

# Socialist Challenge

# EXPOSED! THE GUNMAN FROM THE DAILY MAIL



**THIS** week the *Daily Mail* is running a massive witch-hunt against the Trotskyist organisation the Workers Socialist League.

The series in the *Mail* is full of horror stories, distortions, and slanders. For example, the aim of the WSL, says the *Mail*, is to ensure that: 'Life in Britain would assume... the horror of Cambodia.'

What the *Mail* does not tell its readers is how it collected this 'story'.

On Wednesday 9 July a photographer working for the 'Mail' pulled a gun on Alan Thornett, a leading member of the WSL and a deputy senior steward at the Morris Assembly Plant at Cowley Oxford.

The photographer's name is Charles Cramp. He is a free-lance photographer who was employed at the time by the *Mail*. According to Oxford police, the car in which he drove off after he had threatened Thornett with a revolver is owned by the *Mail*.

## Visited

Cramp himself is a member of central London free-lance branch of the National Union of Journalists. He is photographed here sitting in a car. Also pictured are the 'reporters' on the story, Robert Porter and Harry Longmuir.

Alan Thornett and other members of the WSL had for two weeks been followed around and harassed by *Mail* employees. Supporters of the WSL newspaper, *Socialist Press*, had been rung up at all hours and 'visited' by the paper's hacks.

## Guns

Last Wednesday Cramp took another picture of Thornett. When Alan took his camera from him in order to expose the film, Cramp pulled a revolver. When he got his camera back Cramp drove off at high speed.

Within minutes Porter and Longmuir arrived on the scene.

The editorial in the *Daily Mail* on Monday 14 July was headed, 'Totalitarians of the Left emerge'. For a newspaper that in the 1930s supported Oswald Mosley's fascist party, the word 'totalitarian' is a bit rich. The editorial ends urging the right wing in the Labour Party to 'fight, fight, and fight again'.

The question now is: fight with what? Guns?



# LOBBY THE TUC FOR JOBS

## OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name .....

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## HOMENEWS

# Kick out Labour's cold warriors



A section of the 2,000-strong audience at the European Nuclear Disarmament meeting in central Hall, London, on the 10 July. Speakers included EP Thompson, Suzanna York, Ken Coates and Zhores Medvedev. In a lively debate from the floor, several speakers stressed the

importance of focussing not only on Europe-wide disarmament, but also on the demands for unilateral disarmament by Britain and British withdrawal from NATO.

Andrew Wiard (Report)

By Alan Shevek

ON 31 May the Labour Party held a special one day conference. By an overwhelming majority, the delegates decided that:

'The Labour Party opposes the manufacture and deployment in Britain of Cruise missiles and the neutron bomb and refuses to permit their deployment in Britain by the United States or any other country.'

This was the view of the overwhelming majority. But Bill Rodgers, the party's spokesperson on defence has come out with the completely opposite view. In the pamphlet 'Defence Disarmament and Peace: the case for Cruise missiles' he argues not only for NATO and anti-communism, but forcefully in favour of the Tories' plan to site Cruise missiles in Britain.

That Labour's defence spokesperson should be allowed to completely flout party policy on defence is a sick joke. But when we probe the publishers of Rodgers' little pamphlet, the joke gets even sicker. They are the 'The Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding' (!)

This body has among its leading officers Lord Stewart of Fulham, former Labour foreign secretary and supporter of the American war effort in Vietnam; Roy Mason, former British viceroy in Northern Ireland; and to cap it all, Frank Chapple as treasurer and Terry Duffy as secretary!

No doubt, these people are well placed to 'understand' the American point of view. Their committee is a typical front organisation for cold war propaganda, conveying the views of the State Department and the Ministry of Defence. We can be assured that this committee suffers from no

financial problems.

Numerous such committees in the '50s and early '60s were lavishly financed by the CIA. It would indeed be surprising if the new transatlantic committee didn't receive the financial blessing of some transatlantic agencies.

The fact that Rodgers can get away with such a transparent operation shows the need to democratise the selection of the party leadership. There can only be a tiny minority of the party who would for a moment contemplate choosing Rodger for their spokesperson on questions of world peace and 'defence'

He should be replaced with some one who supports the official party policy. The same applies to Peter Shore, who now supports Thatcher's boycott of the Olympics. The campaign against Cruise missiles should go hand in hand with the fight to kick out Labour's cold warriors.

## Peter Hain - can he revive the Labour Party?

By Anne Cesek

THE battle lines have already been drawn for the Labour Party conference in Blackpool. The issues of democracy and accountability are dividing the Party from top to bottom, because the very future of the Party is at stake.

A fundamental question faces all activists whether they are in or outside the Party: what is the strategy that will achieve socialism and create a mass working class party in Britain?

The Commission of Inquiry has been flooded with submissions from all sections of the party. Peter Hain's recently published pamphlet, *Reviving the Labour Party*, is one of the most important contributions so far because he tackles the fundamental questions head-on.

His main concern is 'to reorientate the party so that it adopts an outward campaigning strategy.' This conclusion is based on a damning critique of the practice of the Labour Party.

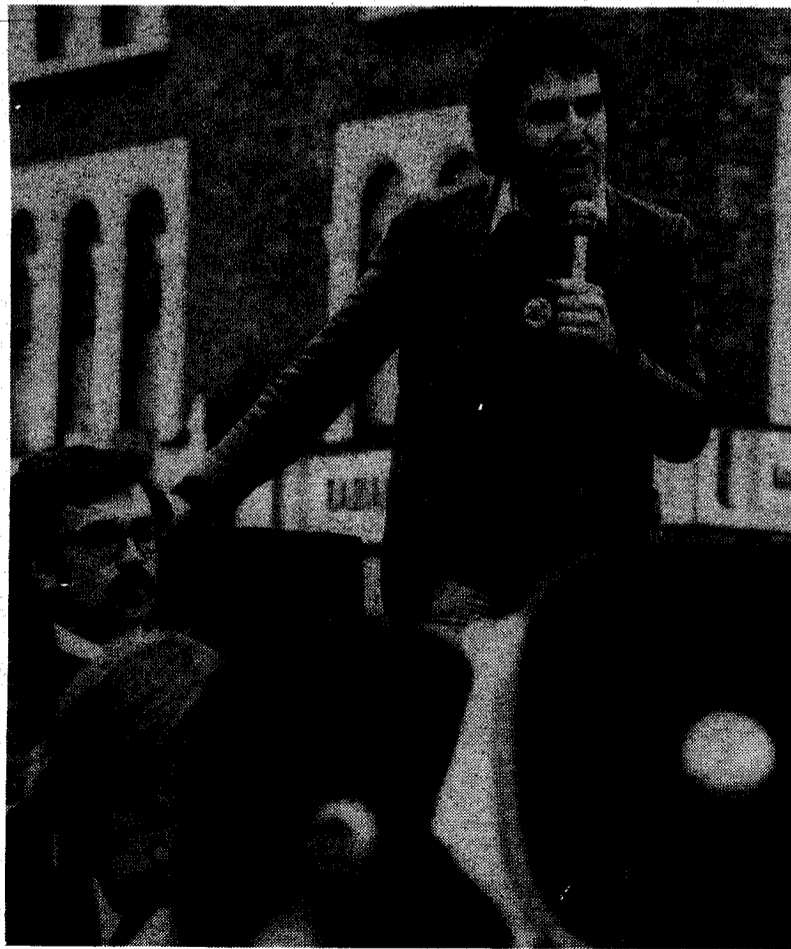
'In opting for a largely electoralist strategy, the Labour Party has imposed a self-inflicted wound, which besides restricting the possibilities for socialist advance, has meant that the Party has been unable to involve its own membership in active political campaigning. There has been no conception of mass mobilisation or struggle.'

