thirty five million unemployed in the imperialist countries, famine in the third world or torture everywhere. The 'Horsemen of the Apocalypse' can be stopped, if the masses, the exploited, and the oppressed take their destiny into their own hands.

In the same way we resolutely support the autonomous mass movement against the arms race in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the other Eastern European countries. Not that we put the workers states and the bourgeois states on the same footing as the capitalist ones, or that we have forgotten the duty to defend the former against the latter in the case of military conflict.

But we understand that, in the situation in the world today, everything that helps the biggest and most unified mobilisation for unilateral disarmament by imperialism in Europe is a blow a thousand times harder against imperialism, and thus a contribution a thousand times more effective in defence of the USSR and the workers states, than a few more rockets, or a few less disciplinary conflicts in the army of this or that workers states.

In taking away from the bourgeoisie one of its main arguments for dividing the anti-war movement in the West, and slowing down its rapid growth, the anti-war movement in the East objectively strikes a stronger blow against imperialism than against the bureaucracy. In reclaiming public control over foreign and military policy, the autonomous anti-war movement in Eastern Europe and in the USSR objectively promotes the anti-bureaucratic political revolution.

This is an integral part of the world revolution and thus of the struggle to save humanity from nuclear destruction. As has just been shown in the advances of the political revolution and counter-revolution in Poland such developments bring almost immediate consequences — positive in the first case, negative in the second — for the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle at the international level.

principal citadels.

There would have to be a totally different economic climate for the political personnel to be prepared to take the final solution for the whole of humanity to come to the leadership of the principal imperialist powers. The main forces of big capital would have to be literally driven to the brink. There would have to be other dominant ideologies, a different relationship of forces between the classes in these countries.

Of course, as the downward trend of the international capitalist economy continues, and as the austerity offensive and war drive of

international capital sharpens, personalities, tendencies, indeed political forces, who symbolise the determination to literally fight to the death, including collective suicide, for the greater glory of private property, or the race, like Adolf Hitler and Hideki Tojo, will begin to appear in the wings and on the edge of the stage. But this time it will be nuclear death.

It would be deeply irresponsible to brush aside the possibility of such a 'suicidal turn' by the leading personnel of big capital, once a certain threshold of the structural crisis of capitalism in decline is passed, like that passed in Germany in 1932.

Those who think that the 'balance of terror' or anti-nuclear propaganda can save us forever are like those who believe in the little voice that whispers, 'You can't die!' Alas, our own fate, we humans, is not only that individuals inevitably die, but even the species could disappear. If it does not master its own fate in time, if, faced with the threat of nuclear war, it does not impose firm rules of order on society, by creating a world social order which makes war impossible. This means the abolition of private property and the sovereign nation state, and the constitution of a world government of producers (the world

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**SUNDERLAND:** The Ceolfrith Art Gallery Bookshop, Grange Terrace.

**YORK:** Community Books, Walmgate.

# International

## Irish elections - 'don't be fooled again'

By Toni Gorton

ON 24 NOVEMBER Ireland has its third general election in eighteen months. But the polls indicate a continuing unstable road ahead. According to an *Irish Times* poll on 15 November, Fianna Fail led by Charles Haughey will get 44 percent of the vote; Fianna Gael led by Dr Fitzgerald 42 percent and Labour 10 percent. This shows the way to another coalition government between Fianna Fail and the Labour Party.

Haughey has accused Fitzgerald with collaborating with the British government and intends to establish an all-Ireland court and police force if elected; that in return for his support for Priors' policies in the North of Ireland Britain is supporting Fitzgerald in the elections.

People's Democracy in its November issue of *Socialist Republic* point out that the real issues are not parliamentary manoeuvres and alliances but a programme in the interests of the Irish workers to protect them from the ravages of big business.

PD is again supporting the candidacy of Bernadette McAliskey who is running as an independent anti-imperialist candidate in Dublin North Central under the slogan: A voice for working people — a voice for Irish unity. The other anti-imperialist organisations Sinn Fein, Irish Republican Socialist Party and People's Democracy aren't standing.

Warning 'don't be fooled again' Bernadette says that the main political parties will recite meaningless jargon about the economy and the world recession, make the voters feel confused and then put the burden of paying for the economic crisis.

She says the 'fight for economic justice and national sovereignty is the same fight. The task of removing the British

1. Nationalise the banks The Irish government owes money, and pays more interest to Irish than foreign banks. Irish banks made £90m profit last year. The first step in reducing government debt is to take control of the banking system.
2. Create a state building agency Most 'productive' investment by government is in the building industry, a byword for inefficiency and speculation. A state building agency could provide work at decent wages, cheap housing, schools, hospitals, recreational facilities and a decent road network.
3. An economic plan Legally bidding targets on employers must be worked out by the government in cooperation with the trade unions. At present £2.5bn of taxpayers' public money goes to private industry. In return the owners of Irish industry owe us nothing.
4. No more pacifying Britain The experiment of the Northern State has failed. To pretend it can be maintained costs lives, in the north and wastes the resources of the south.
5. There can be no reconstruction of the Northern State, through the Assembly, or any other British plan. The government must demand a solution be embarked upon only within the framework of a united and independent Ireland. Nothing else will work.
6. No diversions and infringements of democratic rights The government must not be allowed to divert the national attention from our real problems by making a

political football of these issues which arouse more emotion than reason in the population.

We do not need the proposed abortion amendment to the constitution. It will not stop abortion any more than it will stop moral hypocrisy. It will cost a fortune and achieve worse than nothing.

