

Socialist Challenge

As Benn goes for Labour leadership

GIVE JIM THE BOOT!

THAT WAS THE WORLD THAT WAS

THE fight for the leadership of the Labour Party is on with a vengeance. Events since the special one-day conference have revealed an increasing dissatisfaction among large numbers of party members with the pathetic opposition to the Tories being put up by Callaghan, Healey, and company.

A massive debate has erupted on the policies of a future Labour government. With the recent memory of the debacle of the last Labour government, increasing numbers of party workers want a definite commitment to socialist policies.

At the one-day conference at the end of last month, Callaghan made his position clear. He wants a policy of incomes control, British support for NATO, and no radical measures of any significance — in other words another Labour government which simply manages capitalism.

Centre

The response of the party's far right has been typical; faced with the fight for democracy and socialist policies there is talk of splitting the party and forming a new 'centre' party.

Whatever the schemes of Shirley Williams, David Owen, and William Rogers, the present leadership around Callaghan and Healey has no intention of giving up control to Benn and the left.

For the left to win, there has to be a *fight*. But there is a major obstacle to the success of such a struggle.

The strength of the right wing is the block vote of major unions which have a right-wing leadership. Union leaders tripped over themselves last week to express their support for Callaghan. Defeating the right at the next Labour Party conference means above all defeating the right in the unions.

This is precisely the problem with Benn and his supporters. They imagine that it is



possible to defeat the right by back-room manoeuvres and horse trading with the union leaders.

In reality it is only by organising the left in the constituencies and the unions for a fight that it is possible to win.

To mobilise a rank and file fight it is not possible to concentrate on the issue of democracy, important though it is. It is necessary to link the battle for democracy in the Labour Party and the trade union movement with mass action against the Tories.

A first tentative step toward organising the Labour left in the unions will be taken by the

Labour Co-ordinating Committee's trade union conference in the autumn.

Benn's policies and his project for a 'left' Labour government are not ours. Yet it is in the interests of the whole working class that the Labour right is defeated. That's why Socialist Challenge stands for support for the new 'Mobilising Committee' which has been formed to fight for Labour Party democracy.

The events in the Labour Party in the coming months will have an important effect on the possibility of socialist advance in Britain for years to come. Socialists must do

everything in our power to organise to kick out the right — in the Labour Party and in the trade unions.

BY the time you finish reading this article you could be dead. So could everybody in the town where you live. So could the vast majority of the population of this and other countries.

It will be little comfort to know that this could happen by accident. That a computer in the United States had made a last, fatal mistake and reported a Soviet Union military attack that never was.

And that nuclear weapons had then been sent speeding to the USSR, which in self-defence had fired a battery of its own. It would be too late then for the computer to read-out, 'Sorry, all a mistake'.

Or at any rate too late for most of us; Margaret Thatcher, Jimmy Carter, the generals, and the arms manufacturers would probably scramble to their fall-out shelter in time.

The possibility of such a scenario was underlined at the start of this week when, for the third time since November and the second time in a week, computer errors put US machinery into motion which could have ended in holocaust.

In each case a nuclear strike against the Soviet Union was prevented. But the margin was only minutes.

The lunacy of it all can hardly be contested: the madness of a world full to the brim with weapons that can kill us all is now too self-evident to require further elaboration.

What should be said is that an accident is probably not the most likely cause of nuclear war. The major danger remains the deliberate build-up of the war machine of the NATO alliance and the determination of the US to re-impose its dominance in world politics; even if the future of humanity is the required sacrifice.

It is tempting for us to shrug our shoulders and accept the inevitability of the cataclysm. This is what Thatcher, Carter, Reagan, and other leaders of the Western world want us to do.

But there are things that can be done. In this country one of them is the building of a mass campaign to demand that we opt out of the arms race and out of the NATO alliance which demands it.

Specifically and immediately it means protesting against the deployment of Cruise missiles in this country — missiles whose launch will be controlled by those Pentagon computers, and which ensure that we will be first in the firing line for any Soviet retaliation.

On Sunday 22 June a demonstration takes place in London against the siting of these missiles. That is one demonstration and one cause which cannot afford to wait. Time is not on our side.



'Well, Dammit, That's Not What This Printout Says!'

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)

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Len Murray - on TV too late

By Rich Palser

IS 'Len Murray', as the *Daily Express* dubbed him, really intent on organising political strikes to undermine an elected government as the Tory press would have us believe?

The TUC's general secretary was given the opportunity to defend the unions' Day of Action against the government in a Granada TV Lecture, excerpts from which were televised last Thursday.

Many trades unionists who worked hard to build the Day of Action will wonder why Murray wasn't making similar speeches up and down the country when the press witch-hunt against the unions was at its height, instead of holidaying abroad.

Suggestions can be found in Murray's lecture, entitled 'The democratic bargain'. He insisted that 'the issue is not who runs the country — governments are elected to govern, and in the last analysis they have the power to enforce decisions'.

However, Murray continued, since 'democracy is essentially a bargaining activity' the unions have a legitimate right to bargain not only with employers but also



NOT V I Lenin

with government' — the Day of Action being a way of pressuring the Tories to listen to the unions' views.

For Murray, union action is just a means of seeing that 'a fair bargain is struck', which all sounds very reasonable

and a far cry from V I Lenin. Never mind socialism, or even getting rid of this wretched Tory government, everything will be all right if capitalists and workers are prepared to make compromises.

We have seen where these compromises have led before. Murray himself gives one example, the social contract of the last Labour government, which not only boosted profits while cutting workers' living standards, but also led to the fall of the Callaghan administration.

We have also seen what happens when structures are devised 'through which workers can get a piece of the action and accept that, if they are involved in decision making, they have to accept the consequences,' as Murray puts it.

The consequences of participation in the mismanagement of British Leyland, for instance, has been to tie the unions' hands while tens of thousands more workers get kicked onto the dole.

Unfortunately it is not true, as Murray claims, that 'there is a lot of common interest between workers and employers'. Where is the common interest between the two sides of industry when the employers are intent on cutting wages and jobs in order to secure their profits?

Nor do workers and employers start

off in an equal bargaining position. Capitalists can put their investment where they think they will profit most, but workers can't so easily take their labour elsewhere when competing with 1½ million unemployed.

The working class has a vote every five years, but it is the small minority who own the wealth in this country who decide how that wealth will be invested and what the newspapers will print; whose 'right to dispose of their property as they wish' is defended by the law and the courts.

Just how much respect for the law and order of Parliament have they shown when a Labour government has taken even the smallest measure against their interests?

So long as there are employers and governments like Thatcher's which stand for the employers' interests, Len Murray may well be able to go on negotiating compromises for trades unionists — deals which will inevitably mean ever greater sacrifices for the working class.

When it comes to a fight to remove the employers' government, or further still to dispense with the employers altogether and genuinely plan the running of the economy according to need and not profit, Len Murray is only capable of days of inaction.

Women - 'we have a right to work'

By Valerie Coultas

PIN money is a term that was coined in the late 19th century to describe women's wages. 'Money for pins' was needed because of the very high cost of steel pins needed for dressmaking: it had nothing to do with their wages being a trivial concern.

Today the term is taken to mean that women do not really need to work; their wages are deemed to be necessary only to pay for the odd hair-do, lipstick, or 'pretty' dress.

As many women will tell you, this is downright nonsense. No woman spends her time cleaning lavatories, washing other peoples' clothes, serving up meals in canteens, or typing out endless letters for a stick of lipstick. Women work because they cannot live without a regular income and, in the case of married women, because their income is vital to their family's survival.

Faster

From 1974-78 women's unemployment rose three times faster than men's. As it continues to shoot up, both male and female workers will realise how vital the female wage is — when you have to do without it, you soon realise what is necessary and what is not!

One reason for the rapid increase in female employment is the cuts in social expenditure.

Women, who constitute 42 per cent of the total workforce in Britain, are concentrated in the public and services sector. They staff the schools, nurseries, social security departments, and hospitals. When these are cut, women's jobs go.

Fifty-two per cent of women workers in Britain are mothers. They are forced to take part-time employment because of lack of proper provision for children.

Because of their domestic duties women are also likely to have to change jobs more often than men. This means that employment protection laws, which are based on length of continuous service and the number of hours worked, leave a large number of women vulnerable to the whims of ruthless employers. At the same time it increases the likelihood that women's jobs will be among the first to go in the present economic climate.

The new Tory Employment Bill will reduce women's employment opportunities even further if it is allowed to go through Parliament.

The Bill includes a major attack on maternity rights. Under existing legislation women are required to work a minimum 16-hour week for two years before they are entitled to paid pregnancy leave. No provision exists for fathers to get paid for time off when their child is being born.

The Tories want firms which employ less than six workers not have to give women their jobs back if they leave to have a child. And any employer will be allowed to offer women a 'suitable alternative'



WOMEN against the Tories — they have every reason to oppose the Employment Bill

rather than her own job back.

The Tories also want to increase the red tape involved in obtaining pregnancy leave. If women don't write all the right letters they'll end up losing their job after having a child.

There is no reason why small firms should be exempt from allowing women maternity leave. A fund was set up to ensure that employers who had a large number of female workers were not forking out more than their fair share.

Promotion prospects for women will be hindered if they are not guaranteed the right to return to their own job. All women will also be more likely to be threatened

with the sack under this new legislation.

Employees in firms with less than 20 people and which have only been going for two years will not be allowed to protest to an industrial tribunal if they think they have been unfairly dismissed.

Tribunals will be asked to consider the size and resources of an undertaking when considering unfair dismissal. The burden of proof will lie with the employee not the employer as in the past, and even where unfair dismissal is proved, the minimum award of two weeks' wages will no longer apply.

One-year fixed contracts are suggested as a way of employers avoiding the embarrassment of tribunals altogether.

Seventy-two per cent of all applications for unfair dismissal are lost. Compensation is generally low, and co-workers are reluctant to attend tribunals for fear of dismissal themselves, particularly if they are not members of trade unions — which many women are not.

The clauses relating to unfair dismissal in the Employment Bill are a charter for the unscrupulous fly-by-night employers to ride roughshod over employees. Women are more often employed in small workplaces than men, and the Bill gives such employers a host of escape clauses.

The Tories are also willing to allow pockets of low pay to spread in industry. They wish to remove schedule 11, a clause which allows employees to ensure that they are not being paid a lower rate than the general level agreed between the bosses and the unions. This has eliminated some but by no means all pockets of low pay in industry.

The Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act have proven useless in giving women equal status at work with men — both in terms of the jobs women do and their pay levels.

Women's rates of pay actually declined between 1978 and 1979. The Low Pay Unit discovered that one in five women hairdressers earned less than £30 a week, while 60 per cent received less than £40 a week.

Decline

Employers will be allowed to cut wages even more, to increase competition, and women's wages will further decline if the Employment Bill becomes law.

Unionisation of women has increased dramatically over the past 10 years. Thirty-two per cent of women are now trade union members. The massive turn out on the TUC-sponsored abortion demonstration, and the increasing number of women prepared to take industrial action to get their union recognised, as at Grunwick and Chix, show that women trades unionists are becoming increasingly conscious of the need to actively fight for their rights.

Not only does the Employment Bill attack them as women but it attacks them as trade unionists — through limiting solidarity action and encouraging individual balloting, where the mass media can intervene with an anti-trade union bias to influence the vote.

Women have every reason to work; every reason to join trade unions, and every reason to fight back against the Tories' brutal legislation. An opportunity to discuss how women active in the labour movement can do this will come at the second *Women's Fightback* conference to be held in Birmingham, Digbeth Hall, on Saturday and Sunday, 21 and 22 June. If you want to be involved in pushing back these attacks on women you should be there.

All the details in this article are based on a report on the *Employment Bill* by *Rights of Women*, a group of women lawyers. For a copy of the report, contact: 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1, Tel 01-278 6349.

HOME NEWS

How many more jobs for the scrap heap?

By Patrick Sikorski

THREE thousand Lucas car component workers were declared redundant last week; 3,800 steelworkers at Llanwern were told they had to go the week before; and just prior to that 1,500 workers at the Talbot Linwood car plant were axed, 1,100 workers at Ford, Dagenham, were threatened with redundancy, over 5,000 steelworkers at Port Talbot... the story runs and runs.

The Tories are on the offensive. The list of factory closures and redundancies shown here proves that. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Lucas in Birmingham, in the heart of the motor industry, had already lost 3,500 jobs before the recent announcement. The car industry, which employs 300,000 people in the Midlands, has lost 8,000 jobs in the last six months.

Each month five thousand workers are joining the 143,500 on the dole chasing just 9,403 vacancies.

Load

There is resistance, especially when workers are given a lead — any kind of lead. Workers in South Wales, for example, knew that the steel strike was about jobs. Caught on the hop by the complete support for the steel strike strike, the Wales TUC was obliged to call for a general strike on the jobs' issue.

Then the sell-out started with the postponement of the indefinite action and the calling of one day's action on 28 January. But although the whiff of betrayal was already strong in the air, the response in Wales on 28 January was massive. The fight continues.

Hackney

British Oxygen workers in Hackney, East London, have so far successfully defied attempts to make 26 workers in the acetylene department redundant. It is no accident that the management's plans threaten the union branch chairperson, the vice chairperson, branch secretary, shop steward and assistant convenor.

The closure of BOC's acetylene department in Hackney makes no economic sense as the supplies for

the East London area would then have to come from Cardiff! Management is blatantly attacking the strength of the union in the best organised depot of the BOC group so as to smash the wages militancy in that company.

This isn't just a matter of the workers in BOC being able to protect their living standards against inflation because over the last few years it has been the settlements at BOC and Ford which have established 'the going rate' in the private sector.

For trade unionists and Labour Party members the biggest problem is that unless there is the start of a fightback by the Labour movement against unemployment, rank and file workers in the offices and factories will start to listen to the Tories as they repeat Sunny Jim's arguments of three years ago that 'one man's pay rise is another man's job' (sic), and accept cuts in wages.

Defeat

But it would be wrong to say that the movement has suffered a defeat over unemployment. If it had, it would be impossible to explain the massive strike action and demonstrations on 14 May in places like Liverpool and the whole of Scotland, areas in which unemployment has been endemic for a decade or more.

Mass unemployment only becomes a disciplining force on the working class after a major defeat of the class as a whole in a big historic confrontation with the bosses.

The Minority Movement was launched in 1924 in the aftermath of a slump and wage cut imposed on the miners which saw unemployment reach two million — a much bigger percentage of the

workforce than now — and union membership cut by half.

Only after the political defeat of the whole class in the General Strike in 1926 was mass unemployment combined by the employers with a systematic victimisation of the active shop stewards movement, necessitating the total rebuilding of unions like the South Wales miners during the 1930s.

Socialists need to learn from the lessons of the Minority Movement in 1924, the moves towards a general strike in South Wales, and the Day of Action on 14 May this year.

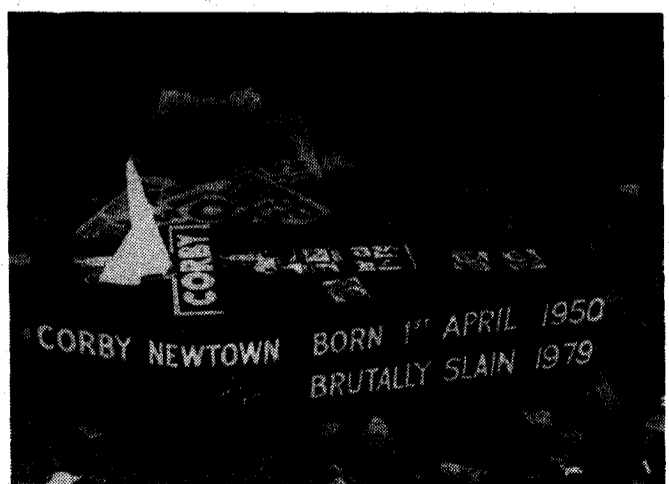
Faced with this Tory government, workers who may be unsure about how to fight back against unemployment in their industry or factory will respond to a call to action which unites the movement, including the public and the private sector, the industrial and white collar unions.

For that call to be made and for

the action to have any chance of success, there has to be an organised minority fighting in the unions which — although it will be started in individual factories and industries — from the moment it is set up will reach across the barriers between workplaces and the organisational barriers between shop stewards committees, trades councils, and constituency Labour Parties.

This minority will have a set of policies to beat — among other things — unemployment, and it will be fighting the present trade union and Labour Party full-timers for the leadership of the movement.

That fight has to start now. The call from the BOC workers for a lobby of the TUC against unemployment in September is one way to start organising all those in the movement prepared to take united action now against unemployment.



'British Oxygen has a fight on its hands'

By Tessa van Gelderen

THERE will be no closure of the acetylene department at British Oxygen's depot in Hackney, East London — that's the message that came out of the southern region shop stewards meeting on Sunday.

The stewards, who came from the large majority of the depots in the region, agreed to make the threatened closure a national issue. It will be put on the agenda at a meeting this week between management and the unions to discuss the company's 'streamlining' proposals.

'Streamlining' means cutting the workforce by 10 per cent, getting the rest to do the same amount of work, and handing them a one-off payment of £214. But if Sunday's meeting was anything to go by, British Oxygen will not push through its proposals as easily as it might hope.

BOC depots in Greenwich, Bristol, and Cardiff will refuse to take Hackney's work if the acetylene department closes. Customers around Hackney still want acetylene, but it's proposed to bring it from these other depots.

The convenor of Hackney, John Walsh, knows the importance of such a decision: 'Solidarity from Cardiff and the

other depots will result in British Oxygen having a fight on its hands,' he says.

The company has offered to remove the threat of compulsory redundancies altogether — on condition that the union agrees that the department would close in three months.

John Walsh does not intend to sign. Now the Transport Union at national level has to respond to the call from the southern region shop stewards.

The solidarity and the will to fight is there. A lead has to be given. A success at Hackney will be the best weapon to defeat the company on its national redundancies (sorry, 'streamlining') proposals.