### Power

But a clear strategy for socialism can only be developed if we are 'clear about where we think power really lies', argues Hain. Reliance on the ballot box makes sense only if we think that real power lies in Westminster.

As Hain says '...our actual experience tells us different'. Effective power, as opposed to the trappings of it, really lies with big business, the multinationals and the private and public bureaucracies which serve them. 'Power in short lies in the edifice of capitalism for which the parliamentary system is a front'.

Peter Hain draws upon the positive ex-



periences of the last few years. Mass action campaigns like the Anti-Nazi League and the activities of the women's liberation movement in which the far left has played a major role, are contrasted to the resolution mongering within the constituency ghettos of the Labour Party. The political link between the trade unions and the Labour Party have also 'steadily been ossified'.

The pamphlet argues that the roots of

this lie in the historical division between the two wings of the movement. '...Trade unions set up the Labour Party to gain representation for the working class in Parliament; the priority was not seen as being to build a mass political movement based on the struggles outside.'

The strategy Peter Hain outlines is one based on a combination of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary action with a revitalisation of the party at a constituency

level. He argues for the creation of workplace branches, the active involvement of the party in the trade unions and workers' struggles, as well as in the activities of the women's and black movements.

But involvement on what political basis and with what political answers? Underpinning this perspective is Peter Hain's central argument that there is no straight choice to be made between reform and revolution.

He advocates a third way: that of the Alternative Economic Strategy (AES) policy package. But the current crisis of capitalism is so grave that it is becoming clear to many people that as an economic system capitalism cannot satisfy human needs. The AES clings to the old dogma that some kind of compromise with wealth and power can be arranged.

### Edifice

If we think that the whole system of wealth and power has to be ended by ending the 'edifice' of capitalism then our strategy must be different. Mass action to push through some parliamentary reform is not enough. Socialism means placing the running of the country from top to bottom in the hands of ordinary working people, directly accountable to their fellows in a system of socialist democracy.

It is only in the process of struggling for their own rights that people become conscious of their ability to run their own affairs in this way and thus see the practicality and relevance of socialism.

Peter Hain illustrates many of the weaknesses of the Labour Party today. But he does not challenge the overall perspective of the traditional left in the Labour Party that Parliamentary reform is the overriding goal and extra-parliamentary activity is simply an added luxury.

The new left in the Labour Party must break with this approach if it is to succeed in turning the Labour Party outwards. It has to confront all those within the Party and the trade unions who want to hang on to 'consensus politics' at the expense of the working class. Will the Labour Party, if it changes along the lines Peter Hain suggests, be able to break with its past?

# HOMENEWS

By Geoffrey Sheridan

**THE** course of the meeting could be traced by the movement of the grey heads. At first there was one, that of the school's deputy head, who came up to the small group of school students in the playground and asked the young man addressing them what was going on.

The latter had in fact just been talking about how to organise a petition demanding the abolition of school uniform. 'See where that gets you,' he told the mini-assembly.

'If a lot of people sign and nothing happens when you hand it in, then call on people to take action. If there's two hundred of you, you can't be victimised.'

There were half a dozen school students listening at that point, and the arrival of the deputy head, who failed to discover what the meeting was about, necessitated its transfer to a roundabout outside South-east London Boys' School, Deptford.

## Argue

Numbers soon multiplied. Three grey heads peered out from the school gates, their craned necks taut with impotent authority.

Describing the events on the roundabout as a meeting is to suggest a degree of formality that wasn't there.

There was the speaker, Richard Rozanski, who was the national organiser of the National Union of School Students, and — within the space of 10 minutes — some 40 school students, mainly third and fourth years and predominantly black.

But the milling around, the bursts of conversation, gave the occasion none of the orderliness of the usual union meeting.

For Richard, who left school a year ago, it meant continually recapping as fresh arrivals joined the unassembled ranks. 'Some students might be for school uniform,' he pointed out. 'Argue with them. It's not just that uniforms make you feel uncomfortable; they mark you out as inferior.'