We don't need more prisons, harsher laws, more 'special courts' or 'special police'. They will not stop vandalism, violence or drug abuse. Social problems need social answers, not witch-hunts, for political gain.

Donations to the election fund are gratefully received. Send to Bernadette McAliskey Constituency Association, 7 Collins Park, Dublin 9. Tel B Dublin 0001-370445.



Part of the protest march against amendment to Irish constitution to make abortion illegal

**A VOICE FOR WORKING PEOPLE**



**A VOICE FOR IRISH UNITY**

VOTE

**Bernadette McALISKEY MP**

## Labour Committee on Palestine formed

By Ros Kaplan

THE LABOUR COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE (LCP) was formally launched last Saturday at its founding conference at Lambeth Town Hall. The recent invasion of Lebanon — and the massacres of Palestinians — ensured a good attendance at the conference, with over 200 delegates and observers from Labour Parties, trade unions and Palestine solidarity organisations. Recently a number of local Labour Movement Solidarity Campaigns have been formed, and this was an opportunity to coordinate them.

The need for such a body within the Labour Party is especially great, because of the continuing influence of Zionist, pro-Israel views even within the Labour left.

This is symbolised by the affiliation of the Poale Zion organisation, as one of the socialist societies affiliated to the Labour Party. Indeed the main debate at the conference was precisely on the issue of whether the LCP should have an explicitly anti-Zionist platform, and whether it should consciously fight Zionism

within the Labour movement, or whether this was implicit within a pro-Palestinian position. Eventually an amendment was included in the founding resolution which made reference to an explicit fight against Zionism. Potentially, therefore the LCP represents an opportunity to construct a broad based organisation within the labour movement, to do consistent work in favour of solidarity with the Palestinian people.

However, the conference was marred by allegations made against some of the organisers by supporters of *Socialist Organiser* (SO) supported by some activists within the Palestine Solidarity movement. SO supporter Andrew Hornung and solidarity activist Tony Greenstein, both from the old steering committee, opened the conference by demanding it be immediately stopped (!) on the basis that Ted Knight and other *Labour Herald* supporters had packed the conference with members of the WRP, who were neither Labour Party members nor individual members of the LCP.

against a split and for a unified committee.

Behind this row was an attempt by *Socialist Organiser* to get the conference to adopt a platform which included very detailed positions on the reactionary Arab states and other questions, which would have potentially excluded some people, and a rather sordid dispute about whether Hornung and Greenstein should be the officers of the LCP.

Whether or not supporters of *Labour Herald*, or the WRP, or both had packed the conference was irrelevant. Certainly SO themselves had mobilised their supporters for the conference in some strength, and members of the WRP would have been able to attend as trade union delegates anyway.

Neither did *Labour Herald* supporters try to exclude *Socialist Organiser* supporters from the steering committee which was elected. It seem-

ed however that *Socialist Organiser* were not happy with a committee which was not in their own pocket.

Despite this row, a broad based steering committee was elected, which includes Ken Livingstone, Ted Knight and independent Palestinian solidarity activists, as well as supporters of *Socialist Challenge*.

The basis has been laid for a continuing campaign throughout the Labour movement on the basis of support for the struggle of the Palestinian people in the struggle for self-determination, withdrawal of the Israelis from the occupied territories, recognition of the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and opposition to Zionism in the labour movement.

We strongly urge SO comrades to come back in to the committee.

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## What is Trotskyism?

# The basis of the united front

By John Ross

THE UNITED ACTION of working class organisations, the united front, is often portrayed by those who claim to be Trotskyists as some sort of manoeuvre. It is to 'expose' the Labour Party and trade union leadership. This is the approach for example of groups such as the *Militant* who refused to participate effectively in mass campaigns such as CND, the Anti-Nazi League, or the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, but continuously demand that 'the Labour leadership' does this or that. The result is that 'Trotskyism' becomes identified as sectarianism in action.

But this concept of the united front has nothing to do with that of Trotsky himself. Trotsky explained his approach to united action in exactly the way Marx had:

'To fight the proletariat must have unity in its ranks. This holds true for partial economic conflicts, within the walls of a single factory, as well as for such 'national' political battles as the one to repel fascism. Consequently the tactic of the united front is not something accidental and artificial — a cunning manoeuvre — not at all; it originates, entirely and wholly, in the objective conditions governing the development of the proletariat, that they have no interests separate and apart

from those of the proletariat as a whole, carry with them the meaning that the struggle of the party to win over the majority of the class must in no instance come into opposition with the need of the workers to keep unity within their fighting ranks.'(1)

It was only by starting off with the objective needs of the working class that a revolutionary party could be built. As Trotsky put it, 'the correctly understood interests of the class are identical with the correctly formulated problems of the party.'(2)

From this it flows that the united front is not in its basis a question of the relation between particular organisations of the working class — even mass ones. As Trotsky put it, talking of the French Socialist and Communist Parties and their respective newspapers *Le Populaire*

and *L'Humanite*:

'The question of the united front is not at all, either in point of origin or in substance, a question of the reciprocal relations between the Communist Party parliamentary fraction and that of the Socialists, or between the Central Committees of the two parties, or between *L'Humanite* and *Le Populaire*. The problem of the united front — despite the fact that a split is inevitable in this epoch between the various political organisations basing themselves on the working class — grows out of the urgent need to secure for the working class the possibility of a united front in the struggle against capitalism.'(3)

From this it can be seen how anti-Marxist are the positions of the *Militant* group on mass campaigns such as CND or the ANL. Trotsky naturally argued primarily for united action of the mass organisations of the working class because that was the way to set the greatest numbers of the working class and oppressed in action against capitalism.