Jobs lost through closures and redundancies

Vickers Elswick (Newcastle)	350	(27.3.80)
Massey-Ferguson (Liverpool)	550	(5.3.80)
Lucas (Liverpool)	450	(14.12.79)
Mather & Platt (Manchester)	500	(9.10.79)
British Leyland	25,000	(6.10.79)
Rosedales (South Wales)	230	(13.9.79)
Shipbuilding	10,000	(18.8.79)
Prestcold (Glasgow)	900	(6.6.79)
Scotswood (Newcastle)	750	(19.5.79)
Vickers Swindon	250	(19.5.79)
Singers (Glasgow)	2,000	(16.2.79)
Vickers Oceanics	120	(20.1.79)
SKF (Kilmarnock)	600	(19.1.79)
Plessey	1250	(7.12.79)
GKN Bolts (Darlington)	250	(28.9.78)
Wilkinson Sword	270	()
Hoover (Glasgow)	270	(9.9.78)
Tress (Newcastle)	330	(2.6.78)
Thomas Bradford	2,200	(6.4.78)
GEC (Liverpool)	670	(11.3.78)
Cammell Laird (Liverpool)	160	
English Electric (Liverpool)	700	
BL Speke	3,000	
Glenfield & Kennedy (Kilmarnock)	1,020	
Plessey (South Shields)	1,600	
Plessey (Liverpool)	2,400	
Babcock & Wilcox (Renfrew)	1,400	(15.1.77)
Singers (Glasgow)	3,000	(17.10.79)
British Leyland	15,000	(22.9.79)
		(on top of 25,000)
Dunlop Speke	2,500	(7.9.79)
Goodyear (Glasgow)	700	
British Shipbuilding (Scotland)	10,000	(20.9.79)
Molins (London)	250	(15.9.79)
Manchester Dry Dock	450	(8.9.79)
London Ship Repair	900	(23.9.79)
Birmid Smethwick (Birmingham)	660	
BICC (Liverpool)	650	
British Steel Corporation	52,000	(25.4.80)
Massey-Ferguson (Kilmarnock)	1,000	

Lobby the TUC!

WORKERS at British Oxygen's Hackney depot have passed the following resolution in their fight against redundancies. Put it forward in your labour movement organisation now.

This Tory government is intent on destroying workers' standards of living and their organisations, the trade unions. Their main weapon is the creation of mass unemployment in order to increase profits through squeezing more production out of a reduced workforce, in order to "persuade" workers to take cuts in pay rather than fight for a decent standard of living; in order to weaken and smash union organisation by "disciplining" those who want to fight back with threats of the dole.

The whole labour movement, the unions and the Labour Party, must unite against this threat and take united action now.

As a first step in such a campaign this branch/ward agrees to sponsor a call for a mass lobby of this year's TUC Congress in Brighton around these demands: *No to Unemployment. For a 35 Hour Week Now. *Fight to Kick Out the Tories.

British Telecoms - a long hot summer

By Colin Talbot, Westminster Branch POEU, and Chris Mullins, Horsham Branch POEU

'THE supporters of that proposition will be meeting outside, in a kiosk.' That was the wry comment from John Scott-Garner, president of the Post Office Engineering Union, on a resolution to take the POEU's pay claim to arbitration.

It received only a half dozen votes from the 700 delegates gathered at the union's annual conference in Blackpool last week. The gales of laughter which followed Scott-Garner's remark showed the militant mood of the representatives of the 120,000 telephone engineers.

Inflation

The crucial pay debate was opened by union general secretary, Brian Stanley. He attacked the Post Office Telecommunications Board for making a pay offer that would mean a drastic cut in real wages. He made it clear that the offer was the result of government pressure, especially the cash-limits imposed on the nationalised industries.

Stanley supported the proposals from the national executive for a pay claim that would keep pace with inflation and make a small improvement in productivity bonuses.

Crumbs

The first amendment, put forward by Glasgow branch, called for a 30 per cent basic claim. This was ferociously resisted by the national executive who argued that under the present government it was only possibly to protect existing pay levels and get a few crumbs on top.

Despite the fact that the executive's alternative, of 23 per cent, was unprecedentedly militant, the conference decided that it had had enough. It passed the Glasgow amendment by 63,002 votes to 61,295, a majority of under 2,000.

Report

The strongest branch of the union, London City, then moved an amendment calling for a more substantial productivity payment in recognition of the 'additional skills, experience and responsibilities necessary for the installation and maintenance of the new systems.' Again, despite the opposition of the NEC, the amendment was passed by a slightly higher majority.

In the debate on the amended NEC report, which now called for 30 per cent, plus 7 per cent productivity payment, and industrial action, the right wing rallied against the victories of the left. The finale was the closing speech by Brian Stanley, supposedly in support of the report.

Claim

He launched a renewed defence of the realism of the NEC and the unreality of the

claim in a desperate bid to head off defeat, but to no avail. In the final card vote, the report was passed by 64,230 to 60,067. Hundreds of rank and file union members in the galleries and rank-and-file leaders on the conference floor burst into applause.

Result

Brian Stanley followed the announcement of the result with a statement in which he called for a united and determined fight for the claim that had been decided. Despite these fine words, the militants in the conference know that it is up to them to win this dispute.

Big growth for Broad Left

THREE hundred engineers attended the first full meeting of the Broad Left, the rank and file group in the POEU, the day before the opening of the union conference. This massive meeting reflected the growing strength of the left in the union, and was a foretaste of what was to come on the floor of the conference itself.

The Broad Left had a well planned and efficiently run day-to-day campaign throughout the conference with at least one bulletin every day and a meeting every evening. A special edition of *Spark*, the Broad Left journal, sold extremely well.

In the executive elections the growth of the Broad Left showed strongly, with an increase from seven to nine supporters on the 23-strong council.

Dave Ward, a Socialist Challenge supporter and secretary of Horsham branch, was one of five Broad Left supporters elected to the seven-strong TUC delegation.

Modernisation — no job loss

THE modernisation programme of British Telecoms (Post Office Telecommunications) will mean substantial loss of jobs over the next ten years unless the POEU fights for a progressive reduction in hours.

That was the argument behind Composite proposition 17, which called for 'a progressive reduction in hours' in order to preserve jobs.

Moving the resolution Bill Upchurch, of Hillingdon branch, explained that this wasn't a demand based solely on the interests of POEU members but was in the interest of the entire working class.

Those who sold jobs for large redundancy payments were betraying the unemployed of today, and future generations. The jobs weren't morally theirs to sell.

Supporting the resolution, Dave Ward called for the POEU to defend the rights of youth. He said that saving jobs for the workers of tomorrow was a vital task for the trade unionists of today and it was a political issue that simply couldn't be avoided.

The resolution was overwhelmingly passed.

Building workers get demolished

By Tony Young

THE bi-annual delegate conference of the building union UCATT took place last week in the wake of one of the worst sell-outs on wages in the union's short and inglorious history.

This deal gave labourers and tradespeople an 18p and 22p per hour rise to increase the rates to only £1.47 and £1.78 per hour.

This settlement was a massive £80 short of the original claim — and that must be some sort of record.

The rise won't be paid until 10 July — 13 weeks after the deal was signed — with no back-dating. On top of this, to get insurance stamps in holiday periods building workers will have to work four days a week instead of the previous three.

Some advance was made in the reduction of the working week, but the one-hour cut will not operate until November 1981; small comfort to the 200,000 building workers on the dole.

Militants attending the UCATT conference expected some sort of revolt. The mood of the hundred delegates, representing 230,000 members, was, however, resigned and apathetic. The visitors were outnumbered by 60 labour officers from private companies, present at the invitation of the union executive.

There were some bright moments. Dave Ayars from the Building Worker group successfully proposed a motion calling for union control over the supply of labour.

Jinny Dunscombe, secretary of Hammersmith UCATT, made an excellent speech calling on UCATT to set up and encourage the entry of women into the construction industry.

Jerry Flint, convenor of F W Cliffords workers, who have been on strike for 15 weeks, spoke of the need for union solidarity in the fight against unemployment.

Otherwise the conference was abysmal. Two anti-lump resolutions were passed on the nod, but then one executive member jumped up and attacked the resolutions saying it was sometimes necessary to recruit lump workers — hardly the way to discourage the practice.

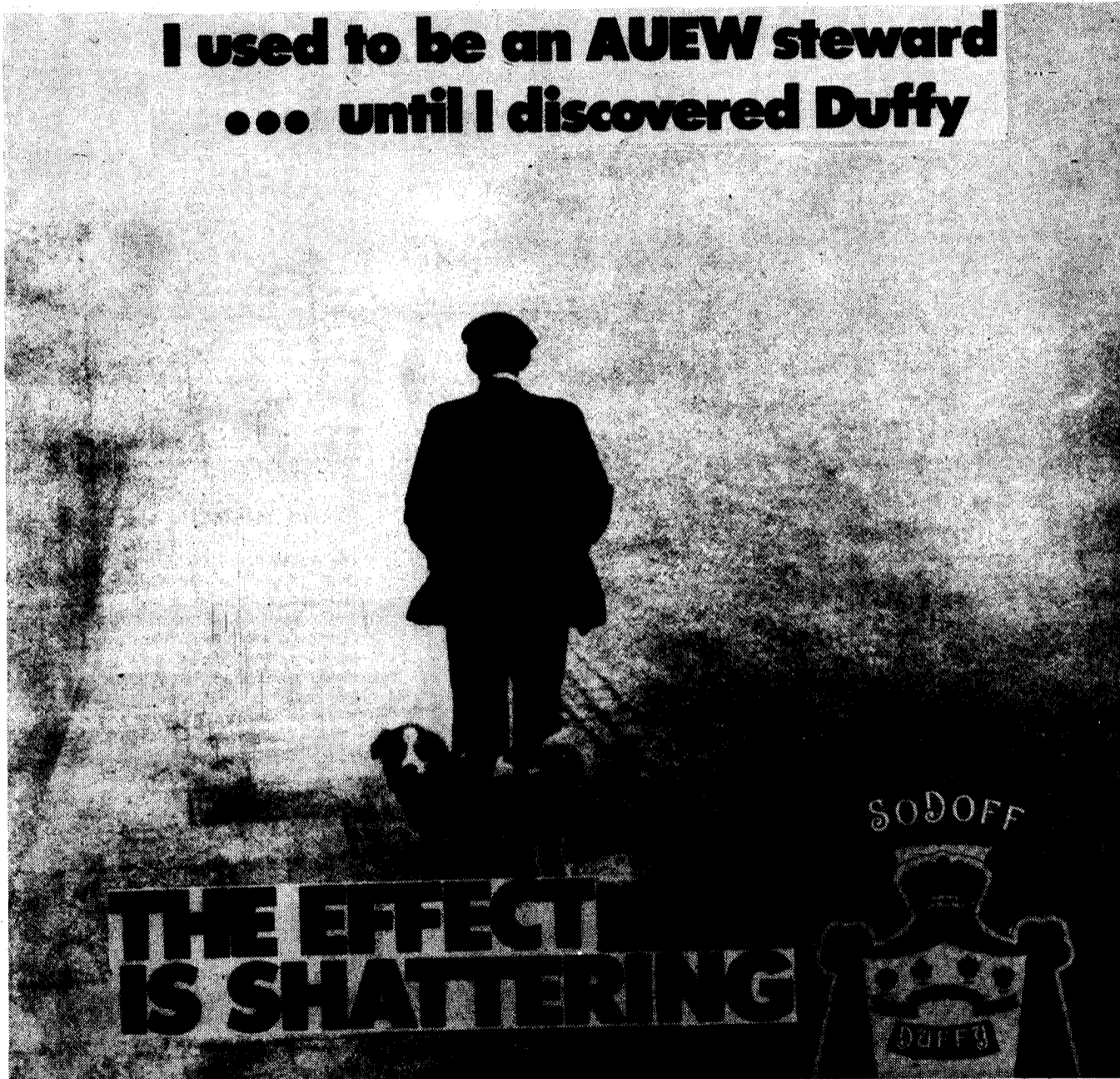
There were plenty of high-sounding resolutions passed, but these seemed destined for the rubbish bin.

All this reinforced the view of militants that only a strong and determined union organisation at site level will ever win anything. Members of Building Worker — a national grouping of rank and file construction workers — were at the conference making this point.

They received quite a good response, especially from some Communist Party and ex-CP members, sickened by the winding up of the CP Building Workers Charter. The Charter was abandoned because, 'as we now have a left wing executive, we don't need it anymore'.

The need for Building Worker was shown best of all by the fact the speaker who got the loudest applause at the conference was ... Jim Callaghan — and that just about summed it up.

Building Worker can be contacted by writing to: 30 Horton House, Meadow Rd, South Lambeth Estate, London SW8.



Organising against Duffy

TRADES unionists usually spend much of their time organising against the bosses. But in the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers an equally important task is to organise against the union leadership.

That's not so surprising since many in the union think the bosses' ideas and the ideas of the union president Terry Duffy are one and the same thing.

Take this example of what Duffy said in January: 'That poor Ted Heath was an honest man, but wrongly advised. He took the miners on, but was wrongly advised. Look at Saltley!

'Then the whole of the population voted to get rid of the Tories. That could happen again and I believe it would be a disaster — even though I am a democratic socialist.'

Read that opinion and it becomes obvious why the conference of Engineering Charter to be held on 28 June is important; especially as one discussion will be on how to secure the defeat of Duffy in the forthcoming presidential election in which once again he will be opposed by Broad Left member Bob Wright.

Duffy's right-wing record was well known even before he was elected last year. But since coming to power he has become an even bigger pin-up for the Tory press.

The most notable of his 'achievements' was the part he played in the victimisation of Leyland convenor Derek Robinson. It was Duffy who insisted that the strike which immediately followed Robinson's sacking be called off; it was Duffy who set up an inquiry into Robinson, which effectively delayed the struggle against his

victimisation; and it was Duffy who refused to organise strike action in support of Robinson once the inquiry had found him 'innocent'.

It is not just Duffy's role in the AUEW which is important.

Jim Callaghan is relying on him to supply the crucial votes against democratic reform of the Labour Party at the annual conference in October. So far Duffy has given every indication that he will try and oblige.

The campaign against Duffy is therefore a battle for the entire labour movement. Members of the AUEW can help to play their part by attending the Charter conference.

For details write to: Engineering Charter, 265a Seven Sisters Rd, London N4.

How should Labour select its MPs?

From the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

THE principle of mandatory reselection of every Labour MP has been won, and the Commission of Inquiry should tamper with this idea at its greatest peril.

The 1979 annual party conference established quite clearly that the rank-and-file in the constituencies and the trade unions wish to have this control and monitoring procedure over elected representatives.

However, the method of reselection is still being debated in the Labour Party. The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy has come out strongly in favour of retaining the present set-up, whereby the general committee of each constituency Labour Party forms the body which selects and reselects candidates.

Although the CLPD is under no illusion that the general committees are perfect bodies — for example, we would like to see them larger with more members from individual ward parties — we are certain that these are the only effective bodies which can exercise a process of monitoring the activities of incumbent Labour MPs.

Illusory

Yet those in favour of democratic reform seem to be assisting our opponents — albeit erroneously — by suggesting an alternative method.

This involves the entire membership of each constituency Labour Party. Although some illusory advantages are suggested, CLPD regards such an alternative as removing the effectiveness of mandatory reselection.

Such a scheme is advocated under populist slogans such as 'extending the democratic process to all members', 'effectively involving the whole rank-and-file' and 'improving accountability'. In reality the scheme provides for nothing of the kind.

If the general committee is good

AMONG the groups within the Labour Party which have come together to form the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, with the aim of democratising the party, is the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

The issue of democracy is now a major battleground for the struggle between the left and right in the party, and the CLPD puts forward its view here.

The left in the Parliamentary Labour Party aims to defeat the right by changing the methods by which the PLP and its leadership are chosen, giving greater control to the constituency rank and file.

Socialist Challenge believes that the unions are key to breaking the hold of the right wing over the Labour Party, and that a fight for democracy in the unions is necessary to challenge their block vote. The unions have to be used to force the party to support working class struggles.

enough to select MPs and candidates at the moment, why do those same MPs and candidates complain about those bodies being given the power to reselect?

If MPs seriously consider that their GCs are undemocratic and are unrepresentative, they should resign their seat in Parliament on the principle of having been chosen by an 'unrepresentative clique' — their quote, not ours.

In fact, there are four reasons why the general committee has to be retained as the selection body:

- * The call for mandatory reselection — formally organised in the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy since 1973 — was undertaken on the understanding that the general committee would be the selecting and reselecting body.

Member

- * GCs allow real democratic activity in the party as a whole. GC delegates are elected by party members, and it is left to the initiative of the individual party member to decide whether he or she wishes to be active and elected on to a GC.

This process requires more active rank-

and-file work at ward level, and effectively prevents the false democracy of the 'one-off' attender, active only at selection time.

- * The composition of the GCs gives formal representation to the trade unions, thus fulfilling the historic link of the unions with the Labour Party. This is generally important, and essential when a candidate is sponsored by a union.

Policy

- * The GC and its delegates are deemed capable of looking after every other aspect of the constituency work — including Parliamentary reports, organising election and propaganda campaigns, and deciding policy through resolutions and the potential mandating of delegates to the party conference.

It is anachronistic to argue that, for some unknown reason which our opponents refuse to spell out, the GC is incapable of reselecting its candidate.

The GC members are those in closest and most frequent contact with the sitting MP, or the incumbent candidate — and it is they who can best decide how the MP's

activities have squared with national party policy and the local party's wishes.

For these four constructive reasons the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy opposes those who advocate the pseudo-democracy of 'primaries' and the throwing open of the reselection process to all members.

Aside from the advantages of GCs, there are positive dangers in any wider and less accountable system of reselection.

If all members could vote at selection conferences, irrespective of how long or how active they had been, it would be easy for the right wing to 'pack' the meetings.

Lackeys

For example, an MP could simply invite all those constituents who had been helped by him or her at 'surgeries' to join the party and — on the basis of just one, isolated and simple action — they would become lackeys, having the same power as those members who had spent perhaps a lifetime working for the party and monitoring closely the MP's activities in and out of Parliament.

The idea of allowing only Labour

voters to select (a version of the US primary system) would be open to simple fiddling and deceit.

Who could tell if a Tory registered as a Labour voter, and thus became eligible to select Labour's candidates? That is the sort of entryism Labour ought to be worried about!