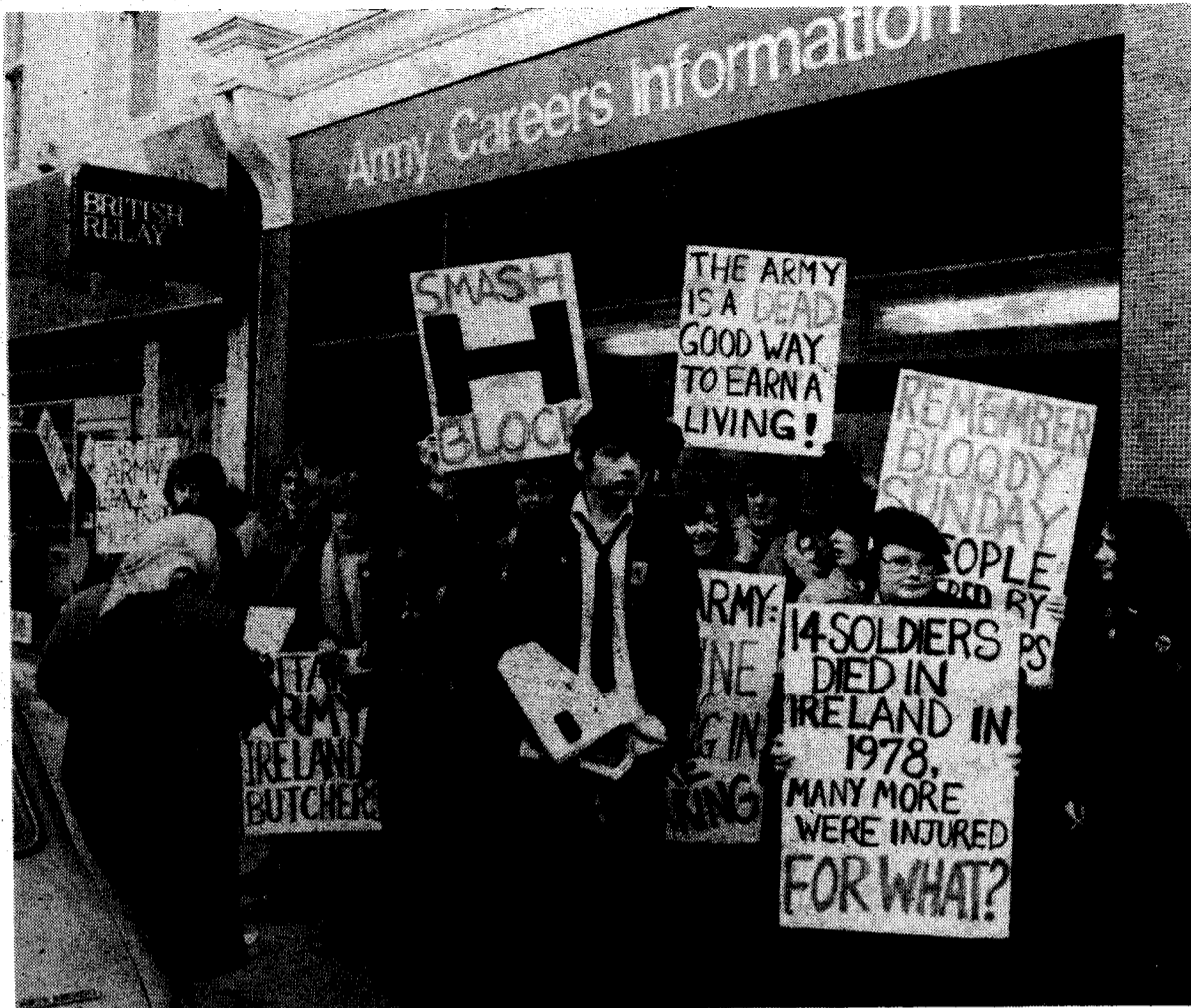
'You've got to argue with parents. Get your friends to see them to let them know there's support for this so that they don't pick on their own kids.'

## Strikes

Then, from a carrier bag, he brought out the weapons of agitation. On his advice, the petition forms were quickly thrust into other bags.

Hands reached out for copies of *Blot*, the NUSS's paper, with its editorial on Thatcher ('Cutting up our lives'), an article by Erika on free abortion on demand, and a report from Leeds NUSS on how they organised a one-day strike against the education cuts.

More hands took copies of *Revolution*, the paper Richard Rozanski will be editing now that he has retired from the school students' union, at its annual conference on 5 and 6 July. With its slogan of 'For a united revolutionary youth organisation', the current, 11th issue of the paper devotes its front page and centre-spread to Cruise missiles and the war drive.



## School students organise Outwitting the grey heads

'We recognise that imperialism is the source of war and that only its overthrow, necessarily by violent action, will free the world of war,' it concludes.

Back to the grey heads. The clusters on the roundabout dispersed rapidly, their uniforms in varying shades of black looking every bit ready for abolition. They filed back through the gates of their comprehensive, where three teachers were waiting to inspect the literature.

Would the petition forms be discovered? Richard considered that the staff would find out about them soon enough. He had been to talk to a social studies class at the school, at which a student had raised the issue of uniforms and promptly passed around a sheet on which he'd written 'We don't want school uniform'. Everyone in the class signed it.

With holidays looming, the campaign may not begin in earnest until the autumn, but by the day following

the meeting, which was held on 19 June, a committee had been elected to carry through the struggle.

The NUSS's national organiser cannot always count himself so fortunate. A few weeks earlier he had been invited to speak at a lunch-time meeting organised by students at a West London comprehensive.

It was held in a classroom and half way through the head walked in. 'He was a smooth, youngish, trendy type,' Richard recounts. 'For a while I ignored him.'

'Then he asked who had invited me, and the 40 people in the room all put their hand up. At first the head tried the "Let's all be grown up" approach, inviting me to his office to chat over a coffee and see if the meeting could be arranged through official channels.'

'I told the meeting about the invitation and said that this is what they mean by democracy in schools. They won't let you invite anyone in. They won't let you organise yourselves. I called for a vote. It was unanimous that the meeting should continue. Then it got heavy.'



'Another teacher came in and declared that the meeting would stop at once. Someone tried to haul me out. We decided to move the meeting into the playground and the head went loopy. Eventually the PE department came and threw me out of the school. An ignominious end,' Richard acknowledges.

He believes that a small NUSS branch was set up, but that it doesn't seem to be going anywhere.

The union has had a mixed year. There have been highlights — strikes in London, Sheffield, and Leeds over the education cuts; involvement by the Cardiff branch in the South Wales Youth March; participation in the TUC's Day of Action by school students in West London and Enfield; an occupation of the Army recruitment centre in Sheffield over the war in Ireland — yet in spite of an active membership numbering some 7,000, the union's former national organiser admits that it has no effective local organisation.

In the report that he presented to the NUSS conference, Richard Rozanski argued that the 'incredibly

repressive nature' of the British education system can be held responsible for this continued state of affairs.

With the exception of Ireland, for example, the rest of West Europe has banned corporal punishment. In Sweden it's even illegal for parents to hit their children. Here the National Union of Teachers, quite apart from other authorities, remains attached to the stick.

Because students are regimented in school, with teachers who always know best, Richard considers that they have an almost instinctive dislike of organisation. 'They'll agree with NUSS's aims, and agree to action, but they won't always be prepared to take steps to organise themselves.'

## Campaigns

Since the union was formed in '72, he adds, it has been dependent on a handful of militants to lead activities. 'Yet as soon as they reach the exam years, the branch collapses because there is no one to carry on.'

Richard, along with other members of Revolution Youth, hoped that the NUSS conference would be able to come to grips with these problems. 'That way we'd see the union grow at local level, which is the key to it becoming a mass organisation.'

The outcome of the conference seems likely to make it harder. Rebel, the school student wing of the Socialist Workers Party, had a majority of delegates, and proceeded to treat the union as an extension of Rebel.

The victory that Rebel claims, with its majority of six out of the 11 places on the national committee, could be regarded with some enthusiasm if it had proposed any political campaigns for the union to be engaged in.

