

Socialist Challenge

TORY SPONGERS SOAK THE POOR

**STEEL:
NO ENQUIRY,
20% NOW!**

TWO pieces of news for the steel strikers — one bad, one good.

THE BAD NEWS was that the steel unions' executives, urged on by ISTC general secretary Bill Sirs, agreed to participate in a 'committee of inquiry' into the wages aspect of the steel dispute.

In doing this Sirs **BACKED DOWN** on his original demand that any such inquiry had to cover job losses and the way BSC is run — for example to 20 per cent plus rises on the way for the steel bosses.

HE CAVED in to the bosses' call for an inquiry rather than take the course some members of the ISTC executive were urging — stepping up of the strike.

The history of all such inquiries is that nine times out of ten they come down on the bosses' side. Take the example of the 'comparability study' held last year into the public sector strike.

This very week, members of the white collar union NALGO are taking action because of the consequences of that inquiry which turned out to be one big con trick.

THE GOOD NEWS was the action taken by Liverpool dockers after they were threatened with loss of pay for refusing to handle scab steel. The dockers went on immediate strike and called for a national dock stoppage in support of the steelworkers.

That shows there is massive support for the steel strike in the working class.

Bill Sirs has had ample opportunity to call on that support and win victory for his members. Each time he has refused.

Now, rather than encourage the moves to a national dock strike which would win the steel dispute in a matter of days, he toddles off to some bogus inquiry.

Sirs is now on full steam ahead for a sell-out. The sell-out can still be defeated by taking the running of the strike out of the bureaucrats' hands.

By rank and file steelworkers seeking to extend the strike — whatever Sirs says; by appealing across the working class for the type of support shown by the Liverpool dockers.

The fact is that the thirteenth week of this strike has shown one thing above all others. Either Bill Sirs will lose the strike or rank and file workers will win it. There is no other outcome possible.



**JOIN THE SOUTH WALES
YOUTH MARCH AGAINST
UNEMPLOYMENT**

**5 April — 9 April Port Talbot to Wales TUC
in Cardiff**

Youth demand a future — TUC must organise action on jobs
March backed by South Wales NUM, Port Talbot Strike Committee etc.
See pages 8 and 9 for details

OUR POLICIES

Capitalism is in crisis. The leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions offer solutions that are in the interests not of the workers but of the capitalist class.

Socialist Challenge believes that the two vital tasks confronting revolutionary socialists are:

- To build broad-based class struggle tendencies in opposition to class-collaborationism in the labour movement. These should be non-exclusive in character, grouping together militants holding a wide range of political views.

- To begin to fight for the creation of a unified and democratic revolutionary socialist organisation which can, through an application of united front tactics, begin to be seen as an alternative by thousands of workers engaged in struggles.

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

1 The struggle for socialism seeks to unite the fight of workers against the bosses with that of other oppressed layers of society — women, black people, gays — struggling for their liberation. This socialism can only be achieved by creating new organs of power and defeating with all necessary means the power of the capitalist state.

2 Our socialism will be infinitely more democratic than what exists in Britain today, with full rights for all political parties and currents that do not take up arms against the socialist state. The Stalinist models of 'socialism' in the USSR and Eastern Europe have discredited socialism in the eyes of millions of workers throughout the world. We are opposed to them and will offer full support to all those fighting for socialist democracy.

3 The interests of workers and capitalists are irreconcilable on a world scale. Capitalism has not only created a world market, it has created world politics. Thus we fight for working class unity on an international scale. This unity will in the long run be decisive in defeating both the imperialist regimes in the West and the brutal dictatorships they sustain in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

In Britain it implies demanding the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and letting the Irish people determine their own future.

4 The Communist parties in Europe are in crisis. Neither the 'Eurocommunist' nor the pro-Moscow wings have any meaningful strategy for the overthrow of the capitalist state. New revolutionary socialist parties are more necessary than ever before. Conditions today are more favourable than over the preceding three decades. But such parties can only be built by rejecting sectarianism and seeing internal democracy not as a luxury but as a vital necessity. This means the right to organise factions and tendencies.

If you agree with these principles and want to be involved in activities by Socialist Challenge supporters in your area, fill in the form below and send it to us.

- I am interested in more information about activities in my area.
- I would like additional literature and enclose 50p to cover costs. (Delete if not applicable)

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

EDITORIAL

A Tory budget for the rich...

CHANCELLOR of the Exchequer Geoffrey Howe's second Budget carries on where his first left off.

HIT are the poor — such as those who depend on social security, old age pensions, and child allowances.

CLOBBERED is the average man and woman in the street — those who can afford few of the pleasures available to the Tory rich, but rely instead on a couple of pints of beer and a packet of cigarettes.

SMILING are the wealthy, the big capitalists, the multinationals and the company directors.

None of this is surprising given the record, ideology, and the make-up of Margaret

Thatcher's government.

Now and again the Tories try to justify their attacks on the old, the sick, and working people by saying that the 'nation' can't afford decent pensions, houses, hospitals, or schools. Sorry, old chap, they murmur, but the country is bankrupt so there's no way of avoiding a two million plus dole queue next year.

Justify

Geoffrey Howe drooned on in such terms on Wednesday when he tried to justify yet more cuts in social spending.

Well it's true enough that British capitalism is in a mess. It's also a fact that it is just part of a general economic crisis which is affecting the entire capitalist world.

Nevertheless, just for a moment, let's cast our mind back to the old, 'light at the end of the tunnel' promise of both Tory and Labour governments. One

example will do — how North Sea oil would prove the country's salvation.

That always was a dubious prophecy, but certainly if the oil had been used for the benefit of all of us things would not be so bad now.

For instance, in the past couple of weeks two of the oil giants heavily involved in North Sea oil — Royal Dutch/Shell and BP — announced their annual profits. BP's amounted to £1.6 billion, a 262 per cent increase from the previous year. Shell did even better; they made £3.1 billion, a 181 per cent increase.

Now here is an interesting fact. These profits combined are approximately half of the public spending deficit which Howe used as the reason for his 'soak the poor' budget.

In other words, if these profits had been seized and used

for the benefit of ordinary people the need for Howe's 'austerity budget' would disappear, at a stroke.

Let's look more closely at this public spending deficit. It comes in part from the high interest rates charged by the banking industry on money which is borrowed by the government.

Banks

By lending the money, the banks grow richer and richer. All the top four banks have now announced last year's profits. Barclays did best with a tidy profit of £529.4m. Then came the National Westminster, with £441.5m, the Midland with £315.5m and Lloyds with £276m. Added up, the profit of the big four banks came to £1.5 billion.

Compare this figure with the cuts in social spending announced at the end of last year. A massive £358m was cut

from education, £242m from housing and £88m from the personal social services run by local authorities. If just over half the profits announced by the banks had been appropriated by the government there would have been no need to make these savage cuts.

So don't believe the nonsense about the cuts being absolutely necessary. They are only necessary if private profit is put before need; if the oil barons and the City of London bankers are given priority over the unemployed, the elderly, the sick.

The Tory budget will mean an increase of poverty. It means a loss in real earning power of the majority of people. But for others, Sir Geoffrey and the whole philosophy of the Tory government offer one windfall after another. A case of Howe lucky for some.

... And it's the poor who don't get the claim!

By Rick Middleton, field worker, Campaign for Single Homeless People (CHAR)

THE TORIES have pushed through Parliament a major reform of the welfare state. The Social Security Bill was given its third reading on Wednesday of last week and the way is now clear for a trimmed social security system to be introduced in November.

The Bill brings two fundamental changes. The link between pensions and earnings will be broken, so that pensions will now be increased only in line with prices.

The collapsing supplementary benefits (SB) system will be completely overhauled. The SB Commission will be abolished after November and entitlement to all supplementary benefits will be determined by published statutory regulations.

Cuts

The context of these changes is a Tory government committed to a massive reduction in public expenditure — a government which has introduced a thousand new staff to snoop on 'scroungers' in order to save a mere £50m, while it cuts staff in the Inland Revenue where an estimated £11,000m is lost each year through tax evasion.

For the first time since the 30s, the Tories are suggesting that unemployment benefits should be cut.

On the government's own estimate, breaking the link between pensions and earnings will save £130m for each percentage point difference between earnings and price increases.

If this change had been introduced in 1974, pensions would be £5 less than at present. The date of the uprating can be put off for up to three weeks, allowing additional savings of £35m a week.

The cuts in the supplementary benefits system are not as blatant, but their effects are as harsh.

The government claims that in its reform of this system it is following the recommendations of the SB review team, which was called for and took place under a Labour government. Bureaucratic convenience is the aim of many of these reforms, which bear the hallmark of Whitehall.

Commission

The SB Commission is to go. The Bill gives extensive powers to the Secretary of State for Social Services to determine, by means of regulations, the details of entitlement to benefit, which have not yet been decided.

The Bill has therefore been passed by a Parliament ignorant of its detailed effects, which have been left to the mandarins of Whitehall.

The role of overseer of the system has been given to a new Social Security Advisory Committee. Described by some as a lapdog rather than a watchdog, this body will only be able to comment on proposals put to it by the Secretary of State. It cannot initiate changes of its own.

The abolition of discretionary pay-



ments is a further area where bureaucratic convenience has prevailed over claimants' needs.

Lump sum payments for people in exceptional need of clothing and footwear will be discontinued for most of the 400,000 people who were in desperate need of them last year. Instead, such payments will be made only in circumstances laid down in the, as yet unknown, regulations.

A recent survey of the effect of similar

regulations applying to lump sum payments for furniture showed that regulations limited but did not clarify entitlement to benefit*.

Additional allowances for laundry and heating costs for the elderly and the infirm will also be reduced.

The means by which a claimant is at present able to supplement the desperately inadequate basic rates of supplementary benefit are being severely cut back. A few pounds will be saved at the expense of

increased suffering and hardship for the poorest and most vulnerable.

The Social Security Bill is a major attack on the welfare state, and marks a significant change in the consensus that everyone should at least be insulated from poverty. The Tory government is soaking the poor to provide tax cuts for the rich.

*Benefits of Discretion, published by CHAR, 27 John Adam St, London WC2. Price 75p.

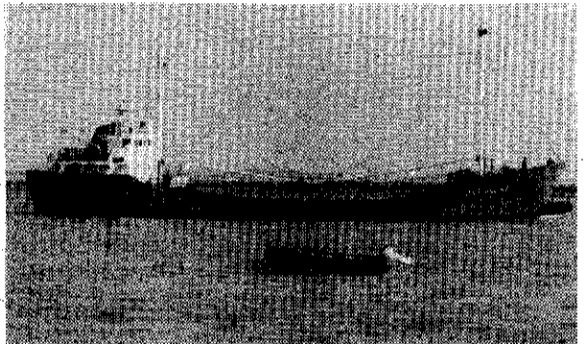
HOME NEWS



2.15pm: a police car tries to keep inconspicuous watch at the dock, several hours before the operation begins.



2.45pm: four miles out of town, in a private car park, empty lorries line up, waiting to go down to the dock.



3.30pm: the 550-ton Ditte Holmo slips up the river Blackwater carrying a load of scab steel.

4pm: at the height of the spring tide, the ship reaches the small port of Maldon, usually used only by pleasure craft.

4.15pm: sent down in groups of two and three, the lorries race through the town to the dock.



4.17pm: the lorries race through the picket line, refusing to stop, the way cleared for them by the cops.

4.18pm: the small group of pickets stand by, helpless.



4.20pm: the crane driver, specially brought into handle the heavy load, is a member of the TGWU. He says he has been threatened with the sack if he refuses to work.



4.50pm: with the shadowy presence of the police in the foreground a lorry driver watches the loading.

EXPOSED! THE SCAB RUN

Words: Andy Weir (Peoples News Service). Photos: Nick Oakes and Mark Benjamin (Peoples News Service)

THE tiny Essex coast town of Maldon was drawn into the hub of the national steel strike last Thursday afternoon when a strike-breaking Danish ship, the Ditte Holmo, delivered steel at a wharf normally used by pleasure craft.

In a well-planned operation, 20 or so lorries went through the 10-strong official picket line, heading for the motorways.

This is just one example of a nationwide steel-smuggling

operation that is managing to avoid the blockade of steel in the registered docks and maintain imports at the pre-strike level.

Steel is entering Britain through small ports in Cornwall, Devon and Essex, and others in the North.

Only 800 tonnes of steel were unloaded at Maldon on Thursday, a small quantity in relation to industrial requirements but important enough to warrant the organisation of a convoy of lorries, which travelled hundreds of miles. This was backed-up by the local police,

headed by a chief inspector and a superintendent, who helped to co-ordinate the arrival of the lorries at the dock.

The police claimed that they were there 'only to prevent damage to anybody's property', but their low profile could have changed at any time. Hundreds of officers waited out of sight in case trouble escalated.

The pickets managed snatches of conversation with only one or two of the drivers, all of whom looked as though they had expected opposition. None of the lorries was

stopped.

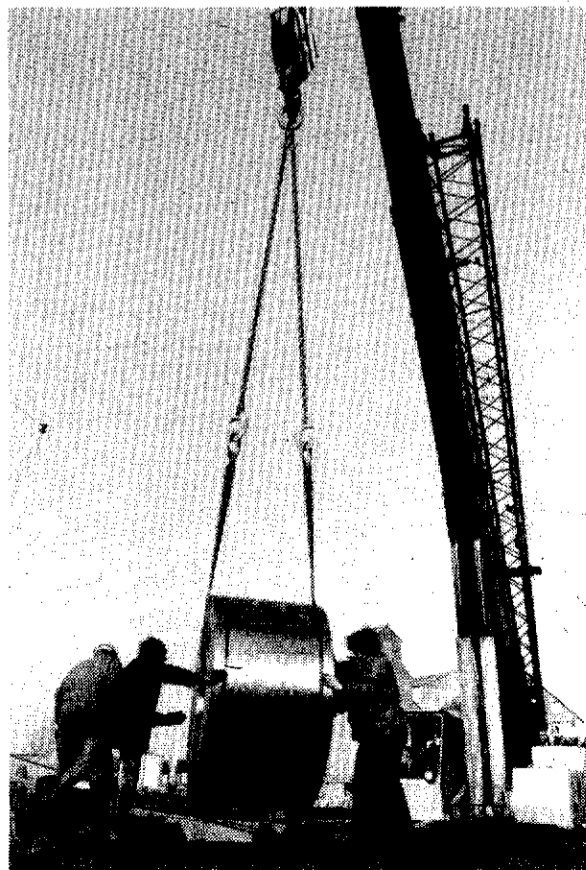
As afternoon passed into evening it became clear there was no hope of stopping the scabs. But pickets came close to preventing the unloading by talking to the mobile crane operator.

He insisted that if the pickets had been there before he arrived he would not have crossed the picket line, but once on the job he risked the sack for stopping work.

Police protection of the operation was meticulous. Motorcycles patrolled Maldon and the roads around it. When a vanload of pickets went to the car park three miles out of town where the lorries were gathering before coming into the wharf, a police motorcycle followed.

When the van arrived, the motorcycle was already there with a police van, and they told the pickets that they would not be allowed on the car park to talk to the drivers since the owner of the car park 'wanted no damage to his property'.

While the pickets were still there, a police sergeant said he had no idea whether more lorries would be coming. Barely three minutes later a dozen lorries pulled into the car park.



4.40pm: a lorry is loaded with its 15-ton roll of steel. Dockers are meant to have been instructed by their union not to handle scab steel. Who are these men?



4.50pm: this man claims to have organised the transport. He asks that the names on the lorries not be photographed or 'I'll be out of a job'.



4.55pm: the cops stand by smiling as the scab steel is unloaded.



5pm: David Barke, the owner of the wharf, discusses tactics with the police, who use their position to co-ordinate the steel-smuggling operation.

HOW WE WON THE FIGHT TO CLOSE



STRIKING steelworkers have finally won 'official permission' to close the Ford Dagenham car plant. But it took a week of independent action to force the hand of the steel union leaderships.

STEVE SLINN, TONY MARTIN and ANDY KEYWORTH, South Yorkshire steel strikers and members of the Transport and General Workers' Union, describe what happened.