Naturally it is far better when there are massive action such as 22 of September in support of

the health workers. Today only the mass organisations of the working class in Britain, the Labour Party and the trade unions can call actions on that scale. This is why Socialist Challenge campaigns for united Labour Party/Trade Union action against the Tories.

But what if their leaderships refuse to take action? The class struggle cannot be abandoned until Len Murray and Michael Foot can be persuaded to take it up. Then campaigns such as the CND, ANL, the actions of the women's movement play a vital role precisely in practically waging that struggle of the working class and oppressed against capitalism.

They both take the most effective action now — which in some cases can be very large, and create the maximum pressure to force the leaderships of the mass organisations of the working class to put even bigger forces in motion.

This is why Socialist Challenge as well as demanding action by the TUC and Labour Party participates in every possible mass campaign, oppositional movement fighting for action in the unions, and other movements of the working class and oppressed.

The two complement each other in the real



movement of the working class and oppressed. They only contradict each other in sectarian schemes. As Trotsky put it, 'The essence of the Leninist united-front policy consists in giving the proletariat the opportunity — while maintaining a fighting, intransigent

organisation and programme — of achieving in closed ranks, even a small practical step forward.' Because its basis is the actual struggle of the working class and oppressed, the 'united front constitute(s) the substance of the problems of tactics.'(4)

In the next weeks we

will look at examples of how the question of the united front was handled in practice by revolutionaries.

Footnotes: (1&2) Trotsky — *What Next* (3) Trotsky — *Theses on the United Front* (4) Trotsky — *Preface to the Polish Edition of Lenin's 'Left-Wing Communism'*.

## 'Born again' Christian wipes out Guatemalans

SINCE the 'born again Christian' General Rios Montt took power in a coup in March the massacres and deaths of Guatemalan people has increased greatly. Despite Montt considering himself the 'saviour' of the people more than 5000 have died in the first five months of his regime.

This report came from a Guatemalan priest, the Rev Luis Fernando Garcia who recently visited London.

He said that one person in every seven is living rough in the open terrified that they might be caught by the army and massacred. 'The army are systematically attacking rural villages, killing men, women and children not with bullets, but through chopping them to death with machetes.'

'They pour petrol on children and burn them, take pregnant women, rape them and hang them upside down from trees and cut open their wombs.'

The terror is well documented by the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission but

despite the evidence the US is in a big hurry to cosy up to General Montt.

The Pentagon's chief military officer in Latin America, General Wallace Notting, declared earlier this year that the 'implications of a Marxist takeover in Guatemala are a lot more serious than in El Salvador — the population is larger, the economy is stronger, the geographical position is more critically located in a strategic sense.'

He went on to say the United States should play 'essentially the same role in Guatemala as it does in El Salvador'.

Notting's remarks are part of the effort by the Reagan administration to justify restoring US military aid to the Guatemalan dictatorship.

## El Salvador - take up the fight in Britain

By Toni Gorton

RADIO Venceremos, the clandestine station of the El Salvadorean liberation movement said that another 95 government troops had been killed or wounded in the latest stage of the fighting.

It also said that seven Hondurans had been killed in the Chalatenango province bordering Honduras 60 miles north of San Salvador. The Honduran government has repeatedly denied that their troops go across the border to aid Salvadoran forces but evidence is to the contrary.

Over 2000 Honduran troops are now in place along the border with 120 US 'advisors'. Columns of Honduran army transports are moving towards the border towing heavy artillery in what seems to be a full scale offensive to crush the newly liberated zones in El Salvador.

In Britain Amnesty International has called for urgent action on behalf of eleven political activists arrested by the regime believed to be 'in danger of torture and extrajudicial execution.'

The National Union of Miners had already intervened on behalf of Jorge Herrera, a labour leader and member of the Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario, a sister party to the British Labour Party.

The much-vaunted elections in March this

year have had no effect at all on the arbitrary killings and torturing by the security forces. While the regime has finally been forced to try five soldiers for the rape and murder of four US women missionaries nearly two years ago this in no way signifies a 'change of heart'.

Letters to the El Salvador government are urgently needed now. For further information please contact Amnesty International, International Secretariat, 10 Southampton St, London WC2E 7HF, Tel 01-8367788.



## Labour movement conference on El Salvador

TRADE UNIONISTS will have an opportunity to organise effective solidarity with workers in El Salvador. That's the promise that the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign make for their working conference to be held on 14 May next year.

A series of speakers will give the background to the present struggle, from political history to the present government's policy.

This will be followed by

workshops on building a school in El Salvador • how to improve media coverage • how to win support for women's struggles • the release of political prisoners and to end the repression • fund raising and campaigning.

Attractively printed advertising pamphlets will be out shortly and are available from the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, 29 Islington Park Street, London N1 (tel 01-359 2270)



# Marxism and Social Democracy

A new series which traces the development of social democracy as a political force and its crucial differences with Marxism.

# 1 The rise of the SPD

By Phil Hearse

THE GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SPD) founded in 1875 grew into the most powerful workers party in the world, the most politically authoritative party of the Socialist International. But when the first imperialist war broke out in 1914 the SPD leadership supported the war and their own ruling class. The repercussions split the world workers movement into its social democratic and communist components — the Second and Third Internationals. The roots of this tragedy lie in the history of the SPD.

Unlike the British Labour Party, which arose out of the decision of the trade union leaders to break with Liberalism and form their own political party, the origin of the SPD was in the competing schools of socialist thought which grew up after the defeat of the 1848 revolution. Right from the beginning the German socialists debated crucial questions of theory.

