

Socialist Challenge

CONSPIRACY

CONSPIRACY! That's the accusation made by GMWU general secretary David Basnett against the Tory press. He accused Margaret Thatcher of plotting with Fleet Street editors to organise the barrage of anti-union propaganda that preceded the Day of Action on 14 May.

Basnett's is the voice of 'moderation'. Even the *Daily Telegraph* says so.

Yet Basnett has revealed that some two weeks before the TUC's Day of Action a meeting between Margaret Thatcher and Fleet Street editors was held at 10 Downing Street.

He says the facts as reported to him were that 'Mrs Thatcher said she would have no objection if the newspapers concerned found it possible to rubbish the trade unions in this period'.

Meeting

Basnett named the newspapers as the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Express*, *The Times*, and the *Financial Times*.

Editors or senior editorial staff on these papers have strongly denied Basnett's allegation.

Yet the comment from the Prime Minister's office last weekend was a give away. There was no denial, merely the remark that the allegation was 'very odd'. 'Such a meeting would be very uncharacteristic,' the spokesperson added.

Government officials do not treat lightly a claim that the media's most virulent tirade against the labour movement and its leadership this side of the 1926 General Strike was plotted at 10 Downing Street.

That Fleet Street was unanimous in its denunciation of the 'Day of Shame' is no secret. That every conceivable propaganda device was used by the press barons in their efforts to demobilise the TUC's (half-hearted) call to action and to demoralise trades unionists is yesterday's news.

But the revelation that the Tory press editors sat down with the Tory Prime Minister to plan a huge 'rubbishing' operation of the mass challenge to government policies certainly is news. Anything but an outright denial can be taken as tacit confirmation.

The conspiracy — that is the word for the secret planning of such operations — could have been taken from the manuals of the CIA, except that Tory governments were up to such activities long before President Nixon's favourite agency was established.

Thatcher's government has a great deal to conspire about. On Saturday it was announced that the rate of inflation leapt to 21.8 per cent last month — double the rate of a year ago, when the Tories took office, and twice the present average in other Western countries.

Prices

There's no chance of it stopping there. Earlier last week, buried under the barrage against the Day of Action, price increases that will hit every working class home were announced.

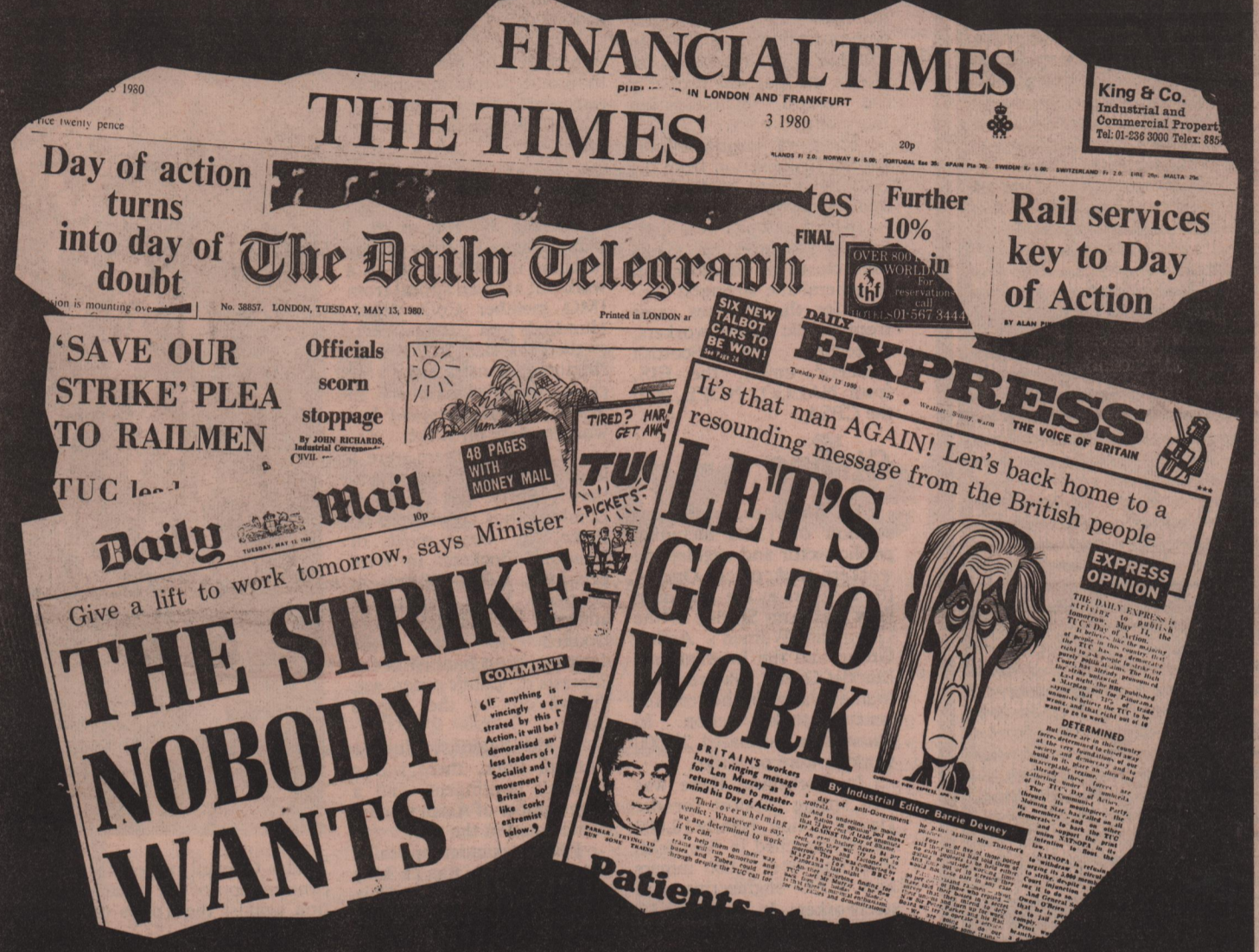
Gas charges are up by a giant 29 per cent. For the second time this year, electricity charges have been raised, this time by 10 per cent.

Under the Tories' instructions, these nationalised industries have to make a profit — which is then shelled out to the rich in tax cuts.

Thatcher's is the most class-conscious government for decades. To defeat the working class it needs to be. Despite the Tory offensive and the TUC's weak response, between one and two million people took action on 14 May.

There is one thing the Tories' conspiracies can't stand up to — a general strike to kick them out.

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Welcome to the land of the free



THIS is one of the sights which earlier this week greeted the Cuban 'refugees' as they arrived in Miami, Florida.

A black is forced to lie on the ground, a cop stands over him with a gun in one hand and the lead of an alsatian dog in the other. And this, the Cubans are told, is the land of the free, of democracy, of opportunity for all.

The reality is somewhat different. It was expressed in the black rebellion in Miami; sparked off by another example of US justice when an all-white jury acquitted four white ex-cops after they had beaten a black to death.

There was more to it than this single case of one law for blacks and no law for whites. Miami is a microcosm of the US, reflected in such facts that for blacks in the city the unemployment rate is 18 per cent, more than double the figure for whites.

For the majority of whites, Miami is the playground, the paradise or the holiday resort where they retire. For blacks, the city means squalor and the ghetto or, if they get uppity, police dogs growling at them as they lie prostrate in the streets.

At least 19 died when the ghettos could take it no longer. Most of the dead were black. That is what life and death is about in the United States. Have a nice time, Cubans!

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.....

HOMENEWS

WHAT HAPPENED DAY OF ACTION

NOT much of the action on 14 May made it on to the TV screens or into the *Express* and the *Sun*. But in Scotland and the North in particular there were big demonstrations and wide-spread strike action.

CLIVE TURNBULL and DES TIERNEY report.

In Scotland, the Scottish TUC demonstrations were the largest for many years. In Glasgow 20,000 people marched in the largest demonstration since 1971. In Edinburgh 7,000 took to the streets in what was probably the largest demonstration there since the war.

There was strong support for the strike action from the National Union of Railwaymen, steelworkers and miners — 16 of the 19 pits were shut. Several engineering plants were closed in Glasgow, but in general the strongest support for the marches came from public sector workers, especially the Scottish teachers' union, the EIS, from NALGO, NUPE, and the CPSA.

Strong

In Aberdeen, a demonstration of 1,400 including public sector and engineering workers took place. One of the speakers at the Aberdeen rally was Ann Shirley of the Grampian Women's Action Group and the International Marxist Group, who received loud applause for her call for general strike action. In Dundee an estimated 20,000 workers were on strike.

In Yorkshire, there was also strong support for the Day of Action. Nearly 10,000 people marched in Sheffield, including over 3,000 miners and 1,500 engineering and steelworkers. In Yorkshire 62 out of 66 pits were

closed, as were steel plants in Rotherham and Sheffield.

At the massive City Hall rally in Sheffield, Arthur Scargill called for mass action to force an early general election to get the Tories out. A thousand people marched in Barnsley, while a demonstration of 500 took place in Doncaster.

Swelled

At the Warrington steel plant a mass meeting on the morning of 14 May led to a walk-out after an appeal from IMG member Colin Herd. Hundreds of steelworkers swelled the size of the Warrington demonstration, to the cheers of other marchers. In York and Huddersfield bus workers were on strike.

In London, there were a large number of demonstrations. Forty per cent of London's bus crews were on strike, as were most of London's dockers. In West London, 3,000 rallied at Southall Park, after an attempt by Ealing's Tory Council to have the demonstration banned in the interests of 'public order' was thrown out by the Appeal Court.

In the demonstration to Southall Park, there was a women's contingent, and a large number of Asian women participated in the rally.

Pete Alexander appealed for support for the 21 May women's picket of the Chix factory, and Andy Lilley, assistant secretary of Ealing

Mirror, Mirror on the wall So Benn was right after all

THE hysteria of the Tory press against 14 May was not exactly a surprise, but perhaps some people in the labour movement expected a different approach from the *Daily Mirror*.

Last year, the *Mirror* got into a big argument with Tony Benn, who said it wasn't a paper of the labour movement. The *Daily Mirror* didn't much like that. In fact, it called Benn a liar. It said that everyone knew that the *Mirror* is the paper of British Labour. Several vicious editorials were devoted to slamming poor Tony.

But then, on 1 May, the *Mirror* seemed to show its working class colours. In a special edition it lambasted the Tories with page after page of abuse and contempt for the Thatcher government — a brilliant demolition of the 'richest cabinet for fifty years'. Decisive proof you might think.

Ah, but then along came 14 May. After some initial hesitation, our friends at Holborn Circus chimed in with the *Express*, the *Sun* and the rest in condemning the TUC's Day of Action. Why the contradiction? What had changed in two weeks?

The answer is not so difficult to find. 1 May, you will remember, was the day of the local council elections. The *Mirror's* special edition had been planned three months in advance. It was purely and simply propaganda for the Labour Party to try to get the biggest possible vote against the Tories.

The *Mirror*, as Tony Benn said, is the paper of the Labour right; the paper of Callaghan, Healey and the rest. But it doesn't like the left, inside or outside the Labour Party. Neither does it reflect or support working class struggles. Over 14 May it faithfully reflected the views of Dennis Healey.

The real forum for protest, said Healey, is not the streets, but parliament. The only day of 'action' that matters is polling day. In other words wait until 1984, don't struggle, rely on the likes of Callaghan and Healey.

Awaiting further evidence, of the *Mirror's* attachment to the cause of the labour movement, at this stage we prefer to believe Tony Benn.



Photo: SOCIALIST CHALLENGE

Trades Council, called for a continuation of the organisation against the Tories on a permanent basis.

Five hundred people demonstrated outside the Chix factory in Slough, where Asian workers are striking for union recognition.

In Wandsworth, the trades council organised a demonstration from the occupied St Benedicts hospital to an anti-Tory festival, attended by a total of 5,000 people on Clapham Common. The festival was preceded by a big teachers' rally after staff at 60 local schools came out on strike.

Forty local groups and campaigns had stalls at the festival, which was addressed by a number of speakers, including IMG members Islay Fullerton from the local NUT

THE TORY PRESS AND HOW TO FIGHT IT

Socialist Challenge's new pamphlet on what lies behind the mass media's assault on the Day of Action and how the labour movement can strike out for press freedom.

Every militant's guide to battling with the press barons, for only 5p!

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association and Nick Williams, secretary of the trades council. Following the success of the festival, the trades council plans a similar venture later in the summer.

Several other demonstrations of over a thousand took place in London, including a 3,000-strong march along Fleet Street led by printworkers.

In the Manchester area a total of some 9,000 people demonstrated, including 5,000 in central Manchester,

with other demonstrations in surrounding towns and suburbs. Five of the city's ten bus garages were out on strike, but most support came from white-collar and public sector workers.

In Birmingham 3,500 people marched to a city centre rally, including delegations from BL's Rover Solihull and Drews Lane plants.

Numerous other smaller actions took place, among them 3,000 who marched in

On the buses

By Barry Johnson
TGWU, Princess Rd bus depot, Manchester

In Manchester the media's assault on the Day of Action focussed on the fact that the buses would be running. Granada Reports televised a confrontation between union officials and a mass meeting of bus workers who were not prepared to take any action.

What happened was a little different. At 4.30am on 14 May, 12 of us assembled to picket the Princess Rd depot. Normally over two hundred buses would have left by 9am. On the Day of Action only five scabs defied the picket line.

At Northenden only two buses went out. None went out from Frederick Road, Altrincham and Salford depots were also out.

At 7am some of us went up to the city centre to turn around the cross-town services that come into our area. With the branch banner propped up against a bus shelter we were able to stop a majority of the buses.

Later 50 of us joined 5,000 other marchers on the Manchester demonstration.

In the Princess Rd depot the decision to come out on 14 May was largely motivated by what was going on in Greater Manchester transport, the effects of cuts, and harassment by local management.

In other depots, however, the general feeling was that there was a lack of a focus for action. Many felt that a day of half-hearted protest would not be particularly effective.

Among those depots which stayed in were Howard Rd and Birchfield Rd, traditionally two of the most militant. If the TUC builds its next protest action with more enthusiasm even fewer buses will run in Manchester.

ON THE



Bristol, 2,000 in Leeds, 2,000 in Bradford, and 1,400 in Nottingham.

In terms of strikes, between one and two million people stayed away from work — including miners, steelworkers, electricians, bus workers, rail workers, and others in South Wales; print workers, bus workers, railway workers and something like 50,000 local government workers in London; and a total of a quarter of a million workers in Scotland.

A total of about 100,000 people took part in demonstrations across the country.

Perhaps the biggest weakness in support was in engineering and large-scale manufacturing, possibly reflecting the move to the right in the AUEW. With a firm lead from the TUC the number of those taking action would easily have been doubled. The facts of what happened on 14 May show that the will to fight is there.

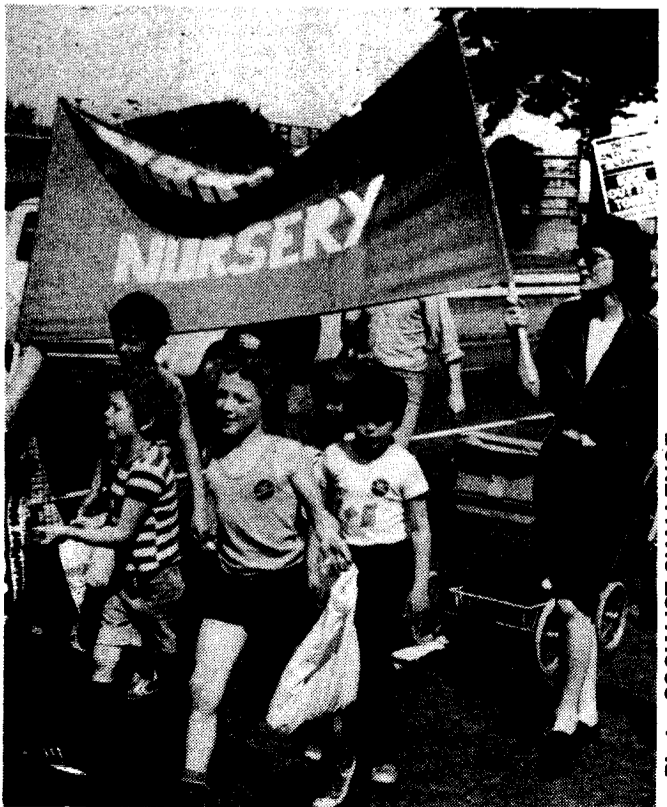


Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

Photo: SOCIALIST CHALLENGE



14 May - Victory or defeat?

BETWEEN one and two million on strike. Tens of thousands demonstrating against the Tories — that was 14 May. But despite this response from hundreds of thousands of workers, the Tory Party and its press allies presented the TUC's Day of Action as a victory against the working class.

Why has this occurred? PHIL HEARSE looks at 14 May and its aftermath.

14 May represented by far the largest action so far against the Tories. At first sight, between one and two million on strike and tens of thousands of demonstrators against Tory policies hardly represents a 'victory' for the Tories.

But in the period leading up to the Day of Action, the Tory leadership and the unprecedented press barrage upped the stakes enormously.

A challenge was thrown at the feet of the TUC leaders — to carry out an enormous mobilisation of their members, or have 14 May counted as a defeat. Murray and Co entirely failed to rise to that challenge; the only effective reply they could have made was to go all out; to vehemently denounce the Tory press; to make it clear they were not prepared to be bullied.