It started at 6am on Monday of last week when the Dagenham plants were flooded with leaflets from the Ford Workers Group calling for support for the steelworkers and for TGWU drivers not to cross picket lines.

A dozen militants from the ISTC then started picketing parts of the industrial estate.

For 11 weeks the ISTC leadership had sanctioned the unloading of steel at Ford's private dock, and had turned a blind eye when it was transported to the Ford plants in Halewood and Southampton.

Scab

It seemed that the concern of Brian Connolly, ISTC official for South-east England, wasn't to stop the scab steel but to stop the picketing.

Or so it appeared on the Monday afternoon when Brian Connolly told two of the ISTC members who had picketed Ford that morning to 'fuck off home'.

He claimed he had the Ford situation in hand. But just what he meant was demonstrated the next morning; for the first time, ISTC officially sent pickets to Dagenham — but only to the press shop, and the pickets were told to stop nothing but raw steel.

That Tuesday, 18 March, craft steelworkers from Yorkshire arrived and the picketing became less selective. The next morning things changed again.

Picket

The first Ford driver to approach the picket line said: 'Where have you been for 12 weeks' and turned round.

Internal transport stopped all day. There weren't enough pickets to stop the drivers round the clock, but the point had been made. All hell broke loose.

Cosy

During the Wednesday afternoon, the Dagenham convenors and officials met with the ISTC officials and reached a cosy agreement: only the press shop was to be picketed; only steel strip was to be stopped going in; and nothing but faulty steel should be stopped coming out.

With this, the officials and convenors — including Communist Party member Dan Connors — were happy. No doubt so was the Ford motor company.

But members of Yorkshire crafts, Warrington ISTC and, fortunately, Ford's own TGWU drivers were not so pleased. So another meeting took place on Wednesday afternoon when we arrived.

We went to speak to the ISTC official picket leader.

ISTC official: 'Where are you from?'

Us: 'Sheffield T&G.'

Official: 'What are you here for?'

Us: 'We've come to picket Ford.'

Official: 'Who sent you?'

Us: 'Sheffield strike committee.'

Official: 'Have you reported through head office?'

Us: 'No. We were told to come straight here.'

Official: 'Well, unless you've been cleared through HQ, you might as well get the next train home.'

Luckily, the stewards for Ford's internal drivers were in a van nearby. They confirmed what the Fords Workers Group had told us: 'There's

only one way to stop this place and that's stop the lot.'

So by 5.15 next morning we were at the picket lines and the transporters were stopped for the day.

That brought local TGWU official Mike Murphy on to the scene. He was down Thursday afternoon telling transporter and internal drivers that the official TGWU pickets from Rotherham and Sheffield weren't official at all, but were 'students' and 'miners'.

When we tried to discuss with Murphy he asked us to leave the TGWU office — the office of our own union.

Then on Thursday night, Bernard Connolly, convenor of Yorkshire crafts and a member of the South Yorkshire strike committee, arrived. He went to see Murphy and the convenors' panel next morning.

The convenors claimed their only concern had been to ensure that their members received 80 per cent lay-off pay if Ford was shut down; that if the internal drivers were stopped this would make it an internal dispute and mean no lay-off pay.

Eventually, the convenors agreed that steel pickets should stop all gasses, oil and petrol entering the Ford complex, which should mean its 29,000 workers would be stopped within 3 to 5 days.

From Monday 24 March a round-the-clock picket was on all five entrances to the Dagenham estate.

Lessons

Many lessons can be learned from last week's events. The union leaders are trying not just to sell-out the '20 per cent, no strings' demand; they are sabotaging action which can win the strike — the effective picketing of big manufacturing industry.

But the most important lesson is the value of co-ordination through the national strike committee has also been shown. So, in the end, it might not have been Brian Connolly's week outside Dagenham — but it was the steelworkers'.

No answers from Sirs and Benn

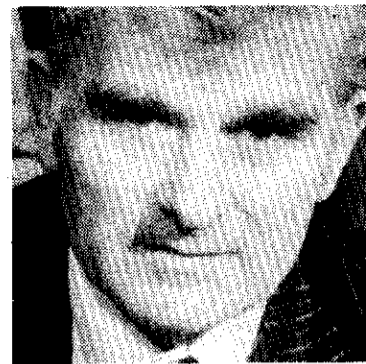
By Paul Highfield

OVER six hundred steel strikers crowded into Newport Hall last Saturday where ISTC general secretary Bill Sirs, Tony Benn, and Hector Smith of the Blast-furnacemen's Union spoke at a meeting organised by the South Wales strike committee.

The mood was very militant, which was why Bill Sirs got a cool reception until he began to talk about the importance of fighting for jobs.

He demanded: 'We've got to force the trade unions and Labour Party into a battle for the whole of the movement,' and stated his opposition to BSC's proposals on jobs.

But Sirs went on to say that his solution was 'a new BSC management



who believe in virility'.

He wouldn't be drawn on whether he would recommend a return to work during the committee of inquiry, although Hector Smith seemed not to favour such a return.

Tony Benn called for a united trade

union movement of 'black and white, women and men, leadership and rank and file'.

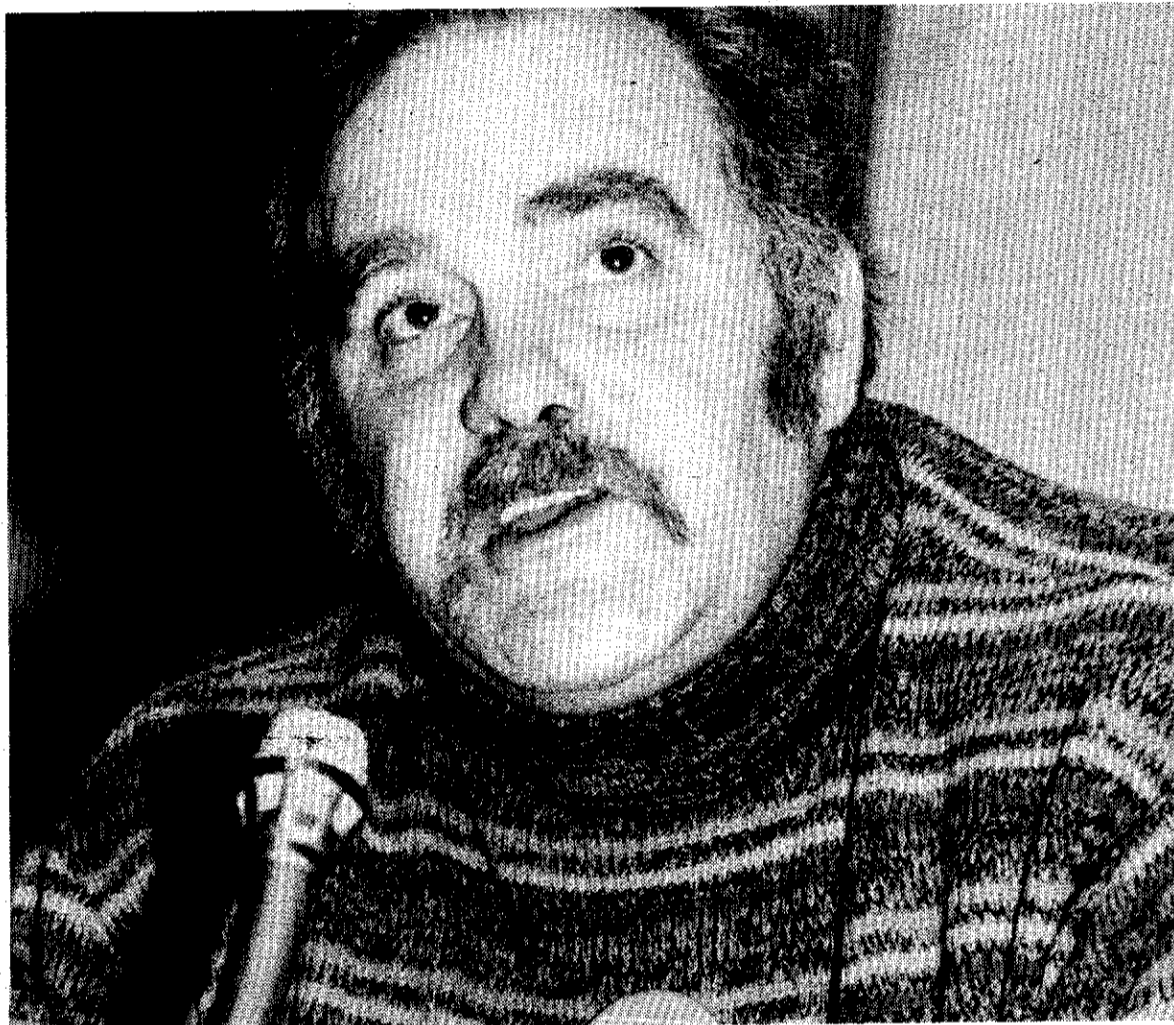
But then, in response to a question on the need for a general strike, Benn merely said: 'It's the responsibility of the trade union movement to decide and the duty of the political wing to give support.'

Several important points came out of the meeting.

The feeling was expressed that the Newport area needed to organise picketing more effectively; particularly that production had to be stopped at the private GKN and Alphasteel plants.

A stepping up of the strike, involving the whole of the trade union movement, was also called for.

As one striker said after the meeting: 'We didn't march on 9 March for the benefit of sight-seers in London and to listen to the Tories. Let's organise to get them out.'



Bernard Connolly, a leader of the South Yorkshire strike committee.

Arbitration: 'The blade is just as sharp'

BERNARD CONNOLLY, South Yorkshire steel crafts leader and member of the unofficial national strike committee answers Bill Sirs and his capitulation to the arbitration demand of the steel bosses.

The national strike committee, meeting in Manchester on 21 March, decided that there will be no return to work on anything less than 20 per cent and no strings. We would emphasise that — NO STRINGS.

We will ignore any call for a return to work, just as the national officials have ignored the claims of their members during this whole dispute.

South Yorkshire is still as strong in its determination to win this strike as it was 12 weeks ago, despite the waffling of the 'full time' officials nationally. There's no wavering in South Yorkshire.

This will be demonstrated if there is any call for a return to work on some shabby compromise. There will be no return to work.

some policy that, for the present, is 'confidential'. Confidential to whom? The track record of their opposition is that they haven't saved one job yet.

We are totally opposed to any arbitration or committee of inquiry. We have seen the results of these 'unbiased' government-appointed mediators in the past. It merely gives the unions the

right to choose their own executioners.

The blade is just as sharp, and hurts just as much, as if it were wielded by the employers themselves. Arbitration can only be the final throw of the national officials in trying to sell us out.

If they had only worked as hard at winning this strike as they have at selling us out, we'd have won long ago.

International solidarity

Bernard Connolly has recently been touring Germany raising funds and solidarity for the steel strikers.

Typical of the support Bernard has received was a message from the Frankfurt district of the huge IG Metall union. It said:

'Dear sisters and brothers, Your strike, lasting now since 2 January, is putting you on a hard test.'

'That's why international solidarity now is very crucial. A dispute like yours can only be won if all forces of our unions stand together.'

'Hold on to your militant way of representation of the interests of all the workers. This is also a struggle against

the government of Mrs Thatcher. It might be possible that we shall be confronted with a struggle like yours tomorrow.

'Therefore your fight is our fight.'

'In solidarity'. Fifteen names of the district office, including the district leader Heinz Pleitgen, were attached.

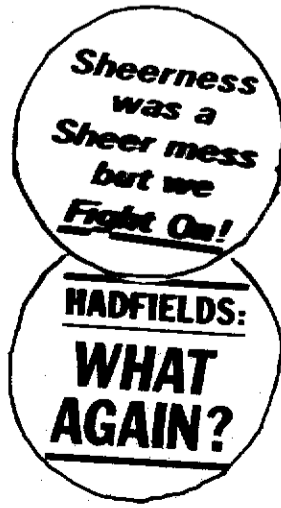


Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

Police smash hospital sit-in

A SMALL army of more than 150 police helped health officials smash a hospital work-in at Etwall Hospital in Derbyshire last Friday. The hospital and the village were surrounded, and telephone lines were taken down.

As a pre-convalescent unit, Etwall helped relieve the pressure on beds at larger local hospitals, and the work-in to oppose closure which

began in December was backed by NUPE and COHSE.

South Derbyshire health authority officials threatened GPs that for each patient referred to Etwall, two beds in local hospitals would be denied them. They also attempted to blackmail relatives by saying that they would remove medical cover from patients left in Etwall.

Local ambulance drivers refused to remove patients.

On Thursday evening the Health

authority removed seven ambulances from service and put them in a car park near the hospital. Two administrators moved into the hospital to stay the night.

At 5am on Friday they put a padlock on the front gate, and an hour and a half later police sealed off the village. Health workers arriving for picket duty were met by a wall of police.

At 10.30am the gates of the hospital were opened to allow police and health officials to escort

ambulances carrying out the remaining patients, nearly knocking over pickets as they went.

Work-ins at other hospitals, which are supported by *Fightback*, should prepare for such attacks.

The Etwall Hospital Action Committee has pledged to continue the fight to re-open the hospital. Messages of support and donations to: Etwall Hospital Action Committee, c/o Wynn Connor, 85 Springfields Rd, Etwall, Derbyshire.



Labour left must defend

Militant

ACRES of newsprint have been devoted to the 'exposure' of the Militant tendency in the Labour Party by the party's former national agent Lord Underhill. Underhill has sent his weighty collection of documents to every constituency party at what is euphemistically described as 'his own expense' — either Lord Underhill has a lot of money or some interested party is giving him a lot of backing. But why all the fuss? After all, the Militant tendency is hardly something new.

The newspaper *Militant* has been published in the Labour Party since 1964. Its supporters have had decisive influence in the Labour Party Young Socialists since at least 1968. Every member of the Labour NEC has known about the Militant tendency for years.

The original National Executive Committee decision not to publish Underhill's collection of documents was made in 1977 — but no one took the opportunity, which was open to them, to challenge this decision either at the 1977 Conference or subsequently. Obviously, these 'revelations' are nothing to do with the sudden discovery by the Labour right that there is a 'party within a party'.

On the contrary, the whole affair is part of a carefully orchestrated campaign by the right-wing, led by Bill Rogers and Reg Prentice's understudy, Neville Sandelson, against the whole of the Labour left. Unless the Labour left, including Tony Benn and the leaders of the Labour Coordinating Committee, understand and respond to it, then they will become the unwitting victims of this attack.

Re-Selection

The offensive of the Labour right has to be seen against the background of the victories won by the Left at the 1979 Labour conference — that the manifesto should be ratified by the national executive rather than the leader of the Party, and that there should be mandatory re-selection of MPs.

Labour's right wing is determined to roll back these victories. They are preparing a long struggle to defeat the left-wing challenge which they see building up in the wake of the disastrous experience of the last Labour government. Their first target is to get next autumn's Labour conference to overturn these left-wing victories. In order to do this they have opened up an offensive against the left; the 'Militant' tendency are just the most obvious and convenient initial target.

The Militant tendency is portrayed by the press as 'Trotskyist'. This is a slander both against the Militant tendency and Trotskyism. At the debate organised by the Labour Coordinating Committee with the far left last week, Tony Saunio, a Militant supporter and LPYS representative on Labour's national executive, deliberately placed himself on the side of the Labour left against the revolutionary left.

But Militant's political accommodation to left social democracy is tempered by an organisational factionalism and a few ritualistic references to Marxist theory. Because of the Militant's obnoxious factionalism, the Labour left may be reluctant to defend them. But this would be a disastrous mistake; rather than acting defensively, the Labour left should go onto the offensive and raise the demand for the right of affiliation of all working class and socialist organisations to the Party.

The campaign against the Militant is being spearheaded by people in the Labour Party who have no interest whatever in socialism or the working class. Bill Rogers and Shirley Williams have been bleating at length about Clause 2 of Labour's constitution which forbids secret organisation inside the party; but, of course, those who hold clause 2 as sacrosanct have complete contempt for other parts of Labour's constitution, in particular clause 4, with its commitment to nationalisation of the means of production, which they regard as a joke.