In 1863 Ferdinand Lassalle founded the German General Workers Union in Leipzig. Its aim was universal suffrage and the achievement of socialism by the actions of the state, 'freed' from the bourgeoisie. This idea immediately brought Lassalle into conflict with Marx.

Lassalle, influenced by Hegel, and his followers regarded the state as a force supposedly standing above the classes for the purpose of promoting 'rational government' and 'cultural progress'.

Marx and Engels insisted that on the contrary the state was an instrument of class rule which could not be captured by the working class and welded for its own ends. Lassalle's view of the state led him into important political errors and was a source of constant conflict between himself and the founders of scientific socialism — Marx and Engels.

German socialism's other major component was that founded by Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, whose organisation, the League of German Workers Clubs, also dates from 1863. After three years of loose association with the liberal German Peoples Party and two years of internal faction fighting, they established

their own Social Democratic Labour Party.

The two trends fused in 1875 and founded the SPD. Marx and Engels took issue with the founding programme of the SPD on two vital issues which were to haunt the SPD throughout its history — revolutionary internationalism and the capitalist state. Marx insisted that the class struggle is immediately and inevitably international in its content, even if its form is national:

'Lassalle in opposition to the *Communist Manifesto* and to all earlier socialism, conceived the workers movement from the narrowest national standpoint. It is altogether self-evident that to be able to fight at all the working class must organise itself at home as a class and that its own country is the immediate arena of its struggle. In so far as its class struggle is national, (it is) not in substance but as the *Communist Manifesto* says, 'in form'. But 'the framework of the present day national state', for instance, the German Empire, is itself in its turn economically 'within the framework of the world market ... of the world system of states ...' (1)

Marx is insisting here that there can be no 'socialism in one country'. He also complained that the internationalism of the SPD was posed in a purely idealist way with talk of the 'brotherhood of peoples' rather than in terms of international working class action.

Marx viciously attacked the conception of the state held by both wings of the party as above society and potentially 'free' of class constraints. He insisted that the task of socialists was to prepare not for the 'liberation' of the existing state, but for its replacement by a new state power based on socialist economic relations:

'Between capitalist and communist societies lies the period of revolutionary transformation of one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the *revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*. (2)

Thus right from the beginning the SPD had an inadequate theoretical grasp of two central parts of a working class political programme — which was to tell heavily in 1914. It failed to understand firstly the



Wilhelm Liebknecht — founder of the Social Democratic Workers Party

necessity for revolutionary internationalism; a complete refusal to side with one's own ruling class at the expense of the international working class. Second, it lacked an understanding of the class nature of the state and the need for its revolutionary overthrow by the proletariat.

In the elections of 1878 the SPD won 493,000 votes and 12 deputies in the Imperial Parliament. The growth of the SPD, coinciding with the growth of the working class itself, was rapid. Before long the SPD had 24 national journals with over 100,000 subscribers. Another important factor in its expanding influence was the founding of the trade unions under SPD leadership: by 1875 they had 50,000 members.

This frightened the ruling class. They launched a massive propaganda campaign against the socialists, vilifying them in the foulest terms. When in 1878 a former member of the SPD attacked the Emperor William I, Bismark moved to introduce his anti-socialist laws — the *Law against the Publicly Dangerous Endeavours of Social Democracy*.

## Banned

This draconian legislation banned virtually all SPD activity and publications. Huge penalties were imposed for transgressors. SPD militants could be 'deported' from their home towns by the police.

While the party organisation collapsed under the savagery of this persecution, the SPD leadership reorganised a centre to co-ordinate illegal activity from over the border in Zurich. But crucially SPD electoral activity was not dealt with under the new law.

By 1884, 9,000 copies of the illegal *Sozialdemokrat* were circulating in Germany. The party was beginning to pull itself together. During this period Marx and Engels once again clashed with a section of the SPD leadership in Zurich.

Karl Hoeberg and other influential leaders had circulated a letter suggesting 'co-operation with the upper strata of society' — that the SPD should ally itself with progressive bourgeois for social reform. Marx and Engels warned:

'For almost 40 years we have stressed the class struggle as the immediate driving force of history ... it is therefore impossible for us to

co-operate with people who wish to expunge the class struggle from the movement ... The emancipation of the working class must be conquered by the working class themselves. We cannot therefore co-operate with people who openly state that the workers are too uneducated to emancipate themselves and must be freed from above by philanthropic big bourgeois and petty bourgeois.' (3)

The German leadership was stunned by the rebuke and retreated. After this conflict German social democracy began to make steady progress. The late 1880s were years of stormy workers struggle, and the trend inside the working class towards the SPD increased. In the February 1890 elections the SPD won its most spectacular breakthrough — a general election vote of 1,427,298. Soon Bismark was to fall, and the anti-socialist laws were repealed.

This victory was to have an immense bearing on the future of German Social Democracy. Its leadership became convinced that the party which had survived the anti-socialist laws and won such spectacular electoral victories was 'invincible', that its progress was guaranteed. As the bourgeoisie in the post-Bismark period turned towards social reform, the practice of the SPD became increasingly parliamentary. Above all, the progress of the 'tried and tested tactic' — elections — turned into an electoral machine.