Equally, there are numerous loopholes in the suggestion that those party members who had attended a stipulated number of recent party ward meetings (an idea recently floated in *The Guardian* by Brian Sedgemore and Frances Morrell) could attend and vote at any selection conference.

Records

How could local parties be absolutely and legally sure they had accurate ward records? How could we ensure that no legal Newham North-east situations do not recur, we are not told!

These are the questions which have to be answered by those who suggest that the General Committee should be usurped in its role as the body for selecting and reselecting candidates and MPs.

Could they also please say how we are to stop the capitalist press having a strong, right-wing influence on those party members who do not attentively read Socialist Challenge or any other left newspaper?

Power

If all the party members in Newham NE were eligible to select, would they have been guided by the Tory press to kick out Prentice... or would we still have a Tory residing in the Labour Party?

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy is strongly behind the power being left with General Committees. We should all unite around this idea — after all, failure to do so would only give credence to those on the right of the party who (having ignored reform for such a long time) are now trying to dilute the effectiveness of the 1979 Labour party conference victories.



That is why the CLPD is right to argue that socialists should oppose moves to increase the role of individual party members to the detriment of affiliated organisations. While not endorsing all the campaign's views, we welcome its article and invite further contributions to the debate.

Why there's no teachers' Broad Left

By Kathy Underwood

IN the National Union of Teachers it has proved impossible to build a 'broad left' which encompasses the Communist Party as well as the forces presently organised in the Socialist Teachers' Alliance and Rank and File Teacher. This situation has arisen due to the policies and practices of the Communist Party.

In the union the CP's positions are permeated with professionalism, they hold an elitist view of the role of teachers and they emphasise the need for respectability. Many teachers new to the union genuinely assume that Communist Party members are Tories or right-wing social democrats.

Speech

It is because of their professionalism that they stayed put when NUT militants walked out of the last annual conference over the speech made by Mark Carlisle, Tory Education Minister. The CP applauded the union's president when he said that the militants' actions brought the 'profession' into disrepute.

These attitudes have wider implications. An editorial in *Education Today and Tomorrow*, the CP teachers' journal, criticised the Labour Party anti-cuts demonstration last November. It held that the NUT executive should not have supported 'the sheer sectarianism of the Labour Party which in effect commandeered what started as a trade union effort'. The alternative it favoured was working in the Council for Educational Ad-



vance as it included representation from Tory, Liberal, Labour and Communist Parties!

At national conference the CP usually supports the line of the executive on the grounds that it is 'in tune with the membership' and, in the CP's view, often to the left of it. This year the CP voted against national action against the cuts, against the union taking a position in favour of a woman's right to choose, against a salary scale designed to benefit poorer teachers, and against taking a

stand on racism outside the context of the classroom.

When the CP does take up issues that are not strictly 'teachers' issues' it still does so in a sectoral way. This year they favoured a position on world peace not because of American imperialism's attacks on the Soviet Union but because nuclear war would mean lots of teachers and children getting killed.

The CP completely underestimated the radicalising

effect of the cuts and struggles against them, and of the Clegg commission fiasco on teachers' pay. The only motion moved by the CP that conference endorsed was that 'Countdown' cards should not be distributed to teachers with advertising from Teachers Assurance — a vital issue for everyone!

In London they have twice prevented annual general meetings of the NUT division taking place in order to block motions aiming to democratise its running, and that of its

council. Also in London, CP teachers have refused to support campaigns against school closures when local NUT branches, parents, trades councils and the local community were all supporting the campaign.

Colin Ravden, assistant editor of ETT, said in an article that Hackney NUT supported the 'ultra-left policy of opposition to school reorganisation (closure)', as did the trades council, Hackney Labour Parties and 'even the borough

council itself' and that the Hackney CP 'alone of local political forces' favoured school amalgamation and closure.

Given the CP's positions how do teachers organise in the NUT? Meetings at the last NUT conference organised by Women in the NUT, gay teachers' group and the Friends of Blair Peach were all boycotted as 'ultra-left loonies'. Militants organised in local associations are accused of being mad, stupid, and unworthy to be teachers.

Thwart

It is these actions of the CP that have led many left-wing teachers, especially those in Rank and File, to ignore the need to build an alternative leadership inside, (as well as outside), the official union structures. Rank and File's fetishism of unofficial action is a result of genuine frustration when meeting the CP's attempts to thwart even the most minimal actions.

It is vital for militants to build a broad opposition and alternative leadership at all levels within the NUT, despite the obstacles involved. It is possible for the various left groups inside the NUT to work together on some specific single issue campaigns — the STA has worked with the Socialist Education Association on educational matters, with Rank and File on cuts and school closures.

Ideally broader unity would be desirable, although it is unlikely at present. Suffice it so say that whatever left currents or organisations emerge in the NUT over the next period they are unlikely to include the Communist Party.

London NUPE to debate alternative strategy

The London divisional council of the National Union of Public Employees held its annual general meeting on 2 June. The meeting unanimously voted support for the 22 June Labour Party demonstration against nuclear weapons.

In line with the decisions of the recent national conference, the divisional council agreed to organise a discussion throughout the division on the 'Prospects for Britain' document submitted to the NUPE conference by the executive.

This document puts forward the Labour left's 'alternative economic strategy' as the solution to the economic crisis. Socialist Challenge supporters within the London division will be putting forward an alternative document.

John Suddaby of Camden general branch was elected as the divisional chairperson.

NAC day school

A special NAC national planning meeting and a day school on positive legislation takes place on 14-15 June at the Marble Arch Intensive English School, 21 Star St, London W2.

The main discussion will be on the campaign to persuade the government to mandate local authorities to provide proper abortion facilities, so that women can have safe legal abortions close to their home.

Both days start at 10am and finish at 5pm. NAC urges everyone who is interested to attend. The campaign hopes for a big turnout.

Fight back on jobs in Teesside

AT the British Steel Corporation Lackenby's beam and rod mills on Teesside, 840 workers have been on strike for a week in protest at bosses' attempts to sack fitters' mates.

They want to reduce the number of mates from one to each fitter to one to three fitters.

Last week BSC announced that over 2,000 other jobs are to be lost in Teesside by Xmas. This is in addition to 600 redundancies caused by the closure of the Cleveland mill this summer.

Teesside Socialist Challenge are calling a public meeting on 20 June on 'British steel — the fight to save jobs'. Speakers include Bernard Connolly, Allied Crafts' Convenor at BSC Rotherham and Brian Grogan, IMG national organiser. Kings Head Hotel, Grangetown, Cleveland, 7.30pm.

Steel

'Lessons of the Steel Strike and the fight to Kick out the Tories'. Authors include Bernard Connolly, Crafts Convenor, Rotherham; Colin Herd, ISTC Convenor, Warrington; Brian Molyneux, ISTC, South Yorkshire divisional strike committee; Ray Davies and Roger Tovey, Llanwern strike committee. IMG pamphlet, price 40p; available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1. Socialist Challenge, 12 June 1980, Page 6.

Chix strike finally ends

By Oliver New

DESPITE attempts by Asian women at the Chix's factory in Slough to continue their strike it has finally been brought to a close by full time General and Municipal Workers' Union officials.

Three weeks ago official support for the strike was ended following negotiations between the GMWU and Chix management.

But the 46 women and one man, who had ben out on strike for seven and half months over unionisation, were not satisfied with the deal as 28 out of 47 workers would have been made redundant.

At a stormy and bitter mass meeting two weeks ago, which almost came to blows, GMWU official Gerry

McMullen, was forced to give way to the demands of the women to continue the strike until they got all their jobs back.

Once he was out of the meeting however McMullen came under pressure from a different quarter. Top union officials wanted the strike to end. They had gained an important propaganda 'victory' when Chix management had conceded union recognition and that was good enough for them.

Following a meeting with the Arbitration and Conciliation Advisory Service, McMullen told the strikers not to resume picketing while further negotiations continued.

At the next mass meeting McMullen was determined to bring things to a close. The only improvements won in negotiations was a half-baked promise from Chix that of the 28 workers to be made redundant 9 would be taken back at some future date when work was available and a £100 increase in redun-

dancy money.

But by offering more than half the workers their jobs back, McMullen had successfully divided them.

After insisting on a secret ballot, McMullen declared that a vote of 21 to 19 in favour of ending the strike. It had taken two weeks to force the deal on the women.

Unlike the Grunwick strike, where there had been lots of discussions and debates on the strike committee, no such body had been set up during the eight-month Chix strike. Resistance to accepting the 'advice' of trade union officials was not as strong as it might have been.

The strike was not a total defeat however. The union has been recognised and Asian women at Chix have shown workers on the massive Slough industrial estate, and all round the country, that they are not going to be pushed around!

Scottish teachers reject 14 per cent

By Michael Anderson

SCOTTISH schools will continue to be disrupted after the decision of the Annual General Meeting of the Educational Institute of Scotland, Scotland's largest teachers union, to reject an offer of 14 per cent.

Teachers in Scotland will be supporting their executive's call for continued strike action, if necessary, even after August when they go back to work after the summer break.

The level of action which the EIS executive have proposed — 10 per cent of the

membership on a one day strike each week — shows that

they have not the slightest idea of how to win the 20 per cent claim.

As one delegate at the conference this weekend put it: 'They're hoping to be dragged, kicking, and screaming to arbitration.'

Rank and File delegates argued for much more vigorous action with the aim of getting the Local Government Officers' Union, the NUT and the nursing unions into a united front to smash Thatcher's 14 per cent norm on pay in the public sector.

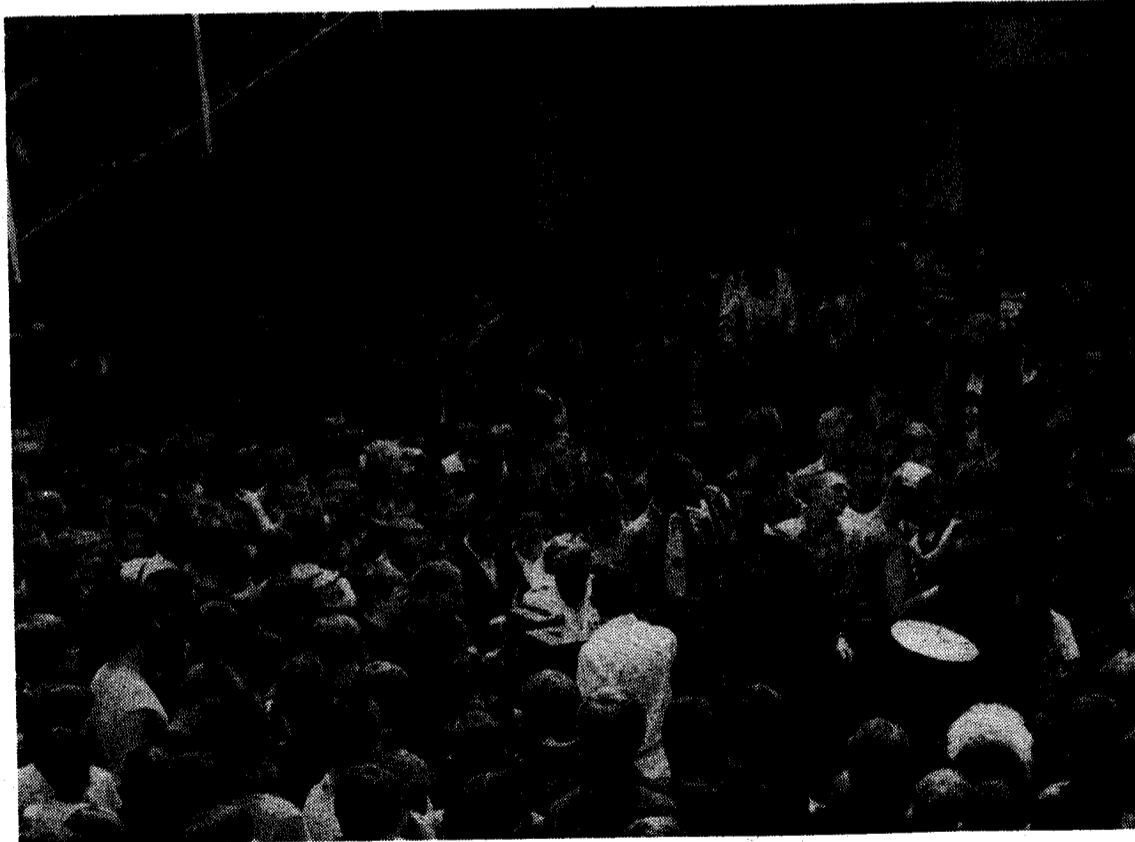
The nurses dispute was seen as a major test for government policy and many delegates stressed that they would be going back to their schools to win support for the nurses.

Dismay was expressed that the NUT has not called action over the provocative nine per cent offer to teachers in the rest of Britain. Public sector rallies and demonstrations are being planned in many Scottish towns around the theme of a 'public sector alliance on wages'.

The apparent militant lead on the 1980 pay claim provided by the executive secured AGM support for the idea of a pay review body for teachers.

Despite close votes on motions advocating a closed shop and respect for other unions' picket lines, the leadership's version of 'moderate realism' generally prevailed over that of Rank and File.

One exception came in motion 74 which stated that a 'teacher's homosexuality should not justify dismissal from his or her post'. After the recent sacking of a gay youth camp worker on the grounds of his sexual orientation this represents a tremendous filip for all teachers in Scotland.



COVENTRY heavy punk band Criminal Class attracted over 400 youth when they played for a Troops Out of Ireland rally in the city's central Precinct last Saturday.

Adolf, the group's manager explained that he is Irish himself. 'What people don't understand is that when they sent the troops in, in 1968, it wasn't because the Protestants and Catholics were fighting each other.

The Catholics were rioting — fighting the police. The police couldn't contain them on the Bogside, so they sent in the British troops. I know that, and that's what we're trying to get across to people. It's not easy — but the troops have got to come out.'

Speakers from the Troops Out Movement and from Women Against Imperialism were well received by the crowd. Badges and Republican News sold well.

Welsh miners back Llanwern action

WELSH NUM president Emlyn Williams, at the Welsh miners gala last weekend, called for support for the activities of the Llanwern Action Committee, which is fighting the 'slimline' job loss programme agreed by union officials for the plant.

Echoing this call, John Hayward, administrative officer of the South Wales NUM, called for a joint fight by steelworkers and miners threatened by redundancy.

Hayward was speaking at a meeting organised by the unofficial Steel Sheet bulletin on 4 June. He said that 6,500 miners in Wales face redundancy under the Coal Board's plans.

The first action on the Llanwern Action Group agenda is a day of protest outside the Llanwern gates on 12 June. The protests will culminate with support for the jobs lobby of the TUC in September and a solidarity meeting at the Labour Party conference the following month.

Nurses move into action

— just the tip of the iceberg

By Raph de Santos and Kevin Holmes
NUPE South Branch, Edinburgh Hospitals

NURSES are now in the front line of the Tories assault on workers living standards. Ruthless cash limits of 14 per cent are being imposed in the public sector while inflation is roaring at 21.8 per cent.

For nurses this not only means an insulting pay offer, while doctors and dentists receive 30 per cent, but with nursing home rents rising by 100 per cent, it will mean a massive cut in their wages over the next year if they accept this claim.

Cash limits don't just seem the nurses suffer. The Health Service itself will be struggling to survive. Whole hospitals face closure, special units and wards are being chopped, waiting lists grow longer, staff leave because of the low pay and bad working conditions.

Those working in the private sector will find themselves and their families suffering if these cash limits are maintained by the Tories. Not only services but wages are threatened.

If the Tories can force public sector workers to accept cuts in real wages they

will try and force all wages down in the next winter pay round. They are already discussing a figure of seven per cent.

Every worker in the public sector must support the nurses, rallies and demonstrations can draw out the implications of the Tory cash limits for the entire community. Private sector workers through their trade union branches and the Labour Party must also be approached for solidarity and support.

The Tory government has a clear economic framework for its policies of cash limits, cuts in real wages and jobs. The Labour movement needs unity and clarity in its response. The money can be found by the Tories for nuclear missiles but it's not there for jobs and hospitals. This government will never put people before profits. It has to go!

Scottish nurses organise

A WAVE of anger has swept across Scotland following the Tory government's derisory 14 per cent pay offer to the nurses.

Leah Sheridan, a nursing steward from NUPE South Edinburgh branch, helped set up a nurses' action group in January 1980.

A successful demonstration was called by this group on 29 March in support of the full 30 per cent claim. Hundreds of nurses in Edinburgh took part in meetings and demonstrations against the Tories' economic policies on the TUC's Day of Action.

The nurses' action group is now proposing to set up a nurses' shop stewards' committee to hold workplace

meetings throughout the Edinburgh area.

'We are attempting to build support for a nurses' demonstration to be held in Glasgow on 14 June,' explained Leah. 'We hope to link up with Scottish teachers who are on strike at the moment for higher pay and the local government workers whose claim is about to be negotiated.'

Leah pointed out that unity among public sector workers was vital if they were to stop Tory attempts to cut their living standards.

Glasgow nurses demand better conditions

By Nick Lockhart (student nurse) Glasgow Royal Infirmary

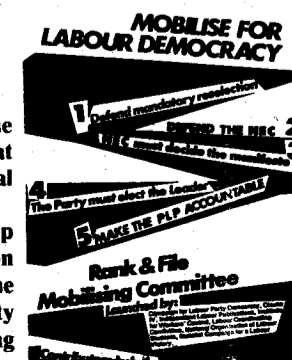
THE Greater Glasgow Health Board refused to give a straight answer to rumours in the nursing press about proposals for a 100 per cent increase in rent for nurses accommodation.

So 130 nurses turned up to a meeting called by a few

notices in the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, a back-water of organisation for many years. The result was that a demonstration has been called for Saturday 14 June from Martha Street, Glasgow at 2pm.

Many grievances were expressed at this meeting such as: lack of privacy; no visitors; sharing toilet facilities with 20 to 30 others, two cooking rings between 40 or more; and rooms (cells) six feet by twelve.

The demonstration now includes not only opposition to rent increases but also to the derisory pay offer of a maximum of 14 per cent and with prospects of four hospital closures locally — defence of the NHS.



Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy

Last week's Socialist Challenge contained information about the new 'Rank and File Mobilising Committee' for Labour party democracy. Copies of the committee's bulletin price 40p can be obtained from 10 Park Drive, London NW11.

Battle of ideas



SOCIALISM IN THE '80s

By Steve Potter

BRITAIN is in crisis — economically and politically. Since the mid-'60s it has been obvious that British capitalism has been in decline. This decline is made worse by the world economic recession, which will hit this country disproportionately hard.

For the British ruling class, the only way out is a fundamental and irreversible shift of power and wealth away from the working class, to boost profits and transform British capitalism.

Yet successive attempts to begin this process have foundered. The strength of the labour movement defeated 'In Place of Strife' and Tory Industrial Relations Act. It brought down the Heath government, and defeated Callaghan's wage policy during the 'winter of discontent'.

Now the Tories have counter-attacked with a new 'strong' government which combines an ideological offensive with right-wing policies on virtually every question.

Against this scenario the working class needs a strategy. It is an inexorable law of politics, however, that a strategy based solely

on defence will eventually lead to defeats. We have to debate how we can combine defence of working class interests with an *offensive* strategy for socialism, to start to turn the defeats into victories.

The starting point of such a counter-strategy is that the working class, *internationally*, should not bear the cost of a crisis that was none of its making. All strategies which accept, however critically, the necessity of capitalist rationalisation, concede nine-tenths of the ground to the capitalists.

The lesson of the steel industry is instructive. Concessions made to British Steel's bosses in the form of slimdowns are immediately followed by demands for more redundancies, as voluntary redundancies are used to bring about closures.

Neither do import controls, the centre piece of the 'Alternative Economic Strategy' promoted by left Labour leaders, resolve the problem of 'deindustrialisation'. In the context of an *international* recession, import controls can provide no solution for the international working class.

The same principle should inform the de-

mand that the massive new Tory 'defence' programme, involving the huge cost of the replacement for Polaris missiles, should be scrapped and that Britain should get out of the NATO war machine.

Instead the money should be used to expand education, health, and housing. Such a programme of public works would meet peoples' needs and employ the jobless.

Reduction of the working week without loss of pay could potentially radically decrease the dole queues. Inflation should be fought by wages automatically compensating for price increases. All restrictions on the unions' right to defend their members interests should be fought.

The secret plans of the multinationals and the nationalised industries, which aim to penalise workers through price increases and redundancies, should be made public. Instead of the journalists who publicised the secret plans of the steel bosses being prosecuted, they should be applauded.

On the basis of the information gained, the trade unions should draw up a plan to beat the crisis, based on the necessity of nationalising industry under workers' control, without the

crippling burden of compensation for the capitalists expropriated.

At the political level the attacks being made on the rights of women, and black people should be fought tooth and nail, and the labour movement should show itself the most energetic champion of those being oppressed by capital.

This extends to the international plane where the war being fought by the British government against the nationalist population of the north of Ireland should be fought with the demand for the immediate withdrawal of troops, and aid given to the peoples of southern Africa and Central America fighting for their liberation from imperialism.

These are the elements of a socialist strategy today, but only the most basic elements.

It is a reflection of the crisis of leadership inside the labour movement that not one of the national left leaders inside the Labour Party or the trade unions would support all these policies, let alone fight for the working class to mobilise to win them.

That task falls to the slim forces of the far left today in Britain. In the following pages contributors debate the way forward for socialism in the '80s.

Labour's left-right struggle

By Alan Freeman

'CONSENSUS politics have ended up in a series of endless attempts to fend off the demands of Labour.' So said Tony Benn in Friday night's televised debate about the future of the Labour Party.

In his most forthright attack yet on the Callaghan leadership, he said that organised labour had found that 'welfare capitalism cannot remove the boundaries between Labour and Capital'.

Labour should reject incomes policy and should prepare, in the face of the present Tory attack, to 'put its conscience before the law' and 'defy those laws' which challenged its hard won rights.

With pronouncements such as these, Tony Benn has relaunched his challenge for the leadership of the Labour Party, only days after the special one-day Party conference.

Transport and General Workers' leaders had hoped that this conference would, in their own words, 'unite all factions of the party'. These hopes were dashed. The struggle for the 'soul of the party' is on with a vengeance.

This is an important fight. Of course Benn's actions are opportunist to the core. His 'discovery' that incomes policy is wrong should have come five years ago.

But regardless of his intentions, his condemnation of the government's record and his call to action against Tory attacks will give a political focus to many millions of workers who were demoralised by the policies supported by the Labour front benches between 1974 and 1979.

To what do we owe this new outbreak? To some extent it reflects the Labour left's fears that they are losing ground against the right.

The AUEW — whose block vote swung last year's conference towards the left — is now matching its strike-breaking role in the TUC by heading up the opposition to reform in the Labour Party. Other trade union leaders are vacillating.

The left has given ground in the Commission of Enquiry and on the NEC itself, with a large group of 'moderates' declaring for a compromise on democracy to get the best of a bad job from the trade union block vote.

Benn has staked his future on confronting the union leaders with their biggest headache — how to sell Labour to their members. 'Do you want to go into the next election faced with the prospect of having to win your members to a new incomes policy?', he is saying to them. 'Back us or lose your members' support'.

But the leaders don't want to bite. Friday's papers were full of their support for Callaghan. This support is not unconnected with their fear that Healey will be the new leader.

But there is no doubt that all the trade union leaders including Moss Evans of the TGWU want a new consensus solution rather than an outright left victory.

So why has Benn moved? The answer is to be found in the mood



and actions of the constituency grass roots at the one-day conference.

More than half the delegates showed the kind of Labour Party *they* wanted by packing out the lunchtime meeting of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, a broad coalition of all Labour left currents (except the *Militant* grouping).

In spite of the failure of the conference itself to produce anything but left rhetoric from the platform, and in spite of the low attendance, this new development was a real gain.

Today the issue that unites the left in the Labour Party is internal democracy. It is true that if there were no advance beyond this de-

mand, the left would remain locked in internal party wrangles, instead of building resistance to the Tories.

The mood of the delegates however showed that wider issues will be raised in the fight for democracy itself.

The problem which the left now faces is what to do about the trade union block vote. This cannot be ducked by trying to reduce the unions' role.

To defeat the block vote the left will have to organise in the unions for rank and file control of the leaders — or perish.

This means challenging the Communist Party's declining monopoly in the industrial field. It will mean not just talking at workers, as Tony Benn likes to do,

but being prepared to *actively* campaigning in support of workers fighting back now.

The left in the Labour Party, through groupings like the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, is taking the first tentative steps to reach out to trade unionists directly through a union/Party-sponsored conference on unemployment to be held later this year.

Socialists cannot rely on the Labour Party lefts to actively organise their base in the trade unions, nor can we expect the Labour Party, with its parliamentarian traditions, to take up the cruise missiles campaign or the British presence in Ireland in a mass way, whatever noises are made on such issues.

Socialists at the base of the Labour Party and the trade unions have to push for the Labour Party to relate to mass action, to the real world of the class struggle *outside* the constituency wards.

The emerging left-wing inside the Labour Party today must commit itself to mass action to bring down the Tories, rather than accepting the view of the right that Thatcher must be allowed her full term.

Unity is vital against the Tories, and the left in the unions will be immeasurably strengthened if a left-wing emerges in the Labour Party that is prepared to fight and mobilise the class and its allies against Thatcher.

Parliament and mass action - Tony Benn

This is an edited extract from Tony Benn's speech at the Debate of the Decade April 1980 published in 'The Crisis and the Future of the Left'.

I must repeat that a Labour Government was better than Thatcher then (1974-9) and it would be better than Thatcher now. But the policies it followed would not be good enough to tackle the problems that have to be tackled now.

I emphasise better than Thatcher then and now because the problem that Paul Foot and Hilary Wainwright speak about — 'why doesn't the agitation continue when Labour is in power?' — is because the rank and file of the Labour Party know that it's better to have a Labour government than a Tory government and they are not prepared to put it at risk.

We must be prepared to face the fact that the problem of balance between agitation and loyalty has got to be solved.

If we are serious we have got also to ask why it is that the socialist groups have failed to prove the efficacy of their solution.

The real complaint that I have is not that we (the Labour Party) reformed and it failed, but that we didn't reform.



Tony Benn

That is what the argument going on within the Labour Party is all about. It is that industry was not reformed despite the 1973 programme. It is that the banks were not reformed despite the policy of Conference.

Parliament was not reformed despite the insistent demand for the abolition of the House of Lords. The civil service was not reformed. Education was not reformed. The control of the police and the security services was not reformed.

I have had many shop stewards come to see me from UCS onwards to raise their problems with the minister. What they do not want from a Labour minister was a lecture in the efficacy of revolutionary socialism. What they wanted was a solution to their problem now.

If we only talk to those who have major problems about revolution then they will say to us: 'You are trying to use *our* crisis to promote your revolution. We want to use *you*, the Labour movement and the Labour leadership to solve our problems'.

The difficulty that the socialist groups are

in, and I think they must face it, is that they are confusing extra-parliamentary struggle which I fully support, with anti-parliamentary campaigning which invites the labour movement to repudiate its past.

Here is the paradox: What is the ballot box but a revolution? Of course it is a revolution. I invite you to go round the world today, and find how many people would give up their lives for the right to do what we can do which is dismiss our government when it comes to a general election.

I think Paul Foot's party and the IMG are so small partly because people fear that if power was acquired the way Paul and Tariq and the other socialist groups wish to acquire it, the people would lose the right to dismiss them if they were not satisfied with what followed.

The British working class created the British Labour Party and we have the means to win consent for socialism by democracy. Any other sort of socialism is unachievable and would not be worth having even if it could be achieved. That is my case.

Benn's industrial policies

Speakout

By Hilary Wainwright

IN HIS arguments against the revolutionary left, Tony Benn emphasised his belief in Parliament as the main road to socialism. Rightly so, since that is where the fundamental disagreement lies. But it is not simply Benn's parliamentarism which will determine the importance of him and his supporters for socialism in the 1980s.

It is the encouragement which Tony Benn gives to workers' shop floor initiatives which is the main source of his appeal to active trade unionists; plus the fact that he combines this with a strategy to overthrow the right-wing leadership of the Labour Party, and very much more discreetly, of the unions.

Few left Labour leaders in the past would have made speeches calling for a more political trade unionism, as Benn did in his Granada lecture a few weeks ago; nor would they have admitted that Parliament cannot carry through socialist policies alone as Benn did in 1971, inspired by the struggle of the UCS workers:

Power

'The changes we contemplate cannot be made by parliamentary action alone. It requires the active work of the industrial movement. These men (the UCS workers) are fighting to survive because they have no alternative. They are generating a new leadership at shop floor level and above. They are creating a climate not only to carry Labour to power, but to sustain us as we carry through the changes which they know need to be made.'

What is the likely effect of this support for shopfloor struggles? What are its limits? How far do the Labour left's policies in fact lead to a more political trade unionism and of what sort? To answer these questions it is necessary to look at the Labour left's industrial policies.

Though Benn and others give support to many different struggles, it is to their policies for a future Labour government that we must look in order to understand their view of the relation between political power and workers' industrial organisations.

Take the two main proposals in their industrial policies: the expansion and strengthening of the National Enterprise Board, and the strengthening of planning agreements with compulsory powers and a tripartite basis — that is, an involvement of the trade unions as well as government and management.

Government

The most important assumption behind these policies is that it is the government which will have the power to take over profitable private corporations and impose social policies on the rest of private industry. Workers' organisations will play a subordinate back up role, feeding in their own plans and proposals to give detailed content to the government's priorities.

A look at what happened when Benn was at the head of the Department of Industry from February 1974 until his sacking in June 1975 will illustrate the type of relationship between government and workers which this involves.



Hilary Wainwright

When the government took over the Alfred Herbert machine-tool company, for instance, Benn had regular discussions with the shop stewards — much to the displeasure of the executive of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, which felt that such discussions should be conducted via the Confed. Benn encouraged the stewards to draw up their own plans, to discuss them with management, and then bring them to the government.

Workers

Similarly on Tyneside, Benn encouraged workers in the shipyards and the major multinationals to draw up plans for industrial democracy in their companies. When some of these shop stewards asked an assistant of Benn's: 'What should we do if management refuses to implement these plans?', the answer was that they should bring the plans to the Department of Industry.

The point about these and many other examples is that though the Labour Left's industrial policies provide a role for workers' initiatives and ideas, they are not based on the idea that workers' organisations will have to exercise any power themselves.

This feature of Benn's industrial policies helps us to answer a central question in relation to a Labour government: Why, when Wilson, the CBI, and the Civil Service had sabotaged the Labour Party's industrial policies, sacked Benn, and turned the NEB into a commercial merchant bank, was there no resistance from the trade unionists who had put so much faith in Benn and his industrial policies?

Basic

Of course, part of the explanation lies with the TUC leadership, its reluctance to rock the boat, and its pressure of prevent anyone else, Benn included, from doing so. But there was no shortage of rank and file support for Benn's policies. The policies certainly had a base.

But because of the very limited and contained role that the policies assumed for workers' organisations, they did not create

this base to exercise power. The policies may have built up workers' self confidence in their ability to co-operate with the government; but they did not build up the confidence and power to act independently once government had failed.

If anything they nurtured a dependence on government and the possibility of gaining support from individual ministers, which lasted long after sympathetic ministers had left the Industry Department.

Repeat

This is in danger of happening all over again, with even more damaging consequences. On the one hand the Labour Party's present policy document *Jobs, Peace and Freedom* is based on the 1973 policies which Benn tried to carry through at the Department of Industry. On the other hand, even if there is some move to the left in the leadership of the Labour Party, these industrial policies will meet the same concerted and powerful attack from the Civil Service, major industrialists and financiers, as Benn met last time; more powerfully concerted in fact, if the party's leadership itself is at all sympathetic to the left.

So the danger is that once again workers, slightly more cynical this time, will be sold policies by the Labour Party executive which in the end neither the executive nor the Labour left — even with more power over the parliamentary leadership — will have the necessary industrial and extra-parliamentary power to carry out. *But neither, with their existing policies, will they have prepared for that possibility by building up the power of workers to take action themselves.'*

Politicians

Though Benn and his policies have encouraged a more political trades unionism within many shop stewards committees, it is usually political in the limited sense that it recognises that unemployment requires a political solution, which means a solution from a left Labour government, from the politicians, from someone other than themselves. So in a way it is a political trades unionism which only feeds the present erosion of industrial power and confidence.

The reason why the Labour left's policies have tended to have this effect is that they completely underestimate the kind of power required to challenge the corporations and their allies in the state. There is a hint of this over-optimism in Benn's Granada lecture. He commends the extension of collective bargaining to cover health and safety issues and to try to cover control of pension funds, and then goes on:

'Next on the agenda for trade union negotiation must be an agreement for the joint

Agree

planning of a whole range of company policy about... marketing, investment, mergers, manpower planning, and the distribution of profits with a requirement to agree on all these matters before company policy is decided.'

The idea that such agreement is possible is hardly consistent with Benn's belief that 'welfare capitalism is no longer possible for the British people' (as he said at the Labour Party special conference). It could only be under the conditions of welfare capitalism — of capitalist boom and prosperity — that the conflict between workers' immediate interests and those of capital are sufficiently blunted for such agreements to be anywhere near possible.

Imagine Lucas Aerospace agreeing to joint planning for socially useful but not necessarily profitable products, or GEC agreeing to joint planning about mergers!

Formal

They might sign formal papers and guarantees; they might go through some ritualistic discussions. But these issues of investment, mergers, marketing, and such like, go to the very heart of capitalist accumulation. They are not like health and safety, where it is a matter usually of bargaining over an extra cost for the employers. Bargaining over investment, mergers, etc., especially in a recession, is like bargaining over the very basis of capitalist production.

We need to distinguish between workers' organisations developing and fighting for their own plans and proposals for an industry, which can lead to temporary victories through the power which such plans can help to build; and the idea of joint agreements on planning and the future of the industry. The idea of workers' plans on investment, products, the quality of the welfare state, the organisation of industry, as a means of extending workers industrial and social power, is next on the agenda.

Workers at Lucas Aerospace, in the power engineering industry, in hospitals faced with closure, and elsewhere have already put it on the agenda. But to put bargaining arrangements for joint agreements on these issues on the agenda is to tie workers to the illusion of welfare capitalism and weaken the power needed to create socialism.

Back-up

To criticise the left's industrial policies in this way does not mean that policies for a socialist government are irrelevant. It means that whereas the Labour left proposes policies which assume government will have the power to challenge private capital, and workers will provide a back-up, we are arguing for developing a strategy by which public sector and industrial workers, and community organisations will have the power to challenge the private corporations and the state, a socialist government would provide a back-up and support.

That sounds a long way away. For the present it means policies, campaigns and political initiatives which not only build up the strength of workplace trade unionism in its present forms, but which also encourage links across companies, across industry and the public sector, across the workplace and community organisations; in other words which encourage the kind of links which are necessary to draw up and fight for policies to meet working class needs, and at the same time to lay the basis for socialist society.

Leninism in the '80s?

Valerie Coultas and Phil Hearse

IT IS appropriate that a great ideological ferment is going on inside British socialism as the 1980s get underway. While open warfare has erupted in the Labour Party, the far left is going through an important recomposition and debate.

On a number of sides the relevance of trying to build a new socialist party on the Leninist model is being challenged. Many comrades believe that the best chance for socialism now lies through the Labour Party — by renewing it, building it into a mass, campaigning party, winning it to left-wing policies, or splitting it.

For many people it isn't the desirability of an alternative socialist party, but the possibility of its construction which is in doubt.

Other people, particularly those who look to *Beyond the Fragments* and accept many of the ideas and objectives of the organised far left, now believe that the objective of building a revolutionary party is undesirable because of Leninism's alleged inability to comprehend the scope of socialism's objectives.

They prefer to put their energies into knitting together the 'new' movements — the anti-racist movement, the anti-nuclear and ecology movements, the women's movement and so on. Often they see Leninism as restrictive and authoritarian.

In some senses, these arguments seem reasonable at first glance. Why should the idea of creating a new party on the basis of a model dreamt up in Russia in 1902 have any relevance? Isn't it true that the revolutionary, 'Leninist' organisations are tiny and dogmatic?