The attack on the Militant is a political attack, and has nothing to do with constitutional niceties. The only way for the Labour left to defend themselves is to denounce the political basis of this attack and expose the demagogic and anti-working class politics of its perpetrators.

'WE CAN SMELL A SELL-OUT'

By Jude Woodward

'ALL of us can smell a sell-out,' was the way that Ray Davies, a member of the Llanwern strike committee, speaking in a personal capacity, summed up the feelings of Newport steelworkers.

He was speaking at a meeting organised by Steel Sheet, a rank and file steelworkers' bulletin that has appeared regularly in Newport since the beginning of the strike. Some 20 steelworkers came to the Steel Sheet meeting last week.

Ray Davies went on to explain why steelworkers feared a sell-out: 'Much to our surprise, when we got Steelworkers' Banner No 10, ISTC's official weekly bulletin we found Bill Sirs saying: "We accept the principle of locally negotiated productivity deals".'

Jobs

'But what we've been saying all along is that for plants like Llanwern that means our jobs.'

'What Sirs says is just what Villiers has been trying to push down our throats for 12 weeks. A deal based on Sirs' plan would give Villiers a licence to take away our jobs or even close Llanwern altogether.'

Many of the steelworkers at the meeting agreed with Roy Davies. Some were unhappy about the fluctuating level of picketing over recent weeks; some workers questioned the value of sending flying pickets to the West Country when the South Wales private steel firms had not been completely closed down.

All were nervous that a sell-out was being secretly worked out at a national level,

and questioned whether their own rank-and-file organisation was strong enough to resist it.

Organisation

The level of rank-and-file organisation at Caldicot was described by Roger Tovey and Tony Cartwright, members of the Caldicot picketing organisation:

'In Caldicot we've organised across formal trade union lines on a multi-union basis.'

'Every Sunday night we have an open mass meeting, generally with good attendance. Last week we had three hundred people along to a meeting with Tony Benn. It's very good for morale to have people along every week — it keeps them in touch.'

'We have a food co-operative, too, which helps out financially and keeps people involved in the strike. The strike is only as strong as its pickets.'

Roger Tovey explained that social networks — like the Rugby Club — and the Labour Party, as well as the trade union structures, had been used to organise the Caldicot picketing.

Pickers

The Caldicot picketers offered to help organise steel strikers on a similar community basis in other areas around Newport.

'We've got a loudspeaker and we can go round the streets and tell people what's going on — because we are

SOUTH WALES STEELWORKERS



Steelworkers from Caldicot picketing in Bristol

anxious to get other areas going like we are.'

It was suggested that regular open meetings, as in Caldicot, would be an important element in ensuring that rank-and-file organisation maintains the momentum of the strike and could resist a sell-out.

Paul Acaston, who had come down from Stocksbridge to address the meeting, brought donations of £30 to the Llanwern strike fund. He won particular approval when he said:

'The way we see it now is that the strike has moved beyond wages — that's the bottom of the list.'

'All the lads agree that the first priority is redundancies and closures — that's very important because it's not just for us but for the future generations.'

'The second priority is her in Number 10, and her henchmen. We want to do what we can to get rid of this

Tory government.'

'And then bottom of the list comes the money.'

It was clear from the Steel Sheet meeting that there is a high level of militancy among Llanwern strikers, coupled with a generalised distrust of the national union leaderships.

The Sleeping Dragon

By Roger Tovey

What is this — the sound and rumour?
What is it that steelmen hear?
Like the wind in our Welsh Valleys
When the storm is drawing near;
Like the rolling ocean billows
In the eventide of fear.
'Tis the people marching on!

What deep wound has raised from sloth
The might dragon sleeping here?
A blow inflicted at its lifeblood,
Industrial thrombosis, inflicting fear.
Pleas for security fall on deaf ears,
Defence of its future represses its fear.
The people now march on!

The men of letters inspired a system
Of which the dragon became a victim.
The classic economists inspired new wealth
In which greed gained power, wielded by stealth.
Those documents of yore, supply and demand,
Ignore human needs — out of hand.
'Till the people march on!

On we march then, we the workers,
Wealth creators not idle shirkers
And the rumours that we hear
Is the blended soul of battle stirring
In active minds and hands of toil.
Deliverance, the hope of every creature —
When the people march on!

'Pressure the TUC'

DAVID WILLIAMS, vice-chairperson of the Llanwern strike committee, talked to Socialist Challenge about the state of the steel strike.

The Steel Corporation is holding all the aces because it knows that some unions in the steel industry have accepted certain clauses of the document — that is 14.4 per cent. BSC boss Bob Scholey has got his teeth into that, and he's clinging to it.

I think that BSC will go ahead with a ballot come what may, unless the unions begin to give way on the 14.4 per cent.

If we receive more positive support from the TUC it would be a lot easier. We're hanging on now by our fingertips.

I went down to Trafalgar

Square the other week and I thought it was fantastic. Then I listened to Len Murray and I went down like a balloon.

I've never heard so much milk and water and rhetoric in all my life. Murray says he wants to sit down and talk to Joseph and Prior. But they've ignored him, insulted him, humiliated and abused him. It's saddening.

Pressure has got to be brought to bear on the TUC.

Finally I'd like to urge all trades unionists to stay away from Torquay for their holidays this year. I've already written to Bill Sirs asking him to move the Sheet

Trade Board ISTC conference, planned for later this year, away from Torquay.

Scab

The reason for this is the safe haven they have been giving to scab boats bringing steel in from Spain. They allowed three boats to use Torquay harbour to unload, which they've never done before.

We've been going along from Llanwern and we've received nothing but abuse from the non-registered dockers they've got working down there.

We'll keep on going down there until we stop them using the port.

ANNIVERSARY OF SOUTHALL PICKET
 YOUR LOCAL POLICE STATION
WED APRIL 23rd

DISBAND THE SPG

DEMONSTRATION
SUN APRIL 27th

Assemble 1pm Speakers Corner Marble Arch
 March via Scotland Yard to Rally in Trafalgar Square
REMEMBER BLAIR PEACH

COUNCILS START TO PAY UP

By Dave Burns, Islington NALGO

WIDESPREAD action by local authority workers over pay has won its first victories.

The dispute, involving members of the National and Local Government Officers Association, is in support of a pay comparability claim. Although the employers nationally have refused to budge from their 6 to 12 per cent offer, local councils have begun to crack.

At least eight councils have settled at well above the national offer.

Unusually for NALGO, the leadership has been overtaken by enthusiastic and effective action by the membership. Although the official instructions have been unclear, members

around the country have been putting a stranglehold on their employers.

In Camden, for example, telephonists have been on strike since 19 March. NALGO members at municipally-owned airports will be on strike over Easter, and a £10,000 collection made at a national delegate meeting will cover their pay.

Plans are underway to call out NALGO meat inspectors at Smithfields.

The effect of the clampdown on rent and rates collection can be seen from the comment of the finance chief of one London council, which expects to lose £16m in the first few weeks of the new financial year if the action is maintained.

NALGO members should ensure that all income to councils is stopped, so that the trickle of councils caving in becomes a flood.

5,000 NALGO members rally in Glasgow

By Andy Bein, NALGO Glasgow district branch, personal capacity

THE Apollo in Glasgow is the largest theatre in Europe. But last Thursday it proved too small to accommodate a rally of members of the National Association of Local Government Officers.

The Glasgow district branch and the Glasgow division branch, whose members work for Glasgow district council and Strathclyde regional council, called the rally in work-time to draw attention to the industrial action they are taking as part of NALGO's national fight on pay.

Members had to queue for over half an hour to gain admittance to the meeting. Even then 500 of the estimated 4,000 to 5,000 present were unable to get into the main meeting.

In the liveliest contribution from the platform, Bill Seawright, a Scottish national executive council member, described the present action as a 'bloody good dummy run' for the 1980 national claim.

Colin Turbett, a Strathclyde social worker, received the most enthusiastic response when, speaking from the floor, he called for an across-the-board rise of £25 per week as the basis for the 1980 claim.

The morale of the meeting could not have been higher. Most of the council departments in the city came to a standstill. Many libraries, swimming pools, and sport centres were closed for several hours.



Thatcher visit: Heavy fines for students

By Angie Smith

FINES totalling more than £1,000 are expected to be imposed on students who joined workers in protesting against Margaret Thatcher when she visited Hull on 14 March.

The prime minister was diverted to Reckitt and Coleman when 1,200 production workers walked out of another factory she was due to visit, and then the Reckitt workers walked out to join a delegation from Hull Trades Council protesting against her visit outside the plant.

A cordon of police surrounded 250 Hull University students who marched to the plant, in opposition to the increase in overseas student fees.

A member of the Overseas Student Association was arrested and thrown head first over a metal fence when he attempted to cross the cordon. He has since been fined £175 for 'breach of peace'.

Other students who verbally protested were also arrested. Fines are expected to total more than £1,000. Donations and support to: Students Union, Hull University.

Tasks set for anti-racists

By Oliver New

A RECALL conference of the Campaign Against Racist Laws, held in London last Saturday, established CARL as the main national anti-racist organisation.

Delegates from 50 black and anti-racist organisations voted unanimously to continue CARL, which was originally set up to organise last November's massive demonstration against the Tories' immigration proposals.

Over the past few months the anti-racist movement has been on the defensive, with police harassment and deportations increasing while a new nationality law appears on the horizon.

CARL can help change that. It has the political strength to act as a focus for black organisations, local anti-racist groups, and the labour movement.

The conference decided to launch an appeal for affiliation to CARL and to produce a regular bulletin. This will centre on opposition to the government's anti-immigration laws, proposals on which are expected in the summer.

Delegates at the conference also felt that activity against other forms of racism

should be organised. Specifically it was agreed that CARL will campaign against the 'sus' law.

Also backed was the 27 April demonstration on the anniversary of the murder of Blair Peach. This is the main priority for anti-racists in the next month.

The London demonstration will be the day before the re-opening of the inquest into Blair's murder.

Another initiative discussed at the CARL conference was the black freedom march from Bradford to London, starting on 28 June. Manjit Singh from the Bradford Asian Youth Movement told the conference that support committees had already been established in a number of towns.

Further details of these activities can be obtained from CARL and Friends of Blair Peach Committee, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH; Asian Youth Movement, 226 Lamb Lane, Bradford 8, West Yorkshire.

Students are target for fascists

By Ifor Jones

THE Sussex Front, part of the British Movement, is planning to march through Brighton this Saturday with the slogan 'Kick the reds out of Sussex University'.

This fascist organisation directs its propaganda at white youth, particularly the unemployed, aiming to set them against blacks and Jews, and now to isolate and attack students.

Apart from its racism, the Sussex Front's 'Radical programme for the salvation of Britain' borrows from the Labour left and the Communist Party in proposing: a halt to imports; a massive training programme for young Britons; pulling out of the EEC; and an end to British investment abroad.

Sussex students are organising a counter-demonstration in Brighton on Saturday, supported by the

Anti Nazi League, the local trades council anti-fascist committee, and Brighton Revolution, which has produced a leaflet to explain that the oppression of young people through unemployment can only be overcome by uniting all youth against the system which throws young people on the dole to protect declining profits.

Brighton Revolution has initiated a campaign against youth unemployment, in Brighton and will be sending a coach to the South Wales Youth March.

The counter-demo starts at The Level, Lewes Rd, Brighton, at 10am, 29 March.

Stone Platt occupiers backed by AUEW

By Pete Clifford

THE Engineering Union's executive committee decided last week to give official backing to the occupation of the Stone Platt plant in Oldham, now in its sixth week.

But it has been left to the workforce, which is opposing closure, to fight for implementation of this decision at the company's other plants in Bolton, Crawley, Accrington, and the Scragg's division in Oldham.

Flying pickets have been out at these plants, turning away supplies and trying to close the factories with the backing of the AUEW's Oldham district committee.

In spite of the announcement last week of a £3m loss by the company in the last year, the determination of the strikers is 'hardening up'.

Sorry!

The quote on the front page of last week's Socialist Challenge should have been attributed to Bernard Connolly, not Brian Connolly as reported.

2,500 march in Sunderland

By Paul Davidson

A 2,500-strong march and rally against the cuts and for the removal of the Tory government was held in Sunderland on Saturday. Large contingents of steelworkers took part, together with public sector and other unions.

Ted Knight, the leader of Lambeth council, received the greatest applause at the rally when he called on Labour councils not to implement the cuts and for the labour movement to back these actions, so that another Clay Cross situation did not develop.

Steelworkers' leader John Lee pointed out that the Thatcher government had not been given a mandate to carry out savage cuts. In Consett the whole community would be threatened if, as planned, the steelworks is closed.

The Sunderland Cuts Committee speaker stressed the need for the CPSA and other civil service unions to protect those without work whose social security benefits may be threatened by the Tories.

The speakers were unanimous on the need to make 14 May a day of national strike action against the Tories.

according to strike committee chairperson Harold Robinson.

Many of the strikers, including Harold Robinson, see their struggle as part of the fight against the Tories. He told Socialist Challenge:

'We'll be having a Confed stewards meeting in Oldham and I will be supporting the call for a general strike on 14 May. "Days of action" can be a dinner-time meeting or anything — the TUC has left it open, all airy-fairy.'

'I think the whole country should be out. The railway workers, who are proposing this to the TUC, are quite right. We've got to do something positive.'

On 26 February, at the invitation of Sir Geoffrey Hawkins, boss of Stone-Platt and president of the Engineering Employers' Federation, both Terry Duffy and John Boyd went to tea at the Dorchester Hotel in Park Lane.

Pride of place at this £114-a-head banquet was given to Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who announced that British workers could look forward to 10 years of austerity.

Harold Robinson's comment was: 'I can tell you that Duffy's got no credibility with us. In Oldham there will be solid support for Bob Wright in the ballot against Duffy for AUEW's national president'.

Support and donations to: Eddie Holland, Stone-Platt Dispute Fund, 70 Lord St, Oldham.

Nurses to march for 30% rise

By John Brennan

NURSES will be taking to the streets in Edinburgh on 28 March in support of a 30 per cent pay claim and in opposition to the cuts.

Support for the march has already come from over a hundred delegates on Edinburgh Trades Council, and a large number, of delegations from both the public and private sectors and expected on the day.

The pressure for action has come from nurses in the National Union of Public Employees, who are angry at losing part of last year's Clegg pay award and at the recent '0 to 25 per cent' offer.

To build for the march, nurses' meetings are being held to co-ordinate the various hospitals, together with mass meetings of

COHSE and NUPE members to encourage ancillary workers to join the protest.

Leah Sheridan, NUPE steward at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, says: 'We want to show that we won't accept more cuts in wages and that we are prepared to fight the Tories' cuts alongside other health workers.'

'Winning support from poorly organised sections of women workers can only strengthen further action against the Tories and build the unity needed for strike action on 14 May.'

Building Worker

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

for all building trades unionists
 29-30 March, Digbeth Hall, Birmingham

Saturday, noon to 5pm: regional and job reports; the next wage claim; changes to policy statement; direct works.

Sunday, 10am to 1pm: Building Worker — the paper and its organisation; election of an editorial board and area secretaries; situation in the official movement — election etc.

Overnight accommodation will be arranged. Credentials, back numbers, and policy statement from: Building Worker, 30 Horton House, South Lambeth Estate, Meadow Rd, London SW8. Tel 01-732 4478.

Is the women's TUC a 'ghetto'?

By Valerie Coultas

BEL MOONEY, a columnist on the Daily Mirror, has resigned her £16,000 a year job.

Rumours in the press suggested that this was because the Mirror had refused to print her report of the Women's TUC. But Bel Mooney says she resigned because she felt she was given too little scope as a writer.

She told Socialist Challenge: 'I could not write about the issues that really affect working class women — education and nursery cuts.'

Her unpublished opinion of the Women's TUC — that it is old fashioned and unnecessary — is quite common among both female and male trade unionists. Bel Mooney says: 'I think that after 50 years we should be able to take on the man in our own camp. We don't want to put ourselves in a ghetto.'