But instead the TUC leadership prevaricated.

The strategy of the *Express*, the *Sun*, the *Mail* and the rest was to *appeal over the heads* of the trade union leaders to their members. The mass media effectively said to rank-and-file trades unionists: 'Murray is leading you nowhere. On 14 May you will lose a day's pay for nothing. Not many people will strike. Don't put yourself on a limb for nothing.'

This line of argument was backed by the decision of the High Court against the print unions; that their instruction to members at Express Newspapers to strike was illegal. NATSOPA's refusal to withdraw the instruction provided the high point of resistance to Thatcher's rule on 14 May, and Express management duly withdrew its threat to sack the print-workers who took action.

The only reason that the Tories' onslaught could be effective was because most of the unions had made strike action *optional*. They did not issue clear instructions for mass strike action. Yet it was not only a firm lead at this level that was lacking.

Leaflets

Millions and millions of copies of the Tory newspapers argued the case against the TUC action, but hardly anything was done by the unions to counter this with arguments of their own.

They should have produced tens of thousands of leaflets. Union districts should have organised hundreds upon hundreds of meetings to explain the case for 14 May. In the event the case of the unions, the working class point of view, went by default.

In the light of this, the fact that *so many* thousands of workers took strike action is remarkable, and represents a glimpse of the deep-seated hatred and frustration with which this government is regarded.

The response to the call was uneven, area by area, sector by sector. The biggest response came in areas like Scotland, South Wales, South Yorkshire and Merseyside. This repeated the pattern of the general election, reflecting the militant traditions of those areas. More than that, it showed that where there was a militant lead: where there was even the making of a class-conscious leadership — as in South Wales and the Yorkshire mines — there was a good response.

By raising the stakes of this conflict, the Tory offensive put the TUC leadership on the spot. Murray and the other members of the General Council could only have turned the situation around by going all-out to have a massive mobilisation of the rank and file. This they were not prepared to do; they never wanted a one-day general strike or anything like it.

Petrified

As Murray said: 'We achieved everything we wanted to on 14 May.' Precisely. Nothing scares the union bureaucrats more than the thought of the membership, in their millions, taking strike action. The dynamic towards a general strike petrifies them. They wanted just a 'protest'. If the propaganda barrage of the press made that protest ineffective, that was a price they were prepared to pay.

There was a deep-seated cynicism about the Day of Action, even among the militants. The reason for that is obvious. The arguments of the Tory press — that one-day action would affect little — struck a chord. The one-day action was completely unconnected with any *perspective* for on-going action or long-term plan to kick out the Tories.

14 May, as a 'protest', had no specific demands attached to it. It was simply 'to raise the level of public debate', and to 'get the government to change course'.

Such a perspective had an air of complete unreality about it. Anyone with the least bit of sense could see that the Tories are not going to be turned aside by 'protest'. This is the most determined and right-wing government since the war. What is needed is mass industrial action leading to a general strike. That's the only thing which will succeed in throwing the Tories out.

Whatever the short-term demoralisation resulting from the relative lack of impact of 14 May, it will continue to have reverberations inside the labour movement. Thousands of people could see that they were being let down by their leaders; they could see that if a fight against the media offensive took place, it was possible to build a much bigger action.

Socialists have the job of turning this frustration from demoralisation and anger into determination to push the struggle forward. We have to continue a fight inside the labour movement to commit it at every level to mass action against the Tories. The targets have to be the special Labour Party conference on 31 May, and then beyond that the Trades Union Congress in the autumn.

But it is impossible to fight the right wing and to commit the trade union leaders to action without building an *organised left wing* in the unions. That is the key to whole situation. Without an organised left, 14 May will be not a beginning, but the precursor of more demoralisation and defeat.

Printworkers Walk Out on Tory Law

By Geoffrey Sheridan

THE printworkers who led the march past the *Daily Express* offices in Fleet Street on 14 May had a few remarks to address to the newspaper which had begun the tirade against the 'Day of Shame' and then gone to the High Court to have strike action declared illegal.

Their main comment, with fists raised, was 'Rubbish!'. To those journalists who had remained in the Express building, barricaded behind corrugated iron sheets, they shouted 'Scabs!', adding the call for 'Matthews out' to the now standard 'Thatcher out'.

The refusal by the leadership of NATSOPA to withdraw its instruction to members at Express Newspapers to strike on the Day of Action represents the first blow to the Tories' Employment Bill.

That is what Mr Justice Griffiths was trying to put into force when he ruled in the High Court that unions had no legal grounds for inducing their members to breach their contracts for a 'political stoppage'.

NATSOPA won hands down. Victor Matthews, the boss and in effect editor-in-chief of Express Newspapers, didn't dare go back to the courts when it became clear that the union wouldn't withdraw its circular. He knew that his sheets of shame, as one NATSOPA official described them, would be in jeopardy if any union officer were jailed.

For the same reason, Matthews' threat to sack printworkers who did not turn up for work on the night of 13 May quickly evaporated.

The print union raised two fingers to the law and by taking their defiance on to the streets they showed that the courts and management are powerless when the price of enforcing the Tories' justice is an industrial standstill.

Matthews managed to publish the *Daily Express* and *Daily Star* in Manchester on 14 May, and so for good measure the print unions shut down the papers on 15 May in both London and Manchester.

Reg Brady, NATSOPA father of the chapel

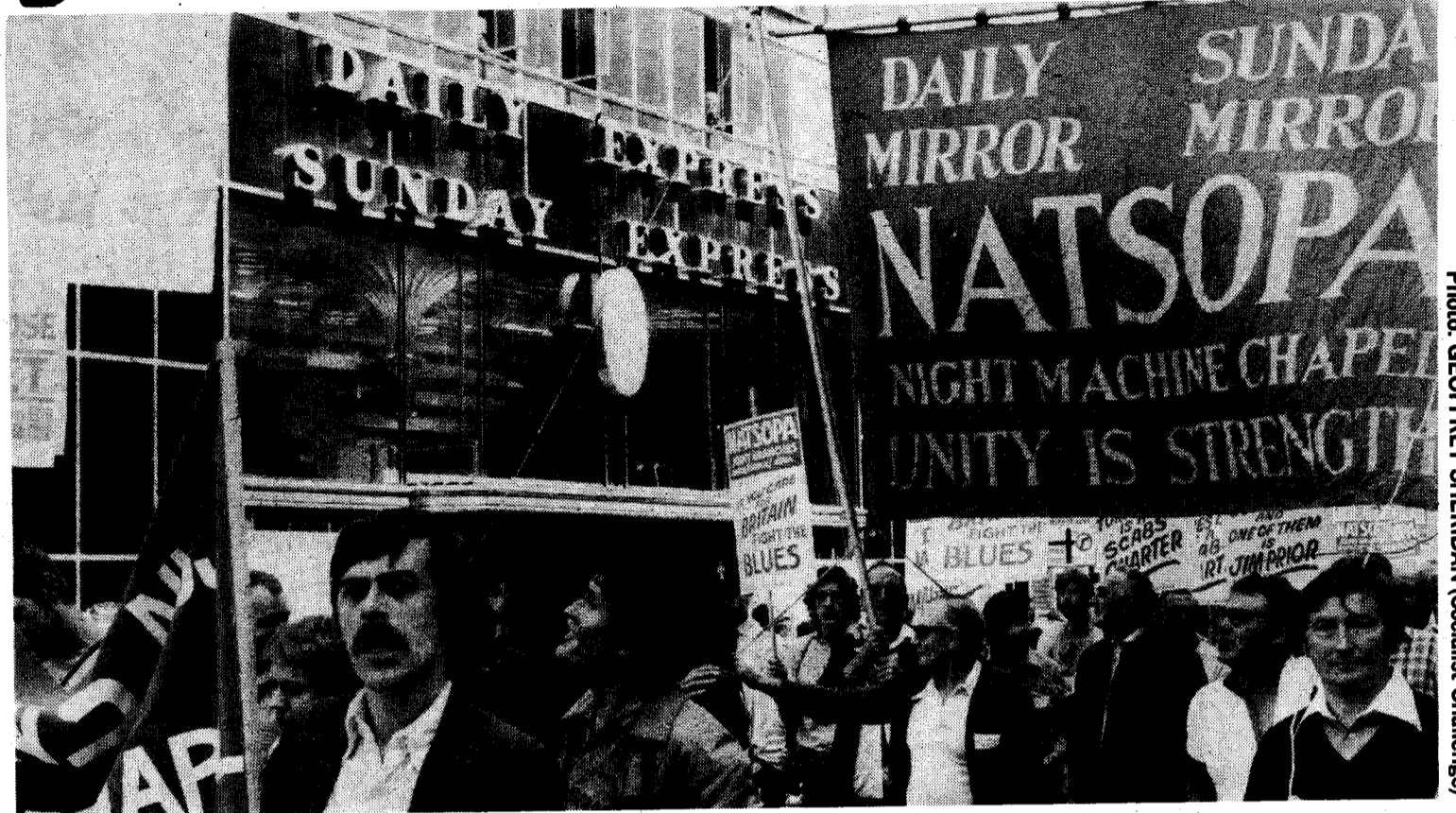


Photo: GEOFFREY SHERIDAN (Socialist Challenge)

in the *Sunday Times* machine room and one of the speakers at the rally before the Fleet Street march, considers that the union has written another page in trade union history.

'There have been enough occasions,' he says, 'when the trade union movement has acted in defiance of the law. It was the Pentonville Five dockers who first put the knife into Heath's Industrial Relations Act. If the

law isn't accepted as fair, then it's broken and has to be changed.

'There's nothing fair about the Employment Bill's scabs' charter,' Brady adds, 'NATSOPA's action has been a shot in the arm for the movement. We've received dozens of resolutions supporting the union's stand. It's the sort of response to the law that we need to

see throughout the country.

'My union will not comply with the Employment Bill. What we have to ensure is that the Day of Action is the beginning of the campaign against all the Tories' policies and not the end. That means agitate, educate, and organise — which has been sadly lacking in the movement.'

Ello, 'ello, who's jumping the gun, then?

A FUNNY thing happened on 14 May outside Old Oak Common Depot, the diesel depot for Paddington station.

Three rail workers — Pete Grant a member of ASLEF, Ernie Tregadon a member of the NUR executive, and John Davage, the ASLEF branch secretary at Paddington, were handing out leaflets encouraging workers to strike and explaining why 14 May action was taking place.

The three pickets were approached by two uniformed police officers who emerged from an unmarked car. 'Do you work here?' the pickets were asked. When they answered in the affirmative, the police inquisitors, taking their cue from written instructions, countered: 'Are you in dispute with your employer?'

Tregadon, Davage and Grant realised that the police were quoting from the provisions of the Tories' Employment Bill, which happens not yet to be law.

This was pointed out to the police, who came back with: 'Move on or we'll arrest you'. So they moved on.

The Metropolitan Police is evidently making preparations for putting the Employment Bill into effect.

The photograph taken by Carlos Augusto shows mounted police charging pickets in London's docks. Didn't hear about it? Not surprising really. They're just practising. The 'pickets' are cops in civvies.

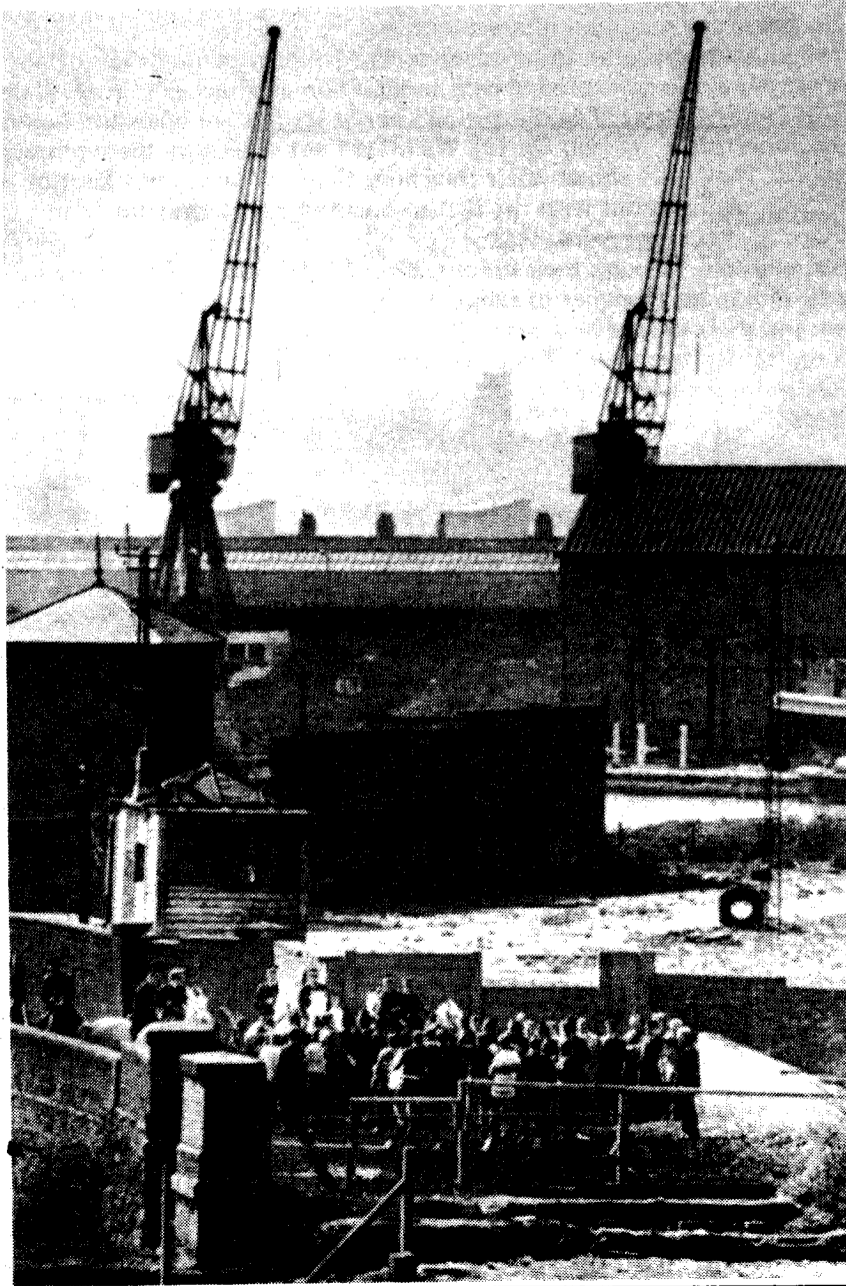


Photo: CARLOS AUGUSTO (IFL)

Civil Servants' delegates turn out for 14 May

By Sue Owen, CPSA conference delegate

THE Tory press has been trumpeting the fact that the Civil and Public Services Association's new election system has brought to power a right-wing national executive.

Balloting members at workplace meetings has replaced delegates' casting 'block vote' at the annual conference. However, the elections — resulting in the Broad Left losing its majority on the executive — are not quite such a blow for civil service trade union militancy as the press would have us believe.

What they show is that the Broad Left was too complacent and failed to campaign among the membership. A more activist approach is needed.

The debate at the CPSA conference last week showed that the basis for such an approach exists — there are plenty of activists in the union.

The announcement of 70,000 more jobs to be cut ensured a massive turnout of delegates on the march and rally on 14 May in Southport, where the conference was held.

Conference took the first tentative steps towards the election of full-time officers and the abolition of the Pay Research Unit system, by which our pay is bureaucratically determined through a passive method of comparison with other workers.

In a successful reference back, delegates voted to give the motion on affiliation to the National Abortion Campaign a higher priority on

the agenda. The motion was still guillotined, because the previous debate overran, but persistent attempts to get the motion heard and debated were supported by large numbers of delegates.

Right-wing president Kate Losinska's tactics of provoking the left and then presenting them as the 'wreckers of the conference' cut no ice with delegates. When she attempted to quash points of order from the floor her ruling was successfully challenged.

Perhaps the most important issue facing the conference was the victimisation of Phil Cordell, a member of the Socialist Workers Party and branch secretary at Brixton unemployment benefit office, together with three of his colleagues.

Phil was given a standing ovation and motions declaring support for members victimised for trade union and political activities were carried unanimously.

However, as the clapping died down many of us were left wondering what would happen next. The right-wing executive — who are so inexperienced that a school on basic trade unionism is being arranged for them — will do nothing.

It will be left to activists in the branches to organise strike action, collections, and meetings in support of the sacked Brixton members. Witch-hunting civil service trades unionists is the admitted aim of the Tory government.

If these members are not reinstated all activists in unions like the CPSA will be in danger, and the new-found militancy and strength of the CPSA could be rolled back.

Support to: Brixton UBO Campaign for TU Rights, 16 Knowlton House, Cowley Estate, Cowley Rd, London SW9.

HOME NEWS

IMG £6,000 Fund Drive

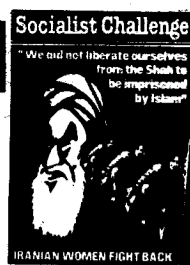
THE IMG had made an emergency appeal for £6000 to boost its work. We spent huge sums of money on our intervention in the steel strike. Pamphlets, leaflets and field organisers cost money!

One of the letters in response to our appeal last week was from a foundry worker in Barnsley:

'Here's £12 for the IMG's emergency fund. It's my pay for 14 May. My place voted not to strike on the TUC's Day of Action. But I'm not going to be counted as one of Maggie's supporters. To give it to you is the best way to clear my conscience.'