'Blot' is available price 10p (5p to school students) from: NUSS, c/o 3 Endsleigh St, London WC1. Tel 01-387 1277. 'Revolution', price 10p, from: Revolution Youth, PO Box 50, London NI. Tel 01-359 8371.

### Revolution Youth presents WOMEN'S LIBERATION & SOCIALISM

An educational event for all Revolution Youth members and sympathisers.

Discussions on:

- \*origins of women's oppression and the family
- \*Sexuality and sex role stereotypes
- \*Rape \*Prostitution
- \*Age of consent
- \*The women's movement
- \*Women in the USSR
- ... and much more.

- \*The women's movement
- \*Women in the USSR
- ... and much more.

Plus films, gig, theatre event

Weekend of 19-20 July

Brighton Polytechnic, Falmer site. Accommodation and some food provided. Starts noon 19 July. All donations welcome.

## WHAT'S LEFT SC EVENTS

RATES for ads to appear in *What's Left*. 5p per word or £4 per col. incl. Deadline: noon Sat. prior to publication. Payment in advance. WANTED: screen printer for the Other Printshop in Manchester. Experience not essential but some artistic capability and organisational efficiency are. Phone Criss on 061-236 4905.

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.

FULL-TIME worker required for the Troops Out Movement to work in office in North London. Duties include liaising with branches and co-ordinating their activities, organising national events and fund-raising activities. Also general office work. For further details tel 267 2004. Apply in writing to TOM steering committee, Box TOM, 2a St Paul's Road, London N1. Closing date is Friday 1 August.

SAVE 'Pits and Steel Jobs', Labour Party conference fringe meeting, 7.30pm Tuesday 30 September, Cliffs Hotel, Queens Promenade, Blackpool. Speakers include: Emlyn Williams (Pres S Wales NUM), Dennis Skinner MP, Neil Kinnock MP, Alec Jones MP, speakers from Llanwrnachdraeth Action Committee. Invited: Bill Sirs, general secretary of ISTC.

ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside C&As — for more info ring phone Collin, 574060.  
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 Kilburn Square.  
BRIGHTON: For info phone Nick, 605052.  
BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. For more info contact Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.  
CARDIFF: SC sales Newport Town Centre outside Woolworths 11-12.30; Cardiff British Home Stores 11-12.30. Also available from 108 Books, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.  
COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138.

DUNDEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, every Thursday 4-5.30pm, Friday 4-5.30pm, Saturday 11-4pm.  
ENFIELD: SC available from Nelsons newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.  
HACKNEY: Socialist Challenge jumble sale. Sat 5 July 2pm St James Church Hall, Powell Rd, E5. Donations of goods to Hackney branch.

HACKNEY Socialist Challenge public meeting, 'Revolution in Central America and the Caribbean' Tuesday 22 July, Homerton Library, 7.30pm. Speakers: Fitzroy Ambersley (recently returned from Caribbean and Grenada), Toni Gorton, and Nicaraguan Solidarity Committee speaker.  
HAMILTON: SC on sale 8-11 every Sat. outside County Bar Almada Street, every Sat outside Safeway 1.30-5. For more info contact Paul, 17 Clyde View or John at 54 Eliot St, Hamilton

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.  
LEWISHAM and Deptford: SC cuts school. Open to all SC supporters, sat 19 July, 2-6pm, Waitrose Action Centre, Baylis Rd, SE1. Speakers: Bernie Lynch, Mick Sullivan.  
NEWHAM: SC sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Market, Upton Park.

OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.  
OXFORD: SC supporters sell every Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.  
STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday 1pm Mersey Square. Tel. 061-236 4905 for more information.  
SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat., Regent St (Brunel Centre).

TEESSIDE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newsfare, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and in Green's, Spencer Market, Stockton.  
TEESSIDE: Thursday 24 July SC forum: Iran and the Middle East. 7.30pm Borough Hotel, Corporation Rd, Middlesbrough.  
TOWER HAMLETS: SC supporters sell papers every Friday 5-6pm Watney Mkt, Sat 11-12.30pm Whitechapel tube, Sunday 10.30-12.00 Brick Lane.

WOLVERHAMPTON: SC readers group meeting, United Nations, NARO BEE - Capitalist International Party, 8pm, Mon 28 July, The Coach and Horses, Cornbank Rd. Speaker Nige Brown. SC on sale at Wolverhampton railway station, 4.30-6pm on Thurs and Fri, at the Polytechnic students union, Fri 12-2pm, and at the Mander Centre, near Beatties, Sat 11am-2pm.

## IMG NOTICES



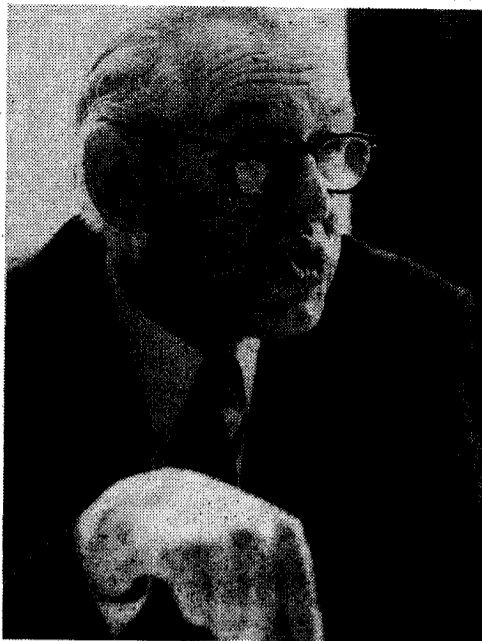
ANTI-CRUISE missiles fraction: the first meeting of this new fraction will take place at the National Centre on Saturday 19 July. The meeting starts at 11am. All branches to send one representative.

BULLETINS. Out now! Bulletin on Afghanistan (25p), Minutes of World Congress (£1.50). Orders using tokens now for CC bulletin (40p). Still available: IMG conference minutes and IMG International Information Bulletin. All bulletin orders to be taken through IMG branches.  
CENTRAL Committee report book: branches should subscribe: report book from the last CC from CC member numbers at their own. Otherwise: the centre will provide a copy at the normal speakers fee. Documents available in the next two weeks.

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Analyzing the Parties  
Beyond the fragments?  
The Labour Left's "Revolution"  
The British Communist Party at the end of the line  
The role of the Communist Party  
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INTERNATIONAL, theoretical journal of the I.M.G. Now available at a 25p discount to I.M.G. branches. Send in your orders right away.