Is the Women's TUC an admittance of failure that we, as women, can't take on men?

Although trade unions are bodies that have been fashioned by the working class to defend themselves against exploitation, they are still modelled on the divisions and inequalities that exist within the working class.

Because of the tradition of craft organisation in Britain, the unions separate skilled workers from the unskilled and semi-skilled. Some unions divide off

young workers, and unemployed workers are often excluded.

Women and black workers have had to fight for their needs and concerns to be recognised, as at Grunwick and at Chix.

There are still no women on the TUC's General Council in their own right. Men are far more numerous on the union executives, even in those unions which have a predominantly female membership. The National Union of Teachers, for example, with 75 per cent female membership, has four women and forty men on its executive.

Men rule over women from the top to the bottom of the trade union movement. By and large they are the trade union officials, the branch secretaries, shop stewards, and the delegates to conference.

To challenge this domination women have to confront male assumptions of superiority — to give men a jolt. We have to show how these attitudes weaken the trade union movement. Sexual harassment and abuse of women are clearly divisive, but paternalism during strikes and trade union meetings can be just as off putting.

Women have to show that our needs and concerns — nurseries, pregnancy leave, equal pay, training opportunities, improved working conditions, sexual autonomy — benefit every worker.

The ideas of women's liberation have found roots among women workers who are beginning to demand not only equal pay, financial independence, childcare

provision and fertility control, but the right to do the same jobs as men and to work in factories that are not adorned by pornography.

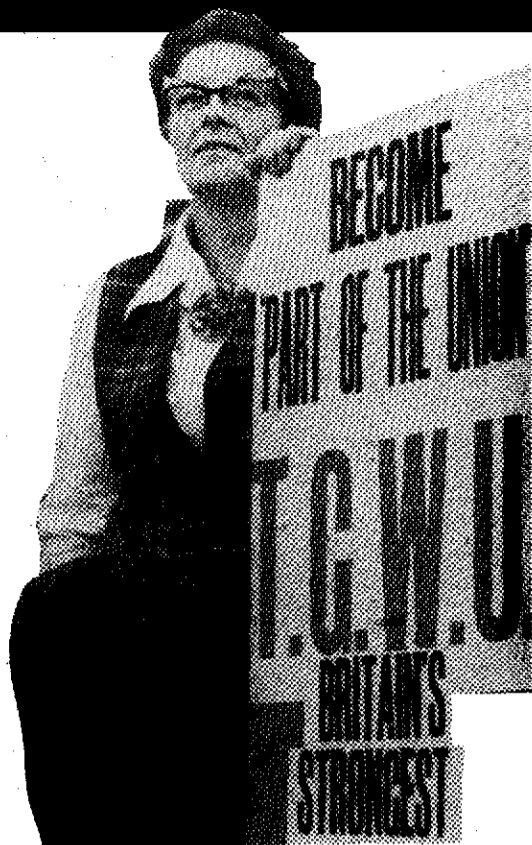
If the Women's TUC is allowed to simply pass resolutions that have little effect, and to fail to organise rank and file women trades unionists to fight for their rights, it could turn into a 'ghetto' that diverts women from confronting male domination in the unions.

But if, on the other hand, the Women's TUC is used to give a lead to women at the base of the unions, to help organise those women to take up the issues that confront them both at work and in the community, as in the case of the pro-abortion march on 28 October last year, it can be a useful weapon in the fight for women's liberation.

Gaining equality for working class women is no easy battle. Jenny Tizard, the first woman electrician to complete her training and a delegate at this year's Women's TUC, explained that once women step into male preserves in the workplace we face physical insults and attack.

Women need more than equal rights to gain equality with men. We need positive discrimination to overcome the centuries of oppression and discrimination we have suffered. Society has failed women, not the other way round.

A campaigning Women's TUC is part of the positive action that is needed within the workers' movement to win equality for women.



There is now a greater need than ever before for the Labour left to intervene decisively and coordinate rank-and-file trade union initiatives against the Tories and in favour of socialism.

That was the clear lesson flowing from the collapse of the national delegate conference convened by the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions (LCDTU) at the end of January.

The 1,000 delegates left in disarray after the Communist Party-controlled platform had refused to permit discussion of a broader unity between the LCDTU and other rank-and-file groups.

The implications of this could be far-reaching and to understand them it is necessary to trace the role played in the past by the LCDTU.

Stewards

Set up in 1966 by the CP to coordinate the growing strength of the shop stewards movement, it was able to play a key role in mobilising shop floor activism against Barbara Castle's 'In Place of Strife' and then in the anti-Tory campaign of 1970-74.

Its importance lay not only in an undoubted ability to offer a forum for rank-and-file trade unionists, but in its links to 'left' trade union leaders in the heyday of the Jones-Scanlon era.

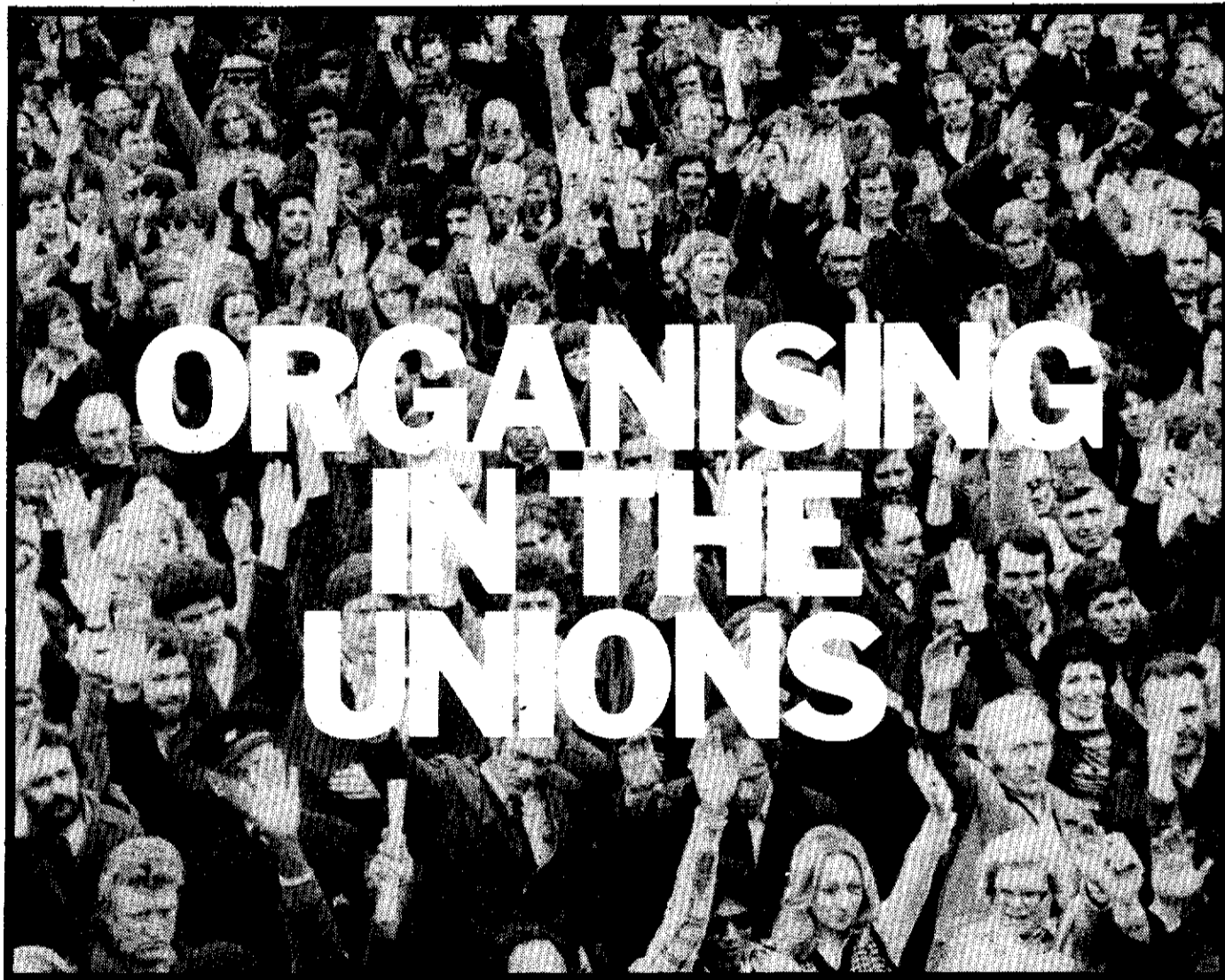
Prior to the social contract period from 1975 onwards, the LCDTU was the focus for a series of 'broad left' groups with significant shop steward support.

But, partly because of the alliance with the Jones/Scanlon leadership, the LCDTU went into rapid decline during the social contract — its problems being accelerated by the more general decline in membership of the Communist Party and its industrial base in particular.

Revolutionary

Thus it was that at the recent conference probably well over half those attending were not aligned to the CP, coming from other rank-and-file workers groups, notably the SWP's Rank-and-File Defend Our Unions Committee which had staged an 1100 strong conference of trade unionists last June.

But instead of seeking common ground with other left groups, the LCDTU's leadership refused to allow a



ORGANISING IN THE UNIONS

Rank-and-file worker coordination

FROM 1970 to 1974, the last Tory government faced a powerfully organised force within the trade unions. It was led by the Communist Party in alliance with left-wing trade union leaders such as Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon, through the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions.

Today Margaret Thatcher does not face such a force. The last conference of the Liaison

Committee, held last month, ended in disarray, with a refusal by the CP organisers to allow far left delegates to put a resolution for voting.

PETER HAIN, a member of the Labour Coordinating Committee, explains in the March issue of Labour Leader how he thinks that the left should now be organising inside the unions. His article is re-published here.

motion calling for unity between it and the Defend Our Unions Committee.

Unruly scenes followed, including an attempt physically to eject the SWP's industry organiser, John Deason, and the conference was closed an hour prematurely by LCDTU Chairman Kevin Halpin.

Warfare

It would of course be easy to accord too much significance to such apparently inter-necine warfare on the left. On the other hand, the seriousness

of the implications of the LCDTU's present demise should not be underestimated.

Weakening

Despite being able still to attract an important layer of shop floor leaders and having a far deeper industrial base than anybody else on the left, the CP is in a steadily weakening position. And that is reflected in the increased confidence of management to take on local union committees, notably Leyland.

There is nothing therefore

to smirk about in the shenanigans and disarray of the January LCDTU conference.

Instead, the onus is placed sharply upon the Labour left to face up to the attack on workers' rights. And that will only be successfully done by the Labour left itself organising a coordinated rank-and-file movement of trade unionists.

We should no longer accept the traditional argument that the Labour Party, by virtue of being the child of the trade unions, should therefore leave

industrial organising entirely to the official leadership of the unions.

It is only by a fusion between the rank-and-file of the unions that sufficient mobilisation can be achieved both to resist the present offensive and move beyond it towards workers' control.

At present, workplace level leaders are crying out for a coordinated campaign which can only be provided by the Labour left. We alone potentially offer the opportunity of a credible link

between the shop floor and the official movement, whilst avoiding falling into the trap of the LCDTU and relying too much upon official leaders.

If we don't provide that lead, we cannot blame workers for turning to other rank-and-file initiatives. For even though these initiatives (and the SWP is putting considerable energy into its industrial efforts at present) are likely to fail for political reasons, they will offer short-term attractions.

Against that background, the Executive of the Labour Coordinating Committee decided at its February meeting to convene a conference of trade unionists to explore the possibilities of a Labour left orientated shop floor coordinating committee.

In the meantime, every support should be given to the TUC's 'day of action' on 14 May.

But, as the LCDTU's conference declaration put it: 'A "day of action" can mean anything — to be effective it must be real action of general strike proportions.'

The LCDTU also called for the instant recall of Congress if the TUC has not produced plans for further 'positive' action by 14 May to carry resistance beyond the day of action.

Women's TUC in militant mood

By Penny Duggan

The 50th Women's TUC met in Brighton 13 March. Delegates were in a militant mood and many women in traditionally male-dominated trades made their presence felt.

They called for positive action from employers and trade unions to break down the barriers to women entering the skilled and higher paid manual trades, and to ensure that those women who are in such jobs were not isolated.

When the delegates heard that John Corrie had managed to wangle himself another day to discuss his anti-abortion Bill all hell broke loose. Delegates rushed out of the hall to send off telegrams to their union sponsored MPs telling them to attend the debate and vote the Bill down.

Post Office workers said they would guarantee the arrival of the letters!

It was Marie Paterson who announced on Friday that the Bill had finally been committed to the rubbish bin. She received fantastic applause for her news.

Women trade unionists clearly felt that they had contributed to this victory.

SOUTH WALES YOUTH

When a pit closes all the jobs will go

THE support of the South Wales Mineworkers' Union for the Youth March is an important step towards a united front to fight unemployment.

'We are very concerned about the unemployment problem in South Wales,' Don Hayward, administrative secretary of the South Wales NUM, explains. 'We are very glad to see the youth taking part in this march.'

'It's good that they are taking an interest in the job situation. We can envisage a situation, in a few years time, when there will be hardly any jobs in this area for people of 20-25 years old.'

'We will support any stand against unemployment in South Wales, that's why we are supporting the Youth March. We are discussing giving it some financial support as well.'

'There are a lot of apprentices in the pits — these young people will suffer if the pits close. When a pit closes everyone's jobs will go. There won't be transfers, as there were in the past.'

'Only the other day we got the message clear from Philip Weeks, director of the South Wales Coalboard. He said that if a dozen pits closed tomorrow you could count the number of jobs that could be saved 'on the fingers of one hand'.'

'That's the scale of the problem we are facing.'

'The policy of the National Union of Mineworkers on job protection, as discussed at the delegate conference in London last week, is that "we will not accept colliery closures as a result of the import of foreign coal".'

The support of Don Hayward and the South Wales NUM executive is a crucial boost to building the Youth March.

It allows supporters of the march to go out to the pits in the area and argue with miners of all ages to win them to the idea of the march.

But it would be better still if the NUM itself organised a series of pithead meetings to gather support for the march. The NUM could easily win apprentices and other young miners to come on the march.

The result of the miners' ballot — rejecting the South Wales NUM executive call for an all-out strike on jobs — has demoralised many NUM militants in the area.

The way to change this is not to sit back and say: 'Well, that's it, the lads won't fight'. That just feeds demoralisation.

Militant miners have to go out to the pits and argue about it; they have to give other workers a perspective for winning.

The Youth March, which will demand that the Wales TUC organises united action in defence of jobs, is a positive step.

That's why the NUM should not just lend it official support, but go out and actively win the support of rank and file miners. If the NUM executive is unwilling to take such a step, there will be no lack of others who will.

SPONSORS OF THE MARCH

NUM South Wales Executive
ALAN FISHER, General Secretary, NUPE
PAUL ELLIOT, Area officer, NUPE
STUART HASTINGS, Area officer, NUPE
Port Talbot ISTC/NUB Strike Committee
EETPU Port Talbot Shop Stewards Committee
GRENVILLE PHILLIPS, Labour councillor, Swansea
ANNIE POWELL, Mayor of Rhondda
TONY CARTWRIGHT, Labour district councillor, ISTC Llanwern
RAY DAVIES, Labour district councillor, Caerphilly, and ISTC Llanwern
ROGER TOVEY, NUB Caldicot Picketing Organisation
JUNE ABDUL RAHAM, NUPE, Llywypnia Hospital
ANDY CHANDLER, president, NUS Wales
DAI GRIFFITHS, president, Swansea University Students' Union
South Wales Campaign Against Health Cuts
West Glamorgan Cuts Committee
Swansea Trades Council
Swansea Women's Centre
Wyndham West Lodge NUM
DAI FRANCIS, former secretary, Wales NUM NUS Wales
BURT PEARCE, secretary Wales CP 'Revolution'
International Marxist Group

The Wales TUC had better watch out!

By Jude Woodward

EASTER weekend will not be a holiday for a large number of South Wales youth.

While other people are sitting at home in front of the television or possibly soaking up the sun in their garden, the youth will be going up and down the valleys drumming up support for the fight against unemployment.