DM, Foundry worker, Barnsley.

We hope you didn't work on 14 May. Whether you did or not, please give us what you can.



Don't forget Socialist Challenge!

THANKS to all those who have given to the IMG's emergency fund drive — but please don't forget Socialist Challenge. Money has only been trickling in and we are a long way off our £2000 quarterly target.

Our thanks this week to:

E Mahood	£10.00	Coventry IMG	15.00
M Burslem	10.00	R Whitehead	5.00
		Glasgow IMG	20.00
		Lambeth IMG	25.00
		E Pugh	3.50
		P Holmes	3.50
		Enfield IMG	5.00
		TOTAL THIS WEEK:	£97.00
		CUMULATIVE TOTAL:	£582.93

Union leader tells bosses: Don't pay up

By John Nolan

EXCELLENT solidarity over a two month struggle at JR Williams, contractors at the Runcorn Can Factory, led to a cave-in from the bosses. But the £2,000 cash offer to the 26 striking electricians was vetoed by Frank Chappell, general secretary of the Electricians' Union.

The 26 electricians were sacked for staging a half-day strike over discrimination against militants. Pickets were put on the gates and 40 electricians employed by another contractor, Crown House, refused to cross and work stopped.

Finally on 9 May the employers offered the electricians £2,000 each as compensation and severance pay — as the contract only had a few weeks to run it was accepted. Those who wanted to stay on were prepared to fight it out at the Joint Industries Board (JIB) appeals committee.

Later the same day Frank Chappell intervened to stop the payments as they 'contravened the JIB working rules'. Then, to add insult to injury, the Electrical Contractors' Association, the bosses' organisation, asked them to return their JIB membership cards. Without these cards they would not be able to work in the industry again.

The ECA did not want the 26 JR Williams workers to set a precedent for other contract workers, so now they are seeking to blacklist them. The actions of Frank Chappell in stopping the payments has not helped morale in the struggle either!

Wide solidarity and support is required if these workers are to win their dispute. For information about solidarity action or contributions to the fighting fund contact: J Taylor, 6 Kingsley Rd, Swinton, Manchester, or Rank and File, c/o 2a Dawson St, Liverpool 1.



Kick out the Tories badge available now from: Reigocrest, PO Box 50, London N1. 20p each or cheaper rates for bulk orders, especially for cash in advance.

Printworkers' pay victory not the end of the story

By Jeremy Gardner, Deputy NUJ FoC, 'The News', Portsmouth

THE employers' offensive is continuing after the end of a two-week lockout of printworkers in provincial newspapers.

National Graphical Association members won an £80 minimum weekly wage, a 37½-hour week by November 1981, and an end to the lockout. But the union's executive ordered members back to work all over England and Wales, while some faced management-imposed conditions with serious implications for union organisation.

At *The News* in Portsmouth NGA members were instructed to return to work, although management insisted that this involved working with the handful of former NGA staff who lost their union cards when they agreed to work during the lockout.

That is a clear breach in the closed shop. On the same paper the management aims to negotiate with representatives of editorial staff selected by the editor, rather than elected National Union of Journalists chapel officers.

At Swale Press on Merseyside, 128 NGA members face the sack. Eight were dismissed during the national dispute and the rest now face losing their jobs because they have come out in their support. NGA members occupied the Swale press building on Friday in protest.

The NGA leadership has left workers in these areas out on a limb, but it is vital for all workers in the industry to support them.

'Harrow Observer' observed

THE *Harrow Observer* is being closely watched. Trades unionists and campaign activists in Harrow, Middlesex, are so sick of their local paper's biased coverage that they are now monitoring its reports prior to taking up the paper's role with the journalists who work on it.

The *Harrow Observer* is typical of the right-wing products of Westminster Press, the largest provincial newspaper group in Britain.

When the local Indian community had some water sent from the Ganges for a religious festival, the *Observer's* headline was: 'Possibility of typhoid in Harrow'.

During the campaign against the Corrie anti-abortion Bill, the paper publicised remarks by the local Tory MP that the campaign was 'capturing young girls' to oppose the Bill. The local campaign was refused the right to reply.

When ward closures were announced at the local Northwick Park Hospital, the paper published a statement from management. A reply was sent in by the COHSE branch at the hospital, and a reporter came to interview them, but

no union comment was published.

A broad range of groups have now come together to discuss their experience with the *Harrow Observer*, including the trades council, the Labour Party, the National Abortion Campaign, and the anti-racist committee.

Their first move is to monitor the paper's performance and to compile a dossier to present to the National Union of Journalists' chapel at the paper.

The *'Harrow Observer'* observers can be contacted at 56 Salisbury Rd, Harrow, Middlesex.

Workers resist union bashers

By Erica Barnett

DOG SHIT smeared on the ballot paper was one Hopkinson worker's response to management's request for acceptance of new anti-union working procedures.

1700 Hopkinson's workers in Huddersfield have been on strike for nine weeks now since Philip Thomas, the new deputy managing director, insisted on increasing employees' contribution to the pension fund.

The Joint Shop Stewards' Committee imposed an overtime ban and management rapidly escalated the dispute by locking out the workforce. Thomas then threw everything into the melting pot by tearing up all previous working agreements between unions and management and imposing a 10-point set of demands on the workforce.

These demands included dismantling the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, halving the number of shop stewards, no pay increase this year, planned reduction in wages of certain workers and compulsory overtime.

Roger Spurr, a shop steward at the plant, said: 'Thomas has been almost identical to Edwardes at BL... he has tried everything. Negotiations — well, it's difficult to describe them as negotiations. He says: "I'm going to do this and you will agree".'

The ballot, where one worker expressed their view so eloquently, also smacked of Edwardes' BL tactics. The secret ballot of the entire workforce asked whether workers were prepared to accept management's proposals as the basis for negotiations. It is difficult to make an assessment of the ballot results as it was run by management, but it appears that very few workers replied and many voted No.

Morale among the strikers is still running high, with over 200 workers actively involved on the picket lines and in running the strike. Women workers have played an active role. Dozens of women replied to a 'Frustrated Housewife' in the local paper who was calling for a return to work.

The strike is not just about pay, but about defending trade union rights against head-on attack. In the light of Edwardes' attacks in BL, and the planned Tory Bill restricting trade union rights, this kind of management attack will get more common. That's why trade union solidarity is so important.

Money and messages of support should be sent to: M J Jessop, Hopkinsons JTUC Fund, 2 The Bungalow, Church Avenue, Linthwaite, Huddersfield. Tel: Huddersfield 21154 (day).

STOP PRESS Iranian revolutionary executed

By Firooz Shooshtari

AHMAD MOAZEN, a member of the HKS (Socialist Workers' Party, Iranian section of the Fourth International) has been shot.

He was executed by Khomeini's Revolutionary Guards after being arrested on 22 April when fighting broke out in Ahwaz University between left-wing students and Khomeini supporters. Universities in Tehran, Gilan, Sistan, and Baluchistan had also been the scene of similar riots.

Khomeini's chief judge, Ayat Allah Jenatti, has been stirring up a campaign against the left in the universities following Khomeini's decision to spread the Islamic 'cultural revolution' and clear

out 'imperialistic' left-wing ideology.

Jenatti called a mass mobilisation to this end in Ahwaz. People were urged to come to the stadium in Ahwaz to pray and on the way the demonstrators went into the university surrounded by Revolutionary Guards. Fighting broke out between unarmed students and armed pro-Khomeini demonstrators who were trying to ransack the headquarters of the left inside the universities.

The university had been the only place where the left was not being harassed by

Khomeini supporters.

Five students were killed on the spot according to *Bamdad*, Khomeini's official paper, which also reported that thousands of students were arrested, and that many of them were left unconscious from beatings and stabbings.

900 students were imprisoned and 250 are still in prison awaiting trial. On 13 May some of the families went to protest outside the revolutionary court at the continuing imprisonment of their sons and daughters and in retaliation students were shot by the Revolutionary Guards.

Other members of the HKS are in hospital with injuries.

This family must stay

By Jenny Flintoft

'THIS government is the hardest we've ever had to deal with,' declared Jack Stallard, Labour MP for St Pancras North, at a packed meeting in North-west London, last Friday, called in support of Juno and Meena Varkki, who are threatened with deportation.

He urged supporters to step up pressure on the government, and to try to persuade MPs to sign an Early Day Motion in the Commons to lift the deportation order. Liberal leader, David Steel, is asking all Liberal MPs to put their names to it.

Tony Clarke (chairman of Camden Council of Social Service) denounced Britain's 'vicious immigration laws'.

THE deadline for short news articles for this page is 10.30am Monday. Articles up to 200 words can be rung through on Sundays on 01-359 8189.

He proposed a resolution asking the Home Secretary to allow Juno and Meena to remain in Britain. This was passed unanimously.

It was clear from the meeting that there is tremendous support for Juno and Meena within the local community, where there is deep indignation at their treatment by the Home Office. Many offers of assistance have been made.

Campaign for Juno and Meena Varkki, 220 Belsize Rd, NW6.

SOCIALIST Challenge published last week a resolution calling for a lobby of the Labour Party's one-day conference on 31 May.

The call for a lobby has the backing of a number of prominent labour movement bodies and individuals, including Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Council and the national Fightback members' meeting.

This week we publish interviews with a number of individuals who, in their personal capacity, have supported the call.

Hugh Richards, Battersea South CLP delegate to the 31 May conference:

'Battersea and Wandsworth, my trades council, supports the call for a lobby. We had 4,000 people out on Wandsworth Common on 14 May. Our real strength lies in the unions, but we have to try to control the Labour Party.

'The union leaders use the party as an excuse for inaction. Under Callaghan they said: "Look, this is our government, we have to go along with its policies". Now they say: "Look, our government isn't in office, we have to wait until it is".

'But they control the Labour Party with the block vote! We have to use the strength of the union rank and file to control the union leaders and the Labour Party.'

Martin Eadie, president, London Transport district NUR:

'I think it's important for the union membership to make its voice heard in the Labour Party. Although we received a very good response to 14 May in some areas, it was patchy in others. The media played these up.

'I'm sure that one reason was the lack of a united purpose. What are we fighting for — to make Thatcher change her mind?

'If we knew we were aiming to get the Tories out we would have a much clearer sense of where we're going. This is the sort of problem the one-day conference should be discussing.'

'The Labour Party should be made to build direct action to stop the Tories'



Labour Party members on a West London 14 May demonstration

Bernadette Lynch, chairperson Lewisham cuts campaign:

'I hope the lobby will let us spread the sort of stand our cuts committee has taken. We took a "no cuts, no rates rises" position, and this has a lot of support among local Labour Party activists.

'In Lewisham the area health authority refused to carry out the health cuts, and the government had to appoint its own commissioners. This, and the council's refusal to pay

the police precept, have roused a lot of local backing.

'We need a national movement to back up any further action taken.

'There is another important point: when the AHA refused to make cuts, the hospitals were still closed. There was no mass action, as there was with the EGA, for example — although the AHA's action generated plenty of willingness to organise it.

'It is direct action that will stop the Tories. The Labour Party should be made to build and support it.'

Ray Varnes, vice president, London district NUPE:

'I support this lobby. I've been campaigning for NUPE members to use their strength in the Labour Party to get some action from it in support of our struggles.

'This is what the one-day conference should be discussing — building mass action against the Tories'

Carl Becker, chairperson, Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow health shop stewards committee:

'The last national Fightback members' meeting supported the lobby call. I think it's important we start paying attention to the Labour Party.

'Fightback started under the Labour government, and we shouldn't forget that they made the cuts respectable. Then during the "winter of discontent" they turned on public sector workers who were striking for the very policies on which the government was elected — decent living standards and social services.

'But it's our levies and unions that keep the Labour Party going. We should use them to control its actions.'

Enda Donnelly, Hounslow Labour councillor:

'I'm glad this lobby has been called. I was elected on a "no cuts" platform after the Hounslow Hospital occupation. But the local Labour group doesn't want to know. It thinks it can duck the problem by raising the rates.

'This is just a disguised cut. It lets the Tories off the hook. Now, when the next round of cuts comes, it will be much harder to rouse mass opposition because the local people won't know if they're fighting the council or the Tories.

'That's the Tories' strategy — to make us seem responsible for their attacks.

'The problem is that the Labour Party has given no clear national lead to councils that will have to take "illegal" action by refusing to make cuts or raise rates. We need a national movement to defend councils that do stick their neck out — and to force them to take a stand.

'The Labour Party isn't building this movement because it isn't committed to kicking out the government. We need a grassroots current in the Labour Party that will fight for this.'

SPG LIES EXPOSED

By Tom Marlowe

THE members of the SPG who are suspected of killing Blair Peach during last year's demonstration against the National Front in Southall have been exposed in court as a bunch of liars.

At the inquest last week they contradicted each other and claimed many lapses of memory. Among the mysteries created by the police witnesses were:

The case of the empty van

PC Raymond White was the driver of one of the two SPG vans in the Beechcroft Avenue area where Blair was killed. At approximately the time of the murder White said he was driving the van down Beechcroft Avenue. He said he never left the van and was alone.

But the other SPG members, Inspector Hopkins and PC Greville Bint, claimed that they were in the van with White. When White was questioned about this in court he insisted: 'I don't recollect them being there.'

The case of the undrawn truncheons

Sergeant Alan Lake and PC Anthony Richardson, two SPG members in the vicinity at the time of the killing, said they didn't see any police officer draw a truncheon.

But this heroic attempt to absolve the police fell rather flat when other SPG members admitted that they themselves had drawn their truncheons. These included PC Brian Lovell and Inspector Alan Murray.

The case of the cul-de-sac

What happened at the cul-de-sac at the end of Beechcroft Avenue is vital, for it was around the entrance of the cul-de-sac that Blair was killed.

PC Lovell told the inquest that he chased one demonstrator into the cul-de-sac. PC Richardson admitted to



Inspector Alan Murray



Sergeant Brian Chapman



PC Brian Lovell



PC Greville Bint

have chased two. Lovell told the inquest that he managed to 'stop' his quarry. Richardson said the two whom he chased escaped by climbing over a wire fence.

Richardson said there were no other police in the cul-de-sac at the time of his chase, Lovell said he had seen Richardson there, but then changed his mind saying he 'couldn't remember'.

Earlier in the inquest other witnesses said they had seen seven or eight cops chase people into the cul-de-sac, but none of the police questioned in court admitted to being members of this group.

The case of the bad memories

A loss-of-memory epidemic seems

to have affected the SPG officers who were in Beechwood Avenue.

The worst sufferer was PC Michael Freestone. He 'couldn't remember' who was driving the van he was in, whether it had stopped or slowed down in Beechcroft Avenue, whom he had seen when he walked down the street, or whether there was anyone else in the van when he rejoined it. Inspector Alan Murray admitted to a previous memory loss just after the time Blair Peach was killed. In his first statement, made after the demonstration, he claimed he had jumped out of the SPG van at the beginning of Beechcroft Avenue — the opposite end to where Blair was attacked.

But in court he agreed that three

weeks later, in a second statement, he 'remembered' that he had jumped out of the van very near the spot where the killing took place.

Other SPG members who 'forgot' about what exactly they were doing in Beechcroft Avenue included PC Lovell and PC James Scottow.

The case of the 'implements'

The SPG members offered a wide variety of excuses to explain how various 'implements' — the words used by Inspector Murray — came to be found in their lockers.

Murray said a jemmy found in his SPG safe was there in case it was needed for 'executing search warrants'. PC Raymond Barnes said that a sledge hammer and a spare handle

were in his locker because he had taken them to the police station to lend to someone who wanted to 'knock down a wall'.

PC Raymond White said that a metal cosh and a long whip found in his locker were 'souvenirs of a trip to America'. PC George Woodcock claimed that a large American truncheon found in his locker had been given to him by a policeman with whom he had stayed when he visited the United States in 1966.

PC Bint, when asked to explain about Nazi regalia, army bayonets, and a leather-covered, lead-weighted piece of wood found at his home, said he collected such weapons 'as a hobby'.

The inquest, or rather the farce, continues.

On the edge of the nightmare

By Geoff Bell

'IF it takes a real blood-bath then let's get it over with.'

So spoke Ronald Reagan, the favourite to be the next president of the United States. The words were uttered ten years ago when the US was in Vietnam and Reagan was the highest flying hawk in the sky. He hasn't changed much since.

After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan he called for a naval blockade of Cuba and for the US to arm the Afghan rebels. He has criticised Carter's decision not to press ahead with the neutron bomb and the B-1 bomber.

He likes to quote former President Roosevelt: 'We must be the greatest arsenal of democracy'. His favourite television programme is 'Mission Impossible' in which every week US agents save the world for democracy.

A fool Reagan may be, but he is a dangerous fool.

The prospect of him becoming US president is part of the nightmare. Other elements include the continuing presence in Downing Street of cold-warrior Margaret Thatcher and the possible — remote though it appears at the moment — election victory in West Germany of Franz Joseph Strauss who was a propaganda officer for the Nazis during the last world war.



Knock-out

Imagine the three of them holding humanity in their hands. It reads like an advertisement for a nuclear fall-out shelter.

It would be a mistake to personalise the nightmare too much. Reagan, Thatcher, and Strauss are representatives of their respective capitalist societies; apparently the ruling class, or at least significant parts of it, feels they are necessary.