## Fighting policies can elect Bob Wright

By Jonathan Silberman

'FOR years the Broad Left has been in the doldrums', admitted Ken Brett at the national conference of the *Engineering Gazette*. 'We've been very concerned at national level. It's now started to move. By God it's got to move.'

Brett, the Broad Left candidate for assistant general secretary in the forthcoming elections in the Engineering Union, was addressing 187 delegates at the Birmingham conference organised by the journal of the Broad Left.

In his speech, Brett was saying what many militants have been thinking for some time. The Broad Left has been in crisis at a time when the tasks of the left in the union are greater than ever.

As one delegate put it, 'This crowd — Boyd, Duffy and Co — are worse than Carron. They're trying to destroy the democracy of our union.'

The platform was optimistic. As Brett explained: 'I am impressed by the youthfulness of this meeting.'

An organisation without youth is an organisation without a future. By this criterion, the Broad Left has a rosy future.'

Bob Wright, the left's presidential candidate, spoke of the need for a fighting leadership for the union. Many speakers endorsed what Bob Wright had to say about the events in Leyland.

'National action was developing throughout Leyland in response to the sacking of Derek Robinson. This action was called off in favour of a futile committee of inquiry. The momentum of opposition to his victimisation was thereby broken.'

'In future all union activists must be protected. We need a union president and a full union leadership capable of giving our great union the resolute leadership it requires.'

With speeches like these, delegates were forced to ask why the Broad Left has been 'in the doldrums' for so many years and why the union is facing one of the worst crises in its entire history. But they got no answers, and so there is no guarantee that the speeches were more than hot air.

The fact is that if the Broad Left leadership had shown complete intransigence to the attacks of the Labour government; if it had charted a genuinely independent course to Hugh Scanlon — Broad Left

leader of yesteryear — then things would be different in the Broad Left today.

It bordered on complete hypocrisy when Bob Wright spoke of Leyland. Wright was part of the vicious campaign of the right-wing union tops against the Leyland toolmakers when they went out the gate against the social contract. Wright chose to remain silent when Derek Robinson was victimised.

## Action

Fine words after the event are welcome, of course. But what's necessary above all is fine action at the time.

As one delegate, Dudley Edwards, put it: 'This union led the fight for the 10-hour day. It led the fight for the 40-hour week. It helped make Heath's Industrial Relations Act unworkable. It helped make possible the successful resolutions on democracy passed at last year's Labour Party conference. The role and record of our union are at stake.'

The left will have to completely break from the strategy and orientation of its leaders over the past years. Collaboration and compromise over social contracts, import controls and the like must be thrown out. Class struggles policies are the alternative. We have got to commit Bob Wright to these policies, and turn his fighting speeches into action. This is the only way to win the election and get rid of Duffy and Co.

By Dodie Wepler

THE Iron and Steel Trades Confederation claims that the measures in *New Deal for Steel* will halt the closures in steel. Some of the proposals, if taken in isolation, might be a good idea. But they do not add up to a plan that can solve the problem of job loss in steel.

Let's look at them one by one. The pamphlet argues that BSC should cut the price of steel by 5-10 per cent. But would this stimulate steel sales and provide more work?

It might, if there was a high market demand. But today we are in the midst of an international recession and while tips to BSC management to solve the market problem may held out with prices, it certainly doesn't guarantee jobs.

Furthermore, it's entirely wrong to suggest that the economic slump hasn't drastically affected the market for steel.

## Deprived

Despite the rise in steel production levels, it is clear that still more steel is needed. Yet political choices have been made by the bosses of industry and their governments on a world scale which mean fewer houses, hospitals, and schools.

That's why the market demand for steel is lower than world productive capacity. And that's why the Tories have imposed cash limits on BSC.

If these decisions are beyond our control, why should steelworkers get involved in BSC's pricing policies? It is the responsibility of workers to save jobs, not to work out how BSC can tinker with the market value of steel. That should be left to the BSC accountants.

The ISTC pamphlet puts the blame for high-priced steel on the government's cash limits. It calls for an end to these limits on funding from central government, and for greater state subsidy. Good idea. Why should private industry be given ample investment aid and the nationalised sector be deprived of it?

## Investment

*New Deal for Steel* points out that BSC, a basic, nationalised industry, is paying out over £200m each year to the banks. It says that half of BSC's debts should be written off. Why only half? Still, this is a step in the right direction.

The pamphlet proposes that new investment be made in the profitable finishing end of the industry; in a new aggressive marketing policy; and in developing a more flexible industry with increased use of electric arc furnaces which make special steels. Fine — providing that such investment takes no one's job.

But if the Steel Corporation would benefit from investing in the profitable finishing end of the industry, why does the union's pamphlet remain silent about the fact that the most profitable sectors of all remain in private hands? Why not nationalise the private steel firms?

The more serious problems in the proposals come when the pamphlet

## Steel union publishes plan for industry

# Tips to BSC is no way to save jobs!



CONSETT workers march through London to lobby MPs last week. Their town will die if closure plans go through. But Bill Sirs' policies don't offer them a way forward. (See page 5 for story)

tries to explain how the prices can be cut through 'operational improvements'.

It suggests that BSC is using too much coking coal in its product. It complains that the government is refusing to make coking coal subsidies for domestic coal. But it also argues the need for BSC to cut its use of coking coal.

Does this mean that the jobs of miners are to be put at risk in order to save BSC money? Miners are steelworkers' best allies. Last week the NUM executive threatened that any further contraction of the coal or steel industry would be 'strongly opposed'.

Another 'operational improvement' to allow BSC to make a price cut is the proposal for a cut in overtime. Good. This could allow many steelworkers to be re-employed.

But the pamphlet also argues that the best way to reduce overtime is to eliminate 'absenteeism' by giving workers an 'attendance bonus'.

Now if there is a high level of absenteeism in the steel industry it is because, leaving aside the dirt and danger of working in steel, workers are demoralised by the lack of job security. This will not be cured by the measures in the pamphlet.

It is a testimony to the tragedy of the industry that workers should have to be bribed with special bonuses before they come in to work. This

idea of bonuses is similar to Ford management's plan, which has involved a wage cut for many Ford workers. Any slight infraction of the agreement by workers leads to a substantial reduction in wage packets.

But the real problem about overtime is this: if it is so widespread in many plants, why not share the work with the thousands of steelworkers on the dole queues, on the basis of the principle of no loss in pay? Is it in the interests of unity that some steelworkers should be facing the dole while others are working themselves into the ground?

The ISTC pamphlet finally criticises the corporation for its export policy. But British production levels are fixed by the infamous Davignon plan. The pamphlet leaves aside the thorny political problem of the Common Market by arguing that even within the levels imposed by the EEC, Britain should not be cutting back in steel.