## Within

In 1891 the SPD drafted a new programme for its congress at Erfurt. The 'Erfurt Programme' systematised a general conception of the programme of a workers party which remains typical of social democratic parties — the division between the 'maximum' and the 'minimum' programme. In this scheme the party has one programme for immediate struggles — the improvement of workers' conditions within the system. The other programme provides for the ultimate, far off, victory of socialism — Bebel's 'day of the great sweep' — leaving ambiguous exactly how this day would be brought about.

Thus the SPD gave theoretical legitimisation to a potentially reformist practice — that the party in parliament, and the trade union leaders, would concentrate solely on immediate reforms, and fail to link immediate struggles with the goal of

socialism.

The resolution of this problem of the contradiction between the daily struggles of the proletariat within capitalism and the goal of socialist revolution was only solved by the notion of *transitional demands* and a *transitional programme* worked out first by the Communist International in the early 1920s and further elaborated by Trotsky.

According to the theory of transitional demands it is possible to mobilise and educate the working class in its daily struggle for the ultimate goal of socialism by raising 'qualitative', transitional demands which point the way to socialism. Whether or not it is possible for Capitalism to grant these demands, they contradict the logic of the functioning of the capitalist system and insist on solutions at the level of the whole of society.

## Basic

The logic of the 'minimum' programme is to insist on reforms which capitalism can grant, to ameliorate the workers' conditions. But capitalism in crisis, argued Trotsky, cannot meet even the most basic needs of the working class.

By mobilising the working class around transitional demands, the revolutionary vanguard combines a struggle both for immediate reforms and for a series of anti-capitalist measures, in the vital interests of the working class, which only a workers' government can carry through. Rosa Luxemburg raised this problem:

'The unification of the great mass of the people with a goal that goes beyond the whole established order of the daily struggle with the revolutionary overthrow that is the contradiction of the Social Democratic Movement which must develop consistently between two obstacles: the loss of its mass character and the abandonment of its goal, becoming a sect and becoming a bourgeois reformist movement.' (4)

In a later debate with Bernstein, Rosa Luxemburg explained: 'It is not true that socialism will arise automatically from the daily struggles of the working class' (5).

Precisely on the questions which Marx had raised, internationalism and the state, the SPD began to falter. Even Engels in some of his writings after the death of Marx, when he collaborated closely with the SPD leadership, seemed to sanction the view that elections would be the road to victory:

'(The SPD's) growth proceeds as spontaneously, as steadily and as irresistibly and at the same time as tranquilly as a natural process. All government intervention has proved powerless against it. If it continues in this fashion we shall by the end of the century conquer small peasants, and grow into the decisive power in the land ... To keep this growth going without interruption until it gets beyond the control of the governmental system ... to keep it intact until the decisive day, that is our main task.' (6)

This seemed to sanction the SPD's gradualist approach, especially as Kautsky removed from the text passages making explicit reference to street fighting and revolution.

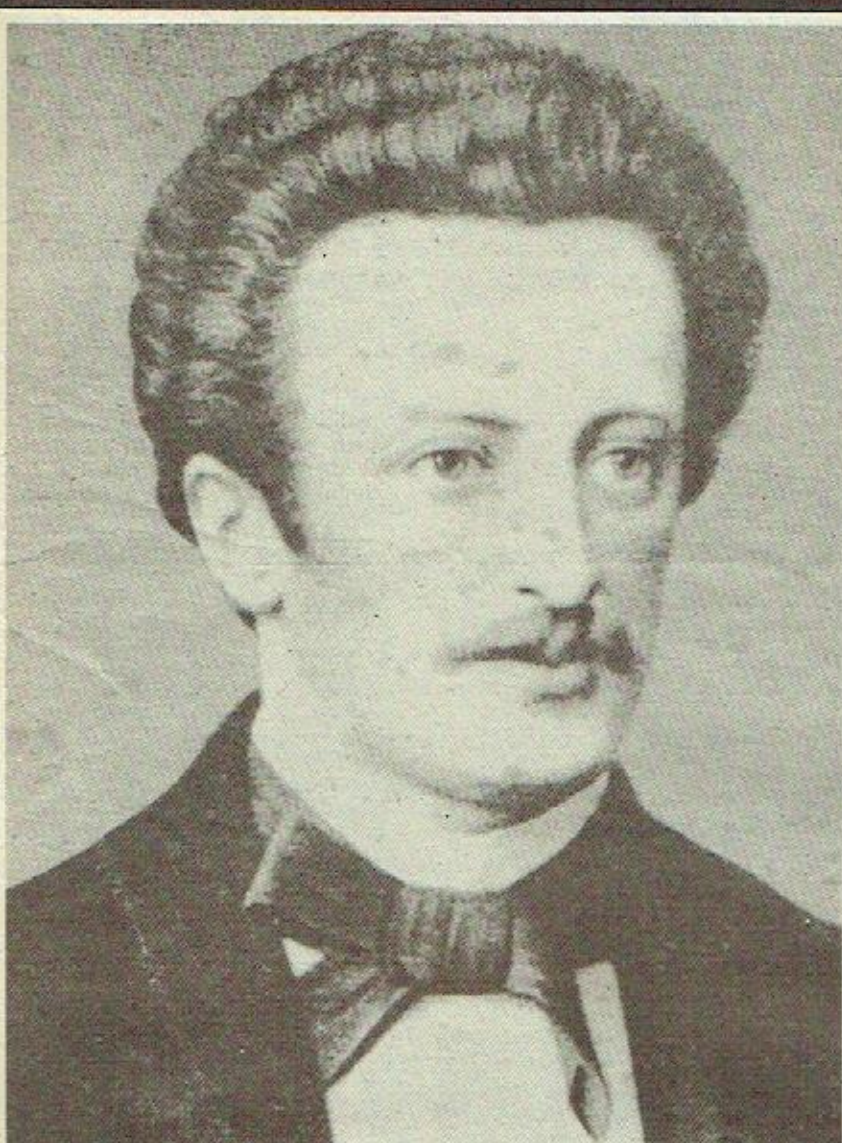
Further the SPD began to retreat on its internationalism, especially in relation to Russia. Because Russia was regarded as the most reactionary state in Europe, the SPD began to adopt an apparently social-patriotic attitude.