To appreciate why, a quick glance at post Second World War history is necessary.

After the war the US was the undisputed champion of the world. Its development of the atom and then the nuclear bomb gave it a knock-out punch none could match. The country had emerged unscathed from the

war, unlike the Soviet Union which lost 25 million dead during the hostilities.

This allowed the US to act as the policeman of the world, demanding obedience to its own version of law and order. Between 1948 and 1970 the US intervened in Third World countries at a rate of once every 14 months.

Then came Vietnam which was not just a military and political defeat but which, within the US itself, led to a deep questioning as to the morality of American military might imposing 'democracy' whenever and wherever it wanted.

A more subtle approach was needed, one developed in the 'geopolitical'

strategy of Kissinger and Nixon. At its centre was the promotion of reliable states in strategically important regions of the world; countries like Israel, Indonesia, Greece, South Africa, Brazil and Iran, whose job was to safeguard their region in the interests of imperialism.

This left the US free to conduct covert operations and to 'destabilise' governments of which it disapproved. Chile and the CIA-inspired coup there in 1973, was the classic example.

What this left out of consideration was the attitude of the inhabitants of these 'reliable' states. The overthrow of the fascist regime in Portugal, the emergence of liberation movements in southern Africa, the fall of Haile

Selassie in Ethiopia, of the Greek Junta, and of Somoza in Nicaragua all suggested that however much the US favoured these regimes, without direct military intervention their survival could not be guaranteed.

Where the Kissinger strategy really collapsed was in the vital oil region of the Middle East.

The contradictions within US policy became apparent with the Arab-Israeli war in 1973 and the use the Arabs made of the oil weapon. The US — dependent on Israel as a bastion of Western imperialism, but needing to secure the co-operation of the Arabs — had to perform a delicate balancing operation. Carter's Camp David 'peace' treaty is all but dead.

The fall of the Shah and the radicalising effect this has had on the rest of the region has brought the 'geopolitical' method to a crisis point. And alongside this there has been the steady growth in the military capabilities of the Soviet Union, a capability which is largely defensive but which does make it difficult for the US to openly intervene to impose its authority on a rebellious world.

Henry Kissinger recently summed up the crisis of imperialism:

'I happen to agree with President Carter that the danger to America is the gravest in the modern period. We are sliding towards a world out of control, with our relative military power declining, with our economic life increasingly vulnerable to blackmail, with hostile radical forces growing in every continent, and with the number of countries willing to stake their future on our friendship dwindling.'

Kissinger went on to call for a 'new firmness', and it is this direction in which the US is now moving.

Carter is bidding to establish new military bases in Kenya, Oman, Somali, Egypt and Israel. Before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the US announced a dramatic increase in its arms budget and a crash programme for developing the MX missile.

It countered a Soviet offer to withdraw 20,000 troops and 1,000 tanks from East Europe by telling its West European allies that it had to let the US install the Cruise and Pershing missiles in the UK, West Germany, Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands.

There is a logic to this madness. What is involved is a return to the old pre-Vietnam strategy of open intervention. The weapons are pointed at the Soviet Union, yet — at least for the moment — they are not so much meant as a direct threat but as a warning that in the event of a US military operation in say the Middle East or Central America, the Soviet Union should stay well clear.

This is not a bluff. The crisis of US imperialism is real, which means the danger to the rest of us is real. The US is moving to the position where for the benefit of imperialism it is prepared to hold the rest of the world as its hostage. It is time the working class staged its own rescue operation.

Missiles, missiles, everywhere

BRITAIN's membership of NATO means that this country is expected to play its part in the war moves of the United States. With Thatcher in charge, the government is a very willing recruit.

Currently, in terms of hardware, Britain's contribution is Polaris, a submarine-launched ballistic missile which has been in service since the late 1960s.

There are four submarines in operation, the HMS Renown, Repulse, Resolution and Revenge, each of which is armed with 16 missiles carrying what are known as A3 warheads. These contain three separate packages of 200 kilotons, roughly ten times the size of the Hiroshima bomb. The Polaris has a range of 2,880 miles.

But this isn't sufficient for Thatcher, or for the NATO chiefs. They reckon that in about ten years' time Polaris will be out of date; apparently there could be a problem over shortage of spare parts!

To replace the Polaris, Thatcher is expected to give the go-ahead for the purchase of Trident missiles. These will be carried in five submarines each equipped with 16 C4 missiles. Each missile will carry eight warheads of 100 kilotons. Trident will cost the taxpayers of this country £6b, which could prove the most expensive mass suicide in history.

Beauties

But the real innovation for Britain will be the Cruise missile. Thatcher recently agreed that Britain will play host to 160 of these beauties, each of which has a range of 1,500 to 2,000 miles.

Even by military standards there are a number of odd features to Cruise. First, they are not judged to be particularly effective. Today's Soviet defence system, never mind what it will be like in a few years, would be expected to knock out 50 per cent of any batch of Cruise missiles that were sent in its direction.

Second, Cruise can only be controlled by the US. Its functioning depends on tracking operations fed into computers from American satellite grids. This makes the Cruise missiles which are due to be stationed here reliant on a continuous supply of information which is under US control. It will be Ronald Reagan or some other cowboy who will decide when Cruise is fired.

Aircraft

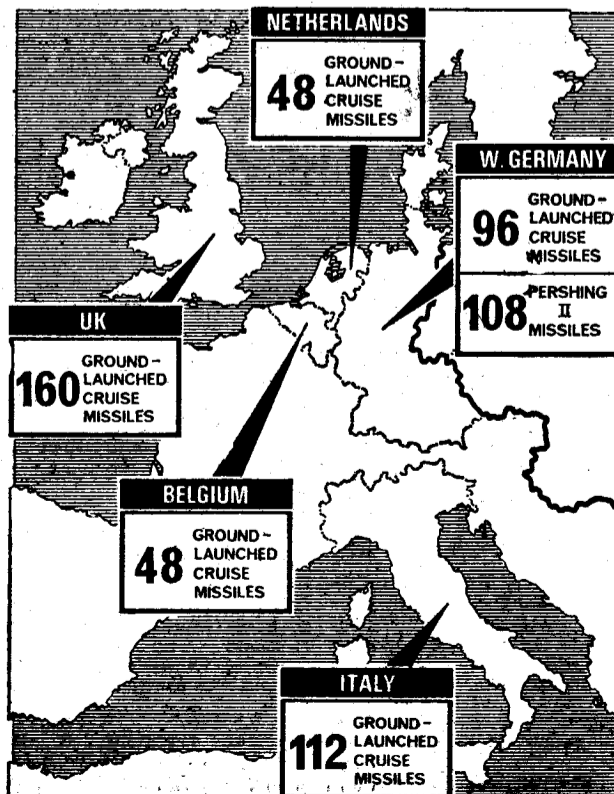
Third, even if Cruise was considered necessary there is no military reason for there to be bases in Britain, for Cruise can be fired from ships or aircraft.

All of which adds up to a big question mark as to why Cruise missiles are to be sited in Britain at all. The answer is political.

Through Cruise, Britain will be tied to the US war machine and will be a prime target for any Soviet retaliatory attack. For the US, Cruise is a way of ensuring that those countries in which there are such bases become military colonies of the US, and will have no choice but to fall in line with whatever direction US foreign policy takes.

Cruise missiles are due to arrive in Britain in two or three years. There is that much time to stop them. In the life-span of planet earth it is not very long.

NEW MISSILES FOR NATO



UNCLE SAM THREAT

Cops of the World

By Phil Hearse

THE interests of United States' imperialism are threatened today in two crucial parts of the world — the Middle East and western Asia, and Central America.

In the former, America's vital economic interests are threatened. In the latter, the revolution in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala threatens to cut the Americas in two.

In response to these threats, the United States has constructed a new and massive counter-revolutionary corps — the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) consisting of 100,000 soldiers and including three marine combat brigades, two army divisions, and assorted air force and navy units.

The RDF is a dagger pointing at the heart of the colonial revolution. Before looking at the threats to America's interests it is worth glancing at the history of America's role as world cop since 1945.

The United States emerged from the Second World War as the strongest imperialist power. Two world wars all but finished off the British Empire. So the United States adopted the mantle of 'protector of the West' — imperialism's top cop.

Korea

While France and Britain fought their own colonial wars — in Algeria and Indochina, and in Malaya, Greece, Kenya, and Cyprus respectively — America's first counter-revolutionary expedition (under United Nations auspices) was in Korea.

The invasion of South Korea by the communist North, resulted in American forces being thrown back to a small enclave around the Pusan peninsula. America sent hundreds of thousands of troops who invaded North Korea and fought their way to the Chinese border, before the intervention of a million Chinese troops put paid to any ideas of conquering the North.

But to a certain extent the American intervention was successful; South Korea, under the dictator, Syngman Rhee, was 'saved' for 'democracy'.

In 1954 the United States limbered up by organising, through the CIA, a mercenary army which overthrew the liberal government of Arbenz in Guatemala. Arbenz's government was by no means socialist, but it made the crucial mistake of trying to compulsorily purchase land owned by the United Fruit Corporation — the agribusiness multinational which dominated large parts of Central America.

Cuba

John Foster Dulles, the US Secretary of State, and his brother, CIA director Allen Dulles, happened to be linked by family ties to the United Fruit Corporation.

America saw out the '50s by sending the marines to put down a little local disturbance in the Lebanon in 1958.



The main counter-revolutionary American intervention of the post-war period was in Vietnam, initiated in earnest by the liberal 'new frontiersman' John Kennedy. The American leadership was shocked by the development of the revolution in Cuba, where a guerilla army, apparently of a 'radical democratic' character took power and evolved towards socialism.

They reasoned that it was necessary to draw a line against the possibility of a series of defeats in the semi-colonial world of a similar character. To draw that line they despatched an army of half a million to Vietnam. Kennedy stated his intentions in his collection of speeches 'To Turn the Tide'. America had been pushed around by Third World communism long enough.

Vietnam

America fought in Vietnam to make clear to insurgent movements all over the world that, in future, any attempts to flaunt imperialism would be met with the full might of the world's strongest military power.

This strategy, deepened by Lyndon Johnson, involved the full-scale and daily bombing of North Vietnam — a point where there were no structures left of a size worth bombing — and the systematic destruction of whole areas of the countryside. Mass terror against

the civilian population was indiscriminately used.

It was a fragile strategy. Every time the Americans escalated the size of their commitment, they escalated the potential size of the defeat — which came with disastrous consequences.

Hotspots

At the height of the escalation of the Vietnam adventure, Johnson found the resources in 1965 to mount an invasion of the Dominican Republic. The liberal government of Juan Bosch proved too radical. Fearing another Cuba, a pre-emptive strike by the US was necessary.

America had always regarded central America as its own preserve. As the House of Representatives resolution put it: 'The US or any other American nation has the right of unilateral intervention to keep communism out of the Western Hemisphere.'

The consequence of the American defeat in Indochina was traumatic. World-wide political opinion, and opinion inside the United States, made direct American military intervention anywhere in the world unthinkable. The political overheads of trying to intervene in, for example, the revolutionary process in Portugal in 1974-5 would have been too great.

Since the end of the Indochina conflict, the United States has been trying to reverse the effects of the defeat. The

revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan have proved the occasion for the most enormous and calculated political and ideological offensive.

The United State has been gripped in a wave of patriotism and chauvinism. Every racist and anti-communist sentiment has been whipped up. The ideological conditions are being created for the use of force once again.

Where are the 'hot spots' that America could hit?

In Central America, the US is threatened by the development of the Nicaraguan revolution, and by the upsurges in El Salvador and Guatemala. In Nicaragua the bourgeois ministers have been ejected from the Sandinista's junta. America has not come up with the promised reconstruction aid, so the Nicaraguans have turned to the Soviet Union.

Nicaragua

If Nicaragua carries through a socialist transformation it will destabilise the whole area, break the isolation of the Cubans and be a dreadful strategic blow to imperialism. Equally, the opposition to the dictatorship in El Salvador is under the leadership of armed revolutionary groups who control the trade unions.

The United States cannot possibly allow the victory of the revolution in either country.

In the Middle East and West Asia, the American interests are more important economically. They can be summed up in one word — oil. Any further threat to American oil supplies could easily bring about a direct intervention by the Rapid Deployment Force.

RDF

The key to the RDF is not only size and firepower — just half of available forces could swamp a small country like Nicaragua in a few days but its mobility. Soon it will be equipped with the C-X, a new jumbo cargo plane which (at \$295m a piece) can land hundreds of troops anywhere in the world within hours, and new ships to carry the super-fast maritime position ships — which have the same objectives.

The Cops of the World are organising and re-equipping. In addition to the RDF there are 430,000 American soldiers stationed abroad.

The number of American troops in the Middle East has increased by 50 per cent since 1968. There are 50 countries with some sort of military presence.

So don't believe that Vietnam, suffering defeat though it was, put the World's Cops out of business. They are just waiting for an opportunity to start the colonial revolution out of business — with a vengeance.

ENS THE WORLD

BRITAIN OUT OF NATO

By Valerie Coultas

WITH the decision of NATO countries to allow the USA to plant nuclear weapons, particularly the recently negotiated 600 Cruise and Pershing missiles, on Western shores, NATO — the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation — is thrown into the limelight.

In his first visit to Europe last week Edmund Muskie, the new US Secretary of State, managed to persuade NATO countries to accelerate their arms build up against the Soviet Union. He was successful despite the reluctance European governments have displayed in implementing President Carter's request to boycott trade with Iran and to avoid the Soviet Olympics.

The NATO alliance, refuelled with added nuclear armoury, remains strong despite the obvious tensions within it. What attitude should socialists adopt towards this 'security' alliance? NATO was set up in 1948 on America's initiative to 'maintain peace, promote conditions of stability and well-being' by 'economic collaboration' and to regard 'an attack on one of them as an attack on all'.

Greece

NATO's role in the cold war was clear. Western European countries, backed up by America, would pool their military resources to suppress the spread of communism.

The Truman doctrine, which pledged support for any country of 'free peoples' who are resisting attempted subjection by armed minorities or by outside pressures, was not aimed at 'protecting' European countries from Soviet invasion but suppressing the 'malignant parasite' of communism from within.

In post-war Greece, where communists had led the anti-Nazi resistance movement, the British-backed government could not control the situation. In 1947 British and American troops were sent into Greece to deal with the 'malignant parasites'... the Greek people.

Nor has NATO's role changed today. Its 'security' duties have allowed it to place aircraft carriers along the shores of Portugal and Italy when it looked likely that the people of these countries might be 'silly enough' to put Communist Party-led governments in power.

Despite attempts, particularly by West Germany, to allow European countries more say in the deployment of NATO's economic weapons, the United States remains very firmly in control of the alliance. It makes the largest financial contribution and provides it with its nuclear capabilities.

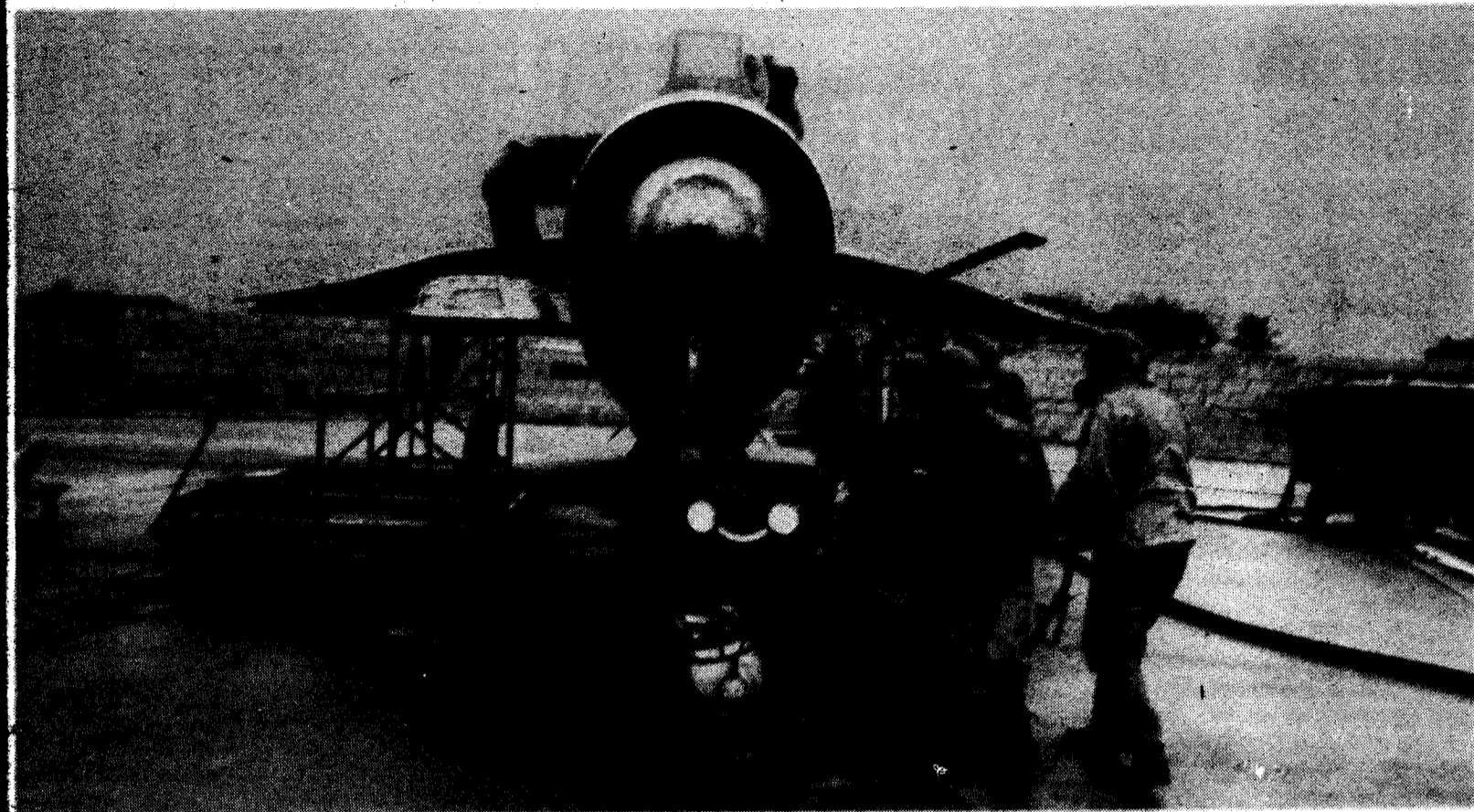
Profits

All supreme commanders of NATO have been American. The Cruise missiles that are about to be placed in Britain this September, which are untested and cost £750,000 each, will be under US control.