Elitist

Undoubtedly, the crucial argument for most worker militants is that the Labour Party can be won to left politics, and this is the way to get socialism. The fight for democracy in the Labour Party — which is incidentally a thousand times more authoritarian and elitist than the far left organisations — then becomes the crucial issue. Through committing a Labour government to conference decisions, they hope, socialism can be achieved.

Socialist Challenge's response to this is not the 'Labour Party is rubbish' argument of *Socialist Worker*. We support all those fighting for socialist policies in the Labour Party — they will have to go through the experiences of testing this course out in practice. But while supporting their fight, we believe that ultimately another course will be necessary.

It is true that Benn is not the same as Callaghan, and a government with Bennite policies of reflation and planning agreements would bring many benefits to ordinary people. But we doubt that it would bring socialism.

The Labour left doesn't stand for breaking up the existing system, but for radical reforms within it. These objectives are admirable in intent, yet the last Labour government was elected on a similar programme.

It didn't implement that programme because it was sabotaged by the Labour right — who didn't want to implement it — and the big corporations and the Civil Service.

A Labour government which *wanted* to implement a radical programme would have to force the big companies into planning agreements to secure productive investments and to plan production; it would have to push through planning of trade; it would have a massive battle against entrenched interests to cut arms spending, soak the rich, and so on.

Just like Allende in Chile, to really force through a radical programme, which must ultimately involve sweeping nationalisations, it is necessary to confront big capital and its state apparatus.

You can't make a social revolution by agreement with the capitalists. You have to mobilise the working class for revolutionary mass action to take political power, forcibly if necessary, from the big corporations and their police force, their army, and the rest.

You can't do that without a policy of revolutionary mobilisation and mass initiative. But it is inconceivable that the Labour Party would adopt a

revolutionary policy.

Its whole ideology, the strength of its established bureaucracy, and its methods of organisation prevent that. It would split a long time before revolutionary policies won out. A new party is needed which is based on a revolutionary perspective. Neither the Labour Party, nor any knitting together of 'movements' can substitute for such a party.

Yet can such an alternative party really be built? British capitalism is entering a truly momentous crisis, economically and politically. Millions of workers will be radicalised by unemployment, falling living standards, and the threat of war.

Any argument which says that there won't be an extensive radicalisation is in fact saying that capitalism will be able to solve its problems without a massive crisis. But not even the bourgeoisie believes there is no crisis, or that it is getting better.

Refreshing

It seems certain the large majority of those radicalised, looking for political solutions, will look to the Labour left. But the more militant minority, especially young workers, can be won directly to building a revolutionary alternative.

Contrary to the assertions of Peter Hain in his new pamphlet *Refreshing the Parts Others Cannot Reach*, the revolutionary left is growing. Through the unity of its forces, especially of the International Marxist Group and the Socialist Workers Party, it would be possible to quickly see the building of a small revolutionary party, which would challenge the Communist Party as the main force to the left of Labour.

This is a realistic, achievable objective. The building of a revolutionary party in the '80s is possible because of the depth of the crisis which is developing. It will put massive pressure on all the existing political alignments. It is in periods such as the present that revolutionary parties are built.

Is it true, though, that the Leninist left is authoritarian, dogmatic and incapable of responding to new movements and issues? As a criticism of those sectarian 'Leninists' who believe that the commandist model of a secret underground party in Czarist Russia is adequate for Europe today, there is some truth in this.

We will not build a mass revolutionary party in this country or any other country if we assume that commandism and preaching to people is the way to go about things.

We have to be ambitious in our goals and aim for a party that is broad enough to incorporate differences of opinion within a revolutionary framework — Parliamentary deputies would be accountable to that framework.

The heritage of Stalinism and years of isolation weigh heavily on modern Marxists. Monolithism is seen as effective. Debate, division over the smallest matters, a hindrance. This frightens away many potential supporters.

Sterile

It affects attitudes to unity in action. The Anti Nazi League and the National Abortion Campaign broke out of this sterile approach and drew in thousands of young people and thousands of women, through their openness to debate and the range of forces actively involved.

Mass extra-Parliamentary action will continue to be the far left's domain on social issues for a long time to come. But to build a mass party, the far left has to become an attractive force for those it wishes to attract most — the industrial working class.

Unity in struggle with members of the Labour Party and the Communist Party will be essential to this aim. But we must go further. To present an attractive alternative to the lefts in the Labour Party the *politics* of Leninism — not the organisational fetishes — must be broadcast as far and wide as possible.

Within our ranks what unites us is far greater than what divides us: for workers' control as opposed to workers' participation in the running of capitalist industry; for the extension of Parliamentary democracy to direct control through workers' coun-

cils; for international unity among workers.

The rallying cry of the Bennites will not seduce a large number of British workers. Too many Labour leaders have raised their hopes only to dash them when they are in power.

Revolutionary socialists in the 1980s have to provide a positive alternative, a rallying point, for all those who reject reformist socialism.

The bickering must come to an end. Revolutionary socialists who see the need for a new party in Britain must come together and discuss. The choice is clear. Benn's road or ours.



ON 17 March 1980 almost 3,000 people packed into Central Hall, Westminster, to take part in the *Debate of the Decade*. Tony Benn, Stuart Holland, and Audrey Wise put the case of the Labour left. Tariq Ali (IMG), Paul Foot (SWP), and socialist feminist Hilary Wainwright argued the case for the revolutionary left.

The *Crisis and Future of the Left* is an edited account of the debate with an introduction by Peter Hain. Published by Pluto Press, it costs £1.50, and is available from The Other Bookshop.

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP



**I am interested in the IMG
Please send me further information**

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Return to IMG, P.O. Box 50, London N1 2XP

AGENDA

STOP THE NUCLEAR DOODLEBUG!

LAST week at a secret NATO base in northern Norway, the generals and air marshals of the 'Free World' decided that the first of the Tomahawk Cruise missiles will be located in Britain and Italy.

The Cruise missile is one of the latest examples of the renewal of the arms race initiated by the United States. Apart from the Cruise missile, the United States is spending hundreds of billions of dollars on its new 'MX' underground mobile missile system.

The siting of the Cruise missiles in Britain has nothing whatever to do with the 'defence' of Britain. Working people in Britain have no interest whatever in a nuclear war with the Soviet Union, or in being the missile outpost of the United States.

Nuclear war

In a recent television programme, an American general admitted: 'If there's a nuclear war we want it to be in Europe'.

The question of nuclear disarmament was one of the main questions which divided the recent one-day Labour conference. The Labour right primed David Owen to intervene at the conference in support of Cruise missiles, and James Callaghan went out of his way to oppose nuclear disarmament.

But Owen and Callaghan were opposed by the overwhelming majority of the delegates. The Labour Party's National Executive has already come out against Cruise missiles and any replacement for the Polaris missile.

To support its demands the National Executive has organised a mass demonstration to take place in London on Sunday 22 June. This is one of the most important demonstrations to have taken place for years. It marks the rebirth of an anti-militarist movement in Britain, which can have a big impact on British politics in the coming months and years.

All branches of the IMG should be mobilising for this demonstration. Already a number of branches have taken the lead in organising local committees against the re-armament programme. On the



demonstration there will be an anti-imperialist contingent which clearly places the blame for the threat of nuclear war on the American war drive, and the preparations of the United States to fight the development of the revolutions in Central America and Iran.

Socialist Challenge believes that nuclear disarmament doesn't make sense without withdrawal from NATO — our supporters will be raising the demand forcibly. Revolution Youth will be organising a youth contingent on the demonstration.

It is not sufficient for Socialist Challenge supporters

to just attend the demonstration. We must use the remaining two weeks to get support for the demonstration, circulate our sympathisers and supporters, and organise transport.

Callaghan and Owen are hoping this demonstration will be a flop. So are the Tories and all those who hold the military establishment and the alliance with the United States dear.

We must ensure the demonstration is a success, to thwart their insane plans which threaten working people in the whole of Europe.



Calling all teachers

'TEACHERS have just received a big wage rise.' If you believe that you'll believe steelworkers got 18 per cent. But I'm not falling into press lies in asking all socialist teachers to make a contribution to the IMG emergency fund.

Everyone moans about the bureaucracy. The IMG does something about it. In the NUT, we have collaborated with other militant teachers in building the Socialist Teachers Alliance. This led the fight against the bureaucracy at the Easter Conference. The IMG couldn't collaborate in this alliance without resources. The IMG is the backbone of the STA.

I am asking all teachers to give a donation — and one that means something. If it doesn't hurt, you can afford more. All IMG teachers are being asked to donate a minimum of £25. Strike a blow against Clegg yourself. Make out your cheques to 'The Week'.

BERNARD REGAN, General secretary East London NUT



COMING SHORTLY: just the badge to wear and sell in the build-up to the 22 June demo. 20p plus 10p p&p. OR make money for your local campaign/organisation by ordering 20 or more at a bulk discount rate of 15p per badge post free. All orders must be pre-paid to Hackney Socialist Education Group, c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

THE OTHER BOOKSHOP

NEW:

Cannolly's Marxism
Bernard Ransom
Pluto, £2.95

Uncommon Market
Stuart Holland
Macmillan, £2.95

Arguments Within English Marxism
Perry Anderson
NLB, £3.95

The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1.
Tel: 01-226 0571

IMG 1980 CADRE SCHOOL

New speakers

THREE new speakers at the IMG's Summer Cadre School are Norman Geras, Nicholas Krasso, and Livio Maitan. Geras, author of 'The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg', will be speaking on 'Some Philosophical Problems in Marxism'. Krasso, a participant in the Budapest uprising of 1956 and a pupil of Lukacs, will be speaking on the Hungarian revolution.

Livio Maitan has just returned from an extended stay in Nicaragua. Given the momentous developments taking place in that country, Maitan's presentation of the development of the revolution will be of great interest.

Special Courses

A number of special courses will take place at the school. Two of the most important will be on the *History of the British Labour Movement* and *Marxism and the Family*. The option of Marxism and the Family will include items on how the family structures women's oppression, the socialist movement's analysis of the family, and a debate on Engels' view on the origins of women's oppression. Speakers will include Margaret Coulson, Branca Magas, Judith Arkwright, and Valerie Coultas.

The course on the history of the British labour movement includes discussions on a) Chartism and the formation of the British labour movement, b) the Communist Party and the labour movement till 1926, and c) the post-war development of the labour movement.

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.

I am interested in coming to the summer school. I am a member of the IMG/Revolution // I am a sympathiser of IMG/Revolution from

Name/Address.....

I enclose a cheque/PO for..... towards the £47.50 cost of the school.

Please indicate which options you wish to take.

Note: It is only possible to take two options.

1).....

2).....
Cheques payable to 'The Week Society'.

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)



HOW BRITAIN DIVIDED IRELAND

THERE are a number of reasons why Ireland, for the first time in its history, was split into two political units in 1921. That the Irish people wanted partition was not one of them. The general election of 1918 — the last time all Ireland voted together — showed what the people did want.

Of the 105 seats which Ireland was allotted in the British parliament, Sinn Fein, the most Republican party, won 73. The more moderately nationalist Irish Parliamentary Party won six, the Unionists 26.

Here was an overwhelming vote for Irish Republicanism — a majority far larger, for example, than the percentage required to secure devolution for Scotland and Wales in the 1979 referendum.

Even in the North of the country a majority of the people voted for Irish independence. Of the nine counties in the province of Ulster (present-day Ulster is made up of only six of these), the Unionists had a majority in only four; and in the six North-east counties the Nationalist minority was far larger in comparison with the Unionist majority than the Unionist minority was in Ireland as a whole.

Self Rule

Even the Unionist vote itself was not an endorsement of partition: the Unionists believed that Ireland should remain united, but in Britain. As the historian George Dangerfield wrote: 'On the whole, therefore, it might be said of the 1918 elections that they made out a poor case for the exclusion of the six counties.'

This was not the first election in which a majority of the Irish people voted for some form of self-rule. Similar results had been recorded many times during the previous hundred years — in fact, ever since the British, at the end of the eighteenth century, abolished the devolved Irish parliament and imposed direct rule in response to an Irish uprising. Yet the elections of 1918 were different from those previous. Sinn Fein's nationalism was more extreme than any other ever endorsed by a majority of the Irish: the demand was for complete and unfettered freedom from Britain. The success of Sinn Fein flowed from the prestige of the Easter Rising of 1916 which, ill-supported though it was at the time, had a powerful effect on the consciousness of the Irish people.

Mandate

The mandate the party received in the election was soon exercised by the unilateral establishment of an independent Irish parliament, the Dail.

The 'Democratic Programme of Dail Eireann was unanimously adopted when the TDs (deputies) met:

'We declare in the words of the Irish Republican proclamation the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish

IRELAND

THIS weekend the Committee GEOFF BELL recalls how and for Withdrawal from Ireland is why the original division of holding a 'Voices for Ireland took place during the Withdrawal' forum in London. stormy years, 1918-21.

VOICES FOR WITHDRAWAL

Saturday 14th June
Conway Hall,
Red Lion Square,
London WC1
(tube: Holborn)

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.

destinies to be infeasible...

'We declare that the nation's sovereignty extends not only to all men and women of the nation, but to all its material possessions; the nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and wealth-producing processes within the nation... we re-affirm that all rights to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare.'

The rest of the Democratic Programme spelt out in more detail the principles on which the Dail should operate. Today, these would be described as left social-democratic but the membership of the Dail was predominantly drawn from the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie.

Neither in social composition nor in programme was the First Dail explicitly working class. The phrase coined by Sinn Fein leader Eamon de Valera during the election campaign, 'labour must wait', remained operative. Indeed, many in Sinn Fein were profoundly anti-socialist.

Nevertheless, the British coalition government of Lloyd George refused to recognise the First Dail, insisting on its right to rule Ireland. Armed conflict between the two sides was inevitable. The peaceful road to Irish independence had run its course — blocked by the determination of the British to override the

democratically expressed will of the Irish people.

What made the British resist? It was not the opposition to Irish self-determination expressed by the minority in North-east Ireland. The Unionists were certainly influential in British ruling circles, especially within the Tory Party, but others in the coalition, including Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, tried on a number of occasions to persuade the Loyalist leaders to accept some form of home rule for a united Ireland.

Proposals

The Government's proposals, published in 1920, envisaged an all-Ireland parliament sometime in the future. It is the Government of Ireland Bill that reveals why Britain was opposed to Irish independence.

It proposed two 'Home Rule' parliaments, one for most of the country, the other for six of the nine Ulster counties. The powers of both parliaments would be strictly limited. Britain, for instance, would retain control of defence, foreign affairs and finance. The British parliament would retain overall authority in Ireland, both North and South continuing to send MPs to Westminster.

A Council of Ireland would be established, 'with a view to the eventual establishment of a parliament for the whole of Ireland and to bring about harmonious action between the parliaments and governments.'

Expressed here was the nub of Britain's opposition to Irish freedom. The British feared that if the Irish controlled their own economy *Britain's financial interests would be threatened*; if it controlled its own defence and foreign affairs *Britain's security would be endangered*. The entire proposal amounted to an insistence that Ireland remain a *British colony*.

The geographical boundaries of the proposed six, as distinct from nine-county Ulster, were drawn up by the Unionists. Their logic was simple: they wanted as large a slice of Ireland as they could get, but one in which the percentage of Irish nationalists was small enough to give the Unionists permanent control.

In a nine-county Ulster the Unionists would have no guarantee of power. So they rejected it in favour of the artificial six-county unit.

By the time the Government of Ireland Bill was published, Ireland

and Britain were at war. On one side, under the authority of Dail Eireann, was the Irish Republican Army; on the other, the British Army, the Royal Irish Constabulary and the infamous British mercenaries, the Black and Tans.

Half of the elected members of Dail Eireann were in prison, and the British Government repeatedly declared that it would never negotiate with the 'murderers' of Sinn Fein and the IRA.

The strength of the Irish resistance changed the government's mind. Towards the end of 1920 negotiations began.

The Irish side was represented by Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, Robert Barton, E J Duggan, Gavan Duffy and Erskine Childers. They went to the London talks on the explicit understanding that they had no authority to sign a treaty.

Manoeuvres

The British negotiators were headed by Lloyd George, and the talks were a triumph for him. He manoeuvred, took the Irish delegates to one side and worked on them individually, and eventually threatened 'total war' on the Irish people if the British peace terms were not immediately accepted, without reference to

Dublin.

The peace terms included the right of Britain to use the Irish naval ports; an oath of allegiance to the British crown to be signed by every member of the Irish parliament; the partition of the country along the lines proposed in the Government of Ireland Bill of 1920.

Lloyd George also told the Irish delegates that a boundary commission to be established to review the exact size of the Northern state would take two and a half counties away from 'Ulster', which would make the state too small to be workable.

It was this promise together with the threat of 'total war' that finally persuaded the Irish to initial the peace treaty.

Treaty

When the Irish negotiators returned to Dublin they were denounced by de Valera and two other ministers. An Irish civil war followed (although in a sense it was a further phase of the War of Independence), with the British helping the pro-treaty side to victory.

Eventually the South of Ireland state was to win complete political independence from Britain. Twenty years later the oath of allegiance and the British use of Irish ports were rescinded, and in 1949 Ireland left the British Commonwealth.

The one outstanding matter was the North-east corner of Ireland. The boundary commission, when it finally reported five years after the treaty, accepted partition as it was.

Throughout the negotiations and the years which preceded them, many in the British Government would have preferred to see a united Ireland being established. But they did not force the Loyalists to accept the majority verdict of the Irish people.

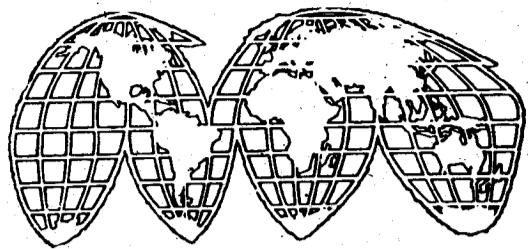
It would have been relatively easy to do. Almost all of 'Ulster's' finances came from reserved taxes imposed and collected throughout the UK; a withdrawal of these revenues would have killed 'Northern Ireland' stone dead.