Why should British workers submit to the bosses' Common Market at all? A real fighting lead from the ISTC would be a suggestion for a campaign to get Britain out of the EEC!

Even if the measures in *New Deal for Steel* did not involve a single job loss from the day it was implemented onwards (and what about the

thousands already out of work?) they cannot and will not stop further redundancy in steel. The measures will not stop thousands of jobs being lost.

And even if all these doubts were cleared up, and the pamphlet faced up a bit more bravely to some of the issues it confronts, the *New Deal for Steel* would not be the programme that steelworkers really need.

The reason for this is that the problems of the steel industry are more fundamental than Bill Sirs assumes. The steel industry hasn't just caught cold, it has pneumonia. It suffers not from a passing chill but a debilitating disease.

This is not the fault of steelworkers. The steelworkers are being asked to pay for the decades of inadequate investment in the steel industry, for the fact that the nationalisation of the steel industry was left so late, for the fact that private ownership rested content with the captive markets of the British Empire instead of investing in new plant — in the final analysis for the fact that Britain was the first to develop steel making, which meant that her competitors, who came later, could avoid her mistakes.

It is the present generation who are being asked to pay for what previous generations did. And this at a time when a serious recession

throughout the capitalist world is hitting workers everywhere.

That's why it is no use tinkering with the steel industry. For that's what Bill Sirs proposals are: tinkering. A serious problem demands a serious answer.

Yes, there is a recession. But everyone knows that more and more, not less and less, steel is needed, both in Britain and abroad. Schools need steel. Do we have enough schools? Hospitals need steel. Do we have enough hospitals? Countries in the Third World need steel too for tractors and combine harvesters. Do they have enough of those?

## Planned

Of course not. The need for steel is greater than ever before. What an irrational society we live in! Many countries — like Nicaragua and Cuba and African countries — are crying for steel. The Soviet Union and China can't meet the need for steel.

It's only in an unplanned economy that such a basic commodity as steel suffers from a crisis of over-production, and where political choices about exports mean that needs in other countries aren't fulfilled despite the demand.

The answer is that industry must be harnessed to human needs. This means a plan for reconverting the whole of the British economy. There is no way that steel can avoid the effects of the world recession merely by tinkering with the level of steel prices, raising the working capital of BSC, diversifying the product, or altering its ingredients.

And then there is the problem of the antiquity of much of the steel industry. There can be no doubt that under a fully planned economy, it would be not be efficient for society or pleasant for the workers to keep a number of the antiquated steel plants as they are.

## Rotten

But under a planned economy it would be possible to bring new industry into being to replace the old, to retrain workers no longer needed in one sector to work in another, without the misery of the dole queue. The modernisation of British steel could be carried through without the fear of unemployment.

All this can only be brought about by a fundamental re-structuring of our society. A genuine workers' government, not one that is headed up by Callaghan, would map out a plan of the economy in the interests of people's needs, not profits. It would aim to transform our economy into a flourishing system with jobs for everyone.

But until that time arrives, steelworkers must fight to hold on to their jobs. There are no magic formulas or easy solutions. The struggle will be long and hard. Inevitably there will be defeats and setbacks. Inevitably the employers will succeed in pushing some workers on to the dole. But steelworkers must stubbornly refuse to accept redundancy. They must do this by a struggle to bring home to workers everywhere the message that we must get rid of this rotten system and build a new and better life.

## Uhl campaign gains support in Oxford

By Joe Singleton

OXFORD Trades Council members have joined in the campaign to protest against the conditions under which Petr Uhl and the other Charter 77 civil rights campaigners are being held in Czechoslovak prisons.

Signatories to the petition include Mick Soames, president of the Trades Council and a Communist Party member; Pat Ward, the secretary; as well as the National Union of Railwaymen delegate Jack Kirk and Alan Thornett from the Transport Workers Union.

It is hoped that the signature of Peter Moss, the National Union of Teachers' delegate and also a Labour Councillor, will be followed by other councillors from the Labour group in Oxford. They will be approached in the coming weeks to state where they stand on this issue.

If trades councils and other labour movement bodies wanted to push the campaign forward even further, they could make a donation towards the publication of a book of Uhl's writings. Donations over £20 will be mentioned in the book.

Further information: Charter 77 Defence Committee, 14 Elgin Court, 16 Montpelier Rd., London W5 (Tel: 01-998-4490). Donations for the book to: Alternatives in Eastern Europe, PO Box 50, London N1.

## Nasira Begum fights deportation

By Dick Withecombe, Manchester Ardwick CLP

ON Saturday 19 July hundreds will be protesting on the streets of Manchester to help prevent the deportation of Nasira Begum, whose appeal is to be heard on 23 July

Nasira is about to be thrown out of the country she made her own because she was deserted by her husband, and the British state will only allow her to stay if she is the wife of a British citizen.

There are now at least five defence campaigns for individual immigrants active in the Manchester area. A success has already been notched up with the victory of Mohammed Butts' fight to remain in this country.

The largest possible turnout to protest for Nasira will be another gain on the road to stopping the deportations.

The demonstration starts at 12.30pm, Whitworth Park, Manchester.

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



# 'We will not allow BSC to close Consett'

By Patrick Sikorski

THE 'Consett Crusader' train brought around a thousand steelworkers together with women and young people from Durham to London on Wednesday of last week. They came to lobby their MPs against the planned closure of their steelworks.

Over 3,700 steel jobs are immediately at risk in Durham, but as in all steel towns every other job in the area is dependant on steel. Another 7,000 jobs are at stake.

There are no other jobs to go to. The unemployment rate in the area is already 13.8 per cent. If the steelworks closes the figure will become 40 per cent. Just now 65 people are

chasing each vacancy. This month 1,400 school students will be chasing a grand total of eight vacancies.

As in South Wales, the Consett closure would directly threaten 10,000 jobs in the Durham coalfield. The pits at risk are in Horden, Seaham, Blackhall, Dawdon and Wasington.

As John Lee, Secretary of the Consett Joint Union Co-ordinating Committee, told Socialist Challenge on the train down to London:

'The fight at Consett is a turning point in the fight against the tremendous attack on jobs and the right to work in the North.

'We will not allow BSC to close this works. Unless someone wins a fight against this government, the figure of three million unemployed will become a reality very quickly.'

Unfortunately the basis on which the campaign is presently being fought does not

reflect the willingness of the rank and file to wage a militant fight, or the possibilities of using the fight at Consett as the spearhead of a united fight across the region.

The argument that the union committee put to MPs was that the Consett works is profitable and therefore should be saved.