Closures planned for steel and mining would cause widespread unemployment in South Wales. Even government figures estimate that there will be 150,000 unemployed in Wales by early next year — and this is probably a cautious estimate. It's not surprising that everywhere you go people are talking about the '30s.

The cuts, the closures, and the Tories are on everyone's lips in South Wales, particularly among young people. It's the youth who have most to lose if the closures go through — it will mean that they will have to leave their home town or face the prospect of continuous unemployment.

The attempt earlier this year to link the miners and steelworkers in an all-out strike on jobs failed through insufficient organisation at a rank-and-file level. The miners voted against this action in a pithead ballot.

The Wales TUC was responding to local pressure when it called a day of strike action in Wales against cuts and closures. But it fell over itself to call it all off when Len Murray put on the pressure.

But the failure of these plans will not be the end of the story on the fight to defend jobs.

In the long run, the working class of South Wales cannot defend jobs and living standards on its own.

Pressure has to be brought to bear, not just on the leaders in Wales but on the TUC as a whole, to organise a united front against the Tory offensive, to kick out the Tory government and to win policies which save and create jobs rather than demolishing them.

The South Wales Youth March against unemployment is an important step towards this all-out fight in defence of jobs.

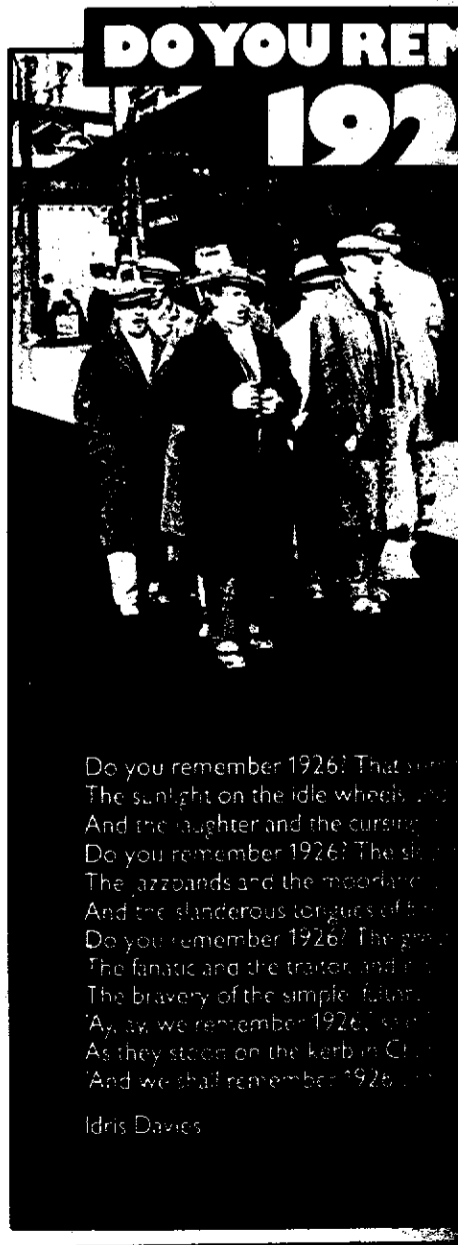
With the significant backing of the South Wales NUM and the Port Talbot steel strike committee, youth from the steel towns and mining valleys will march to the Wales TUC to demand that it takes decisive action to halt job loss.

In the Port Talbot area over 70 youth have already signed up to go on the march. More will be coming from Cardiff, Pontypridd and the Rhondda. Young women who work in garment factories in the Rhondda or as nurses in threatened Cardiff hospitals are expected to join along the route.

This is the kind of initiative which can work to galvanise workers in South Wales to fight unemployment. They talk about the youth being deprived of a future — now the youth will come to them and demand that they organise real action.

The Wales TUC had better watch out on 9 April. Young people of Wales will be banging on their doors, insisting that those who call themselves labour leaders behave like leaders.

And that means a vigorous push for united working class action against Tory policies. A recall Wales TUC should meet to organise a class-wide struggle in defence of jobs.



Do you remember 1926? That year... The sunlight on the idle wheels... And the laughter and the cursing... Do you remember 1926? The strike... The lizzards and the moorlands... And the slanderous tongues of the... Do you remember 1926? The great... The fanatic and the trader, and the... The bravery of the simple, the... 'Ay, ay, we remember 1926,' said... As they stood on the kerb in Cl... And we shall remember 1926...

Idris Davies

YOUTH MARCH FOR JOBS



KEVIN WALTERS is a labourer at the 'Abbey' — the local name for the Port Talbot steelworks. He is 22 and worried about his future, which is why he will be going on the march.

'My job isn't safe — no one's job at the Abbey is safe. They're building a new concast boss plant which is worth at least two thousand jobs — it's supposed to be finished by January '81. They are still planning to build it; work has begun, but it's three or four months behind.

'If the new plant is built the jobs situation won't be so bad. But you can't tell what they are going to do. They don't tell us.'



ALICIA WELLINGTON is 15 and is at school in Port Talbot. She's planning to go on the march — but mainly she wants to get out of Port Talbot.

'I haven't got a clue what I'll do when I leave school, but I won't be staying in Port Talbot — not the way things are now. My father is a contract worker at the Abbey. There are ten kids in our family and not enough money coming in.

'At the moment the cost of things is still going up, and the Tories will put up fags and beer in the Budget. Workers can't even have a drink of beer without mad Maggie putting money on it. There won't be any jobs at all if the Abbey closes down. We've got a meeting about the Youth March on Tuesday — we're going because it gives us something to do.'

JANET AYRES is also at school in Port Talbot, and is 16 years old. She had no doubts about what is at stake in Port Talbot.

'If they close down the works at Port Talbot the town will turn into a slum. It'll be the depression, like in the '30s. What we should do is get rid of Maggie — that's the best way to stop all this. This place won't last long if we don't.'



KELVIN DAVIES is still at school in Port Talbot. He plans to go on the Youth March. It's his future that's on the line.

'There are some jobs around in Port Talbot but you need qualifications — CSEs and 'O' levels. There's nothing for those without. There's no jobs in the steelworks.

'And I know who I blame — Margaret Thatcher. She talks a load of bull — she needs a grenade down her throat. She's just there for the rich.

'There's no future for us unless we get mad Maggie out.'

Wales must fight

By Brendan O'Leary

IN THE Ogmore Vale in South Wales the miners are firmly in support of the Youth March. The Welsh people are not going to be sold out on jobs without a militant fight. The Wales TUC has backed down on jobs in the face of the TUC in Britain putting pressure on them not to fight.

Dai, who works in the Ogmore Valley, told Socialist Challenge that the miners had been betrayed by the British TUC:

'Thatcher comes on TV and says that the Welsh people agree with the government's policies. She never speaks of the unemployment and desolation they will bring. How can we fight the powerful propaganda of the media without the support of our leadership?'

'Wise, a representative of the National Coal Board for South Wales, says that if the steelworks close, new markets will be found for Welsh coal.'

'The Abergavenny Gwent works is one such market but there is no mention that Abergavenny pays 20 per cent less than full rate for its coal, which means that pits selling to it will make a loss. Loss-making pits close.'

Militants among the miners feel that it was propaganda like this that brought the No vote in the miners' ballot for strike action.

They know that if the steelworks at Port Talbot and Llanwern are cut back, five pits would close immediately with at least five more to be phased out over three years. The smaller and more isolated pits would be the first to go. The miners say that when

the Wales TUC but also from the General Council in Britain. One pit worker put it this way:

'After our victory in 1972 my father told me that he felt he had been avenged for the defeat of 1926, and the horror of the '30s. Now he is angered and fearful at the prospect of a return to the conditions of those times.'

Wales must fight, even alone, if it has to!

the time comes to fight they will fight. But they must have united action not only from

Something has to be done on jobs

GEORGE White, an organiser for the Socialist Workers Party in Port Talbot, told Socialist Challenge his views on the youth march.

I think the march is a good idea — something has to be done about jobs in this area. But it is a pity that the International Marxist Group didn't approach the SWP earlier because then we could have organised the march hand-in-hand.

Clash

Unfortunately, the date you have chosen clashes with our rally in Skegness, and we'd planned for most of our members and contacts to go to that. Those of us who aren't going to Skegness will of course be going on the march.

I think that you've done a good job to organise the march in so little time — and I wouldn't have believed it.

I've lived in Port Talbot for ten years now — I came from Glasgow to look for work!

No Work

There's no work here. The only places that I've worked in the last three years have been in Belgium, Holland and Germany.

But last week the police decided to do me for obstruction and they took my passport away — that's my lifeline to work.

South Wales Youth March Against Unemployment

5 April to 9 April

Port Talbot to Swansea via Maesteg, Lewistown, Treorchy and Pontypridd

If you are interested in going on the march, contact:

Cardiff
26 Machan Place
Riverside
Cardiff

Newport
5 Sydney St.
Newport

Tel: Cardiff 373585

Swansea and Port Talbot
Taibach Rugby Club
Talbot Rd
Port Talbot

Tel: Swansea 460086

Or ring London 359 8371 and ask for someone from Revolution



...and speeches,
...crossings,
...streets!
...concerts.

...swift disaster.

Photos: JUDE WOODWARD, (Socialist Challenge)

The TUC's Irish scandal

By Chris Murray

THE Trades Union Congress is pressing ahead with its attempt to act as censor on Ireland. Tameside Trades Council, which has been threatened with disaffiliation by the TUC if it holds a conference on Ireland, has now received a letter from Len Murray spelling out the TUC's attitude.

The letter was addressed to Dave Halsworth, secretary of the trades council. It states that Tameside Trades Council 'must act at all times within the terms of Congress policy,' and that 'it must give an undertaking not to hold a conference on Ireland without first securing the agreement of the TUC about the final agenda and speakers for such a conference'.

Helping the TUC have been members of the Communist Party who have contributed their own nasty tactic of slander and misrepresentation. At a meeting of Manchester Trades Council on 19 March a report of the Tameside situation, given by a CP member, alleged that Tameside had organised the conference in conjunction with 'the political wing of the murderers of Airey Neave'.

This followed a totally false report in the *Morning Star* on 6 March saying that the

conference had been reconvened at the request of the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

What is the real situation? Tameside Trades Council has been debating the political situation in Ireland since 1976. Various debates and resolutions culminated in a decision, last November, to campaign for the removal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act; immediate withdrawal of the British troops; self-determination for the Irish people as a whole; and prisoner of war status for Irish prisoners.

Such a policy, it need hardly be said, is outside official TUC thinking but Dave Halsworth believes that Len Murray's excuse for threatening disaffiliation — that the council is not following TUC policy — is just a smokescreen explains Dave: 'It's not because trades councils are not allowed to decide their own policy issues. Many trades councils oppose TUC policies and don't meet this threat. The TUC stepped in because we dared to raise the question of Ireland.'

The resolution passed at the trades council was 'to organise a bona fide trade union-delegated conference on Ireland and to seek sponsorship from other trade union bodies'. Despite TUC interference, the trades council is pressing ahead with its plans.

But if the TUC is to be thwarted in its censorship of discussion on Ireland, it will be necessary to build a broad campaign of solidarity with the trades council. Such a campaign, said Nigel Smith, a member of the council's executive, should focus on 'fighting the conspiracy of silence on Ireland within the labour movement'.

As to the trades council itself, it has issued a statement saying it 'will not be dictated to on policy decisions democratically arrived at — by anybody, be it the TUC or any other body... We shall open up the debate on Britain's perfidy in Ireland and go on doing so until justice for the Irish people is achieved.'

Tameside will be circulating an appeal to other trades councils and to trade union branches asking for support. Messages of support should be sent to: Dave Halsworth, Tameside Trades Council, 186 Kings Rd, Ashton-under-Lyme, Manchester.



Len Murray



Green for go in the Labour Party

By Geoff Bell

IS IRELAND about to become an issue in the Labour Party? Here are the clues:

* The home policy sub-committee of the Labour Party national executive is currently taking evidence on what policy the party should be following on the North of Ireland;

* Tony Benn, leader of the Labour left, restated his 'own belief' in Irish unity at the 'Debate of the Decade' on 17 March. Benn also revealed that he proposed that the NEC should formally adopt a pro-Irish unity position;

* The London regional conference of the Labour Party recently passed overwhelmingly a motion calling on Britain to withdraw from Ireland;

On top of this, about a hundred Labour Party members are due to meet in London this Saturday, under the auspices of the Labour Committee on Ireland, to discuss and debate what policy the party should adopt.

The lead-up to all these developments can be found in the successive attempts of the Troops Out Movement, Socialist Unity and others to make Ireland an issue in the next general election, and the fight that was waged at the subsequent

Labour Party conference to give space on the agenda to a discussion on Ireland.

The growth of the Troops Out Movement has also persuaded some leading figures on the Labour left to take a closer look at what position they should be taking on the issue. For example, Peter Hain, of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, has agreed to speak at a 'Voice for Withdrawal' forum in June staged by those who organised the successful 12 August London demonstration last year.

For those who have been campaigning on the Irish issue for several years these developments must surely be welcomed. The question is, how can they be encouraged?

One alternative was offered at the 'Debate of the Decade' by those who heckled and attempted to disrupt the debate. Such heckling is perfectly legitimate, and it should be noted that the H block protesters at this meeting were not those involved in most of the disruptive activity. But simply denouncing from the sidelines, the record of the Labour left on Ireland is not, by itself, likely to persuade the Labour left to take up Ireland.

At the other extreme, because of the successes that have been achieved in the Labour Party in the last few months, there is the danger of focusing all activity on the internal rhythms of the party; of seeing, for example, the priority as winning the home policy sub-committee to some vague

commitment to long-term Irish unity. While such a commitment would be a step forward, representing as it would, at least on paper, a break with by-partisanship, the more meaningful test for the Labour left concerns what they are willing to actually do on Ireland, and what precise demands they will make.

Ideally the best formulation this Saturday's London conference can adopt would be to establish within the Labour Party a caucus determined to fight for the immediate withdrawal of Britain from Ireland. But whatever the precise wording of the demands adopted, the Labour Committee on Ireland would best advance its cause by promoting an active campaigning strategy, rather than simply seeing itself as a polite pressure group.

This would involve linking up with those outside the structure of the Labour Party — most appropriately the Troops Out Movement — who do campaign on Ireland, and it would imply using the Labour Committee on Ireland to take the demand for British withdrawal into the trade union movement.

Most of all the Labour Committee on Ireland needs to map out a series of activities — from backing demonstrations on such issues as the H blocks to assisting the campaign in Barnsley to remove former Labour North of Ireland Secretary Roy Mason — which help to make Ireland an issue not only in the Labour Party but outside as well.

APRIL FOOL QUIZ



UDA·UDR·UVF
Spot the difference?

ANSWER: There is no difference

PRODUCED BY PEOPLES' DEMOCRACY

April Fools

THE British Government is to issue a stamp to commemorate ten years of the Ulster Defence Regiment.

The UDR was originally formed as a 'non-sectarian' alternative to the B-Specials which were forced to disband because of their open involvement in the anti-Catholic pogroms in 1969.

The regiment was put under the direct command of the British Army and it soon carried on where the B Specials left off. Extreme loyalists flooded into the UDR and many of its members were later convicted of a whole range of crimes, including murder. A UDR member was one of the notorious 'Shankill butchers' who hacked to death Catholic after Catholic in a sectarian assassination campaign. Today the UDR is almost 100 per cent Protestant.

The issue of a commemorative stamp would, therefore, be rather sick if it were not for the fact that the government is issuing it on 1 April — April fools day. Whether this is a rare sign of humour from the British administration in the North of Ireland or whether it is another of its many bumbles is not clear. Whatever, the Irish revolutionary organisation Peoples Democracy have produced special postcards offering their own 'commemoration' of the UDR. Copies of the cards, which should be sent to Thatcher on 1 April, are available from: Connolly Bookshop, Avoca Park, Anderstown, Belfast or Plough Book Service, 38 Clanawley Road, Killester, Dublin 5. Cost 25p p&p.

WHAT NEXT FOR ZIMBABWE?