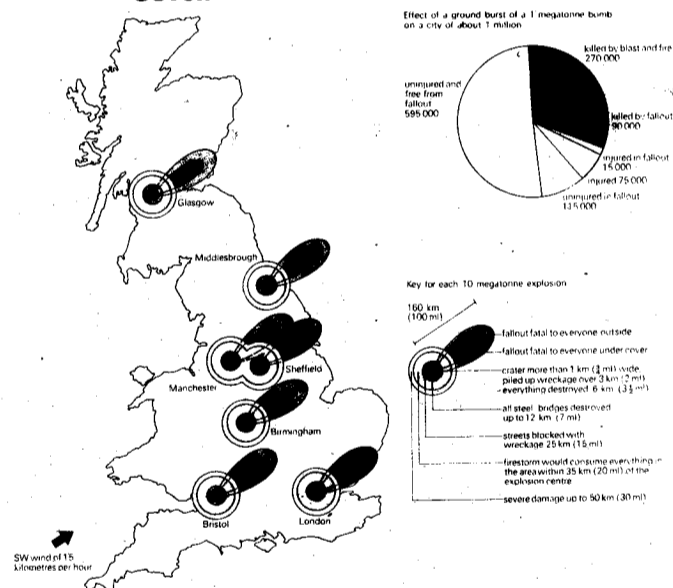
The Italian Communist Party, which has tried so hard to appear respectable to the European establishment, feels that it is 'provocative' for socialists to call for a withdrawal from NATO.

We say exactly the opposite. There is no likelihood of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. NATO's real job is not to 'protect West Europe' but to protect the profits of American and European capitalists and pull Europe into America's war drive against the Soviet Union.

Working people make no profits out of war; they have every interest in opposing the build up of nuclear weapons in Europe. These weapons will be used as easily against workers in Europe who get out of hand as those in the Soviet Union. Britain should get out of NATO right now before it's too late.



Seven H-bombs on Britain



It's not the same the whole world over

By Sylvia Bliss

TURN on the television or pick up a newspaper these days and there's one message that's rather obviously being hammered home. From the Olympic boycott to the Cuban refugees, a clear lesson is intended for workers in the West — there is a major threat to world peace and it comes from the Soviet Union.

We are told that the United States, the last defence of the so-called 'free world', is being undermined by the military ambitions of the Soviet Union. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan has been the starting point for an orchestrated propaganda campaign in defence of the 'free West' against the spectre of communism.

But the Soviet Union is not responsible for the increase in international tension. Carter's campaign is a smokescreen for an increasingly aggressive stance by US imperialism. The plans for the creation of the Rapid Deployment Force to intervene in hotspots like Nicaragua, Iran, and El Salvador were in existence well before Russian tanks rolled in to Kabul.

Despite their bureaucratic distortions the workers states are not taking such an aggressive stand. This is because the Soviet Union is based on an entirely different socio-economic system to that of the West.

The abolition of the private ownership of industry and finance means that simple profit cannot be the driving force of its economy. The Soviet Union does not have massive investments abroad which it has to protect. There is no powerful arms lobby aiming to gain out of war.

However, unlike in the early stages of the Soviet state immediately after the 1917 Revolution, the Soviet Union's foreign policy is not determined by international working class solidarity and the need to spread the proletarian revolution to the rest of the world.

The policy of 'peaceful coexistence' with the capitalist countries was elaborated by Lenin's successors after the revolution had failed to spread to other advanced capitalist countries, and when the workers' state had developed bureaucratic deformations. The aim of this policy is to maintain the privileges of the bureaucracy within the Soviet Union by upholding the status quo on a world scale, but especially in those areas immediately bordering the USSR.

This was the motivation for the invasion of Afghanistan at Christmas — a misguided attempt to 'stabilise' the whole region.

Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world — it is highly unlikely that the Soviet invasion could have been motivated by the drive for profit, defence of markets or exploitation of raw materials. The demands of the Afghan masses, and the imminent victory of reactionary forces, might have spilled over into the Soviet Union itself. There are Islamic peoples inside the USSR, many of whom share a cultural affinity with the people of Afghanistan. Stability and the status quo were the two major reasons for the Soviet invasion.

Similar considerations apply to the USSR's nuclear deterrents. It is purely a defensive reaction to the imperialist countries' threats of war — the Warsaw Pact will remain necessary as long as imperialism has nuclear warheads

pointed at the workers' states. No big capitalists make money out of arms production in the Soviet Union, it is just a drain on material resources.

In this situation of developing global conflict socialists do not remain neutral. Imperialist military blocs like NATO threaten the lives of every worker, and are motivated by profits and greed. Military blocs between the workers' states are only necessary as long as imperialism keeps up its threats of war — until this threat has disappeared we defend the existence of the Warsaw Pact.

There is no Soviet war drive as such, so there is no need to oppose it.

Military actions of the Soviet bureaucracy, such as the invasion of Hungary in 1956 and of Czechoslovakia 12 years later, crushed developments that could have led towards socialist democracy, and hence must certainly be opposed.

But the way to challenge the counter-revolutionary role of the Soviet leadership is to support the removal of the bureaucracy, not to undermine the gains of the Russian Revolution — among which is the existence of the Red Army.

Without that military force, the Vietnamese, Cuban and other revolutions would have been quickly snuffed out by imperialism.

The American war drive is aggressive and profiteering — if death and destruction lies in its path that makes no difference at all, profits are all that count. The real danger to the world working class lies in the imperialist war drive spearheaded by the US, not the defensive manoeuvres of the Soviet Union.

NAC - open to all

By Valerie Coultas

THE National Abortion Campaign conference in Leeds last weekend threw out a resolution that NAC should become a woman-only campaign. NAC remains open to all who agree with its aims.

Medical

The 250-strong conference also voted overwhelmingly to launch a campaign for a woman's right to choose whether or not to terminate her pregnancy — both in law and in practice.

Local groups will be urging the Labour Party to adopt such a policy in its manifesto, and campaigning to ensure that abortion facilities are mandatory on the National Health Service.

The conference decided to hold a major rally in the autumn aimed at broadening the debate on why the 1967 Act is inadequate and why the choice to have an abortion should be made by the woman herself and not the medical profession or the government.

The successful Campaign Against Corrie had involved more women in the pro-choice movement than at any other time in the five years since NAC was set up. The TUC had been

pressured into calling a 60,000-strong demonstration in October last year to protest at the restrictive Bill. Next spring NAC will be holding a labour movement conference to build on that support.

Discussion at the conference reflected both the potential and the problems involved in an alliance between the women's movement and the labour movement. The TUC demonstration, where some women had rushed to the front because Len Murray was leading the march, was fresh in people's minds.

At the centre of the debate was what was meant by a woman's right to choose. Some women were concerned that in gaining support from the labour movement, the campaign had been stressing the economic arguments for choice — poor women need free abortions because rich women can always have them — and not stressing that the issue of control was central.

The slogan 'Our bodies, our lives, our right to decide' was adopted to make it clear that women's sexual freedom was at stake.

Women from Leeds and Brighton NAC thought that because the fundamental issue was whether women should have control over their own bodies, only women should run the campaign.

But opposition to this argument came from many different viewpoints at the conference. Women in the Labour Party pointed out how difficult it would be to get affiliation and money from the party if NAC was women-only. Women in smaller local groups felt that if they excluded men they would feel even more isolated.

Many women who supported the women's liberation movement being autonomous pointed out that NAC had been successful because it was a broad-based campaign; that *anyone* who supports women controlling their fertility can join, and that if men were forced out some women might be put off.

Women from the International Marxist Group pointed out that NAC was led by women and that men were few in number at the conference. The existing constitution had never barred women from having women's-only meetings or having a women's-only assembly, as was held on 8 February when 5,000 women protested outside the Houses of Parliament during the third reading of the Corrie Bill.

After a great deal of debate on the issue, the conference decided to support a resolution from some of the non-aligned women on the campaign steering committee, suggesting that although NAC should remain a mixed cam-

paign it should recognise that women were oppressed as a group and that they should be encouraged to lead the campaign.

On particular occasions, the resolution pointed out, this would mean that women might meet separately. The resolution won the support of a large majority of the conference.

Debate and reflection after a year of successful campaigning was inevitable. Some women expressed disappointment that there was not a little more concrete discussion on the way forward for the campaign.

The attempts to stop abortion charity clinics advertising on the London underground and gaining new licences, and the possible closure of family planning clinics mean that, even without a parliamentary attack on the right to choose, NAC groups will have their work cut out over the next year.

Having clarified some of the objectives of the campaign, NAC will hopefully continue to be an open, broad-based campaign that can win more and more people, particularly women, to actively participate in the fight for free abortion on demand — a women's right to choose.

The next NAC National Planning Meeting is on 14-15 June in London. It will discuss the details of the Positive Legislation Campaign. Ring NAC on 01-278 0153 for details.

By Stephen Potter

MUCH hard thinking is going on in the labour movement as the lessons of the TUC Day of Action are absorbed. Socialist Worker has no exception.

In a major article last week Tony Cliff anticipated events on 14 May with a call for a united front approach against the Tories which also contradicted some positions adopted at the last conference of the Socialist Workers' Party.

The main point of Cliff's article was to highlight that 'Above all the 14 May reveals the crisis of leadership'. He gave three reasons for this crisis of leadership which included: the impact of years of collaboration; the depth of the crisis and the strength of capitalist ideas among the working class and the decline of the Communist Party.

His main conclusions were that of building a leadership 'in struggle' especially around defiance of the Prior laws; replacing the Communist Party with a revolutionary socialist organisation rooted in the working class; and building a working class united front against the Tories in a way analogous to the Anti-Nazi League, uniting with the Labour Party and the Communist Party.

Shelters

Gone were the positions defended by Cliff at the Socialist Workers' Party conference last year — that we were in a period of big defeats for the working class; that rank and file organisations had to be 'shelters from the storm'; that we were not in a period where socialists could take big and bold initiatives to unite in action with thousands of workers; that the shop stewards movement has been incorporated into the lower levels of the trade union bureaucracy.

The reason for the change is clear. It has become impossible to say we are in a period of big defeats when the steel strike locked the country for 13 weeks. It was clearly a mistake to try and build a party front in the steel strike in opposition to building a national strike committee, particularly in a union where the militants were not under the hegemony of the Communist Party in many areas. It was difficult to justify calling for a general strike in the special Welsh issue of Socialist Worker while claiming that there was no possibility of a major fightback from the working class.

The big demonstrations against the John Corrie Bill; the uprising in St Paul's Bristol against police harassment; the solid response to the TUC's Day of Action from the industrial strongholds of the British labour movement despite the violent press which hunt allow Cliff to reconsider.

'It's not true that there is no feel-

Socialist Workers Party Time to change course?



Cliff dismisses developments in the Labour Party and refuses to confront the disunity of the far left.

ing or capacity for doing anything,' he admits.

So what does Cliff propose? A united front against the Tories is a good idea but how should it be formed? Cliff's only concrete suggestion is the right to work march from South Wales to the Tory Party Conference. Nowhere does he suggest what form mass action against the Tories should take. He avoids mentioning the need to build a movement for a general strike.

Nowhere does Cliff discuss the

issues to be concentrated on or the policies that a united front should be formed around. After five years of a Labour government, and one year of the Tories, militants in the labour movement are keen to know where a fight against the Tories will take them. What political answers are necessary to the problems of unemployment, inflation, the new technology.

But Cliff is right in pointing out the decline in the Communist Party's influence in the trade unions. Their

failure to act independently of the 'left' bureaucrats has made some trade unionists see membership of the Communist Party as pointless and opened the terrain for the far left to make gains.

But it is not only the far left who is viewing the decline of the CP in industry with a view to stepping into its shoes. The left in the Labour Party, particularly those forces around the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, have also grasped what is happening

and they have made proposals that challenge the division of labour that has existed between the LP in Parliament and the CP in industry since the '20s.

They are urging the Labour Party to begin organising inside the unions rather than leaving it up to the CP's Broad Left formations.

Votes

Tony Cliff dismisses these developments in the Labour Party because he argues that the trade union block vote will be used against the left at the next LP conference. In doing so he fails to follow through a united front approach consistently. The block vote of the AUEW may be cast at the next Labour Party conference with the right-wing, but there are still thousands of rank and file trade unionists who look to the lefts in the Labour Party to produce a political alternative to the Tories, despite the fact that their trade union leaders may cast their votes with the right-wing.

Any attempts made by left party leaders to break out of the constituency ghetto and actively organise rank and file trade unionists should be welcomed by the far left. A new minority movement of active trade unionists fighting against the right wing inside the trade unions will include Labour Party members if it has any real influence. The far left gains nothing from being sectarian to the Labour Party rank and file.

Neither is Cliff willing to look at the far left from a honest viewpoint. Yes, it is possible to build a revolutionary organisation in Britain today that can challenge the Communist Party as the main organisation to the left of the Labour Party. Revolutionaries led the Anti-Nazi League. Revolutionaries have been most consistent in the defence of abortion rights. Revolutionaries have begun, slowly, to have an influence inside the industrial working class.

But for most militants, one thing stands out above everything else. The disunity of the far left under the Tories as under Labour makes it ineffective and easily dismissed as a serious force. Despite having broad agreement on the fundamentals of a revolutionary programme the left refuses to unite in one organisation.

The SWP itself is a case in point. Despite being the largest of the far left groups, it has not shown itself willing to discuss with the IMG what obstacles exist to our two organisations becoming one.

We can understand the Communist Party hoping that the far left remains divided. We can understand that the Tories like things that way. But we don't understand why in the face of such opportunities the SWP is so intransigent.

YOUTH

Revolution Youth founding conference

Youth take up the challenge

'THE chief tasks of revolutionary socialist youth in Britain today are to mobilise our generation against the United States war-drive, against the Tory government and to build a revolutionary youth organisation that is rooted in the industrial working class.'

That was how Ann Henderson opened the discussion on perspectives at the founding conference of Revolution Youth.

Awareness of the threat posed by the war-mongering of the USA's imperialist government and Thatcher's collaboration with it, ran right through the conference. It formed the backdrop to the discussion on the new organisation's programme and was raised by many speakers during the heated debate on Revolution Youth's relationship to the Fourth International.

The speaker giving greetings from the Young Socialist Alliance of the United States keyed into this feeling when she explained:

International

'Internationalism must be at the heart of our programme and practice because we live in the belly of the imperialist beast itself. The US ruling class has a giant rifle. One barrel is aimed at the revolutions in the colonial world and one barrel is

aimed at the working class of the United States. These two aspects come together in Carter's attempt to re-introduce the military draft and re-militarise our society.'

22 June

Speakers in the debate on perspectives pointed out the role of Thatcher's government in the imperialist war-drive and in particular the importance of opposing the stationing of the Cruise missiles in Britain and defending the revolutions in Iran, Central America and the Caribbean. Conference voted to go all out to mobilise youth behind the call by the Labour Party for a national demonstration against nuclear weapons on 22 June.

But it was decided that on the march Revolution Youth would be putting right up front the fact that the only threat to peace in the world today is the desperate attempts by the imperialists to roll back the colonial revolution while making the working class of their own countries foot the bill for the economic crisis. Revolution Youth's slogans will be aimed at the imperialist war-



mongers demanding: 'No Cruise Missiles in Europe', 'Britain get out of NATO' and in defence of the colonial revolution.

Countering the imperialist offensive at home means fighting to remove the Tory government. For a revolutionary youth organisation this means promoting joint actions of youth with the workers' movement to build the kind of mass movement that can kick the Tories out of office. That was the meaning of conference's decision to continue the campaign of 'Youth Against the Tories' launched in the build-up to 14 May.

Sonia, from Birmingham, pointed out that the most effective way to carry on that campaign was if the members of Revolution were working in the heart of the working class.

The conference decided to make a special effort to get a majority of its members into industrial

trade unions and to build joint trade union fractions with the IMG.