Total War

There was no way that Lloyd George and his coalition government would have done any such thing. To them it was perfectly legitimate to threaten 'total war' on an Irish population asking for nothing more than the right to rule themselves; to discipline the Loyalists for objecting to such democracy was another thing.

The Loyalists were led by members of the same class that controlled the British Government. They shared too the ideology of British imperialism — that natives had to be kept down. The Government also knew that in 1912 British Army officers had threatened to mutiny if sent against 'Ulster'.

If the British Government had insisted that the Northern corner of Ireland be part of Ireland as a whole, acute divisions could have broken out within the British ruling class. Unity of that class was placed above unity and democracy in Ireland.



AROUND THE WORLD

China

ACCORDING to reports coming out of China, the authorities there are sending thousands of people to rural labour camps, reviving an internment without trial system common in the 1950s.

Chinese sources are reported as saying that so far this year Peking police have sent more than 5,000 young people to 're-education through labour' camps for offenses as minor as loitering or being jobless.

Former workers at such camps say that although the maximum term is set at four years, many inmates must stay for the rest of their life because there is no work for them elsewhere. Chinese dissidents are also sent to the camps.

In February this year the Chinese *People's Daily* reprinted on its front page the government regulation permitting the detention system as applicable to: 'people with no decent occupations, who behave like hooligans ... counter-revolutionaries ... people who have been dismissed from government jobs, who refused to work or who willfully keep making trouble, jeopardise public affairs and refuse to mend their ways despite repeated admonitions.'

Portugal

THE Portuguese government declared last week that it would not permit the stationing of NATO nuclear arms on its territory, despite the country's membership of the alliance's nuclear planning group.

Defense minister Adelino Amaro da Costa said that nuclear capability is 'not important for Portugal'. Who is it important for?

South Africa

THE South African regime's minister of posts and telecommunications, a certain Mennie Smit (sorry, typing error, the right name is Hennie Smit) explained last Thursday why blacks are not included in a new body that the government has established to draw up a constitution.

Smit declared that blacks are 'less developed' and have 'slower thought processes' than whites.

The reaction of the black Anglican bishop Desmond Tuto was most 'undeveloped' and obviously a product of his 'slow thought process'.

After declaring that Smith was 'sick', Tuto asked: 'But if Africans are less developed and have a slower thought process why then are the whites afraid of competing with them on an equal basis?'

United States

DESPITE the attempts of the US ruling class to engulf the country in a great wave of patriotism, there are indications that perhaps not so many Americans are prepared to die for the American Way as Messrs Reagan and Carter would like.

The US Army announced at the weekend that overseas tours of duty for single US soldiers and married soldiers who travel without their wives will be reduced from the present 24-32 months to 18 months.

The change, said the Army, 'is an effort to boost morale and increase enlistments for overseas duty'.

El Salvador

THE ruling junta in El Salvador has extended its 'state of seige' for 30 days. Under this all constitutional rights are suspended.

The El Salvador regime continues to torture and kill as many of its opponents as the army can find. But the government itself remains shaky. One indication is that all European embassies, apart from Italy's, have now closed down.

West Germany

WEST German police and frontier guards last week used water cannons, helicopter squadrons, and armoured cars in an attack on 2,000 demonstrators who for the past month had been preventing test drillings for a planned nuclear waste storage centre in Gorleben, Lower Saxony.

Gorleben has been one of the centres for protest by West German anti-nuclear power groups. The town was originally destined to be the site for a comprehensive reprocessing and waste storage centre. But pressure forced the government to drop the reprocessing aspect of the plan.

Petr Uhl scandal—campaign launched

ACCORDING to new information reaching the West through the Palach Press news agency, the Czechoslovak Stalinists are trying to break Petr Uhl's physical and mental health in prison.

Uhl is a revolutionary Marxist and leader of Charter 77, the Czechoslovak civil rights movement. He was gaoled for five years last October in a trial which involved the jailing of other Charter 77 leaders and which brought an unparalleled outcry from the labour movements of Western Europe.

The Labour Party executive unanimously condemned Uhl's arrest last July and again unanimously condemned his imprisonment in October. The leadership of the British Communist Party has also condemned the jailing of Uhl and his comrades.

We now learn that Petr Uhl, who is being held in a strict regime labour camp at Mirov in north Bohemia, notorious as the

worst labour camp in the country, is banned from keeping any written material of any kind, even letters from his family.

He is not even allowed to keep his own notes on the fulfilment of his labour norms, nor a copy of prison regulations. He is banned from keeping pictures of his wife and children. He is allowed no visits except one hour every six to eight months from a close relative and that meeting must be supervised by guards and nothing except family matters may be discussed.

Uhl's chronic bronchitis has become acute since April because of the extremely heavy work to which he is subjected: he is forced to carry loads weighing up to 86 pounds up 67 steps.

Despite Czechoslovakia's Law on Imprisonment, which states that prison conditions should be 'humane', the Stalinist regime clearly intends to break Petr Uhl during his five years in prison.

At the end of May, the Charter 77 Defence Committee, which has led the

campaign in this country for the release of Petr Uhl and the other Charter 77 political prisoners, launched a campaign to demand that a labour movement lawyer from this country be allowed to go to Czechoslovakia, to have access to the Charter 77 political prisoners, and to study their conditions.

The committee is asking all labour movement organisations to pass resolutions protesting against the imprisonment of Petr Uhl and his comrades, condemning their prison conditions, and demanding that a labour movement lawyer be able to visit them.

Protest resolutions should be sent to the Czechoslovak Embassy, with copies to the Defence Committee at 14 Elgin Court, 16 Montpellier Road, London W5. Financial assistance to the families of jailed Charterists should be sent to: The Charter 77 Defence Fund, Hon. Treasurer Reg Race MP, 133 Criserson Road, London SE23.

Iran: US coup plans exposed

DAMNING evidence was published daily last week from the Tehran conference on American intervention in Iran, outlining the lengths to which US imperialism is prepared to go to look after its interests. However, the interests of the Iranian people didn't figure in the accounts of American intervention.

Perhaps the most astonishing revelation was the plan drawn up in early 1979 which aimed to set up the Shah's last prime minister, Bahktiar, at the head of a military administration. Failing that, the US government was prepared to resort to a military coup in Iran!

Today, when literally thousands of tons of military hardware are on the way from South Carolina docks to the British island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean — the nearest staging post for intervention in the Middle East — the US claim that the defence of the Afghan people is at stake, ring less and less true.

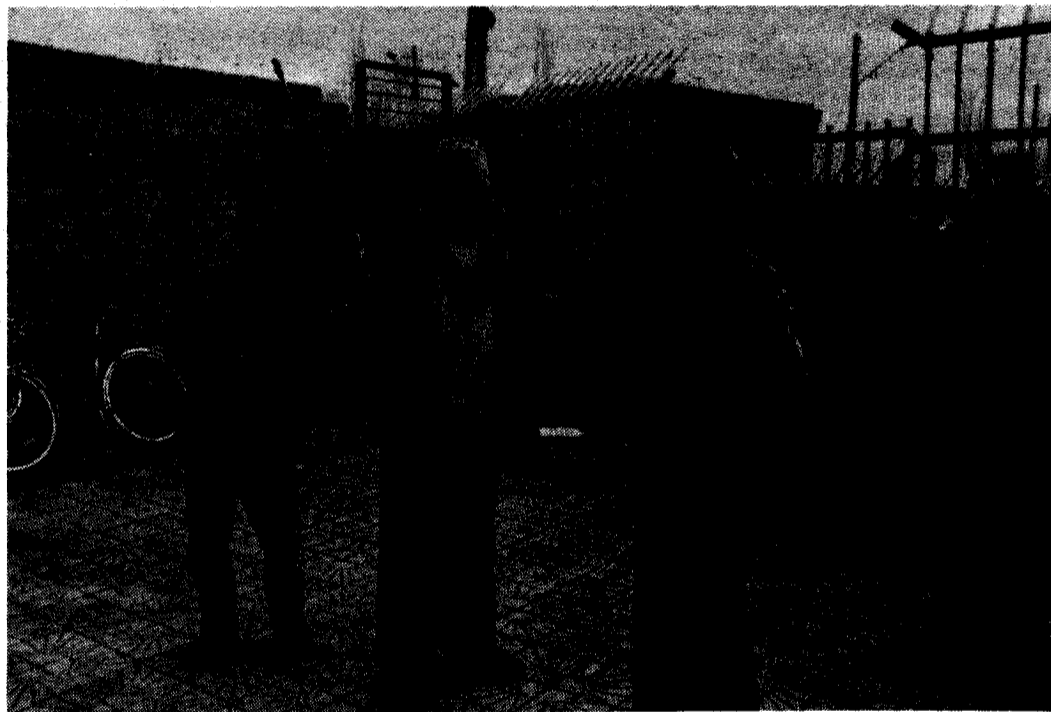
After the failure of the so-called hostage rescue — which was revealed at the conference to go well beyond a mere 'rescue' — the US is having major difficulties in the face of the deep-going anti-imperialist movement.

Committees

The conference, attended by ex-Attorney General Ramsey Clarke, co-incided with a demonstration by half a million Iranians to commemorate the thousands who died in the 1963 rebellion against the Shah. Confronted with a mobilisation of this scope, Khomeini called for a trial of President Carter in a world court for his flagrant violation of human rights.

This movement has indicated its potential class character by its rapid identification with the plight of black people in Miami. Spontaneous marches on prayer day in 15 different cities echoed with chants of 'Blacks of America, we are all your supporters', and 'Blacks of America should be set free'. The struggle in South Korea met with equally enthusiastic solidarity.

The anti-imperialist movement today combines with an extension of land occupations by peasants, especially in the provinces around Tehran and in northern towns. *Shoras*, incipient workers' councils, have been formed in new areas in recent months. Lessons from



Armed militants of Iran's Turkish minority.

struggles involving control by workers over their industry are accumulating.

There are limits on the development of the *shoras*. First, they are only coordinated and centralised to a limited extent, and they are not seen by even the most advanced workers as a political alternative to the government. Furthermore, the *shorah* leaders refuse to advance any demands to break out of these limits.

Nevertheless, the first tentative steps towards unification of the *shorahs* has been registered. Although the Islamic clergy dominates the *shorahs*, a break is becoming evident. On May Day, for instance, demonstrations were called. In the morning, the Islamic *shorahs* marched. In the afternoon, however, two to three times as many demonstrators rallied to the call of the Fedayeen and non-Islamic *shoras*.

Most important of all, however, is the escalating struggle in Kurdistan. Today, half of the government troops are in Kurdistan trying to crush 50,000 organised, armed Kurdish fighters. For the first time, there has been a serious decomposition of the Iranian army, with desertions among the officers.

Since August generalised arming of the Kurdish population has been accompanied by increasing numbers of land take-overs. Neighbourhood committees

which have many of the features of the civil defence committees so important in the success of the insurrection in Iran — have been established.

Khomeini is attempting to crush the anti-capitalist movement in the name of anti-imperialism. He justifies the ruthless use of the troops against the national minorities because it 'divides the anti-imperialist front'. A new wave of repression against the left is justified in similar terms.

The universities — a vital organisational base for such groups as the Fedayeen and one place where political debate has centred since the insurrection — were forcibly closed down after a speech by Bani-Sadr calling for the universities to be 'Islamised'. Any imposition of an Islamic 'cultural revolution' has nothing to do with advancing the interests of the Iranian people.

Claims have been made that the Imam students, who played a leading role in the anti-imperialist movement, saw the university closure as an extension of the embassy occupation, to be followed by occupations of the land and factories. Whatever truth may be attached to such claims, this can't be the starting point for assessing the forceful closures. It ignores the carefully prepared political campaign by the ruling class to purge the universities and weaken the anti-capitalist movement.

Today Khomeini and the government are trying desperately to roll back the gains made by the Iranian masses since the overthrow of the Shah. The testimony of the strength of the mass mobilisations is the inability of the ruling class to assemble a government with enough authority to impose capitalist 'stability' in Iran. The continuing rifts between Bani-Sadr and the Islamic Republican Party are evidence of the deep crisis of bourgeois leadership in Iran today.

The best way socialists can ensure that the anti-capitalist movement in Iran is strengthened is to organise against the US war drive; to campaign for the repeal of the British sanctions bill which received its third reading in Parliament last week; to demand the withdrawal of US weapons from the British colony of Diego Garcia; and to support the struggles of all the oppressed and exploited in Iran today.

Especially important is defence of the Kurdish resistance. But socialists would do well to take note of the statement by leaders of that resistance which explained that, in the event of an attack by American imperialism, they would defend Iran.

They are dead right, because the fight against Carter's war drive is fundamental to the defence of the Kurdish nation, however falsely Khomeini may try to counterpose them.

Nicaragua set for showdown with capitalists...

By Brian Grogan

THE last few weeks have confirmed that a new stage has been reached in the Nicaraguan revolution: a workers' and peasants' government has been established on course for a socialist revolution.

In response to this and the situation in Grenada and El Salvador, the counter-revolutionary plans of imperialism have been accelerated.

There have been provocations aimed at Cuba and threats against Grenada. But most serious of all is the imperialist activity in support of the dictatorship in El Salvador: Washington has recently granted the military junta six million dollars in military aid.

Mercenaries

In Guatemala, an army of 5,000 mercenaries, made up of ex-Somoza National Guards and counter-revolutionary Cubans and Vietnamese, is being trained on the property of the rich landowner Sandoval Alarcon.

It seems clear that Washington is preparing to make El Salvador the focus of its stand against the developing revolutionary process in the region.

The resignation of the junta of the Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction (GRNN) of the capitalist ministers, Alfonso Robelo Callejas, the leader of the bourgeois Nicaraguan Democratic Movement, and Violetta Barrios de Chamorro, marked a decisive step towards the formation of a workers' and farmers' government.

The exit of these two leading right wingers and their replacement by two other bourgeois figures is not just a change of faces. Rather it signals the elimination from power of the capitalists as a class: the new ministers were chosen by the Sandinista Front, the FSLN, and can be removed by them.

Reconstruction

This, in turn, signifies the crisis of the FSLN's project, envisaged in the 1980 plan for economic reconstruction, of collaboration with sectors of the capitalist class.

After the overthrow of the Somoza regime, the masses demanded an immediate and drastic improvement in their living conditions. A rapid improvement was not, however,



allowed for by the plan for 'reconstruction'.

The situation was made much worse by the refusal of whole sections of the capitalist class to fully participate in the plan. Out of a total of 663 enterprises, only 296 have resumed production, according

to Frederico Carda, the vice-minister of planning. On average, those firms that are in operation are functioning at less than half their capacity.

This process of 'decapitalisation', as it is called,

has led to workers occupying factories demanding they be nationalised. The FSLN has supported these moves.

Land occupations have also been taking place and the Agricultural Reform Institute (INRA) has intervened to turn

over the land to the peasants.

This has led, among other things, to the partial refusal of the landowners to become involved in the reconstruction process, and it is still unclear whether a large part of the cotton crop will be planted.

Merchants have begun to organise against the FSLN's decree of a price freeze on basic necessities.

A series of strikes have taken place for higher wages or for the recognition of the non-Sandinista trade unions. Many of these strikes have been opposed by the FSLN.

Strikes

In general the FSLN has been opposed to the interruption of production caused by strikes, while being prepared to negotiate, and has rarely rejected all of the claims of the workers.

Thus the actions of the masses, supported by the FSLN, have forced the capitalists out of any significant say in the economic plan. This provoked a crisis of the coalition government. The immediate issue was the calling of the Council of State with a decisive worker and peasant majority.

The response of the FSLN to this crisis has set them decisively on course towards establishing a workers' state. This will undoubtedly lead to new clashes.

Given the control of the army and the formation of a workers' militia by the FSLN, there is little chance of this course being reversed by the capitalist forces inside Nicaragua. The main danger is outside intervention. This is most likely to begin in neighbouring El Salvador.

The FSLN leaders have been intransigent to the growing imperialist threat. Tomas Borge clearly indicated that an attack on El Salvador would be deemed an attack on Nicaragua itself. Any American attack on El Salvador is likely to lead to war in the whole of Central America.

INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS/INPRECOR

Latest copy includes detailed material on the repercussions of the upsurge in South Korea, together with an analysis of the developing confrontation in the Caribbean. Single copies 30p plus 10p postage. Subs: £11 for one year. Send to IP/PO Box 50, London N1.

...while Cuba challenges US imperialism

By John Clynes

THERE is little doubt that Cuba is supporting the radical course being taken in Nicaragua. The events of the last month can only be interpreted as preparation by the Cuban people and government to respond to the imperialist threat in the region.

On 17 March five million people demonstrated against US imperialism in the 'March of the Fighting People'. The defence of El Salvador and Nicaragua were central themes of this demonstration.

The events in Cuba around the Peruvian embassy, which sparked the mass emigration to the United States, were obviously an organised provocation against Cuba. Nobody has ever been deported or prevented from leaving Cuba.

This provocation was accompanied by US

exercises in the regions — 'Solid Shield 80' — which was to have involved a massive landing of US marines at the US Navy base at Guantanamo in Cuba.

But the demonstrations in Cuba were also something else. They involved a clear message from the Cuban leadership to the people about the choices which faced them and the consequences of their choices. As Fidel Castro pointed out in his May Day speech to one and a half million people, the choice is either to fight against imperialism or to capitulate.

If the Cuban people fight, said Castro, they will have to face even worse hardships. The United States blockade of Cuba will undoubtedly be intensified. Oil supplies are likely to be interrupted.

In this situation Castro publicly took to task those in the government, or in managerial positions, who would prefer an easy life gained by accommodating to American imperialism.

He pointed out that some of these people were among those leaving Cuba. Their exodus was also part of the preparations for the coming confrontation.

As Castro explained in his May Day speech: '...the work of the revolution and the building of socialism is the task for absolutely free men and women and is absolutely voluntary'.

The three gigantic demonstrations of the past three months have shown to the whole world exactly what the mass of the Cuban people think about the tiny numbers who have emigrated.

This class-struggle stance by the Cuban leadership in the face of the developing revolutionary crisis and the mounting pressure of imperialism is the best way of staying the hand of Washington.

It has to be met with our own redoubling of solidarity with Nicaragua and El Salvador.