At the Erfurt Congress Bebel declared: 'If Russia, that bulwark of savagery and barbarism, the enemy of all human culture, were to attack Germany in order to dismember and destroy her — then we are as much and indeed more concerned that those who lead Germany, and we shall oppose it.' (7)

## Debate

This kind of talk prefigured Bebel's declaration shortly before his death in 1913 that 'there is not a single person in Germany would surrender the fatherland without a fight. This is particularly true of the Social





Ferdinand Lassalle — his conception of the state bitterly contested by Marx

Democrats' (8)  
 Inside the SPD there now broke out a debate which was to shape its whole future — the debate over 'revisionism'. In 1898 in *Die Neue Zeit* Bernstein published a series of articles challenging fundamentals of Marxism.

He accused the SPD leadership, not without reason, of having an increasingly reformist practice, but of maintaining a formally revolutionary rhetoric which was out of keeping with this practice.

Bernstein argued that capitalist crises were getting less severe, that class differences were evening out and not deepening and that the masses were not being impoverished. The growth of capitalist cartels and monopolies meant that the capitalist system was becoming more ordered and rational, not more 'anarchic'.

Bernstein therefore argued that the fight for socialism was one of evolutionary gradual advance, not of revolution. Things would gradually get better for the working class, with a little bit of help from the SPD. This kind of thinking was of course a product of the relative capitalist stability and economic growth between 1890 and 1914.

## Push

Bernstein's ideas, in a different context, prefigured many of the ideas formulated by the Labour Party 'revisionist' thinkers in the 1950s and 1960s — that class differences would gradually disappear and the system automatically become more rational with a little social democratic push.

These predictions of people like Crosland and Douglas Jay came crashing down with the onset of the capitalist crisis of the 1970s. Bernstein's crashed in the horror of world war, when the full barbarism of capitalism and the bankruptcy of the SPD leadership were fully exposed.

The drift of the SPD towards reformism, however, was not just a product of ideological factors, but also of the growing *bureaucratisation* of the party and within it, of the trade union bureaucracy.

As the SPD and the trade unions grew, in a period of relative stability, they developed an enormous apparatus of party functionaries, journalists and trade union officials. Seeking to move to power via successive electoral victories, the officials represented an enormous conser-

vative force. They tried to win support in the 'middle strata' which Engels had referred by curbing any 'extremism' and by appearing ever 'moderate'.

## Role

Zinoviev, in his book *The War and the Crisis in Socialism* (9) showed how the middle class and better off workers came to play a disproportionate role in the party, consistently being over-represented at party congresses. The supreme representative of the social democratic bureaucracy was Friedrich Ebert, who became party secretary in 1906. In 1911, backed by the right wing trade union leaders, he challenged Haase in a run off for the presidency of the party. In 1913 he won the post against Bebel himself.

The evolution of the SPD is typical of the social democratic parties based on a large but mostly passive membership; concerned with winning elections by appearing 'moderate'; and elevating to positions of authority the functionaries, in particular the trade union bureaucrats, at the expense of the working class membership.

In the debate over revisionism, in which Bernstein was soundly defeated, the Kautsky-Bebel 'centre' of the party fought alongside its future left wing — led by Luxemburg and Liebknecht. Only towards the end of the decade did the fight break out between the centre and the left wing — precisely on the issue of mass struggle versus exclusive reliance on the 'tried and tested tactic' of elections.

### Footnotes

1. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx Engels selected works, vol 2 p27.
2. Ibid p32-33
3. Marx-Engels selected correspondence p395.
4. 'Organisational Questions of Russian Social Democracy' in D. Howard (ed) *Selected Political Writings of Rosa Luxemburg* p304. Quoted in Norman Geras *The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg* (NLB 1976) p113.
5. 'Reform or Revolution', in M-A Waters, *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*, p59.
6. F. Engels: Marx-Engels selected works p135
7. Quoted in R. Black, *Fascism in Germany*, volume 1 p147.
8. Ibid
9. Quoted in P. Broue, *Revolution en Allemagne*, p36.

## CHANNEL 4

SUE MACDONALD watches two late-night programmes on Channel 4 last week. Below she gives her views on: 'The Long Shadows of the Plantation' and 'Eastern Eye'.

# The Long Shadows of the Plantations

AFTER THE RUBBISH I've seen on television, last Tuesday's showing of the Long Shadows of the Plantations on Channel 4 came as a pleasant surprise.

This surprisingly moving programme was about Sylvia Woody, a 70 year old black woman in the States and, as the title would suggest, her lifelong struggle against and suffering under, racism. Not only is hers a struggle against 'racism' and women's oppression' as the tv guide tells us — but also a dynamic struggle against capitalism — something they're not so keen to tell us!

The programme begins with a horrifying sequence of photos depicting slavery, the activities of the Klu Klux Klan, and lynchings, backed by searing black music. It ends with a series of photos depicting black demonstrations and strike action, backed by equally moving but no longer mournful songs such as 'Give Me Your Hands to Struggle' and 'She Gotta Go Down and Join the Union'.