Abortion

Following Revolution's role in the Campaign Against Corrie, many delegates spoke on how to carry on the fight for young women's rights and build the women's liberation movement among youth. Especially important will be the young women's magazine to be launched this summer and the campaign for contraception and abortion facilities for youth.

Revolution Youth will be organising its own school on women's liberation to educate all of its members — men and women — on the origins of women's oppression and the struggle for women's liberation.

Paul Adams from Liverpool

moved a resolution which explained the vanguard role that black youth have played in recent years in Britain and in particular the significance of the victory won against the police in Bristol. The resolution called for a campaign to educate the members of Revolution Youth in the politics of black liberation and for a sustained campaign to link up with those fighting to build a black liberation movement in Britain.

It was also agreed to maintain Revolution Youth's campaign to convince revolutionary youth in the SYL and Rebel of the necessity of joining together to build a united, independent, revolutionary youth organisation.

The most lively debate of the entire conference was on Revolution Youth's relationship with the Fourth International. Of the delegates who spoke some argued that the time wasn't right or more discussion was necessary before

taking a decision. But the majority view was that an independent youth organisation needs a revolutionary party, the only such thoroughly revolutionary, international party in the world today is the Fourth International. The vote for solidarity with the Fourth International and its British section, the IMG, was overwhelmingly carried.

The final sessions of conference dealt with norms, finance, constitution and the election of the leadership. In these sessions in particular Revolution Youth demonstrated that those who claim that youth can't run their own organisation express nothing more than their own lack of confidence in the future and in the ability of working class youth to fight for it.

Conference ended with the singing of the Internationale, marking the birth of a dynamic new force fighting to build a revolutionary party and revolutionary international among youth in Britain.

Average age 20

THERE were 200 delegates and observers at the Revolution launching conference in London last weekend. A census of Revolution members provided information on the state of the organisation.

The average age of Revolution members attending the conference was 20 years. Of those attending 38 per cent were young workers, 44 per cent students and school students and 18 per cent unemployed.

There were 55 delegates elected on a ratio of one delegate to three Revolution members. However, some branches sent fewer delegates than their entitlement — such as Cardiff and Manchester — while a couple of areas sent no delegates at all. New branches of Revolution are being formed all the time and a number of these were not in a position to send any delegates, although, some members did attend as observers.

A number of fraternal guests attended from other youth organisations both in Britain and abroad. There were guests from *Barricade*, the Socialist Youth League, Rebel, from France the Jeunesses Communiste Revolutionnaire, the Young Socialist Alliance (USA) and from the Irish section of the Fourth International, People's Democracy. Tariq Ali was a guest speaker from the International Marxist Group and Dodie Wepler gave greetings from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

The session which discussed Revolution's relationship with the Fourth International was the most lively, with 25 speakers. The result was an overwhelming vote in favour of political solidarity with the FI and its British section. A motion calling for the vote on the FI to be postponed fell with 12 in favour and 41 against. Then the motion on political solidarity was carried with 50 voting in favour, none against and 3 abstentions.

The new revolutionary youth organisation voted to call itself Revolution Youth. It elected a national committee whose average age is just over 18. Its first mandate is to gear the organisation up for a youth contingent on the 22 June demonstration against the Cruise missile.



Forward with the Fourth International

By Paul Adams, Revolution Youth national committee

THE MOST important discussion at the launching conference of Revolution Youth was over its relationship with the Fourth International (FI) and its British section, the International Marxist Group.

There was opposition to declaring solidarity with the Fourth International, but after a complete and exhaustive discussion the vote in favour of political solidarity with the FI was overwhelming.

Why is this question of building a revolutionary socialist youth organisation as part of a youth international so crucial?

Every day the international nature of the class struggle is demonstrated. Iran, Afghanistan, Ireland are places that directly affect the class struggle here in Britain.

Thatcher is second only to Carter in forcing the imperialist drive to war. The bourgeoisie understands that to survive it must organise on a world scale. NATO is not a debating society for old brigadiers — those alliances are forged to protect capital's global interests.

Working class youth, blacks, young women are looking with burning intensity to the struggles against imperialism in Iran, South Africa and in Nicaragua. Steelworkers understood the need for international solidarity in their strike.

We, in Revolution Youth, could not afford to lag behind the advanced sections of the working class which are beginning to understand the need for international organisation of the oppressed and exploited.

It is only the FI that is today organising

revolutionaries on a world scale; it is only the FI that is building an international party in the tradition of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

To achieve a successful revolution a mass revolutionary party rooted in the working class and oppressed is crucial. This is the lesson of history. That party can only be built if it is internationalist in theory and practice.

Revolution Youth is in business to help make a revolution therefore we have to help build that party. Working class youth moving to revolutionary politics are inspired by the revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua and they will rally to the banner of the FI.

Would solidarity with the FI hinder our struggle to build a unified revolutionary youth organisation? Absolutely not. The IMG, British section of the Fourth International, is the only revolutionary organisation waging a struggle for revolutionary unity. Association of Revolution Youth in this fight can only help us.

The fight for revolutionary unity does not mean concessions on fundamental parts of the revolutionary programme, and the fight to build the international party cannot be compromised.

Big battles are coming, in the imperialist centres and the workers' states as well as in the Third World. The question of revolutionary leadership will be posed.

Revolution Youth will be fighting to build a mass revolutionary youth organisation as part of the fight to build a mass party capable of leading the working class to socialism.

That is the message we are taking out to the youth. Forward with the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

AGENDA

The school will take place between the 12th and 18th July 1980. A deposit of £10 will secure you a place, but the full £47.50 has to be paid in advance by the 31st of June, 1980. This will cover your accommodation, all meals, morning and afternoon coffee and the full programme of events. Detailed programme, reading lists and information regarding the venue will be received on registration.

Attendance at the school is open to members and sympathisers of the IMG, Revolution Youth and the 4th International.

The school is designed to combine a forum for discussing questions of Marxist theory and strategy.

The opportunity to hear

- * Ernest Mandel
- * Charles Udry
- * Robin Blackburn
- * Margaret Coulson
- * Tariq Ali
- * John Ross
- * Oliver Macdonald

A relaxed atmosphere for meeting comrades from all over the country, together with visitors from Europe.

The School's programme is designed to provide plenty of time for:

- * Relaxing in the sun.
- * Watching, or joining in sporting activities. (Comrade Tariq will be leading morning jogging sessions ... optional)
- * Watching films.

An event not to be missed is the Saturday afternoon cricket match between Socialist Challenge and Socialist Worker.

MAIN SESSIONS

The main sessions are grouped into three parts: The Colonial Revolution, Workers States, and Europe.

1) Permanent Revolution and Strategy in the Third World.

Stalinist Global Policy from Yalta to Afghanistan.

The Cuban Revolution.
Revolution in Nicaragua.

2) Political Revolution in the Workers States — Hungary and Czechoslovakia (Debate on Afghanistan)

3) The German Revolution 1918/19. Revolution and Counterrevolution in Spain, 1936.

Revolution in Portugal 1974/5. The nature of the Coming British Revolution. (debates on the Trades Unions in Late Capitalism, and State Capitalism)

A full reading list will be supplied on registration — All books and pamphlets available from The Other Bookshop.

Revolutionary Marxism Today, Mandel, NLB, £4-50.

Trotsky. A Study in the Dynamic of his Thought. Mandel, Special Offer price £2-00.

Also: Special Offer — From Stalinism to Eurocommunism. Mandel — £2.00
Lessons of October. Trotsky, 90p.
The Transitional Programme

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ERNEST MANDEL



OPTIONAL COURSES

As well as the main lecture course there will be a series of optional three part courses.

Two introductory courses are planned:

- 1) An Introduction to Revolutionary politics.
 - 2) An Introduction to Marxist economics.
- There will be two other subsidiary courses on:
- 3) Marxism and the Family.
 - 4) Aspects of the history of the British Labour Movement.

It would be very helpful if comrades would state their first preference on the application form provided. It will not be possible for comrades to attend more than two optional courses.

Kyoji Nishi 1926-1980

Founder of Japanese Trotskyist movement dies

KYOJI NISHI, one of the founders of the Revolutionary Communist League, Japanese section of the Fourth International has died of cancer. Nishi joined the Japanese Communist Party when it was reconstructed after the Second World War.

Programme

After World War II the Japanese CP grew rapidly; it was the only party which had never

capitulated to support for the Emperor during the war.

But a crisis in the CP started in 1956, after the invasion of Hungary. Nishi opened up a struggle inside the CP around the draft of the new party programme.

He wrote an article, *For the Leninist Programme*, defending the revolutionary road to socialism and soviet-type democracy against Stalinism.

In 1958 Nishi, and the leadership of the CP students' organisation were expelled from the party. From that point on, he was consistently a leading member of the Japanese Trotskyist movement.

Italian LCR stands in elections

From Mary Johnson in Milan

MUNICIPAL, regional and provincial elections take place in Italy in June. This will be an important test of strength between the major political forces in Italian society.

For the first time, the Lega Comunista Rivoluzionaria will stand its own slate of candidates. These candidates will stand for the municipalities and provinces of Turin, Milan, Genoa, Brescia, Taranto and two or three other towns in the Venetia region.

The standing of candidates is the culmination of a cam-

aign to get between 400 and 600 signatures, verified by a local official, for each candidate. But it also reflects the renewed growth and development of the LCR, Italian section of the Fourth International.

The construction of the LCR has been a difficult task. Before 1969, the Italian Trotskyists carried out two tactics simultaneously. On the one hand they constructed a left tendency in the Italian Communist Party (PCI), around the journal *La Sinistra*; on the other they constructed an independent revolutionary youth organisation (Falce e Martello — Hammer and Sickle).

But with the development of the mass upsurge of 1969, which included a huge wave of

student struggles, it became impossible to run these two tactics simultaneously. The youth in Falce e Martello rebelled against entryism in the PCI, and the section went into crisis. Most of the youth organisation went into Maoist organisations.

Centrists

The result of the crisis of 1969 was the building of three large centrist organisations in Italy — Avanguardia Operaia, Il Manifesto, and the largest of them, Lotta Continua. These organisations built themselves to the stage where they could mobilise tens of thousands on the streets, each had daily papers and a membership of over 10,000.

But in 1976, they each went into a massive crisis, unable to give an adequate response to the PCI's reformist policies. They imagined it would be possible to have a 'government of the left' in which the PCI, the Socialist Party and the far left would participate with the bourgeois radicals to push through a transition to socialism.

The crisis and decline of the centrists has given renewed space for the building of the Italian Trotskyist organisation.

Throughout the 1970s the LCR (then GCR) had concentrated on implanting itself in the factories. This difficult task has paid dividends. The LCR played an important role in the struggle around the renewal of work contracts which took place in 1978 and 1979. They have been particularly involved in the struggle against the sackings of 61 militants from Fiat Turin.

Austerity

Two comrades of the LCR, Angelo Caforio and Pasquale Salerno, were amongst the 61 sacked, for having been in the

front line of the struggle in Fiat Mirafiori.

The current battle of the LCR is concentrated on the struggle against the austerity measures, accepted by the PCI and trade union leadership. In particular they are defending the workers' councils in the fac-

tories, which are under ferocious attack from the bosses.

The Italian section today has activities in 25 of the main towns in Italy, and is well established in most of the industrial towns. The trade union work of the LCR is concen-

trated in building its cells at the numerous Fiat factories, the Milan Alfa Romeo factory and the Italsider factories.

Hopefully the LCR slates in the elections will help to consolidate the work done in the unions, by publicising the political line of the LCR amongst wider layers of the working class.



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Tameside fights on

By Chris Murray

TAMESIDE trades council is continuing to fight its disaffiliation by the TUC.

The trades council was victimised two months ago for calling a conference on the North of Ireland, the composition of which the TUC found objectionable.

Speakers invited included a member of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, an organisation the National Front accused of being 'terrorists', a theme later taken up by the TUC.

More than 20 trades councils have now condemned the

disaffiliation. These include Newcastle, Sheffield, Leeds, Bradford, York, Preston, Southampton and Plymouth.

Threats

It is understood that the TUC is now threatening to expel Southampton and Plymouth because of their support for Tameside.

Todmorden Trades Council will be raising the issue at the annual conference of

trades councils at the end of this month. Tameside is planning to lobby the conference.

It is also pressing ahead with the organisation of its Irish conference. This will take place on 7 June at Manchester Poly students' union.

All labour movement bodies are urged to support this conference to show their solidarity with Tameside.

Credentials can be obtained from: SECY, 186 Kings Rd, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancs.



Armagh 11 — more jailings

TWO more women have been jailed for refusing to pay a fine imposed on them after taking part in the peaceful picket of Armagh women's prison on International Women's Day last year.

The two, Liz Largey and playwright Margaretta D'Arcy, are part of the Armagh 11, all of whom were fined after the police attacked the picket.

A third woman, Anne Marie Loughran, was jailed two weeks ago but because her fine was paid by a relative, against her wishes, she has now been set free.

Liz has been jailed for two months and Margaretta for four. The fines imposed on all the other members of the Armagh 11 have now been paid.

A picket in solidarity with Margaretta and Liz will now be held outside Armagh women's prison on 24 May. Anyone who can attend this protest from Britain is asked to make a special effort to do so.

It is expected that some form of solidarity action will take place in London on the same day, possibly outside Brixton prison.

H Block prisoners: the relatives are also the victims

By Liz Curtis

FOR the visitor to Belfast, it quickly becomes clear that the issue of overriding concern to the nationalist community is the struggle for political status in the H Blocks and Armagh. There is no getting away from it: the physical and psychological impact on both the prisoners and their relatives has been too great.

We stayed in the Short Strand, an isolated nationalist enclave of some two thousand people on the bank of the Lagan. This small community has 18 men on the blanket and two women in Armagh.

The relatives live under enormous stress. One woman we met, Mrs McVeigh, had collapsed a few days previously on the fourth anniversary of her son's arrest. When we visited her, her husband burst into tears. Mrs McVeigh explained that he had had a stroke some years back. 'He hasn't seen Sean since he walked out that door.'

Decades

Sean McVeigh was the first from the district to go on the blanket. That was three years ago, and he has 15 years to serve. He's 22 now. Like all the protesters, his sentence would be halved if he would accept criminalisation: as he is on the blanket, he will serve his full term.

Like many of the prisoners from the Short Strand, Sean comes from a Republican background. Imprisonment for political reasons is nothing new to his family. His father was active in the Republican Movement from the age of 11, and was interned from 1940 to 1944.

Mrs McVeigh, too, was an active Republican for many years. She has suffered greatly since Sean's arrest. Another relative of an H Block prisoner tells us later that Sean was 'an awful good wee boy — he was very good in the house for his mother.'

Mrs McVeigh says several times that of all the decades of struggle she remembers, the last ten years have been the worst.

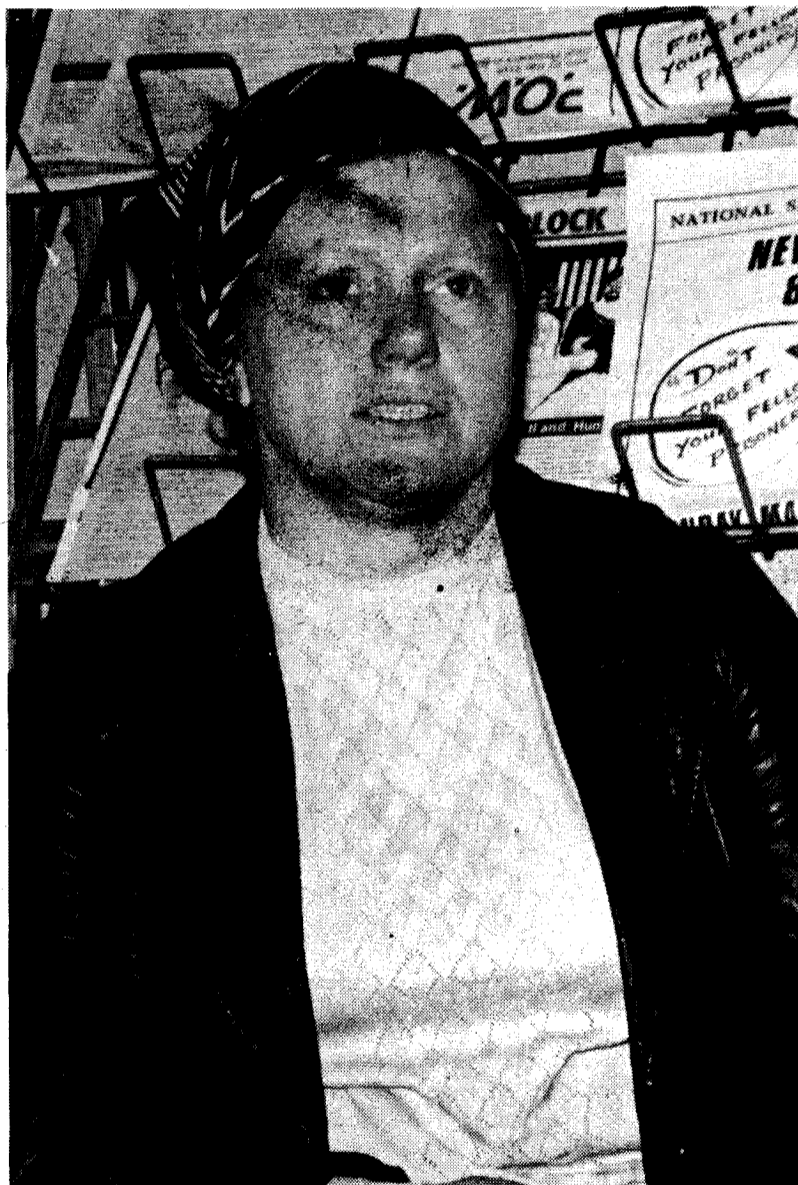
Rosemary Callaghan, too, comes from a Republican family. Her mother is the chairperson of the local Sinn Fein branch. When male screws attacked the women in Armagh on 7 February, Rosemary was carried down the wing with her breasts exposed. These assaults led to the women going on a no-wash, no-slop out protest.