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. 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 4.5-5.30pm, 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).

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

WOLVERHAMPTON: SC Public Meeting, 16 June 8pm, 'Benn's Road to Socialism', Coach and Horses, Cannock Rd. Speaker: Martin Tolman.

SC SPONSORED DRY OUT. John May has found a novel way to raise money for Socialist Challenge. Last year he raised £25 by giving up booze. Now he intends to repeat his performance and double his target — he hopes to go two months without booze this time rather than just one. His dry out starts on 31 May so you have plenty of time to rush sponsorship to him at 113 Kingswood Avenue, Park North, Swindon, Wilts.

LONDON SC jumble sale, Sat 14 June, Essex Rd Library, N1, 2pm

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Dayschool on Racial Oppression and the Labour Movement: SOUTHALL, BRISTOL... BLACK OPPRESSION AND CLASS POLITICS. Morning session: On the Dole, Up Against the Police — And With No Help From the Unions — Speaker Fran Eden. Afternoon session: The Strange Death of Liberal Anti-Fascism — Speaker Frank Richards. Saturday 21 June 1980, 10am — 5pm. All Nations Club, 4 Martello Street, Hackney E8. For details ring 274 3951 or write to BM RCT, London WC1V 6XX.

REGISTER NOW: £1

Revolutionary Communist Tendency, International Conference, 5, 6, 7 September 1980

IMPERIALISM IN THE EIGHTIES

Today the crisis of imperialism more and more demands political and military intervention in Africa and the Middle East. The aim of the RCT's three-day conference is to discuss inter-imperialist rivalries and assess their significance for the working class. Sessions will include: Iran — Ireland — Zimbabwe — Afghanistan — theory of imperialism — racism and migrant workers — imperialism and the BBC.

Details from BM RCT, London WC1V 6XX

HOW feminism fragments the labour movement, where TOM goes wrong, Socialist Challenge's Tameside censorship, Tony Cliff's ideological crisis, and much more... all in the next step No 5, the review of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, price 20p — Out Now! Cheques to Junius Publications. Send to BCM JPLTO, London WC1V 6XX.

Hands Off Ireland Defence Campaign DEMONSTRATION

LUTON

Saturday 28 June

Assemble: People's Park at 12.30pm

Smash Police Censorship of Ireland! Smash the H-Blocks!

Defend Hands off Ireland!

Donations to HDI Defence Campaign, 49 Railton Road, London SE24 0LN

THE NF is marching against the people of Iran. The RCT has organised a counter-demonstration to defend the masses in Iran. All anti-imperialists to assemble at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park, at 1pm Sun 15 June (Marble Arch tube).

AMNESTY FOR ST PAUL'S. New badge available for 20p. Special offer of 15p for order of 15 or more. Send 10p for cost of postage. All proceeds to St Paul's Defence Fund. Write to Bristol Anti Nazi League, Box 1, Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol.

IMG NOTICES

TGWU fraction. National centre Sun 6 July.

RAIL national fraction. Sat 5 July noon till 4pm. National centre.

AUEW fraction. Sat 21 June. Note change of date. Further details later.

FRACTION LEADERSHIPS aggregate. Sun 22 June national centre.

NAAGG London members meeting. Fri 27 June 7.30pm national centre; national secretary. Sat 28 June. 11am to 3pm, national centre; national fraction, Sat 13 Sept. 11am till 4pm national centre.

LETTERS

A last word

RAY Challinor's letter (22 May) contained two truthful statements amidst a jumble of rubbish. They were that Ray has resigned his membership of the Tyneside Socialist Centre, and that he has suffered a very dangerous stroke.

I think he sincerely believes he has submitted something to the Socialist Centre Bulletin on the question of Jim Murray and has had it censored. But he hasn't.

He once sent us a copy of a letter of his which was published in *Socialist Worker*, with a covering note a few lines long. He followed that with a letter which I would have published, except that I knew it was composed a few hours before his stroke, and Ray himself rang after his discharge from hospital to apologise for having written it.

His letter to you claims that 'support wanes' for the Socialist Centre, whose most prominent members are 'disenchanted ex-SWPers, anarchists and opportunists'.

Through this year, we have been attracting an average of eight or ten new members a month; membership is higher than it has ever been, and includes members of the SWP, IMG, CP, and smaller revolutionary groups; the present elected committee includes no anarchists, as it happens, and one ex-member of IS, that I know of.

Is there any chance that this silly exchange of correspondence could be closed?

ANDY McSMITH, Tyneside Socialist Centre

Yes, Eds.

Import controls OK!

I CANNOT understand Socialist Challenge's oft-repeated opposition to import controls. Of course import controls won't on their own bring socialism or be a socialist solution to capitalism's crisis. But planned foreign trade, as part of an overall socialist strategy, is a necessity to shield British industry from the ravages of the multinationals.

Socialist Challenge and the rest of the far left say that import controls save British jobs at the expense of foreign workers. This seems to me a misunderstanding.

First, as British industries collapse, their products are often not replaced with those of foreign workers, but the country just gets poorer and de-industrialisation advances.

Second, over time, with a strategy based on reflection and import controls, both Britain's exports and imports can increase, which will benefit foreign workers.

So your opposition to import controls which is, you say, based on 'principled internationalism' seems to me to be based on an abstract schema, and robs British workers of an important tool in defending jobs and industry — both of which are important to building socialism, don't you think?

MARTIN STEVENS, Northolt

South Korea's real achievements

TARIQ Ali's generally informative background article on South Korea (29 May) contained some startling, but I think symptomatic omissions.

Somehow Tariq managed to avoid any hint of the fact that during the years for which he gave statistics (1960-77) South Korea ceased to be one of the poorest middle-sized countries of the Third World and achieved the extraordinary feat of nearly trebling its national income per head.

The article was a good introduction to the social and political antecedents of the Kwangju uprising, but the economic analysis needed to put these events in perspective was almost completely missing.

There were a couple of knee-jerk references to cheap labour

and multinationals. But how many readers of Socialist Challenge are so in touch that they do not need to be reminded that between 1963 and 1975 real wages in South Korea improved at an average annual rate of nearly seven per cent?

This may seem like nit-picking, and apologetic nit-picking at that. Nevertheless the strong (and relatively egalitarian) performance of South Korean capitalism over most of the last twenty years is a fact which is not going to go away, and we may as well get used to it.

Tariq's embarrassment in this case is linked, I suggest, to a more general difficulty in the position of Socialist Challenge on Third World issues.

The paper has recently been jugged into admitting that rapid economic growth has been taking place in a number of less developed capitalist countries after all. As I understand the new line, it is that the growth which has occurred has been at the expense of the living standards of the working class and the poor, or at any rate has not benefitted them significantly.

This view does make quite a lot of sense as an interpretation of the Brazilian and Mexican cases. The trouble is that it is flatly contradicted by the evidence on certain other countries — prominent among them South Korea. Hence the reason, but not the justification, for Tariq to bury his head in the sand.

DAVID BOOTH, Hull

Uncomradely behaviour

IN issue 149 (29 May), you published a letter from Lomond Handley complaining about the inefficiency of the Womens Voice office.

You made no attempt to get in touch with us before publishing it to draw the problem to our attention or to confirm its allegations.

We don't want to weary our readers with a long account of our side of the story, but we would like to draw their attention to your apparent policy of publishing hostile letters about other organisations without regard to their accuracy or their political content.

The worst Lomond Handley accused us of was inefficiency. We think that your failings of principle and comradeship are rather more serious.

LIN JAMES, pro Womens Voice

Perpetuating inaccuracies

PHIL Hearse's review (22 May) of Perry Anderson's ponderous and various *Arguments Within English Marxism* perpetuates (and renders even cruder) some of its inaccurate evaluations of the founding New Left as well as of its successors in the *New Left Review* team.

Phil states of this later *NLR* 'core': '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.'

The implication that the post-1956 New Left had no formative experience in militant anti-imperialist struggle is ignorantly false. As a matter of fact, even Anderson pays tribute to the tradition of 'solidarity with colonial people's' forged around the CND left, and to Edward Thompson's own anti-imperialist record.

The advent of the latter New Left co-incident, in the main, with the end of direct British military intervention in its Third World possessions. Consequently, the struggle against our own imperialism (a task somewhat more arduous than the campaign against the United States in Vietnam or the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia) is, on the whole, unrepresented in *NLR* — excepting always Fred Halliday's brilliant and timely Middle East writings.

The New Left of the former period, by contrast, possessed, both in the period of its membership of the Communist Party and of other left bodies, and subsequently from the Suez



adventure to its own disappearance as an organised force, an experience in anti-imperialist militancy (Kenya, Malaya, Central Africa, Cyprus, Guyana, the Middle East, and the long solidarity with French comrades over Algeria) which is quite beyond the ken of the present British left.

We were weak on Zionism, and silent on Ireland. But on the latter point, the allegedly superior 'militant anti-imperialist' training of the new *NLR* has availed them little.

Their journal has seldom run any material on the Northern occupation; and Perry Anderson now concurs in E P Thompson's judgement 'rightly condemning the Provisional IRA'.

Equally, Phil's fervent phrases about the later *NLR* seem 'elaboration of the revolutionary strategy of Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, and Gramsci', not to speak of their 'historic (Phil's italics) contribution' in acting as DJ's to the longest playing (if frequently changing) top theoretical tunes from Eurovision, are slightly misplaced.

Isaac Deutscher, mentioned by Perry Anderson as a strong influence on the new *NLR*, was much more a comrade of the post-1956 New Left movement.

Arguments Within English Marxism is in many parts a stimulating and reflective work; not, however, meriting the adulation, bordering on sycophancy, that Phil and Tariq Ali (in a recent *New Statesman* column) have bestowed on it.

PETER SEDGWICK, West Yorks

Is Revolution Youth really independent?

HAVING for some time watched with keen interest the development of Revolution as potentially the beginnings of an independent socialist youth organisation, I was, while not surprised, pretty upset at its recent turn to political dependence on the Fourth International and its British section, the IMG.

Your report of the conference (22 May) left many important questions answered either inadequately or not at all.

Firstly, how can Revolution Youth claim to be an organisation independent of any political grouping yet at the same time declare itself in political allegiance to one particular organisation, the IMG, and its fraternal organisation, the FI?

Your reporter's attempts to justify this move by referring to political dependence as being separate from organisational dependence seem little more than verbal acrobatics.

Even if this was possible, you seem to contradict your own logic. I refer to the proposal accepted by conference that Revolution Youth and the IMG hold joint trade union fractions; so much for organisational independence!

Admittedly there are many problems of building an independent socialist youth organisation from scratch — in particular the economic dependence of many youth on 'adults' for the basic means of existence. Revolution has been reliant up till now on the financial and material resources of the IMG in order to consolidate itself and expand.

The question here is not whether an independent youth organisation like Revolution should be dependent on adult socialists, either individuals or sympathetic groups, but the logic of this system is that it will keep youth financially dependent on

'adults' until that system is changed.

What's central is that such an organisation retains its independence at all times, receiving resources and finances with no strings — no matter how subtle these may be.

Furthermore, if an independent socialist organisation is to develop the qualitatively new politics needed to make it an attractive proposition for youth in struggle, it must surely be dealt with in a more sensitive way by those of us in revolutionary organisations who claim to have broken with those weary old formulations of youth organisations under the paternal domination of 'parent' organisations — Rebel, Young Communist League, Socialist Youth League and so on.

After all, the time and space are allowed the until and space to develop a theory and practice (and organisation) out of their own struggles — in school, workplace, or on the streets — the end result will inevitably fall short of its potential.

BRIAN JOHNSTONE, Birmingham

Use language we can all understand

AT our branch meeting last week we discussed the long review by Phil Hearse (22 May) of Perry Anderson's new book, *Arguments Within English Marxism*.

While various points were raised about the content of the article, there was general agreement that the style and language of the article were inappropriate to a paper like Socialist Challenge. To quote from the article:

...Thompson...rejects the elaboration of Marxist categories undertaken by Althusser...some of which — the distinction between mode of production and social formation, over-determination, structure in dominance — have passed into common usage.

Come off it, Phil. If you are editing a paper for a readership for which these concepts are common usage, you might as well give away SC as a supplement to *New Left Review* and not ask us to waste our time selling it on the streets.

MIKE CLARKE, Camden IMG

History of the partition of Korea

THE United States did not intervene to divide Korea in 1950 as Tariq Ali stated (29 May), but in 1945. The US military decreed the 38th Parallel to be the dividing line between their zone of occupation and that of the Soviet forces in post-war Korea.

In the southern, US zone the military authorities suppressed the government of the Korean 'People's Republic' (a coalition of 'Communists' and bourgeois nationalists) which they found on their arrival, and set up their own direct military government.

Later, in 1948, they set up Syngman Rhee, a pro-US Korean, as head of an 'independent' republic. Rhee's social support came from landlords and ex-Japanese collaborators. Even the bourgeois opposition, the leaders of the former 'People's Republic', were violently repressed.

Also in 1948 the main Soviet forces withdrew from the North, and by the next year the bulk of US troops had gone from the

South. But the regime only survived because of US military aid.

The US and their puppet regime did not go unopposed by the Korean masses. In the autumn of 1946 and again in 1948, after the establishment of the Rhee regime, resistance reached revolutionary dimensions with millions participating.

Unfortunately the old bourgeois 'democratic' leaders retained their grip on the mass movement in the absence of a conscious revolutionary programme and leadership.

Nevertheless by 1950 the Rhee regime was in a political crisis. Considerable armed resistance still existed in the southern countryside, sections of the army were 'unreliable', and the bourgeois opposition made overwhelming gains in the National Assembly elections.

On 25 June heavy fighting broke out on the Parallel, each side accusing the other of starting it.

It is not well known that on the very same day, hundreds of miles to the south, fresh mass uprisings broke out in Taegu and Pusan.

The Rhee regime collapsed through its own rottenness, not because of the North Korean People's Army's mythical superiority.

The US decided not to accept this and invaded, in partnership with its allies, under the cover of a 'UN peace-keeping' mission. The later Chinese intervention restored the situation more or less as it had been on the 38th Parallel.

The political conclusion is that even the most militant mass movements against imperialism

should not be left in the hands of bourgeois democrats and Stalinists in the hope that the problem of revolutionary leadership will be solved spontaneously.

A conscious struggle must be waged to build a leadership with a programme that can take the masses beyond their immediate healthy responses to oppression.

I hope we will see such a leadership emerge in Korea in the near future.

L F Holley, Bath

Brain Damage?

DYSLEXIA is, according to the *Collins Concise English Dictionary*, an 'impairment of the ability to read, often from brain injury or genetic defect'. Now it often seems to be the case that the left suffers from some form of collective dyslexia.

Consider the facts: a meeting is advertised to start at 7.30pm sharp and yet the hall remains more or less empty till 8.00.

Or take the case of the Socialist Challenge letters page. For many weeks we have been asking comrades to keep letters to a 400-word maximum. But every time we open our post bag, lo and behold, we find offerings that would fill the letters page — on their own!

We can only conclude that there is indeed a larger incidence of dyslexia than was previously thought to be the case. The question is, is it genetic or brain damage?

'AUNTIE' TRIES TO ECLIPSE THE REAL ISSUE

Why did the BBC not ask: "Who killed Blair Peach?" — Instead of asking all the time: "Who killed JR?"

If 'misadventure' is the cause Of JR's death — Let Justice ask: "What kind of 'misadventure' then?"

Oh what a fuss About a bad fictitious man — And lack of breath About so good a teacher's death.

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By Martin Collins

WHEN the Socialist Workers Party launched *Socialist Review* in April 1978, it embarked on an extremely ambitious project. The aim was to fill a gap for a popular socialist magazine combining wide ranging news coverage with coverage of all the issues facing socialists.

Politics, the editors argued, shouldn't be defined by our rulers, but seen in its broadest sense embracing music, theatre, films, television and sport, 'the struggle against women's oppression as well as the fight for higher wages'.

In some ways, it was a similar goal to that which *Socialist Challenge* aspires, though the monthly magazine format of *Socialist Review*, when backed by the weekly *Socialist Worker*, gives more scope for extensive debate and discussion.

It was a big challenge. In 1978, after four years of a Labour government which attacked the working class, it was obvious that neither the Labour lefts nor the Communist Party were capable of making a challenge to the right wing. Yet, the far left had shrunk.

The economism and sectarianism which had led to hostility between the far left and the women's movement prevented the left from evaluating the demise of the 'new left' on a European scale or of facing up to the new tasks before it, without fragmenting at the first opportunity.

The massive growth of the Anti Nazi League, combining culture and propaganda, and the early successes of *Socialist Challenge* and *Socialist Unity*, forced the SWP to review its own reputation.

Socialist Worker tried new formulae and ideas. An early letter to *Socialist Review* elicited a curt comment: 'We dissociate ourselves from the sectarian tone. We think the left needs more open and fraternal discussion and less point scoring.'

Of course, *Socialist Review* suffered many of the problems associated with *Socialist Challenge*. How can the magazine be opened by 'intellectuals' without closing it to worker militants repelled by the language of the seminar room?

socialist REVIEWed

How is it possible to produce a magazine that is clearly identified with a political party and ideology yet is a lively forum for debate between people with widely differing viewpoints?

A fine balance has to be struck to interest the first-time reader, and at the same time to raise the cultural and political understanding of the committed activists.

By the end of its first year, *Socialist Review* could draw a healthy balance sheet. With a paid sale of 4,000 (which is still rising), its list of contributors from the left was impressive — from John Tocher to Sheila Rowbotham. A large number of topics had been tackled from the traditional 'which way for the left' type, to examination of 'scientific objectivity'.

A regular feature looked at popular writers from a socialist point of view. Science was covered, particularly debates on energy and the 'nuke'. Feminism, the cinema, theatre and the unions featured prominently. News items tried to get 'behind the facts' and extensive book reviews were always topical, steering clear of an attraction simply to 'left type' books.

Importantly, the articles provoked a stream of letters — always the sign of a vital publication.

Minor criticisms could be made. The articles on

sport and TV which were in *Socialist Worker* never made it to *Socialist Review*. But the main problem was that debates that were to become important inside the SWP — like that over black liberation and *Flame*, over the ANL and the united front, or even over electoral work and *Socialist Unity* — were not reflected in the pages of the review.