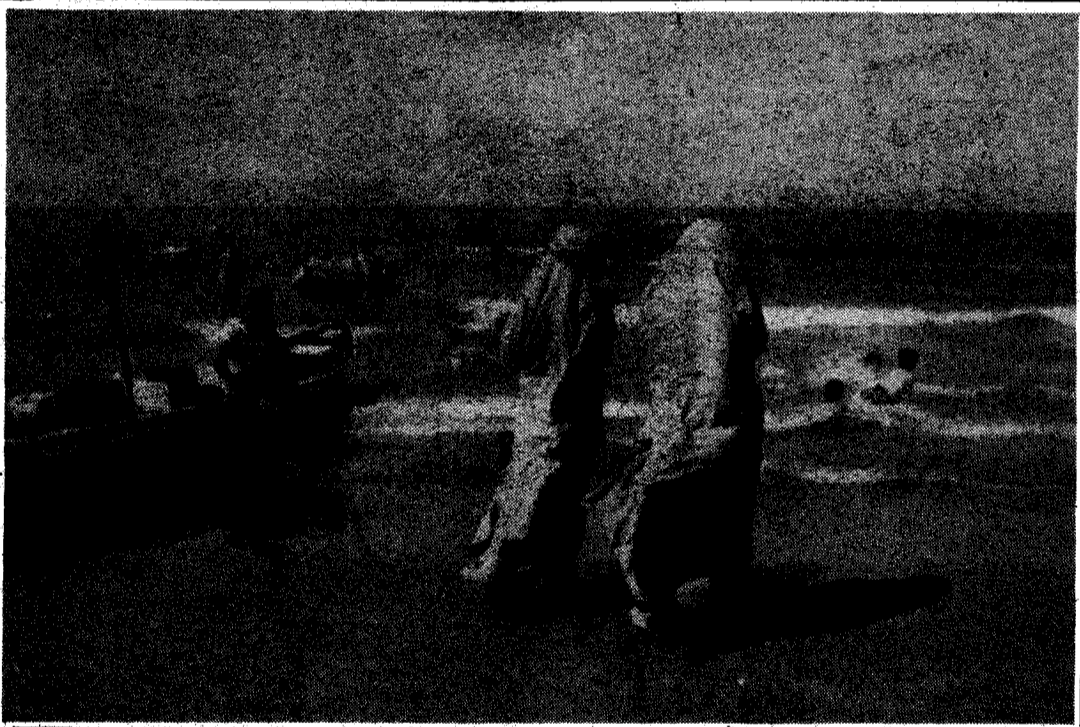
But to successfully oppose the closure, the union leadership will need to ditch all viability arguments and learn the lessons of Shotton, Corby, Warrington and the 'slimline' at Llanwern and Port Talbot.

Plans should be made now for full discussion with the workforce for the occupation of Consett against the closure, and to use the works as a base to mobilise mass support from the region. They should consider, too, a national steel strike against all closures.

## Defend Iranian women

THREE Iranian women were sentenced to 25 lashes each for 'mixed bathing' on the Caspian Sea coast last week. This is just one instance of the renewed campaign by Khomeini against women in Iran. It once again raises the importance of an international campaign of solidarity with the women.

In London on 22 July the Iranian Women's Solidarity Group will be relaunching its campaign in this country. The meeting starts at 8pm and will include a film as well as speakers. The venue is the Roebuck public house on Tottenham Court Road.



## The Greek Gay movement under attack

By Jamie Gough

THIS Monday *Amfi*, the magazine of the Greek gay movement, is going on trial on a charge of offending public morality. This is being done on the orders of the government. The magazine's 'crime' is to have printed a poem containing the word prick accompanied by an illustration showing a naked man.

The case is not a simple matter of 'obscenity'. Even more clearly than in the case of *Gay News*, the prosecution represents an attack on the gay movement itself.

In 1977 the government introduced a draft bill, ostensibly to deal with venereal disease. In fact it was a straightforward attack on gay men, transvestites, and prostitutes, by a draconian extension of police control over anyone who met in public places for sex, whether for payment or not.

The Greek gay movement, AKOE, was formed to fight this bill, and a worldwide campaign of solidarity forced the government to back down. AKOE, in spite of a massive reactionary campaign against it in Greece itself, has continued to grow and now has a large women's caucus within it.

Today, the government is attempting to close down AKOE's most important means of reaching gay and non-gay people, and is reintroducing to parliament the bill it had previously been forced to drop.

An international campaign is being organised to force the government to drop the prosecution. Greek gays need our support.

Picket the Greek Embassy, 1A Holland Park, London W11, on Saturday 19 July, at 1.30 pm. Donations to the *Amfi* Defence Fund, c/o Lloyds Bank, Gants Hill Branch, 377 Eastern Avenue, Ilford, Essex.

## 'Unite in a fightback for jobs'

Public meeting and discussion

20 July, 11.30am - 5pm

Great Western Club, Hopkinstown, Pontypridd, Admission 50p

Speakers include: Don Hayward (NUM S Wales), Ben Davis (NUM S Wales area executive), Idris Jones (NUM, Ty Mawr Lodge), Ray Hill (Jobs Action Group, BSC Llanwern), Ron Hood (EEPTU, BSC Port Talbot), Ruth Easter (South Wales Youth Against Unemployment).

Further details from S. Wales Youth Against Unemployment, 17 Chaddersley Terrace, Mount Pleasant, Swansea. Tel. 460086

## Health workers condemn flesh parade

By Sue Spilling, COHSE assistant branch secretary

ERIC Wilson, president of the health workers' union, COHSE, can't be too happy that he defended a beauty parade which was held during the union's conference earlier this summer.

My region, NW Thames, has passed a motion of no confidence in Wilson over his handling of the affair, and it is demanding the right of those who opposed the human cattle show to reply to the slurs that have been made against us by union officials.

The parade was organised as a 'social' event by the union's North-west region, in which the Blackpool conference was held. Some 30 people picketed the parade, including two members of the national executive and a number of delegates.

We were treated with contempt by those who stomped past to watch female flesh. One male delegate told me: 'Don't worry, darling, you'll never be raped.'

Instead of condemning such actions, Wilson apologised to the conference the next day for our behaviour. He was given something like a standing ovation from the predominantly male delegates — in a union whose membership is three-quarters female.

These events have spurred the organisation of women within the union, and we can be quite sure that the COHSE leadership will not have heard the last of that particular night out in Blackpool.



'Kick out the Tories' badges are available again after their first great sell-out. Send 20p plus 10p p&p to: The Other Book Shop, 328 Upper Street, London N1. Bulk rates available.