For 35 minutes Sylvia sat in front of the camera and talked, her words broken up by photos and

music showing the development of the black movement — it was the most stirring and effective 'political' programme I have seen in ages.

Sylvia's radicalisation began as a very young child, having not been allowed to play in a 'white' park. As a form of protest she refused to sing the national anthem in her school assembly. Her reasons? 'The Star Spangled Banner says land of the free and I did not feel free'.

When she gets her first job and forces her boss to give her a rise in her pathetic wages she says 'They (her co-workers) thought that I had become their enemy ... they didn't know who their enemy was'. This time her fire is clearly directed against the bosses.

Not only does this woman have very definite views on the oppression and exploitation of the blacks and the working class down the ages, but also on the question of women and particularly on

their hidden role in working class history: 'There is a complete blackout on what women have done in the trade union movement and every movement ... you would think that no woman ever marched on the picket lines ... ever raised a dollar ... not a woman no place!'

the vague reminiscences of an ageing semi-senile woman. These are a call to arms. She doesn't want us to sit in front of the TV and admire her. She wants us to follow her example, at work and on the streets. Time after time it is hammered home to the viewer, 'What you eat is connected with politics, where you sleep is connected with politics'.

## Divide

Although she knows and is very vocal on the fact that this is not her male comrades fault, and that it is divide and rule tactics on behalf of the ruling class, she is beautiful when she speaks solely to the women in the audience about when 'you both get home from work, from a day in struggle together, and he immediately takes care of the big problems, the international problems ... in front of the TV!'

But this touch of realistic cynicism is used positively when Sylvia tells us that 'women are changing things now' to make the viewer ask what can I do to help?

Sylvia Woody is quite clear. These words are not

Yes, the long shadows of the plantations still hang over society today — in the form of deep rooted racism and vicious ruling class attacks on the black population. But this programme was not only a tribute to Sylvia Woody and the millions of women like her, it was also an example of how to finally disperse those shadows.

The message was clear, we must fight racism and women's oppression now as part of the long term struggle for socialism.

It was a moving and inspiring statement when Sylvia Woody said, 'As long as I breath I will be working for the freedom and dignity of the working class'. Let's hope that other Channel 4 viewer, that night were equally moved and inspired.

# Eastern Eye

I'LL HAND IT to Channel 4, whatever their motivation, they're trying! True, most of the decent stuff is on at some unearthly hour when most people are only semi-conscious for one reason or another, but what's new?

Nevertheless their attempts to boost their viewing figures by 'catering for ethnic minorities' has resulted in some programmes well worth staying awake for.

Eastern Eye, a programme aimed at the Asian society is described in the *TV Times* as a mixture of 'hard hitting political stories and light off-beat ones'. Well, the light off-beat element — ie film star's wives being asked how they felt while their hulk of a husband cavorted on set with 'attractive young women' wasn't so interesting, but the 'hard hitting politics' were worth a watch.

Over half the hour long programme was used to expose the vehement racism in the police force. It was based around Hendon police training school where John Fernandes, head of a 'multi-cultural studies course' set up in the wake of Scarman to pacify people, asked his police cadet pupils to write an essay on their attitudes to blacks in Britain — it really was asking for trouble!

'All blacks are a pain and should be ejected from our society' and 'the blacks must accept that if

they want to live in this country they must fall in line under white British dictators' are indicative of the general tone of the essays. References to 'white mastery' and 'wogs' were commonplace.

The report on these essays was followed by an interview in the Eastern Eye studio with Commander Wells, head of the Hendon school, and (surprise, surprise!) two black police cadets who fervently denied they'd ever suffered from any racism (I assume by the fact they first entered the college that they wanted to keep their jobs!)

Commander Wells then went on to say that these essays didn't show deep rooted racism which would be eradicated by 18 months training.

What exactly is 'shallow' racism? And could anybody (except the odd cop or two) not consider references to 'white mastery' as anything but deep rooted?

70 per cent of these



Police — claim no racism

essays were considered by Fernandes to be 'abusive or negative' and only one out of 64 essays expressed anti-racism. This totally gives the lie to the old, old myth that the police force represents the whole spectrum of society and there will therefore necessarily be an element of racism. The police force attracts these thugs by its' very role in society.

This expose is particularly timely when we consider Whitelaw's recent decision that racist police would not be sacked, and recent government

proposals giving police more power to stop and search (whatever happened to the abolition of SUS?), the right to detain people for 96 hours before going before magistrates, and the right to take fingerprints from 10 year olds!

Something tells me that maybe the police really aren't too concerned about fighting racism, why should they be, it's not in their interests and they've got the Tories and the ruling class backing their every action all the way down the line.

### BAD TASTE

Have you heard about the American businessman who couldn't keep his business out of other people's noses?

Not to be confused with the dreadful Russians who can't keep their noses out of our business!

Do you think Mister Prime would have fared better had he gone to Cambridge like Sir An...  
Never mind the class issue, son!

Just consider the score:  
Spying — 35  
Indecent Assault — 3



# Socialist Challenge

## HEALTH DISPUTE

# Tougher action needed

By Bob Pennington

**THE LEADERS** of NUPE have decided to recommend that their members reject the government's two-year pay deal for health workers. They have made it clear that if this does happen, then the result will be all-out strike action.

Albert Spanswick COHSE's general secretary and chairperson of the TUC health committee is squeezed between the pressure from the militants in his union and the adamant refusal of the Tory cabinet to make any compromise.

As a consequence Spanswick said last Sunday, that it was very likely that his executive would also recommend rejection of the offer and put the case for strike action.