The legacy of imperialism is now the inheritance of the Patriotic Front government.

The enormous political and economic problems which face the people of Zimbabwe and their new government are not simply the result of the revolutionary war, as the mass media would have us believe.

The new government is saddled with an external debt of about £250m, of which some £150m is owed to South Africa for its support for Ian Smith's war effort! Black unemployment is chronic and rising fast; only one in three adults are in formal employment.

One of the most pressing issues is the land question. Eighty-three per cent of the African population live in the countryside but the tiny white population own the best 50 per cent of the land. This unequal distribution has resulted in a massive overpopulation in the 'tribal trust lands', where the Africans are condemned to subsistence farming.

The consequence of this is a migrant labour system, similar to that operating in South Africa, where people are forced to work in white-owned mines, farms, factories and homes for a part of the year. Between 60 and 75 per cent of all African households depend on some form of wage labour for their subsistence.

The countryside, particularly the 'tribal trust lands', has been devastated by the security forces. Health and education programmes are in ruins. The Red Cross says that 20 per cent of the population is suffering from malnutrition.

Integration

There are 750,000 'displaced persons' living in wretched shanty-towns, and on the borders there are another 175,000 refugees. To this must be added the estimated 225,000 people living in the so-called 'protected' villages, who wish to return to their own areas.

It is estimated that \$100m will be needed to bring the 'trust lands' back to life.

Radical measures, such as the expropriation of private sector farming and a full-scale attack on the power of the foreign multi-nationals and agri-business, will be necessary to begin to solve these problems in the interests of the masses.

Such a course of action was proposed by the left wing of ZANU. However, Robert Mugabe, under pressure from South Africa and British imperialism, has adopted a different approach. Since the election victory he has appealed for calm, and he has proceeded to make some major concessions to the white minority.

Lieutenant-General Peter Walls, now seen as the leading representative of the white settlers, has been asked to stay on as supreme commander of the armed forces. It is intended that Walls oversees the integration of sections of the guerilla army with the security forces, and the demobilisation of the rest.

Dumiso Dubengwa, who has played a major role in the integration of Nkomo's ZIPRA forces, recently flew to Zambia with another senior commander to discuss the 'tricky' operation of disarming the 8,000 guerillas still there.

A second major concession by Mugabe has been to include two members of the white ruling class in his cabinet. David Smith, who will be minister of commerce and industry, is a member of Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front Party, and was in both the Muzorewa and Smith governments.

State of calm

David Smith and Denis Norman, the other white in the cabinet, responsible for agriculture, are large-scale farmers and ranchers. Norman was elected president of the Rhodesian National Farmers Union in 1978. These figures are included as a guarantee of the property rights of the white minority.

As soon as it appeared that Mugabe had adopted a policy of moderation, the state of panic and shock which had afflicted the white minority gave way to nervous relief. As the *Financial Times* commented, the post-election period 'feels a little like living in the immediate aftermath of an electric storm. As the thunder and lightning subside, an almost unbelievable calm reigns.'

The ZANU(PF) manifesto justifies its moderation thus: 'In working towards the socialist transformation of Zimbabwean society, a ZANU government will... recognise historical, social and other realities in the capitalist system which cannot be transformed overnight...'

'It is recognised that private enterprise will have to continue until circumstances are ripe for socialist change.'



THE new republic of Zimbabwe is to become an independent state on 18 April. The landslide victory for Robert Mugabe's ZANU(PF), and the formation of the Patriotic Front government with 77 out of the 80 seats contested, is a giant step forward for the people of Zimbabwe.

This victory is a serious blow against imperialism and the Apartheid regime in South Africa.

Eight years of relentless armed struggle against the white settler state of Rhodesia and its South African backers enabled the Patriotic Front to win the support of the overwhelming majority of the oppressed masses. But their aspiration for political, social and economic emancipation cannot be met within the framework of a capitalist Zimbabwe.

Imperialism will combine threats and

Mugabe's declared policy is to leave the mines, industry, commerce and agriculture in private hands and to accept a capitalist stage of development. The promised land reforms, and the establishment of co-operatives and collectives of which Mugabe frequently speaks, will be confined to the 10m acres of unoccupied and underused land in the white areas.

There is a clear danger in this course of action. Kumbirai Kangai, the incoming minister of labour, has found himself on a collision course with a wave of strikes by black workers that has swept through Salisbury and other cities.

Kangai explained that the workers were concerned about the future of their pensions, but it was also reported that they were demanding wage increases. There is a

more than 10 to 1 ratio between white and black wages in Zimbabwe.

The bosses immediately dismissed hundreds of workers; the rest were threatened with the sack. Kangai, a member of the left within ZANU, issued a statement saying that the workers must follow dispute procedures and not take wildcat action.

Tactical

Part of the statement said: 'Any precipitate action at this stage can only serve to damage the goodwill which has been built up between the government, employees and their employers and will have a crippling effect on industry.'

Is Mugabe's policy a tactical concession, a ruse, to temporarily deflect a

offers of much needed aid in an attempt to throw back the gains of the Zimbabwean people, and minimise the effects of this victory on the masses of southern Africa as a whole.

South African military might lies poised on Zimbabwe's southern flank ready to intervene if ZANU moves against their fundamental economic and political interests. The Front Line states, under pressure from imperialism, will argue for moderation and conciliation.

With these political obstacles facing Zimbabwe, DAVE HUDSON argues that we must organise the maximum solidarity for the liberation movements of southern Africa.

While the solidarity of socialists remains unconditional, he argues that ZANU will have to break with the white settler state and its repressive apparatus to take the revolution forward.

white backlash? It is too early to tell.

Nicholas Ashford of *The Times*, reporting from Salisbury, reflects ruling class opinion with unusual candour when he states that the most important factor that will determine the behaviour of the Patriotic Front government is the presence of the white-led security forces.

'Although Mr Mugabe will be the country's democratically elected prime minister,' Ashford explained, 'real power will lie with the army for the foreseeable future. Mr Mugabe's own army of 17,000 guerillas is largely impotent, dispersed as it is around 11 remote and vulnerable assembly camps.'

'Mr Mugabe will therefore be able to do little that does not have the approval of the security forces, which essentially means the senior white officers in charge

... General Walls... is unlikely to accept any moves which he sees as seriously undermining white interests or in any way affecting the efficiency and stability of the armed forces.'

This assessment, while ignoring the degree of mass mobilisation which could upset the calculations of the imperialists, reveals the stark realities of power.

There is a danger that the Patriotic Front government will remain captive to the white-led security forces in Salisbury and isolated from its power-base in the countryside. General Walls, the white officer corps, the undefeated security forces, together with the capitalist ministers in the government, represent a dagger at the heart of the Zimbabwean revolution.

Revolutionary tasks

In order to deflect this dagger the new Zimbabwean government must be prepared to decisively break with the white settler state. It should reject a policy of disarming or dispersing the guerilla armies. Any integration with the security forces must be under the supervision of ZANLA.

At some point the sacking of General Walls, a purging of the top civil servants, and the removal of the white capitalist ministers will be necessary.

While it is infantile to reject all tactical concessions, any course that will disorientate the mass movement and undermine its self-organisation and mobilisation could lead to disaster. The Patriotic Front government has won an enormous electoral victory, but they do not yet have the power.

An immense responsibility faces the ZANU leadership. To maximise its chances of victory against imperialism we have the duty to redouble our efforts to build a movement of solidarity against imperialism's conspiracies. Defend the Zimbabwean revolution! US, UK, South Africa — Hands off Zimbabwe!



NICARAGUA: WORKERS TAKE OVER FACTORIES

By Brian Lyons

ON 19 February, the workers at the El Caracol food processing factory in Managua took over the plant and began control of production. The following day the workers were visited by the Sandinista Liberation Front (FSLN) representative, Carlos Nunez, and Nicaragua's attorney general, Ernesto Castillo.

After four hours of discussion the factory was formally placed under the direction of the government. Since then they have held daily assemblies and have continued to run the plant, managing to increase production by 66 per cent in only 12 days.

The takeover of El Caracol was a response to private capitalists' refusing to participate in the 1980 National Plan of economic reactivation.

Sabotage

Private companies are involved in economic sabotage, removing their investments from production units. By the end of February, a further six companies had been taken over by the workers and five of them are maintaining full production.

The FSLN has used the takeover of El Caracol as a model for all workers to follow in cases of capitalist sabotage. Writing in the 22 February issue of *Sandinista Power*, the FSLN hailed the action as exemplary, adding: 'Workers control must be carried out so as to prevent a halt in production or the destruction of enterprises by their owners...'

These beginnings of workers' control are a vindication of the words of the inspirer of the FSLN, Sandino, that only the workers and peasants in Nicaragua will continue to the end.

Deepening

These words are now being put into practice in a way that testifies to a deepening of the class struggle.

The FSLN is encouraging the organisation of the working masses through building their unions, arming the workers into militias, promoting mass mobilisations and advocating workers' control. A revolution is on the march.

The second recent event of importance was the decision of the US government to freeze a loan of

75m dollars to Nicaragua. This loan has been pending for several months and on 27 February, in an extraordinary secret session of the House of Representatives — only the third such secret session in the 150-year history of this body — a narrow majority of five votes gave approval to the loan under strict conditions.

Although much of the loan was earmarked for the private sector of the economy, the loan has since been frozen.

What could previously have been described as willful hesitancy by US imperialism has now hardened into open hostility. It is an act that coincides with and directly aids the Nicaraguan capitalists' aim of destabilising the economy.

Consequently the Nicaraguan government has been forced to turn to the Soviet Union for major economic aid and has just sent a high-powered delegation to Moscow, headed by Tomás Borge, founding member of the FSLN and Minister of the Interior.

Despite the many advances of the revolution, Nicaragua today faces enormous difficulties. Confronted with a reconstruction programme costing at least £1,300m, the 1980 National Plan is already two months behind schedule.

The FSLN has warned the workers: 'If acts of sabotage take place during the coming months, thousands of workers could face unemployment, thus provoking the instability that the 1980 Economic Plan aims to avoid.'

The aim of US imperialism is to exploit the devastation inflicted by Somoza; to suffocate the revolution economically in the hope of dividing and demoralising the people, thereby creating more favourable conditions to drown the revolution in blood at a later stage.

Whether through direct or indirect intervention, the fundamental drive of the Carter administration is towards the nightmare of another Chile in Central America. The Nicaraguans

themselves are conscious of this danger which is why one of the main slogans in Managua today is: **Nicaragua will not be another Chile!**

Building socialism in a country like Nicaragua that has been devastated by civil war is no easy task. The Nicaraguan capitalists, backed up by both the Carter administration and the Thatcher government in Britain which is also refusing aid, will do anything they can to make that task more difficult.

Unlike British and American capitalists working people in Britain have nothing to lose from the reconstruction of the Nicaraguan economy. They have everything to gain from the building of socialism in Nicaragua and the weakening of British and American imperialism as world powers. Solidarity, concrete solidarity, can enormously strengthen the fight for socialism in Nicaragua.

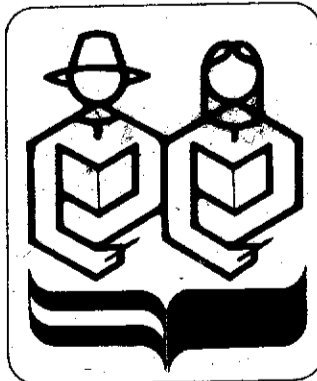
Children's crusade 1980: teaching 900,000 adults to read and write

by Megan Martin

ON 30 March, under the slogan 'Literacy is Liberation', Nicaragua will launch a campaign to liberate 900,000 Nicaraguans by the end of July. This is the estimate of the number of people over the age of 10 who do not know how to read and write. It represents nearly half the population. Many of the illiterates are adults; many of the 180,000 'teachers' organised into literacy brigades are youths of 11.

Plans and preparations for the literacy crusade began in August '79, two weeks after the victory over Somoza. The brigades are ready to begin work but they need materials. They need tapes and cassettes. They need 650,000 books which they cannot print because they do not have the paper. They need \$20m.

The French revolutionary youth organisation, the JCR, has set itself a target of 50,000 francs



for the crusade by the end of April. In Britain we have been slow off the mark but the Nicaraguan Co-ordinating Committee in London has now set up a Campaign for Education in Nicaragua which has set itself the task of raising £20,000 by the end of July.

In February a delegation from Nicaragua met Ann Sutherland of the international department of the National Union of Teachers and received from her a commitment to support the crusade. One of the

delegation also met representatives from the Inner London Teachers Association; they agreed to support the crusade and to help organise a special meeting at the coming NUT conference.

The international department of the Labour Party has shown enthusiasm for taking up the campaign and Arthur Scargill has committed himself to raising it in the Yorkshire NUM.

These offers of support need to be consolidated. But even more importantly, youth and youth organisations in Britain must come into the campaign and make it their own.

The literacy crusade is not a campaign for a traditional educational system, repressive and authoritarian. The old text-books of Somoza have been replaced by text-books organised around the problems of the revolution. All those who learn to read and write will not only learn letters and words, but will also acquire a new social and political conscience. The literacy campaign is integral to the consolidation of the Nicaraguan revolution.

Health as a first priority

SINCE coming to power in July last year, the Government of National Reconstruction (GRN) has implemented a radical programme of Health care.

The new Ministry of Health has:

- * Vaccinated two thirds of the entire population against polio, tetanus, diphtheria, measles and other illnesses;
- * Fumigated some 24,548 houses against the everpresent danger of malaria;
- * Despatched 25 medical brigades to attend to sugar cane and coffee plantation workers;
- * Created a special education programme of nine courses for training auxiliaries in nursing, dietetics, laboratory examinations, anaesthesia and basic sanitation;
- * Installed 4,200 new latrines, twice the number for the whole of 1978;
- * Made free all medical prescriptions;

Moreover, plans are already underway to reconstruct the hospitals destroyed by Somoza during the civil war. Work has also begun on the building of a National Children's Hospital and five clinics, with plans to build a further 150 clinics in the near future.

Ambitious

These are only a small sample of the ambitious preventive health measures taken by the GRN. Free health care for its people will require approximately £10m. New hospitals must be built, new doctors trained to replace those who have died or fled the country, and vast quantities of medical supplies and equipment found. The following are examples of the costs involved:

Item	cost \$
Reconstruction of the hospitals and clinics	5,141,986
67 refrigerators	18,100
40 sets of diagnostic equipment	2,800
8 sets of surgical equipment	3,218
12 machines for anaesthesia	54,000
6 operating tables	4,860
12 suction apparatuses	6,800
18 microscopes	36,900
71 ambulances and other vehicles for mobile care	783,000
120 sets of materials for childbirth	27,000

The Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign in Britain is already organising medical aid to Nicaragua, with regional committees in the North and South of England responsible for raising materials or money for the reconstruction of the medical service in Esteli and Rivas respectively.

In addition, both the National Union of Public Employees and Confederation of Health Service Employees have promised to support the campaign nationally. This will be followed up shortly by the publication of a comprehensive pamphlet entitled *Health in Nicaragua: Past, Present and Future*. At the solidarity conference this weekend, discussion will take place with the aim of issuing an urgent national appeal for funds to be raised over the next six to nine months.

Trade unionists, nurses or doctors who wish to help in this campaign should write to the Nicaraguan Medical Aid Committee, 20 Compton Terrace, London N1.



Work has now begun on the building of a National Children's Hospital and five clinics in Nicaragua.



Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

900 ATTEND HUGO BLANCO RALLY

HUGO Blanco, a Peruvian revolutionary and a leading member of the Fourth International, was given an enthusiastic reception by 900 militants at the Friends Meeting House in London last Friday. He had come to speak about his presidential election campaign.

Also speaking at the rally were: Tariq Ali of the International Marxist Group; South Yorkshire steelworkers' leader, Bernard Connolly, a representative of the Zimbabwean Patriotic Front; Maurice Keoghly, of Peoples Democracy; and Anne Henderson, from the youth organisation Revolution.

The rally was chaired by Michael Boulter, deputy convenor of British Oxygen, Hackney, and a member of the IMG.