Depressed

Her mother tells us: 'They were driven to it by the screws. The girls just couldn't take any more.' The screws had been refusing to let Rosemary out of her cell when she had diarrhoea.

On her last visit, she says, Rosemary was 'awful-looking'. 'She was really depressed, but the morale's great.'

Like all women prisoners in



Mrs McVEIGH

British jails, the women can wear their own clothes. But since going on the no-wash protest, they haven't had a change of underwear since February.

Mrs Callaghan explains that the women used to get dressed up for their visits. But now, 'her hair and nails were dirty, and she's lost an awful lot of weight.'

The cells are stinking. 'They used to empty their chambers out of the window, but now it's all boarded up, so they have to use the cell. They say the smell is really awful. The urine is the worst: they just plaster the other on the walls because you can't smell it so much that way.'

Mrs Callaghan, like all the relatives we spoke to, is 100 per cent behind her daughter's protest. 'Britain should not be in Ireland, and there will be no peace till Britain leaves,' she says. 'The people of Britain should go on the streets to get their sons out of Ireland. Then the British government would have to sit up and think.'

Susan MacArt, whose husband Cormac has been three years on the blanket, talks about the effect on her two sons, who are seven and five. She doesn't take them on every monthly visit, because she doesn't like them to miss school.

The youngest, Seamus, used to refuse to go on the visits. 'It's changed now, but there used to be a green hut, and he wouldn't go into it. He was afraid, because they used to lock the door and turn the key. It was the sensation of knowing you couldn't get out.'

Seamus is also very confused about his father's hair. 'His hair is black now, but really it's yellow. It's black because it hasn't been washed. Our Seamus keeps asking me, "Where is his own hair?" And he doesn't like the beards, because they make the men very old-looking.'

Cormac MacArt is 27, which makes him one of the older prisoners. He is in H5. Susan explains that H5 is really the heart of the protest, as it started in that block.

'When the first blanket men started, the authorities didn't think the protest would ever reach this proportion or that it would ever go on this length of time, so they put them all into H5.'

'Then, as the numbers started to grow, they tried to segregate the older ones from the younger ones, because they maintained the older ones were giving the lead. That's why they're so hard on H3 and H4, because the young ones are there and they think they can break their morale.'



SUSAN MacART

She says: 'When the blanket protest started first, I don't think we understood what it entailed, what it really meant. Britain can't go any further, the H Blocks can't get any worse — and still it's not deterring them. They're not going to give up.'

'I don't believe the ordinary people in the street in Britain really know what is going on.'

The children who are growing up now will inevitably get involved, she considers. 'You know when I think you really see it? In the summer, they

all come out at night and play football and handball. Every summer there's less of them, and there's a different crowd. You'll look and you'll say, "Oh, there's so-and-so — his chum's away." This year you can see the ones who have been in jail and you say to yourself, "Oh, there's so-and-so, and he's only out of jail".'

Tears fill her eyes as she says: 'Everything is related round jail. It's either he's in jail, he's going to jail, he's out of jail. Everything has jail connected with it.'

Voices For Withdrawal

A forum on Northern Ireland

Sat 14 June, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1

Speakers include: Ernie Roberts MP, Clive Soley MP, Bernadette Devlin-McAliskey, Peter Hain, Desmond Greaves (historian, editor *Irish Democrat*), Ruth Addison (Young Liberals).

Plus: exclusive filmed interview with former blanket prisoner.

From 10am. Social in evening from 7.30pm.

Delegates £2, Observers £1.

Organised by the Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland, c/o Youth Office, National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1.

LETTERS

SCEVENTS

ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside C&As — for more info ring phone Colin, 574068.

BATH: SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20298 for more details.

BIRMINGHAM: SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.30, Sat 10-4. For more info phone 643-0669.

BRADFORD: SC available from Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.

BRENT: SC supporters sell every Sat Morning at the Brent Collective Bookstall in the Trades Hall, Willesden High Rd NW10.

BRIGHTON: For 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.

CARDIFF: SC sales Newport Town Centre outside Woolworths 11-12.30; Cardiff British Home Stores 11-12.30. Also available from 108 Books, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.

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.

ENFIELD: SC available from Nelsons Newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.

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.

NEWHAM: SC sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Market, Upton Park.

OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.

OXFORD: SC supporters sell every Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.

STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday 1pm Mersey Square. Tel. 061-236 4905 for more information.

SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat., Regent St (Brunel Centre).

TEESSIDE: SC sales at Newsfare shops in Cleveland Centre and on Linsthorpe Rd, Middlesbrough, and at Greens Bookstall, upstairs in Spencer Mkt, Stockton High St.

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.

WOLVERHAMPTON: SC on sale Wolverhampton Railway station 4.30-6pm on Thursday & Friday; Polytechnic Students Union Friday 12-2pm and Mandr Centre, near Beatties, Sat 11am-2pm.

WOLVERHAMPTON: SC Public Meeting 'The Tory Promise of Tax Cuts and Prosperity' 2 June 8pm at Coach and Horses, Cannock Road, Wolverhampton.

LONDON: SC jumble sale. Ring Tessa on 01-359 8371 if you have any clothes, books, records or toys you no longer require.

SAS incompetent?

THE serious intent of your article on the SAS (8 May) was sadly deformed by the habitual left-wing belief that abuse is a satisfactory substitute for criticism.

You rightly identify the SAS's use in the state's counter-insurgency apparatus, yet almost invalidate your argument by refusing to acknowledge the inescapable fact that the SAS are a formidable enemy.

Whatever one thinks of their ethics, to dismiss them as 'psychotic scum' and 'incompetent... thugs' is a disservice, not to them or their supporters, but to yourselves and even the class struggle.

Such rhetoric is, at best, wishful thinking, at worst a deliberate confusion of emotional reaction with committed argument.

We do not argue with your evidence of SAS 'incompetence', but we feel it vital to point out that one can only be 'incompetent' on such a level when one has access to enviable skills and equipment.

If the SAS were to jump through most readers' minds quips about their mental state would yield little comfort.

Yes, they are killers — trained killers — and whether they are sadists and torturers as well is, in this instant irrelevant. The words were simply there to provoke.

This is a favourite tactic of such rags as *The Sun*, and is less than helpful to those of us who see the SAS, not as a band of crazed louts, but an efficient organisation of very hard men with lethal skills.

The present political climate — especially since the 'siege' — is one in which highly emotive language and actions are being encouraged by the state against anyone who opposes it.

Rhetoric may well win the Tories an election; it will not win, or even begin to win, the class struggle.

This is written not in hostility but out of a desire to see the political comment of the left become realistic and honest. To underestimate opponents, in order to boost the morale of your readers, is manipulative and dangerous, not only to individuals but finally to revolution itself.

LYNN NORTCLIFF and DICK BARKER, London SW1

Books for Southern Africa

AS A result of the response to this appeal, we have been able to send Marxist literature to groups in Botswana, Zambia, Nigeria, Ghana and other parts of Africa where the refugees from apartheid find themselves temporarily.

The following extract from a comrade in Ghana is typical of several we have received:

'Thank you very much for the series of parcels you have sent us over the past few weeks. Our organisation, the Socialist Youth Movement, has found the literature most welcome and useful in equipping us for the struggle.'

We have also been helpful with comrades in Europe and our efforts are beginning to bear fruit.

The steep rise in the cost of books and postage has been a big drain on our funds and money is urgently needed to carry on with this work.

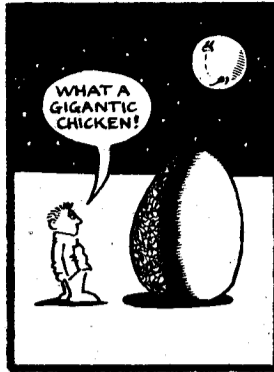
Books are weapons in the revolutionary struggle. Please help with donations to Books for Southern Africa, c/o Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1.

CHARLIE VAN GELDEREN, London NW11.

Camp David must be opposed

FAR from the issue of the Camp David treaty being a complex issue (Letters, 8 May) it is Nigel Ward who is hopelessly confused.

The test of the treaty is not



whether 'it sets back the class struggle in the region' but whether its intention was to sabotage the fight of the Palestinians against the Zionist state.

Otherwise we would argue that since the Industrial Relations Act in 1972 increased the level of class struggle in this country we should not have opposed it. If the treaty has not succeeded in its aims (put succinctly by Dr Brzezinski as 'Bye, bye PLO') it is because of the depth of opposition to it by the Palestinian and Arab masses — something which was constantly reiterated by all those I spoke to when visiting Beirut last August.

By talking of 'class struggle in the region' Nigel Ward ignores both the national liberation struggle of the Palestinian people and the effect Zionism has on the Israeli working class. The defeat of the Zionist state is the precondition for successful class struggle in the region.

The intention of the treaty was to bolster the Zionist state (by allowing it to concentrate on the Lebanese border and the West Bank) in return for, as Yasser Arafat stated, a stretch of barren desert in the Sinai.

Given half the chance, the bourgeois Arab regimes will stab the Palestinians in the back. They all pay lip service to the Palestinian struggle in order to guarantee their own survival (just as the black African states surrounding South Africa do). Both Jordan and Saudia Arabia considered supporting it.

Far from bringing into question 'The inviolability of Jewish (!) settlements' it has if anything increased the resistance of Begin and the Gush Emunim settlers on the West Bank. Given Sadat's suppression of all opposition in Egypt, it is simply not true to say the masses welcomed the treaty.

In refusing to oppose the Camp David treaty and in not seeing the national liberation struggle of an oppressed people as all important, Nigel Ward ends up implicitly supporting the continuance of the Zionist state — just as *Militant* do in the case of the Orange statelet in the North of Ireland.

TONY GREENSTEIN, British Zionist Organisation-Palestinian Solidarity (in an individual capacity)

Militarism in both blocs

SO Phil Hearse thinks that 'the arms effort of the USSR is overwhelmingly defensive' (8 May). Tell that to the peoples of Czechoslovakia and Hungary, Eritrea and Afghanistan.

And who, pray, does he think their new SS-20 missiles are aimed at? No doubt we are to be comforted, as we are removed from this earth, by the thought that Soviet nuclear weapons are only 'defensive'.

This is the same lie that Thatcher and Callaghan use to justify the Cruise missile. It is a shame that *Socialist Challenge* cannot be more original in its apology for 'socialist' militarism.

It is not 'anti-imperialist' to support the Warsaw Pact against the West. You are supporting one imperialism against the other.

True anti-imperialism means opposing the militarism of both blocs and super powers, as well as all their imitators now rushing to develop nuclear weapons. To restrict anti-war politics to anti-Americanism is political childishness in the age of nuclear proliferation.

The decline of CND was not a gain, but the result of political short-sightedness by the left. The revival of its aims by E P Thomp-

son and other is only to be welcomed.

Where is your alternative focus for the campaign against militarism, even in the West?

MARTIN SHAW, Hull CND and European Nuclear Disarmament supporter

Giving up scientific socialism

HILARY Wainwright's letter (24 April) did not set the facts straight. Indeed, Wainwright displays a complete laziness in collecting facts and combines this with a prodigious energy in distorting them.

Throughout the dispute over Jim Murray's support for the AUEW right wing, she has never voted against him whenever the issue has been raised at the Newcastle Socialist Centre.

Wainwright chides me for not coming along to Socialist Centre meetings to put my point of view. But as she knows full well, I have had a stroke, paralysing half of my body. This made it impossible for me to participate in the discussions. I did, however, submit an article attacking Murray to *The Bulletin* of Newcastle Socialist Centre. When this was not published and two articles by Murray had appeared, I tendered my resignation.

The editor makes it clear he will not print alternative opinions. One of the reasons for writing to Socialist Challenge is that my views could not be expressed in the organ of the Newcastle Socialist Centre.

Wainwright paints a glowing picture of the 'progress' of the Newcastle Socialist Centre. What actually is happening is that groups like the IMG and SWP are distancing themselves from it as the support wanes. Now there is no hope at all that the centre could act as a catalyst, bringing about left unity locally.

The centre's most prominent members are demoralised and disenchanted ex-SWPers, anarchists, or opportunists. All this odd assortment are united in their opposition to Bolshevik organisation and methods.

To return to the point about Wainwright that I made in my initial letter: the appalling thing about her contribution to *Beyond the Fragments* is not that she dismissed the great theoretical advances of Lenin and Trotsky, but she writes as if they did not exist.

To do this is to turn one's back on scientific socialism.

RAY CHALLINOR, Tyne and Wear

YCL — putting the facts straight

I WAS very sad, but also very angry to read the article 'Why we left the Young Communists' (8 May). I was sad because I thought that the aim of Socialist Challenge was to be a forum for building left unity in Britain — which you won't do by an article giving such a false picture of the YCL.

In my branch, in Dundee, which has just under 50 members, we pride ourselves on being the biggest political youth organisation here. We are bigger than the LPYS, the Young Liberals, Young Tories and the SWP and IMG put together. We have got a record second to none in how a revolutionary youth organisation should operate.

We hold regular education classes covering all aspects of

politics — history, economics, law and order, Ireland (with a speaker from the Connolly Youth Movement), gay rights, the state. And we hold public meetings on socialism and communism.

We also work with the Chilean community here — we've helped organise hunger strikes, translate leaflets for them and so on. One of our members is currently on the strike committee at a factory fighting for union recognition.

It was the mistakes on our national policy that really annoyed me.

On Ireland: we sponsored the 'Time to Go' demo in London last August. As far as I know one of our members actually made the official banner for the march. In Scotland we have a sub-committee dealing with Ireland, as we do in London.

On fascism: it is ridiculous to say that we weren't at Brick Lane. We even had a report of it in *Challenge* (our newspaper) at the time. Last month in Glasgow we played a major part in getting the NF march banned, by leafletting, taking part in deputations to the police and so on. We marched on the Blair Peach memorial demo.

It is really ridiculous to claim that we think Young Tories can be 'revolutionary', even a glance over our programme, *Our Future*, would show how wrong that is. Moreover, if the writers had read this they would have noticed we have a section on what the 'ultra left' have to say.

As to the age of our members, the average age at our Scottish Congress last month was 18. Scottish membership has doubled over the last two years.

As for your last question, 'What should Revolution do about the YCL?', we suggest you set up a branch in Dundee before asking that question. Even the IMG only has one member here to my knowledge.

I hope in future you will have more reliable articles on us in your (otherwise) excellent paper, because these inaccuracies will just make it a laughing stock, and cynics would say you are only trying to build up your own organisation at the expense of other sections of the revolutionary left.

JANICE GARDINER, Dundee Young Communist League

Star irritated

I WAS intrigued to read the interview with two former YCL members (8 May). It gave a picture of the Young Communist League which bears no relation to any of my experience.

Of all the youth political movements, the YCL is by far the youngest, it is committed to shifting the Tory government out before 1984 — not waiting until then for a general election, as the two people interviewed claimed.

But the thing that personally irritated me more than anything else was the suggestion that YCLers never discuss Ireland.

For all the many demands on it, the YCL has established a working collective on Ireland, and I personally have over the last few years led discussions on Ireland at dozens of YCL meetings — one of them on the day I read the article.

CHRIS MYANT, Morning Star '68 — CP led General Strike!

TARIQ Ali's article on France, May 1968 (15 May) despite many excellent general points, gives a totally false view of the position of the French Communist Party.

If the activity of the PCF and the main union, the CGT, is investigated, it can easily be seen that Tariq has got hold of the wrong end of the stick. Far from the 'ultimate bastion of the French state', not even laying down any conditions for its support of De Gaulle, the PCF was the only party in the Fifth Republic which consistently opposed De Gaulle's policies.

Do not forget that the PCF was the only party to oppose him when he came to power in 1958, ensuring a vote of 20 per cent against him in the referendum on the constitution. It was the PCF in the following ten years that did so much to try to unite the discontent which came to a head in 1968.

But to return to the events more closely. Tariq mentions that on 10 May a one-day general strike was called. He does not mention that it was led by the reformist CGT whose Communist leader Seguy declared:

'The government must immediately withdraw the police from the Latin Quarter, declare an amnesty for all imprisoned demonstrators, and meet the just demands of the demonstrators.' What is this if not a political demand?

On Saturday 11 May *Humanité* declared 'Stop the Repression!'. In Paris on 12 May a joint appeal was issued by the trades unions, led by the CGT, including a demand for 'the transformation of the economic system by and for the people'.

On the day of the strike — 13 May — the CGT confederal bureau appealed to 'workers and especially the youth to strengthen and maintain their unity in order to bring about economic and social changes which will make possible the real emancipation of the working class'.

On 15 May the CGT called on the workers to intensify their initiatives, and on 17 May it declared its full support for the factory occupations, and called for pressing forward the demands of the workers to create a democracy opening the way to socialism. This was concretised in the call for committees of action in favour of a popular and democratic government.