If this does happen and if the nurses once again toss out the government's offer, the stage could be set for a renewal of the fight for the 12 per cent.

But if this is to happen some hard lessons have to

be learned. The militants will have to wage a real campaign in the hospitals to revive the spirit of militancy that existed there up to 22 September. Since then the struggle has been allowed to ebb, mainly because of the failure of the TUC and its health committee to organise all-out strike action in the NHS combined with solidarity action outside.

The fighting spirit of

the health workers cannot be turned on and off like a tap and the militants at area level and in the union committees in the hospitals have got to win over their rank and file to take up the battle once again.

Nor will the TUC guidelines on providing accident and emergency cover be enough to win a dispute. On the days of action when these were used the bed occupancy rarely fell below 10 per cent. Those workers who did provide the emergency cover were often not getting paid. So the TUC guidelines hardly bit at all, and the workers generally lost money for actions that did not lead to victory.

The most effective way of hitting the hospitals is the use of picket lines that stop the oil tanker drivers

and those bringing medical gas taking in their supplies. This action, which could secure quick results, exceeds the TUC guidelines and up to now has rarely been used. To get a speedy and conclusive victory such means will have to be used — even if at first on a selective scale.

strike action can do that. Furthermore, mobilising large teams of health workers to visit the docks, mines, printworkers, steelworkers and the other workers in the public sector calling for support is not only desirable, but vital.

All is not lost. The tide can be turned and the government forced to pay up. But this will not happen as long as the TUC health committee acts in a half-hearted manner. The stakes in this dispute are far too high to allow that to happen so the fight for tougher action must begin right now.

## Support

The rest of the labour movement must be convinced that the health unions and the TUC mean business, otherwise why should they sacrifice their wages in supporting strike action. Determined all-out



Photo: CARLOS AUGUSTO GUARITA

## Release the Greenham Common peace women

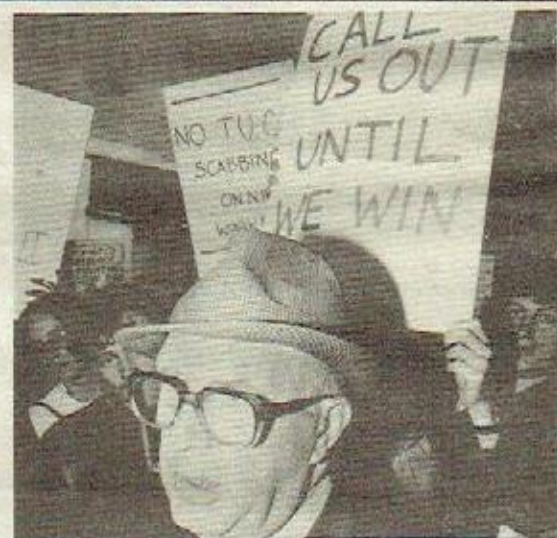
**WOMEN** from Greenham Common peace camp, have been imprisoned in the East Sutton Park jail, Kent and Drake Hall Open prison, Staffordshire.

Last Sunday over 70 demonstrators mainly from CND and Spare Rib, demonstrated outside the prison in Kent. The eight demonstrators allowed inside took flowers and messages of solidarity.

They reported that the prisoners were in good heart and still determined to carry on the fight against Cruise when they are released.

Concern is however being expressed about the other women from Greenham Common who are in Drake Hall prison, as it is said they are being kept in solitary confinement.

Trade unions, Labour parties, women's groups and student unions are urged to send messages of solidarity to these victims of ruling class spite and vengeance. The same organisations should also send telegrams to the Home Office demanding their immediate release.



## Laurence Scott's — Thanks

**THE 15 MONTHS** long struggle of the Laurence Scott's Electromotors to keep open their factory was an inspiration to the whole Labour movement. At a time when union leaders argued that nothing could be done to save jobs, they stood out like a beacon of militancy and hope.

They were finally defeated. But only in the face of the combined might of the employers, the police and the top union officials. So their example will live on. Socialist Challenge is very gratified that the strike committee thought we played a role sufficiently useful to donate £250 to our fighting fund. Other monies that they still had were given to various disputes now going on.

This is what Denis Barry, leader of the strike wrote to us:

'The fight by Laurence Scott's workers is now in the history books and I must say with great credit to those who took part in such a long and hard dispute, and realising that when the going was hard, as it was on most days, when we were on our own and sacrificed by the leadership.

'I would like on behalf of all of us to express our thanks and appreciation for the help received at all times from Socialist Challenge and we would be pleased if you would accept this cheque for £250 to help you in your work.'

We are confident that everyone of our readers thinks the role of Socialist Challenge is as indispensable and will emulate the Laurence Scott strike committee.

This weeks totals are:

Rotherham	£ 11.00
Swansea	140.00
Lewisham	216.00
Islington	245.00
Brent	141.00
Newport	24.00
Wandsworth	139.00
Middlesborough	41.00
Camden	110.00
Southwark	70.00
Huddersfield	25.00
Coventry	40.00
Oxford	121.00
Hemel Hempstead	32.00
Edinburgh	67.50
Cardiff	104.50
Bristol	100.00
Southampton	60.00
Lambeth	400.00
Preston	60.00
Haringey	157.00
Hackney	401.00
Tower Hamlets	200.00
Glasgow	2.50
Brighton	5.00
Sheffield	10.00
Newcastle	50.00
R. Patterson	10.00
LSE Workers	250.00
Total	3232.70
Total so far	£9368.91

FUND DRIVE '82

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