Bernard Connolly received a huge ovation when he brought greetings from the 'Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire'. He explained how rank-and-file steel workers had fought for solidarity actions from other workers and expressed their determination to carry through the struggle to victory.

The main theme of the rally was anti-imperialism. Tariq Ali and Maurice Keoghly both hailed the victory in Zimbabwe and related it to the struggle against imperialism world-wide. Maurice Keoghly called for a stepping up of the fight in solidarity with the H-Block prisoners, now facing their fourth year 'on the blanket'.

A representative of the Patriotic Front was given a standing ovation when he explained the significance of the victory in Zimbabwe for the struggle against imperialism in Africa.

Anne Henderson of Revolution recalled the role that youth had played in revolutionary struggles world-wide. In Zimbabwe and Iran

youth had been in the forefront of the struggle. In Nicaragua, young people — sometimes only 11 years old — had led the fight against Somoza and were now leading the reconstruction effort.

Anne outlined the next steps for building Revolution as an independent revolutionary youth organisation. These included the Youth March for jobs being organised in South Wales over Easter and the founding conference of the organisation in May.

Hugo Blanco gave a moving account of the struggles of the workers and peasants in Peru. He outlined how half the population were unemployed; how most of the working people lived in dire poverty and how over the past 20 years the Peruvian masses had fought back against this exploitation.

Today revolutionaries in Peru were organising an election campaign with Hugo Blanco as presidential candidate, despite the attempts of the bourgeoisie to prevent him standing and to disenfranchise the millions of illiterate people.

The campaign was not about building support for one man, Hugo Blanco said, but a conscious step in the construction of a revolutionary party which could lead the Peruvian masses to victory.

The audience responded enthusiastically by donating over £1,000 to Blanco's campaign and the campaigns of the Fourth International. More than £270 was collected at the end of the meeting in support of the steel strikers.



Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

ABOVE: Patriotic Front speaker acknowledges applause. Below Hugo Blanco

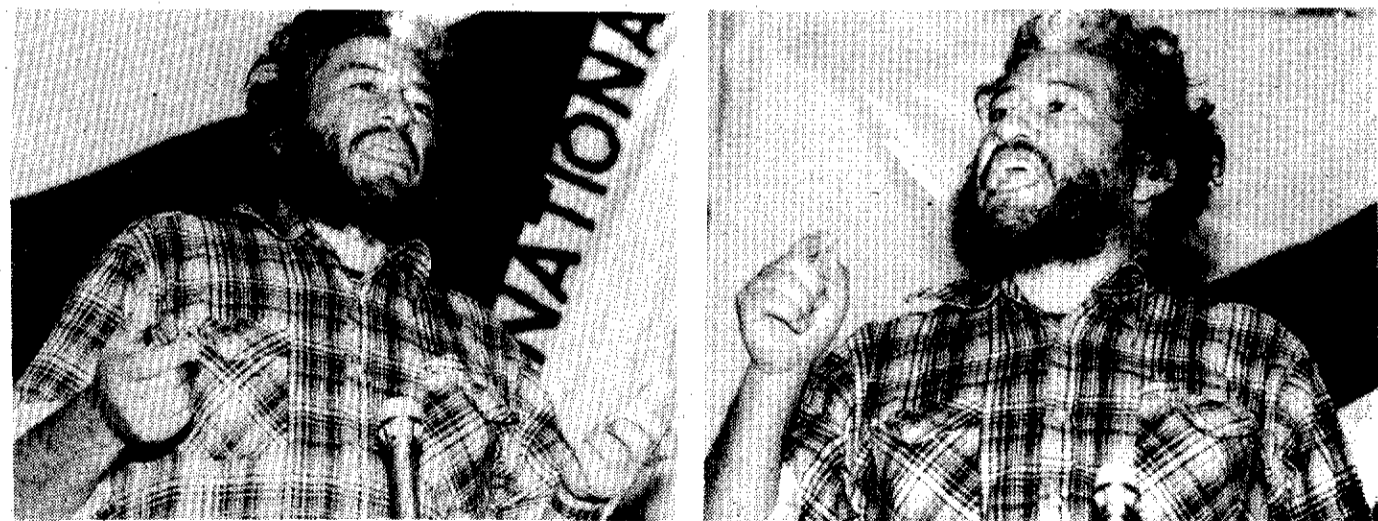


Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

The Revolutionary Unity Caucus of the International Socialist Alliance has decided to implement fusion with the International Marxist Group. The ISA, which had been formed to promote the cause of revolutionary unity, split last autumn because those of us in the caucus continued to defend democratic centralism as a method of organisation, and continued to press for fusion with the IMG, with the longer-term perspective of fusion with the Socialist Workers Party.

We were afraid that the lack of immediate success of the IMG's unity offensive would result in a sectarian backlash, so we were encouraged by the clarification at the IMG's recent conference of its position on regroupment, and by the reaffirmation of the commitment to work for revolutionary unity. The IMG must help to answer the most urgent need of the British working class — the formation of a united revolutionary organisation capable of posing a realistic alternative to the blind alley of reformism.

The decisions of the IMG conference to

ISA militants join the IMG

THE Revolutionary Unity Caucus of the International Socialist Alliance has decided to fuse with the International Marxist Group. This represents, for the IMG, an important addition to our forces. The caucus includes a number of very experienced militants, including comrades with long experience in the revolutionary movement, among them Harry Wicks, one of the founders of British Trotskyism. Below, we publish their statement announcing the fusion.

make a turn to the working class, to help build an independent revolutionary youth organisation, and to adopt a more positive attitude to the only revolutionary organisation with a significant base in the industrial working class, namely the SWP, represents a step forward in the political development of the IMG.

Our decision to fuse with the IMG reflects a genuine convergence of our political positions and an appreciation on our part of what we consider to be the IMG's political strengths. In

particular we are attracted by the emphasis on the need for transitional politics; the position on the autonomous movements of the oppressed; socialist democracy; internal democracy in the revolutionary organisation; and the membership of the Fourth International.

On these and on other questions, we have been struck by what we regard as the positive development of the IMG over the past few years, and especially since the launch of

Socialist Challenge and the unity offensive.

While the SWP is the largest revolutionary organisation in Britain today, and will have a vital role to play in the formation of any future revolutionary party, we have a number of political differences with the SWP — on frontism in the unions and how to apply the united front tactic; on the need for transitional politics; on the correct way to build an international organisation; and on internal democracy.

We continue to have some political differences with the IMG too, and some differences with its political style, but do not constitute a faction or tendency. We have been impressed by the internal democracy of the IMG, which we are confident will enable us to make a distinctive political contribution which, despite our depleted numbers, our long collective experience can offer. We feel that we would gain from joining an organisation which is a member of the only revolutionary international which is seriously organising militants on an international scale.

LETTERS

LETTERS exceeding 400 words will normally be cut to ensure that the maximum number of readers can express their views. Anonymous letters will only be published in exceptional circumstances, but real names will be withheld from publication on request.

Disgusting Slur

YOUR article on the way Ford in Dagenham is obtaining steel shipments (13 March) included a disgusting slur on the train drivers' union ASLEF, with the statement: 'The loading is courtesy of TGWU members and delivery is by ASLEF-powered British Rail.'

This implies that ASLEF members are deliberately scabbing on the steelworkers. In fact the union was among the first to officially call for a boycott of the movement of all steel within the first week of the strike, and since then trainloads of steel have been rusting away in sidings.

If Ford is using its container waggons to transport steel, the train crew have no way of knowing because the containers would be sealed and padlocked by Ford with no information about their contents.

If International Marxist Group members in Ford have proof that the containers are being used for shipping steel, I suggest that they pass the information on to ASLEF's executive and to the union's local branch. I am sure that a satisfactory result would be obtained.
P M GRANT, ASLEF Paddington Branch

Beware the fate of Komsomol

I WAS extremely surprised to read your unsigned report on the 'Rebel' youth conference (20 March). If your reporting of Simon Turner, the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, is correct then all one can say is that the model they have in mind owes more to the dreaded J Stalin than to Lenin.

The Komsomol (youth organisation) which grew in the Soviet Union after 1917 was totally committed to the revolution, but maintained and jealously guarded its independence from the party.

In fact, the highest growth point of the Komsomol was in those early years when the dead weight of Stalinism had not crushed its creative urge. From 22,000 members in November 1918 it grew to 400,000 in 1920. It was not subjected to any central control.

It was often gripped by what Simon Turner, with hindsight, would describe as 'sectarian squabbling'. In 1920-1 there was a strong opposition current in the Ukrainian Komsomol on the national question. They wanted an independent youth organisation for the Ukraine.

The independence of the Komsomol resulted in a large section of the organisation supporting the Left Opposition against Stalin. Stalin wreaked his revenge. Purges and dissolution followed, and in 1928 the Great Leader stated: 'The Komsomol is an instrument of the party and a tool for doing the party's work.'

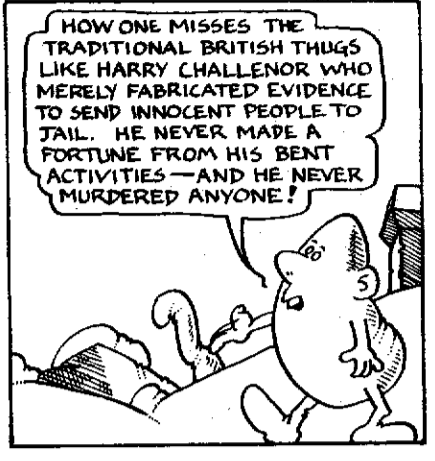
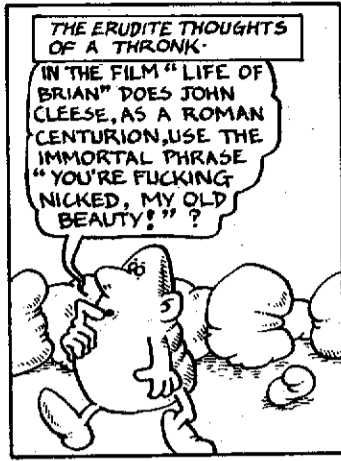
That is the carbon-copy of how the Workers Revolutionary Party and Militant view a youth organisation. It appears that the SWP has joined their ranks. They have the right to do so, but let them not pretend that they represent the spirit of Leninist orthodoxy!

DAVID WAX, London

No serious alternative

I WAS suprised to read Tariq Ali's rendering (6 March) of my New Left Review 119 article on Afghanistan. It is a travesty of what I wrote.

Tariq states that I offer no serious alternatives to the policy of Hafizullah Amin, yet on pages 39-41



there is a whole section entitled 'What Were the Alternatives?'. Tariq proposes that a constituent assembly should have been elected; my very first criticism of the Afghan regime is precisely its 'complete absence of concern for the most elementary democratic norms'.

Tariq goes on to say that I fail to discuss the relationship between the Soviet intervention and the question of national self-determination. Again, this is quite untrue. I develop the argument that some foreign military interventions by post-revolutionary states are justifiable — that of the USSR in the Spanish civil war, and of Cuba in Angola being cases in point.

However, such interventions must satisfy two criteria — relating to popular consent, and the degree of response by imperialism. These provide a basis for socialists to assess the Soviet role in Afghanistan of rather more substance than an abstract invocation of non-interference.

Afghanistan will be an issue of major concern to the left for a long time; I can only suggest that comrades read my article itself, rather than relying on Tariq Ali's rather deficient account of it.
FRED HALLIDAY, London W1

General Strike?

I am puzzled by your call for a general strike to kick out the Tory government.

If you are suggesting that the strikers should overthrow the government, then you are calling for an insurrectionary general strike, the purpose of the strike itself being to allow the workers to assemble their forces for an uprising (that is to say arrest Thatcher's government and put Labour in power). Do you really think this is appropriate at the present time?

Alternatively, you may have the idea that a general strike with folded arms would force the government to resign and hold a general election. But is this a sound strategy? The Tories have only to stand their ground and the strikers will either have to resort to overthrow, for which they will be ill-prepared, or return to work before food supplies run out. Trotsky used to say that general strikes exhaust the strikers before they do the enemy; he always insisted that 'it is only one step from the General Strike to armed insurrection'.

In any case, if the real aim of your general strike is to force the Tories to the polls, why aren't you calling now for an early general election? Then, if, after months of a mass campaign (with one-day general strikes by all means), the Tories refused to resign, the labour movement might begin to entertain the idea of revolutionary action — a pre-revolutionary situation. Your slogan would become more appropriate.

Of course, there is a possibility that some Tory outrage may provoke a spontaneous indefinite general strike (i.e. one not called by any political party). As we saw in May-June 1968, the strikers would soon be demanding socialism and revolution, facing the Labour Party with the need to seize power.

For this reason you must write discussion articles explaining the lessons of the great general strikes and revolutions of the past. However, you seem to me too eager

to have workers rush headlong into the highest form of class struggle, while simultaneously keeping them in the dark about its implications.

Dave Bailey, Newham

Concessions to Imperialism

IN REPLY to Jenny Flintoft's letter 'enormous cultural differences' (20 March) I would like to take issue with several points which I consider to be divisive, dangerous, and contrary to the interests of black liberation.

While it is true that the state oppresses West Indians and Asians through different tactics, the overall effect of that oppression is the same — it produces a group of people who are super-exploited and for whom the minimum of services need be provided.

Black people have long since realised the need for black unity to combat their oppression and black youth particularly are experiencing that unity. The Bradford Youth March for Black Freedom; the Black Socialists Alliance and Organization of Women of African and Asian descent are but a few examples of this.

What good does it serve for whites (and from the tone of Jenny Flintoft's letter I can only presume she is white) to glibly quote their personal (and no doubt ideology-induced) impressions of Asian/West Indian relationships? Doubtless, the police and the Home Office would like to believe what she says about Asians feeling 'loathing' and 'contempt' for West Indians. However, I do not believe that to be the case, nor does Jenny Flintoft provide any evidence to support her claims.

The overriding impression I get from fellow black people is one of hostility to the forces that oppress us and anger (dare I say contempt?) at people like Jenny Flintoft who so imperiously tells us what we think and what we feel. Comments like hers serve not to the interests of black liberation, but rather those of black domination.

And then, to top it all, Jenny Flintoft states: 'Asians have tended to arrive in Britain full of hope (otherwise why come?)'. Admittedly many Asians believed in the myth

WHAT'S LEFT

PEOPLES News Service. A fortnightly news report. Available from: Oxford House, Derbyshire St, London E2. Price 35p.
ROOM available for socialist-feminist in NW London. Tel. 01-960 7177.
READ 'Left-Overs' in Time Out? Now read Hudson Pace and Jim Masters. 'Revolutionary Politics as a Hobby'. Intervention No 2. 60p (p&p). Still available: Intervention No 3. Critical Essays on Ernest Mandel. £1.20 (p&p). Buy both £1.50, post free from: Intervention, c/o Loughborough Rd, SW9.
HANDS OFF Ireland! No 10 Major feature in this issue is full-length interview with Sean MacStiofain — former Chief-of-Staff of the Provisional IRA. Comrade MacStiofain's revolutionary analysis of the struggle against imperialism and racism should be read by all socialists in Britain. Other articles include: Terror inside and outside H-Block; reports on the campaign in Britain, 'The Easter Rising'; and the struggle of the women prisoners in Armagh. From RCG Publications Ltd (SW), 29 Raiton Road, London SE24 0LN. Price 30p plus 15p p&p.
TROOPS Out Movement, Camden and Islington branch social. With films of Armagh Women's Prison protest and Long Kesh. Plus music. Sat 29 March, Hemingford Arms, Hemingford Rd, London N1. Entrance 75p (50p wageless). Starts 7.30pm.
CENTRAL Scotland Troops Out Movement: 'Smash H-Block': rally and march. Sat 12 April, Stirling. Assemble Raploch Community Centre, 10.30am. March to Albert Halls, Stirling. Speaker: Harry McShane, 'Red Clydesider', republican socialist and others.
BOLSOVER: 'How to kick out the Tories'. Speaker: Tariq Ali. Thurs 27 March 7.30pm at White Swan, Market Place, Bolsover, Derbyshire.

of Britain as the home of democracy, but those illusions were surely dispelled on arrival at Heathrow and on confronting British immigration officials. For the real reasons why Asians came to Britain, I can only advise Jenny Flintoft to read up the terms 'imperialism' and 'under-development'.