Surely these are peculiar actions from a party which 'supported the French state'. Contrary to what Tariq claims, it was not the lack of a revolutionary party which allowed the Fifth Republic to continue, but lack of unity between the communist and non-communist left, which wasn't helped by the tactics of the PSU and anti-communists like Cohn-Bendit.

DOUGLAS CHALMERS, Dundee

Police out of schools

AT A recent meeting of the East London branch of the NUT we voted overwhelmingly 'not to co-operate with police visits to schools, activities organised by the police for school pupils... police recruitment drives etc until such time as a full public enquiry has been held into the death of Blair Peach.'

All NUT members, especially those in the Metropolitan Police area, should ensure that a similar motion is passed in their school and branch union group, as part of the national campaign for a Public Enquiry.

While teachers, youth, and community workers are facing cutbacks in jobs and resources, the police have extra resources to promote their public image and to attempt to indoctrinate every class of school students in the Metropolitan area.

PHILIP CRONIN, Friends of Blair Peach Committee

Socialism in the '80s — Which Way Forward.

22 May LEEDS Tariq Ali (IMG)	3 June MANCHESTER Stephen Marks (IMG)
27 May EDINBURGH Steve Potter (IMG)	4 June MIDDLESBOROUGH Valerie Coultas (IMG)
EAST LONDON Phil Hearse (IMG)	5 June NEWCASTLE Valerie Coultas (IMG)
28 May GLASGOW Steve Potter (IMG)	NEWPORT Tariq Ali (IMG)
29 May SWANSEA Phil Hearse (IMG)	June 6 LIVERPOOL Phil Hearse (IMG)
LEICESTER Steve Marks (IMG)	June 16 SOUTH LONDON Valerie Coultas (IMG)
NORTH LONDON Tariq Ali (IMG)	June 17 WOLVERHAMPTON Steve Potter (IMG)
30 May NOTTINGHAM Phil Hearse (IMG)	June 20 CARDIFF Tariq Ali (IMG)
2 June PRESTON Tariq Ali (IMG)	

Phone Socialist Challenge with details of venue and names of other speakers for next weeks paper

IMG NOTICES

IMG NOTICES
LEYLAND national fraction. B'ham centre, 137 Digbeth, B'ham. Sun 8 June, noon to 4pm.
TGWU national fraction. Centre, Sun 6 July.
RAIL national fraction. Sat 5 July national centre noon to 4pm. Sun 8 June.
NUT national aggregate. Sat 31 May.
NATIONAL GAY fraction. Sun 1 June in London. Venue to be arranged. Agenda: theses on gay liberation printed in pre-conference DB; perspectives for gay movement; allocation of work within fraction. A document on perspectives will be available from mid-May. Anyone wanting to be sent a copy and not on mailing list contact national centre.

WHAT'S LEFT

SOCIALISTS! break the routine — Show a film! Discover the best in left films in Britain for the new Socialist Film Services Handbook Films for Socialists. £1 inc postage from Ken Hulme, Room 427, The Wool Exchange, Brushfield St, London E1.
Workers Action public meeting. 'Fight for workers' government'. Wed 28 May, 7.30pm, Hemingford Arms, Offord Rd, London N1.
'THE threat of nuclear war — ways to mobilise against it. No War but Class War.' Libertarian Communist Group public meeting, Wed 28 May, 7.30pm, Metropolitan Tavern, Farringdon Rd, London EC1. Further details: LCG, c/o 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

RATES for ads to appear in What's Left. 5p per word or £4 per col. Inc. Deadline: noon Sat. prior to publication. Payment in advance.

THE publication of Perry Anderson's new book Arguments within English Marxism is an event of major importance for the British left. Anderson's book is a polemic against Edward Thompson's influential text The Poverty of Theory, published last year.

Thompson's book was itself an attack on 'Althusserian Marxism' and what Thompson regards as the intrusion of 'structuralist', 'dogmatic' thought in British Marxism. The debate which Anderson takes up with Thompson ranges over a wide range of questions, including the nature of historical method, Marxism and philosophy.

In part, it is a continuation of a debate which was initiated between them 15 years ago on the nature of the bourgeois revolution in Britain, and the extent and character of the Marxist tradition in Britain.

All this may seem very abstruse. But the debate is an extremely important one, not just because of the influence of Thompson's broadside against Althusser, but also because the stakes of this debate are ultimately political.

In *The Poverty of Theory* Edward Thompson declares 'war' against Althusser's Marxism and 'all such Marxisms'. In reality, his 'war' turns out not to be just against Althusser and his familiar system of concepts, but a defence of empiricism against the fundamental categories of Marxist theory.

It challenges 'vulgar determinism', but it is also opposed to the very notion of Marxism as any form of socio-economic determinism. Politically it goes beyond rejecting Stalinism to dispensing with revolutionary Marxism, too.

Science

Edward Thompson savages Althusser's theory of scientific knowledge, which he argues is incapable of understanding history. According to Althusser, scientific knowledge is derived from the application of Generalities II (G2 — scientific theories) to Generalities I (G1 — the 'raw material', the object of knowledge) to produce Generalities III (G3 — new knowledge).

Thompson correctly points out that because of Althusser's insistence on the differences between the 'real concrete' and the 'concrete in thought', Althusser's epistemology runs the risk of circularity. The production of knowledge takes place entirely in thought, without the possibility of verification in the real world.

There are evident parallels with Kant, and a radical difference between Althusser's account and that of Marx in the *Grundrisse*. Yet Thompson counterposes to this an entirely untenable account of how to understand history.

Thompson recommends the 'reality rule' of Hexter — that historians should back the case which seems most realistic in terms of the evidence. The nature of these terms is completely unelaborated.

Empiricism

Thompson retreats into empiricism, refusing to elaborate the categories needed to interrogate evidence, historical or otherwise, to produce scientific knowledge. But the necessity of elaborating a system of concepts to order knowledge is a *sine qua non* of all scientific procedure, not just an Althusserian whim.

No wonder then that Thompson so radically rejects the elaboration of Marxist categories undertaken by Althusser and his principal collaborators, some of which — the distinction between mode of production and social formation, over-determination, structure in dominance — have passed into common usage.

Class

Perry Anderson challenges the definition of class given by Thompson. Thompson polemicalises against Althusser's insistence that class relations are objective structures, and that individual subjects are just the 'bearers' or supports of these objective class structures. Althusser's notion is aimed at Lukacs' concept of class consciousness and the 'class for itself'.

For Thompson the anti-humanist content of the Althusserian position is stark. If humanity is reduced to being the 'bearers' of social relations, then what role exists for conscious human action? Thompson replies that class is not an objective structure, but a process of common identity:

'Classes arise because men and women, in determinative productive relations, identify their antagonistic interests, and come to value and think and struggle in class ways: thus the process of class formation is a process of self-making, although under conditions which are "given".'

An even more extreme (and influential) statement of this position is to be found in *The Making of the English Working Class*. Anderson points out that such a definition is a break with the Marxist notion that class position is not determined by consciousness.

On the contrary, throughout history

Perry Anderson replies to Edward Thompson

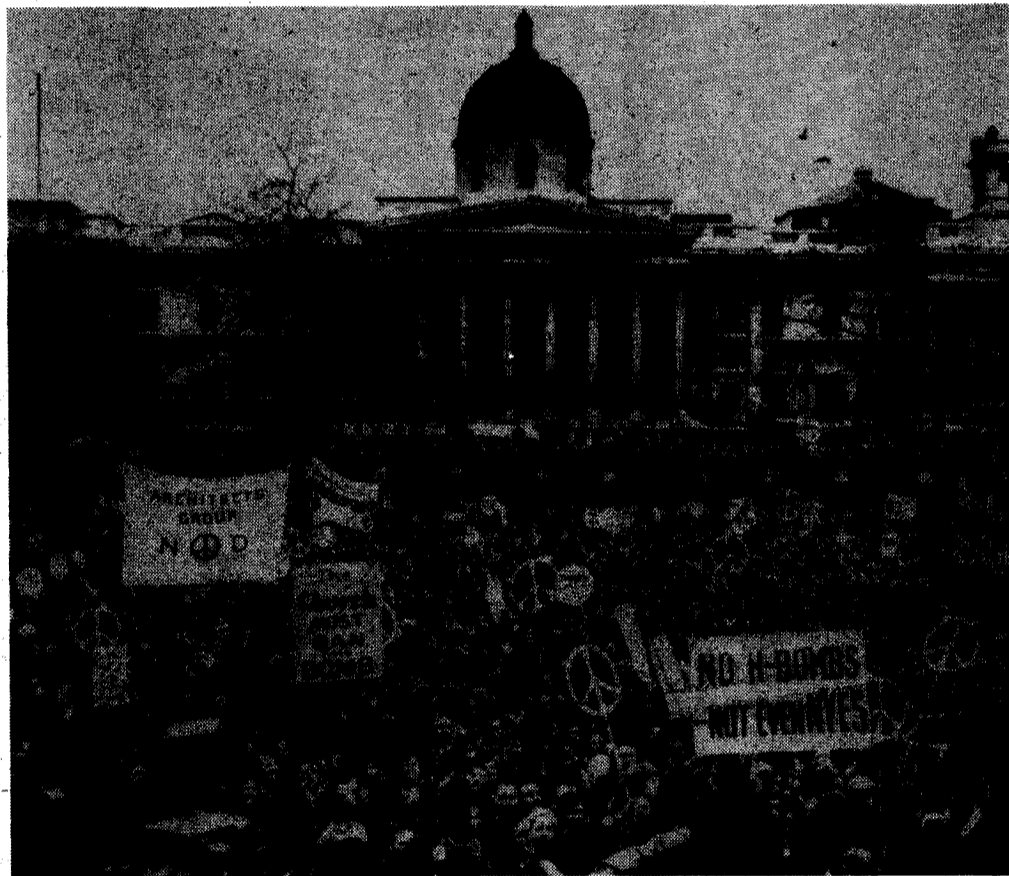
NEW LEFT REVIEW TAKES ON A CRITIC

EDWARD Thompson is Britain's foremost Marxist historian. Author of 'The Making of the English Working Class', 'William Morris — Romantic to Revolutionary' and numerous other works, he is one of the veterans of the 'old new left'.

They were the generation of left wingers who split with the Communist Party at the time of the invasion of Hungary in 1956 and began to elaborate independent anti-Stalinist, anti-capitalist positions.

Thompson's 'The Poverty of Theory', published last year, attacked many of the ideas about Marxism fashionable on the left. This week sees the publication of a rejoinder, 'Arguments Within English Marxism' (NLB, £3.95), by Perry Anderson, who took over from Thompson as editor of 'New Left Review' in the early '60s.

PHIL HEARSE argues that Anderson's book is one of the most important works on Marxism to be published for years.



For Thompson and the 'old new left' the neutralist CND was a formative experience. But for the 'new' left, their first mass campaign was the militant anti-imperialist Vietnam Solidarity Campaign.

numerous classes have not developed any sense of class solidarity or consciousness. Marxism would therefore find it impossible to make any objective analysis of class relations without reference to consciousness, which itself, in Thompson's account, becomes the key determinant of class.

Thompson's explanation of class gives an insight into his whole account of the corpus of Marxist concepts. He argues that Marx started out trying to achieve a 'unitary theory of society'. But he became obsessed with the narrow concerns of political economy, leading to a false economic determinism and the infamous 'base/superstructure' model.

According to Thompson, this privileges the economic and is precisely *not* a 'unitary theory of society' — in which culture and value systems play their proper part — but a false theory of 'economic man'. This account is not at all an original one, but shares much in common with many forms of 'anti-determinist Marxism'.

The typical failure of this account is its inability to grasp the importance for Marxism of the concept of the *social relations of production* as the determining level of social reality. Marxism is a determinism. But all Marx's 'economic' categories turn out to be social relations, not objects or structures.

It is precisely for this reason that all the accusations about Marxism being a technological or narrowly 'economic' determinism are so wide of the mark.

In his *The Poverty of Theory* Thompson attempted to give a social account of Althusser's theories. Althusser was the last systemiser of Stalinist thought. His epigones in the universities and polytechnics were 'lumpen bourgeois' divorced from practice.

Much of the responsibility for introducing this dogmatic clericalism was given to *New Left Review* and to New Left Books who were charged with 'an insistent pressure to re-assert Marxism as a doctrine'. On behalf of the 'old new left', the generation of '56, Thompson made a damning judgement of the group around Perry Anderson, Robin Blackburn and Quintin Hoare, who took over *NLR* in the early '60s.

Rebuff

Anderson delivers a blistering rebuff to this series of accusations. Having defended Althusser's project of elaborating the categories of Marxism, although not all his conclusions, Anderson rigorously demonstrates Althusser's personal distance from the Stalinist apparatuses.

He rightly demonstrates the scope of the contribution — we would say an *historic* contribution — made by the *NLR* team in introducing a wide variety of European Marxist thought, previously unknown in Britain, thus making a crucial contribution to broadening the scope of Marxist culture in this country.

The debate between Anderson and Thompson finally resolves at the political level — around Stalinism, Trotskyism and revolution.

The political period to which Thompson makes constant nostalgic reference is that of the anti-fascist Popular Front and the period of national unity against the Nazis. While breaking with the Communist Party, Thompson never fundamentally broke with the strategy of the 'British Road' — of peaceful, democratic advance.

All his references to Trotskyism are of a derogatory nature, treating it as a subvariant of Stalinism, another arid and dogmatic clericalism.

Anderson gives an account of the political formation of the core of the *NLR* team. Unlike the 'old new left', its first major political intervention was not the neutralist Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, but the militant anti-imperialist Vietnam Solidarity Campaign.

Strategy

Inevitably they were forced to confront the political ideas of Trotskyism, and the history of the Communist movement, which the old new left never really did.

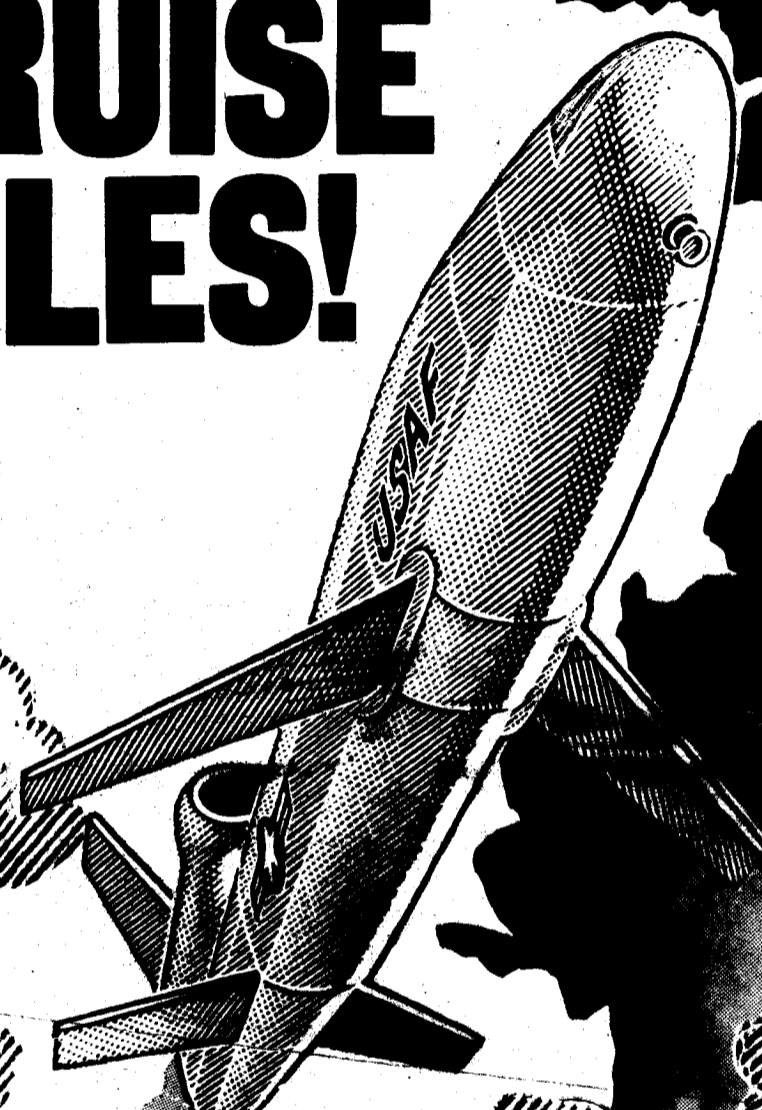
Thus it was forced into a political confrontation with the peaceful road strategy, and towards an elaboration of the revolutionary strategy of Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, and Gramsci.

A brief review of this character can hardly summarise adequately the full scope and depth of the debate that has been set in train, and which has hardly been concluded.

Thompson's *The Poverty of Theory* reverberated around the academic left, apparently carrying all before it. Anderson has done the whole of the socialist movement a service in taking this debate so explicitly and rigorously to its political conclusions.

The debate is not over; Perry Anderson makes clear that he regards his conclusions as provisional and subject to rectification. But it is a debate which transgresses all the fundamental issues of Marxism in our time. It deserves the attention of every socialist.

Socialist Challenge says NO CRUISE MISSILES!



**Demonstrate
June 22nd 12.30pm
Assemble Embankment
March to Hyde Park**

**Organised by
the Labour Party**

BRITAIN OUT OF NATO!