Some big issues of politics that have stimulated controversies elsewhere have been absent. Explaining the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the character of the revolution in Nicaragua, should be as much a subject of debate as the theatre or cinema.

There is a danger of making too much of a separation between 'analysis' and 'discussion', where news is analysed and culture is discussed.

But *Socialist Review* has always tried to encourage an active relationship with its readers, and new features have been added. An 'industrial discussion' section has been put in which has reflected the debate inside the SWP. An article on trades councils provoked responses from new writers just when it looked like the letters page was drying up.

The new 'movement' section has already reviewed the International Marxist Group in conference and it will hopefully be able to analyse developments inside the left in a way that the magazine wasn't able

to do when big discussions were taking place in the Communist Party.

A new 'briefing' section has been added that has laid out clearly all the arguments against import controls, arming militants for the big debates in the unions.

Hopefully, these new developments will be able to build on the strengths of *Socialist Review*. It would be disappointing if the openness and breadth of approach were to give way to the immediate tasks of the anti-Tory struggle, as important though that is.

Socialist Review direct by post costs 52p an issue (incl. p&p). A 12-issue sub is £6 inland. From: *Socialist Review*, PO Box 82, London E2.

socialist
REVIEW

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'Simply the finest, most subversive film on Ireland ever to lighten your screens'

By Carl Gardner

The camera peers out from a car slowly touring what looks like an ordinary council housing estate. The place is the Creggan, on the fringes of Derry, that mean and monstrous piece of architectural apartheid built by the Loyalist-run council to keep the city's Catholic majority from asserting their political power.

The day is sunny and quiet. A dog barks somewhere. A young child stands motionless by a phone box. A bird chirps. The car turns a corner, the camera scans walls and slogans — 'Stuff the Jubilee', 'Up the Provos'. Meanwhile, a woman's voice, hurried then hesitant by turns, intones a deadly litany of names:

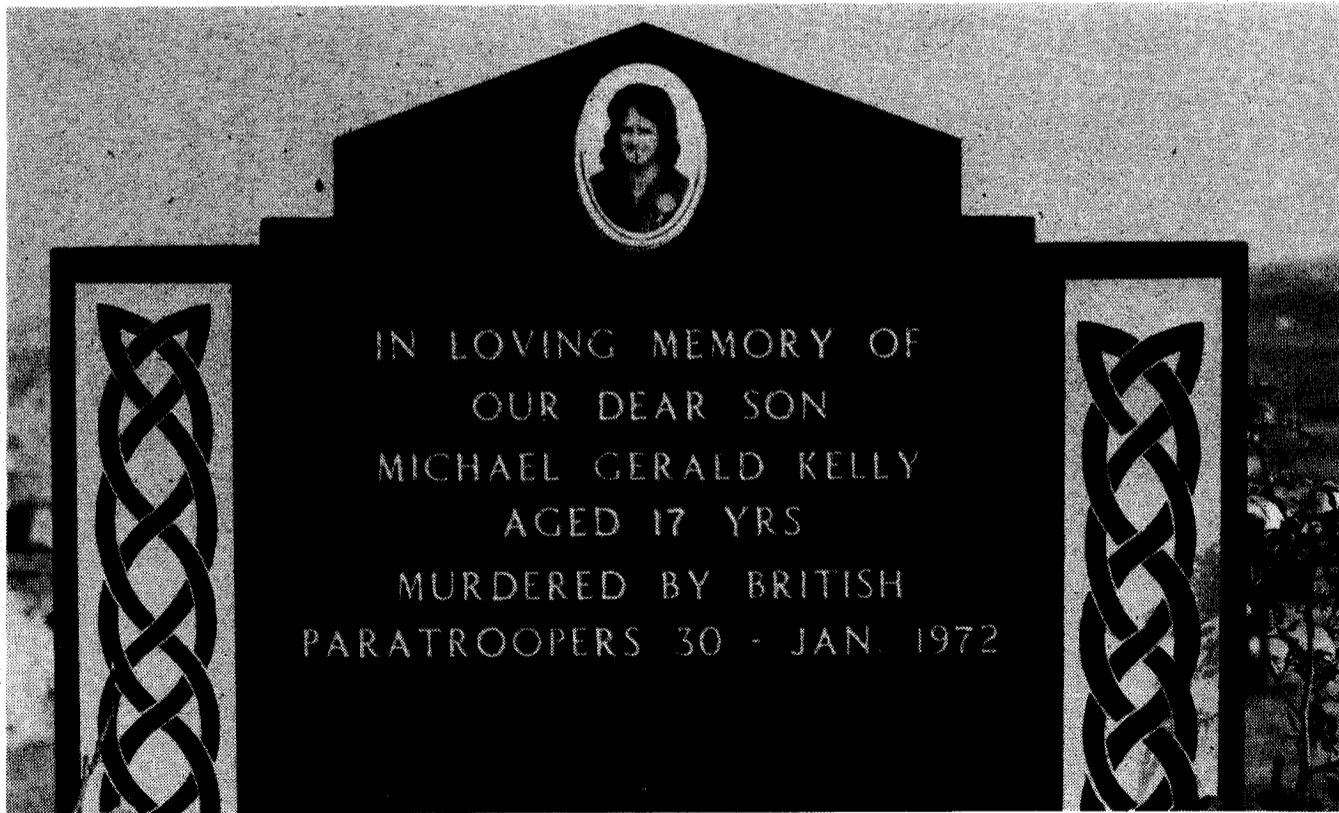
...there was the McCulp family... Joe Coyle... Eamonn Lafferty, he was shot dead... there was Kitty Thompson, she had five children, Colin Keenan, Newton McGillan, Sheimaus Bradley... Barney McGuigan, he was killed on Bloody Sunday... Tom McPhael, he was killed with a plastic bullet... Daniel Hagerly, he was shot over in the corn field on the morning of Motor-

man... At sixteen names she falters, 'I'm sure there's a lot more than that but I just can't remember off-hand'.

This remarkable moment occurs in an hour-long film called 'Creggan' made by director Michael Whyte, of

'And I think the Catholic people began to realise that if the army came here it wasn't really to protect them, it was to protect the interests of the British ruling class.'

Thames Television and Mary Holland, recently sacked from *The Observer* by ex-liberal Conor Cruise O'Brien for her left-of-centre views on the Irish



question.

However, what is perhaps most remarkable is that, Thames and the IBA permitting, this radically-conceived and moving account of politics on the ground in Northern Ireland is scheduled to appear on national television next Tuesday night!

The film's style is simple, stark and uncluttered. A list of what it doesn't contain will give a strong idea of how different it feels compared with all that has gone before it: no archive footage of meaningless violence; no dramatic music; no moral condemnations; no earnest, middle-class presenter from London talking glibly of 'tragedy', 'violence' or 'terrorism'; no army spokesmen; no one from the RUC; no liberals, academic 'expert'; no one from Government, North or South; no Loyalist spokesper-

son; no 'moderate' Catholic priests; no hostile interviewer; and very little TV voice-over at all.

What then does the film contain? Apart from the brief

'To me the Provisional IRA was a crowd of young fellows that just tried to pay back some of the brutality that they had got.'

historical voice-over, there are just two elements.

The core of film is extended interviews with families and individuals on the Creggan talking to camera.

This is superbly cut with fascinating long, low-key, almost static shots of the estate, inside and outside its homes, plus street-scenes in Derry: the Brits on patrol; a vehicle check-point search; a

sloganned wall; shoppers; the cemetery; people entering the Cathedral doorway for mass — a shot symmetrically echoed later by the doorway of the Law Courts with armed RUC men walking in and out of frame.

And all shot with 'natural' sound: car-engines, barkings, shouting, all the usual noises of a warm, sunny afternoon.

The brilliant political control underlying the film can be seen in the sequence at the British army base, where for a moment the camera seems to side with the army — a familiar portrait of smiling, strained faces coming off duty.

But this easy identification is immediately undercut as Mary Holland asks: 'Do you regard the soldiers as your enemy?' and an unseen woman

replies 'Not the soldiers but the uniform that they wear... when he dons that uniform, he's my enemy'.

The film is designed to address an uncommitted British audience — no heady Republican rhetoric, no explicit appeals for 'Troops Out'.

The argument is embedded in the film's style and text — verbal over-kill is not required. Instead the audience is drawn

'He said that talking had never solved Derry's problem, that the politicians had done absolutely nothing and that the only way to get the British to leave the country was by the gun.'

in and approached on familiar ground: everyday sounds and events; clip from a US crime series on the box, in someone's

front room; early discussion of housing problems, family planning, unemployment and the need for the husband to seek work elsewhere.

Then the interviews move on to more overtly political events: the early Civil Rights movement ('the very fact that the police didn't allow them to march drew me and thousands of others out'); the Bloody Sunday massacre; the political attitudes of the estate's young.

Suddenly you realise that both these 'ordinary' couples are in fact the parents of young men imprisoned for IRA activity. But retreat has been cut off.

The origins of Republican support and militancy have already been sketched almost imperceptibly. Horror, revulsion, good old British moralism becomes impossible. The audience is forced to think, to engage, to puzzle out this conundrum.

There will be many critics who will say that all this is just a new variation on media

'Do the English working-class mothers really understand what their sons are doing over there? You know I think there's a lot of things happening here which have been deliberately kept from the English public.'

'manipulation', but that would be to miss the point. All films and TV programmes involve 'manipulation', they all consist of an artificial, constructed view of the world. The difference is that films like this 'manipulate' to force the audience to question that world — the bulk of television manipulates to make people accept it.

CREGGAN will be broadcast on ITV at 11pm on Tuesday, 17 June. All those with access to video-recorders should make efforts to tape it — it will be an invaluable visual aid in raising the issue of Ireland in Britain.

Socialist Challenge

BLACK YOUTH FIGHT RACIST GANGS

HUNDREDS of Asian youth took to the streets in Birmingham's Small Heath last weekend in response to attacks on the Asian community by gangs of skinheads.

This followed a week when racist violence in Small Heath reached alarming, new heights as racist white youths began a series of systematic attacks on the Asian community. The week-long invasion of Small Heath was mobilised by British Movement skinheads from Shard End and Stetchford.

Tuesday 3 June: An Asian shop was attacked by 50 white youth and a West Indian woman was beaten up.

Wednesday 4 June: There were attacks on Asian youth in their school playgrounds. By the evening a hundred skinheads had assembled in Muntz Street. On the other side of the road, 150 Asian and West Indian youths also gathered to fight off any attacks.

Dogs

The police intervened, exclusively against the blacks, and made several arrests.

Thursday 5 June: The police took over where the British Movement skinheads left off. A massive police presence during the day, complete with dogs, meant harassment for the black youth who were congregating throughout the area in self-defence. Many Asian youth were strip-searched.

By 10pm on Thursday night a crowd of Asian and West Indian youths had gathered by Small Heath park, in militant mood. The elders of the community addressed the crowd, calling on the youth to disperse until an afternoon meeting two days later.

Skinhead

The black youth, fed up with police harassment and racist taunts from skinhead mobs, were not impressed and the call was made for a demonstration the next evening. A meeting of immigrant associations and the left was called for 6pm on Friday before the demonstration.

Friday 6 June 6pm: While this 'Ad Hoc Defend Small Heath' meeting discussed plans to deal with the racist attacks, 200 Asian and West Indian youths assembled outside in Muntz Street.

ASIAN youth showed their fighting spirit when racist thugs threatened to make Brick Lane a no-go area for the local black community in 1978. Last weekend Asian youth in Birmingham's Small Heath demonstrated a similar

When a spokesperson announced that there would be a rally on Sunday afternoon, the militant youth demanded immediate action. Announcements that more skinheads were arriving in Small Heath resolved the situation as the black youth rushed off to find them.

That evening saw more clashes with police and skinheads and arrests. Groups of black youth were to be seen

patrolling the streets of Small Heath during the evening.

Over the weekend the youth maintained vigilante patrols in Small Heath, while other groups of Asian youth made their way into the centre of town to make contact with Rastas from Handsworth, and with members of Revolution Youth.

Through **Saturday** and **Sunday** clashes with groups of skinheads and the police continued.

refusal to be intimidated when fascist-inspired skinheads invaded their community.

Last weekend, in Birmingham shows that the militancy expressed in the Bristol events was not an isolated episode — black youth in Britain will fight back against fascist violence and against the police.

Birmingham also shows that if the traditional leaders of the Asian communities are not prepared to organise this fightback then the Asian youth will do it without them, through their own organisations.

Racist attacks show every sign of continuing. Over the summer, record levels of youth unemployment, together with the sustained work being done by the British Movement on Birmingham's white council estates, are likely to bring about a big increase in racist violence.

The youth need to lend their weight to force the local leaders and the labour movement to support self-defence.

Support the H Block prisoners, support Charter '80

By Steve Potter

FOUR prisoners in H4 Block, Long Kesh, were attacked by warders during a wing shift on 30 May. Two of the four, Thomas Moran and Sean Boyle, were badly beaten, and two others, Sean Connolly and Ciaran Toal, were assaulted.

This small news item in the Sinn Féin paper *Republican News* is one incident among the many attacks that are made on prisoners demanding political status in Long Kesh and the women's prison in Armagh.

The prisoners are there as a result of the 'conveyor-belt' system of justice in the North of Ireland. Those who are now in H Block and Armagh have been tried in front of 'Diplock' courts with no jury trial.

The prisoners have refused to wear the degrading prison uniform and all the so-called 'privileges' which stop a prisoner's life being pure hell have been withdrawn.

The prisoners are demanding:

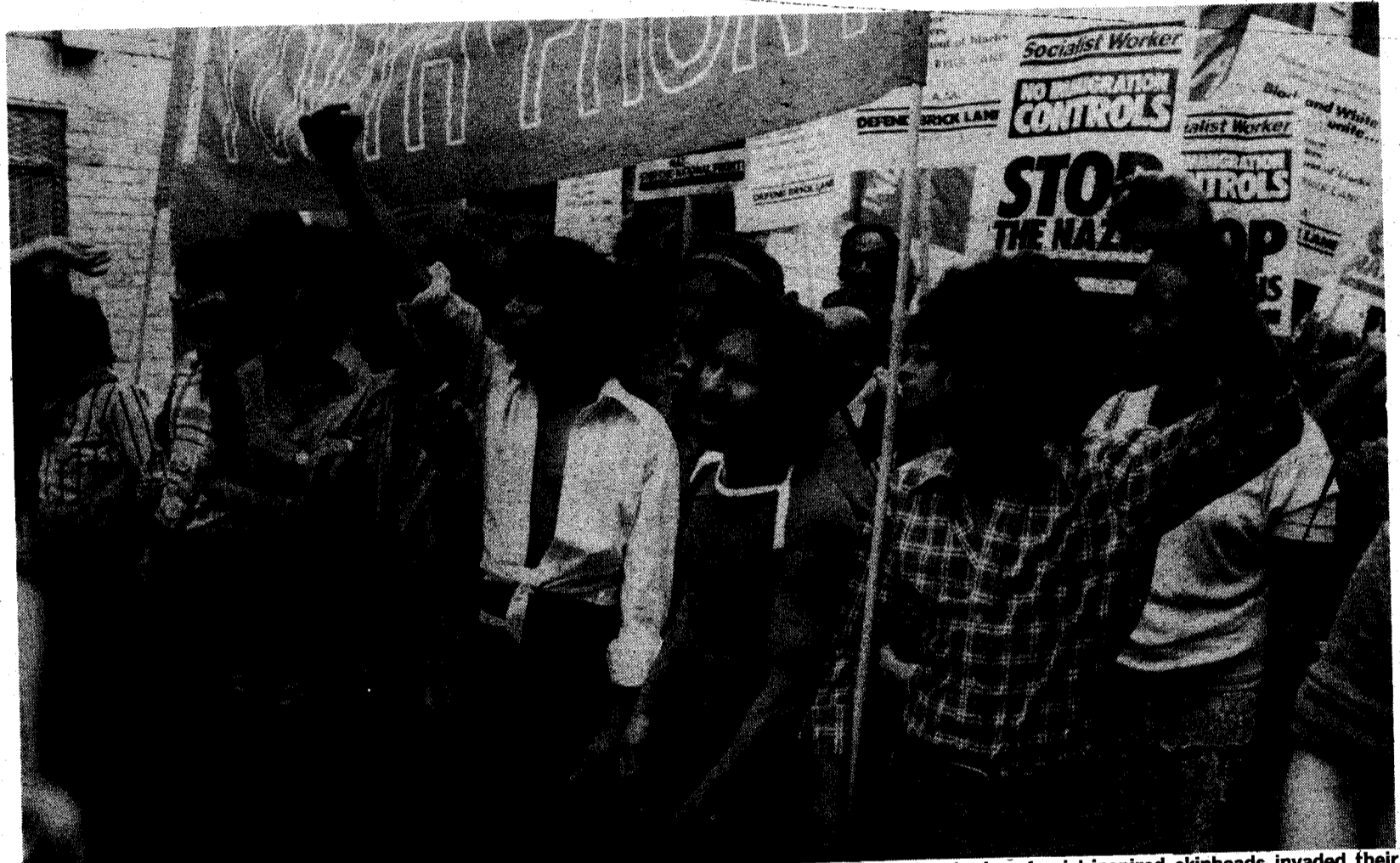
- * The right to wear their own clothes;
- * The right to refrain from prison work;
- * The right to free association among political prisoners;
- * The right to organise their own recreational and educational facilities and receive one visit, letter and parcel per week;
- * Restoration of full remission of sentences.

Supporting them in Ireland is a mass campaign, the National Smash H Block Committee, which has organised demonstrations, meetings, and education around the prisoners' case.

In Britain there is also a national campaign the basis of which was established last week in London. The founding meeting of the campaign called Charter '80 decided to support the five demands of the prisoners in their fight for political status.

The conference of the Troops Out Movement to be held in Edinburgh at the end of this month will be asked to endorse the campaign.

The Charter '80 campaign can make a massive contribution to the case of the Republican prisoners, a contribution which can start to end the attacks on prisoners like Thomas Moran and Sean Boyle, and bring H Block and Armagh to the ground.



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