Lastly, might I just add that if black people are expected to see the Campaign Against Immigration Laws as being an organisation campaigning for our rights, it would serve well for other members to take up the points made by Ms Flintoft.

Rashid Meer, Brighton.

Revolutionary

WHY DO the IMG always have to ascribe grandiose schemes to people who sometimes criticize them (and work with them)?

In her report of the LCC-far left debate, Valerie Coultas (20 March) accuses me of 'rejecting both left reformism and revolutionary politics' in favour of a 'third way'. I would not claim to be doing anything so pretentious and foolish.

I simply believe that some — not all — features of present-day Leninist organisation do more to put workers and women off socialist politics than to involve them. By opening up some of the problems behind this, 'Beyond the Fragments' could, I think, help to strengthen revolutionary politics — not play into the hands of the Labour left as Valerie implies.

But, by equating our criticisms with 'a third way' (as if you guard the only true way), you only confirm, I'm afraid, the sort of things we've been criticising.

Hilary Wainwright

The numbers game approach to unity

IF, as you state in 'Our Common Cause' (13 March), revolutionary unity is the equivalent of unity between the Socialist Workers Party and the International Marxist Group, what has happened to the thousands of revolutionary socialists who are in neither group yet who participated in such campaigns as

the Anti Nazi League? What indeed has happened to the thousands (?) who have passed through both organisations in the past decade or have they all become reformists?

In a thinly veiled attack on the authors of *Beyond the Fragments*, you state that 'those who believe that a united revolutionary organisation can be built outside the existing groups through socialist centres and so on are living in a dream world'. Really?

It is a gross caricature to suggest that such centres can only be built apart from existing groups.

Whatever the polemic about 'rank and file groups' versus 'united fronts', the IMG did participate in, for example the Rank and File group in the National Union of Teachers until the SWP's sectarianism necessitated the formation of the STA.

That's the main point — the SWP's manipulatory attitude towards non-party groups and movements, not whether they are united fronts, socialist alliances or centres, rank and file groups or, as the ANL was, neither.

It is the 'numbers game' that lies behind so much of the SWP's sectarianism.

Yet your juggling of membership figures — 3,000 (SWP) + 1,500 (new recruits) = 6,000 — falls into precisely that trap. It is the needs of the situation — a reactionary government intent on slashing the social and industrial wage, in addition to political attacks on women's rights, sexual and racial minorities, civil liberties and so on which demand a mass response.

It is in this context that socialist alliances and centres and other forms of organisation can play their part as well as the IMG. But no, the IMG sees redemption lying in fusion with the SWP.

Could I suggest that instead of dismissing the ideas contained in *Beyond the Fragments* as 'lending weight to Benn's view', as Valerie Coultas maintains in her report on the Debate of the Decade, you ask why it is that the behaviour of the far-left groups in Britain have given comfort to the reformists and put off large numbers of people from joining any group.

I write incidentally as an ex-member of the International Socialists and as a founder member of the Socialist Students Alliance.
TONY GREENSTEIN, Brighton

SCEVENTS

PADDINGTON: 'Tory immigration controls — a new wave in state racism'. Speaker: Bisi Williams. 8pm, Tues 15 April, Labour Party Rooms, 92 Ladbroke Grove W11.
CAMDEN: 'Afghanistan'. Speaker: Phil Hearse, Camden Labour Rooms, Thurs 27 March, 7.30pm.
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD: 'Afghanistan and the New Cold War'. 8pm 28 March at the Oddfellows Arms, 113 London Rd, Apsley. Regular meetings will be taking place on alternate Fridays following this meeting.
STOCKPORT SC Public Meeting: Ireland — Can the Provos bring Socialism? 7.30 Magnet Inn, Wellington Rd North, Stockport.
OLDHAM SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.
STOCKPORT SC sold every Saturday 1pm Mersey Square. Tel. 061-236 4905 for more information.
OXFORD SC supporters sell every Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Commarket.
BRENT SC supporters sell every Sat Morning at the Brent Collective Bookstall in the Trades Hall, Willesden High Rd NW10.
CARDIFF: SC sales Newport Town Centre outside Woolworths 11-12.30; Cardiff British Home Stores 11-12.30. Also available from 106 Books, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.
ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside C&As — for more info ring phone Cofia, 574068.
BATH: SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20296 for more details.

BRADFORD: SC available from Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.
BIRMINGHAM: SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.30, Sat. 10-4. For more info phone 643 9209.
BRIGHTON: For more info phone Nick, 605052.
BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. For more info contact Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.
COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138.

DUNDEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, every Thursday 4-5.30pm, Friday 4-5.30pm, Saturday 11-4pm.
HUDDERSFIELD: SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.
LAMBETH: SC now available at kiosk Brixton tube, Oval tube, Herne Hill British Rail and Tetric Books Clapham.
SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat., Regent St (Brunel Centre).
TESSIDE: SC sales: at Newsfure shops in Cleveland Centre and on Linschoppe Road, Middleborough, and at Greens Bookstall, upstairs in Spencer Market, Stockton High Street.
TOWER HAMLETS: SC supporters sell papers every Friday 5-6pm Watney Mkt, Sat 11-12.30pm Whitechapel tube, Sunday 10.30-12.00 Brick Lane.
NEWYORK: SC sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queens Rd Market, Upton Park.
PORDSE: SC sale at Gate 25, Body Plant, Dagenham. Week 9-9.45pm, Thurs. 7-7.45pm.

NEW MUSIC

AS I sat and watched the film of a 1975 reunion of some of the finest musicians to come out of the Kansas City jazz boom of the 1930s, another emotion stirred with the elation which came from watching them and hearing their music.

It was anger. Anger that Joe Turner, who began singing 'shake, rattle and roll...' in the '30s is not a household name. Anger that Charlie Parker and Lester Young could only be in the reunion on scratchy black and white film clips.

Anger that these great black jazz and blues musicians, whose talent sparkles forty and fifty years after they started, are less well known than their white imitators over those forty years — not to mention the fame afforded to groups with only a couple of years' experience which are pushed on our radios today.

Experience

But the music has continued to develop for the same reason its creators are hidden and their history suppressed: they are black, products of life in black America.

To get a feel of the tradition of jazz, try to see the film *The Last of The Blue Devils* now on in London at the Electric Cinema.

But don't ignore the exciting developments of new jazz. You have to look for this 'new music', as its creators prefer to call it; it is still being suppressed but it is very much alive.

The highlight of the Camden Jazz Week earlier this month was the McCoy Tyner sextet. On 14 April the Art Ensemble of Chicago will perform at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London.

These musicians are part of the revolution which began to take hold in black music circles in the United States around the mid-'60s. It is no coincidence that this was also when the message of Malcolm X and black nationalism was sweeping black America.

Like all decisive shifts in what is commonly called jazz music — right from the Blue Devils of the '30s and bebop of the '50s, — the innovations



Milford Graves playing in a street in Harlem.

came from the experience of the Black community.

However, because this new music not only moved in new directions, but also consciously raised black pride and the always present link with Africa, the white record companies and critics have given it a rough ride from the start.

Cecil Taylor, the pianist, is today hailed in jazz circles as a genius. But he began playing the new music in the mid-'50s. He remembers times when he worked as a dishwasher in restaurants where his records were on the juke box.

The inspiration commonly credited with leading this

revolution in music is the 'classic' quartet of saxophonist John Coltrane. Although Coltrane died of cancer in 1967 he is still regarded as a giant of Afro-American music, unsurpassed in his contribution to the new music.

McCoy Tyner, then 20 years old, joined the first Coltrane

quartet (now called the 'classic') when it formed in 1960 and stayed with it until 1965.

So what is this new music? Originally it was called 'free jazz', but the musicians feel that the term 'jazz' has been used by white society to relegate a great musical art form to the status of bar-room entertainment.

Where the new music departs from previous jazz traditions such as bebop is in the freedom of its improvisation from 'the restriction of harmony and time' or from being limited to 'variations on a melody or chord pattern,' according to Valerie Wilmer in her book on the new music, *As Serious As your Life*.

Drums

In fact the new music is solidly rooted in the heritage of black music. Many of its innovators are drummers, like Milford Graves pictured on this page at a street concert in Harlem.

As Valerie Wilmer points out: 'The use of additional percussion as an assertion of black identity, effectively reverses the situation created when the slave owners exerted their control by banning the drum'.

British and American slave owners destroyed all drums. Both reggae and the new music are identified by their drum and percussion beats.

Next Week: *The Blues*.

'The Last of the Blue Devils' is showing at the Electric Cinema, Portobello Road, West London until Saturday 29 March. It will also be shown at Norwich Cinema City, 5-12 May, and at Tyneside Cinema, 23-26 June.

How to find jazz events in your area: The Jazz Centre Society based in London has affiliates in the North and the Midlands. Its newsletter lists jazz events and all new music events.

Write to: JCS, 35 Great Russel St, London WC1.

THE OTHER BOOKSHOP

BLACK NATIONALISM AND THE REVOLUTION IN MUSIC
by Kofsky
Pathfinder Press, £2.45

AS SERIOUS AS YOUR LIFE
by Wilmer
Quartet, £2.95

328 Upper Street,
London, N1 2XQ
(Tel. 01 226-0571).

"My style is the style of the hatred of imperialism"



SANTIAGO Alvarez says of his own work: 'My style is the style of hatred for imperialism'. He is one of Cuba's most popular film makers who has depicted the role of the Cuban and Vietnamese masses in struggle.

Born in Havana in 1919, the son of a Spanish anarchist, he had an early introduction to political reality at the age of five when his father was imprisoned for subversive activities.

He joined the Cuban Communist Party in 1942 and was a founder member of the cultural-political organisation, *Nuestro Tiempo* set up in 1950, to which many other future members of ICAIC (Revolutionary Cuba's film industry institute) also belonged. He worked as a music archivist in Cuban television in the 50s and when ICAIC was founded in 1959 he was appointed head of the Newsreel section.

Acknowledged worldwide within a few years as one of the most original figures in the history of documentary cinema, his work has grown out of this newsreel base. Newsreel taught him to improvise, and he has inspired his team to make the most ingenious use of limited resources — as in *Now* and *LBJ*, indictments of racism and violence in the USA, which are made from newspaper photos, newsreel clips, anything he could get his hands on, assembled into the most hard-hitting montages in contemporary cinema.

What Alvarez has done is to stand the conventions of capitalist newsreel on their head. Fulfilling Lenin's dictum that film begins with actuality, the key to Alvarez's aesthetic is montage (and he has often been compared to Dziga Vertov). Through a montage of attraction and repulsion, anticipation and surprise, eliminating commentary as far as possible, often completely, and using music, subjected to the same procedures, to narrate, he succeeds in rethinking revolutionary rhetoric in the most exemplary cinematic terms.

Alvarez's work, showing at the National Film Theatre from 1-10 April, is the most comprehensive yet seen outside Cuba. Alvarez himself is coming to London for the season and will participate in a seminar organised by the British-Cuba Resource Centre on Friday 4 April at 5pm in NET3 (admission free).



Socialist Challenge



We all live in Harrisburg

NO MORE NUKES

IT was 4am on 28 March 1978. In Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the generators linked to the number two reactor at Three Mile Island were producing 800 megawatts of electrical power. At that time of the day, 40 per cent of the US's electricity was coming from nuclear power stations.

Suddenly, a hundred or more alarms went off in the control room at Three Mile Island. The feedwater pump which supplies the steam generators had tripped, and within 12 seconds the reactor cut out, dropping the power level to 30 megawatts, some 6 per cent of full power.

For the nuclear industry, what happened during the following days and weeks confirmed the resilience of nuclear

hardware. Pennsylvania was protected from the radioactivity contained in the hundred tons of uranium oxide fuel in the reactor core.

For the opponents of nuclear power, we were minutes away from a core melt down and the possible release of radioactive material.

This Saturday, the Anti-Nuclear Campaign, Friends of the Earth, and other organisations have called a demonstration to commemorate Three Mile Island, and to oppose the plans of the Tory government to introduce pressurised water reactors (PWR) to Britain.

Why have the Tories, and the Labour government before them, opted for the nuclear solution?

The Department of Energy and the Atomic Energy Authority say that Britain will be short of something like 40,000 megawatts of energy by the year 2000 and that the only way of filling the gap is by

installing 20 new nuclear power stations.

Their choice is PWR. When other options, such as energy conservation, the increased use of coal, or of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, or wave power could have exactly the same effect, why are they so insistent on the nuclear solution?

Cheap

We used to be told that nuclear electricity would be so cheap that it would not be necessary to meter it. Yet the figures of the South of Scotland Electricity Generating Board show that the cost of nuclear generated electricity last year was 1.6p per kilowatt hour, compared with 1.4p for coal.

With vast amounts of energy required to construct nuclear power stations, it is doubtful that the government's programme would fill the energy gap. It

takes from two to eight years for a reactor to pay back the energy debt incurred in its construction.

A study by the Science Policy Research Unit at Sussex University shows that the load factor of PWRs — the time when they are actually producing electricity — is among the lowest for nuclear reactors.

So why the government's enthusiasm? The answer can partly be found in leaked Cabinet minutes: 'A nuclear programme would have the advantage of removing a substantial portion of electricity production from the dangers of disruption by industrial action by coal miners or transport workers.'

The reason for a nuclear programme, with its secrecy and no-strike clauses, is to ensure political control of energy supply, so that industry still runs and profits are made.

For some time, GEC has been pushing

for a substantial programme of PWRs because they are better profit spinners than the existing advanced gas cooled reactors, which have to be produced on site with massive over-runs in the cost.

Also revealed in the Tory Cabinet minutes is a proposal for the role of the National Nuclear Corporation, in which GEC has a large shareholding, to be strengthened so that it would take full control of nuclear power stations. In other words, the next generation of nuclear power stations would be built and run by private capital.

A mass movement has to be built against these proposals, which entrust the safety of those who live near the reactor sites and of the workers at the plants to GEC's quest for superprofits. Saturday's demonstration is the start of that movement, which needs to develop international links if it is to fight one of capitalism's most international industries.

SUBSCRIBE NOW

Britain: 12 months £12.50; 6 months £ 6.50
Abroad: 12 months — Surface Mail £12.50
— Airmail £18.00

Multi-reader institutions: Double the above rate

Name _____

Address _____

I enclose a donation for the Fighting Fund of _____

Cheques, POs and Money Orders should be made payable to 'Socialist Challenge'.
Complete and return to: Socialist Challenge, 328 Upper Street, London N1.

A FIVER TO FIGHT THE TORIES

ANOTHER attack on working people from the Tory Budget! Anti-Union laws, redundancies, attacks on strike pay, and now a cut in living standards.

The trouble with capitalism is that unless you've already got lots of money it's hard to keep ahead of inflation, let alone improve your living standards. Money makes money for the capitalists.

Socialist Challenge has no stocks of capital or investments. All we have is our ideas and our capacity to help

organise the fightback against the Tory offensive.

So before you reel from the effects of the Budget send us a fiver, quick. It's not worth much after the budget, but we certainly need it. This is the last week of the Fiver to Fight the Tories campaign, and we still need a few hundred pounds to meet our target.

So, let's see those fivers rolling in over the next week — there's no better way to show the Tories what we think of their anti-working class Budget.

Our thanks this week to:

Wolves IMG	£5.00
E Fredenburg	2.50
Camden SC group	11.00
J Webber	1.00
SW Manchester IMG	5.00
Anon	10.00
Hackney IMG	10.00
Islington IMG	50.00
R Stewart	5.00
Preston IMG	17.45
B Sachs	23.00
Nottingham IMG	5.00
Canterbury IMG	10.00
TUC marcher	1.00
YATE supporter	5.00
Cardiff IMG	43.50
Charlie and Morag	5.00
Clive and Sue	5.00
Rob	2.00
Huddersfield IMG	25.00
Week's Total	£241.45
Grand Total	£2,313.00