Advertisement

## Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

Public Meeting

Wednesday 23 July at 7.30 pm

For a Full Discussion on the Crisis of the World Trotskyist Movement  
Reconstruct the Fourth International

Speakers from the WSL and TILC sections

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

Entrance £1

Now, as imperialism is plunged into a new crisis, and the upsurge of the working class grows throughout the world, the forces of Trotskyism are still unable to offer clear political leadership. The reconstruction of the Fourth International has become more imperative than ever.

The crisis which has plagued the Trotskyist movement for 30 years has now expressed itself in the new split in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and the formation of the Parity Committee.

These new developments highlight

the need for an urgent and profound open discussion of the political differences at the centre of the crisis of Trotskyism.

We do not claim that the TILC has final answers to the questions involved. But we insist on the need for an open conference to attempt to resolve them.

We do not see the USFI or the Parity Committee offering this possibility. That is why we feel it is necessary to found and build the TILC to fight for a political resolution to the crisis of the Fourth International.

The TILC:

Workers Socialist League, Britain  
Socialist League (Democratic  
Centralist) USA (sympathising section).

Bolshevik Workers League (LOB), Chile  
Bolshevik Leninist Group (GBL), Italy  
Trotskyist Workers League (TAF), Denmark

# 'To raas man! C see white man

A West Indian who came to Britain 30 years ago looks



Some of the first arrivals in 1948

LIONEL Jeffrey was born in the British colony of Guyana in the late twenties. He first came to Britain in 1948 as a student. After finishing his course he returned to Guyana and was involved in the struggles for independence, as an executive of the Progressive People's Party. In 1957 he returned to Britain with his family, and worked in various jobs — on the factory floor, as clerk, teaching — until in 1978 he became the full-time director of the Community Education Project — an Islington-based group which runs courses on West Indian history, culture and politics.

He has been active in Caribbean and Latin American solidarity groups, as well as being Chairperson of the Islington 18 Defence Committee. He has lived in Islington, North London, since 1964, and is currently involved in setting up a West Indian Parents Group in the borough.

The interview originally appeared in the North London community paper the *Islington Gutter Press*. We are grateful for their permission to reprint it.

GP: What impression had you formed of the UK before you came?

LJ: West Indians in the UK were very rare before the war — the odd seaman, a few students. Anyone who spent time in Britain attained a certain kudos on their return.

When I knew I was coming here I asked an uncle who had lived here what it was like. He gave me glowing reports — a shangri-la, a fairytale.

I also knew a teacher who had been over, and he told me very solemnly to be sure to imbibe some of the culture.

GP: Was it not possible for you to continue your education in the West Indies?

LJ: Before 1947 there was no opportunity for higher education. This meant only the wealthy and the few who got scholarships could continue their education in Britain.

And of course what happened is that when they came back most of them reinforced the colonial structure.

That was to change after the war as the anti-colonial movements developed.

GP: What were your first impressions of this country?

LJ: We landed on a grey October day at Liverpool. I'll never forget it.

I was on the ship somewhere when I heard a lot of other students shouting 'To raas man! Come and see white man working!'

I shot up on deck and saw on the dull, grey wharf some white men in bowler hats pushing around large trolleys, and that was the first time I had seen a white man doing physical, manual work.

Back home they pushed pens and administered, shouted a lot, but not anything which looked like 'work' as I understood it. This was different.

I came straight to London, and got a flat in bed-sit land — Hampstead. Middle class home, middle class area. I shared a room with the brother of Cy Grant, the singer, who had fixed us up.

My income was about £5 a week, and the room cost £3. But life was pleasant, we survived, made a lot of friends, and sort of settled down to life in this strange country.

I soon met lots of other students from the colonies, from every part of the world, whose only chance of further education was a scholarship to Britain.

Men like Azikwe from Nigeria, Nkrumah from Ghana, Wallace Johnson from Sierra Leone, Lee Kwan Yew from Singapore, Michael Manley, the current Prime Minister of Jamaica who was my predecessor on the student union magazine.

Wherever I travel in the West Indies and other parts of the Commonwealth I meet old student friends in public life.

GP: Was it the contact with Third World progressives which first made you politically active?

LJ: Not so much as meeting progressive white people. I related to the MCF (Movement for Colonial Freedom) and people like Nye Bevan, who talked of the problems of the British and the colonial working class. Britain needed change as much as the colonies did. I very quickly realised that.

GP: What were your first experiences of racism here?

LJ: Looking for accommodation. I soon had to give up my Hampstead flat, and had to hunt around in the multi-occupied private sector.

The postcards in shop windows — 'No dogs, no coloureds' — I still went along and answered those adverts, not really thinking that they meant me. But my mind was quickly changed when I did the rounds.

Later I became the student welfare officer, and my own experience was repeated hundreds of times over. I was the front man, looking for accommodation for other students. I remember one weekend making 25 phone calls for rooms on behalf of black students, and 23 turned me down flat as soon as they discovered that 'darkies



Temporary accommodation in South London in the early 1950s.

were involved.

'How dark is this chap,' prospective landlords would ask, and then carefully explain that it wasn't them who were 'prejudiced', but other tenants, and, of course, the neighbours.

There were objections to sharing a bathroom with a black in case somehow the colour would come off and stain the other lodgers.

Then there were the children on the streets, and the drunks in pubs who would want to touch you, feel your hair. This got me very cross. And of course when you confronted it, nobody would admit to what we now call racism.

And certainly no one was there to fight it when it did rear its head. The middle class liberals would blame the working class, the left of the Labour party would blame the right, and so on. Racism was later to get a hold because there were no people active against it when it first appeared.

And few black people were

prepared to take this up in a continuing way. Most were only here for a short stay relatively. The main influx of workers who were here to stay had not yet arrived.

For instance, I was more interested at this time in being active in the anti-colonial movement — Kenya, Ghana. Things were happening all over the British colonies.

GP: After completing your course you returned to Guyana, and returned five years later, in 1957. How had things changed on your return?

LJ: Arriving at Paddington, I realised that the black man had come to Britain in a big way. My first bus ride was with a black conductor, no drivers yet, but a definite workforce was here.

Enoch Powell as Minister of Health and others had been recruiting for labour in the West Indies, and thousands of people responded — there was massive unemployment out there, and lots of work here. People jumped at the chance. A whole new ball game had

started.

I had to look for a job. I could have taught, but the pay was not enough at that time. A friend helped me to get a job at a Frigidaire factory in the Edgware Road doing shop floor assembly work.

This was what you could call a 'good' factory, reasonably paid and with fairly decent working conditions. There were only 5 blacks in a workforce of 1,200.

At Park Royal down the road, hundreds of black people worked in the biscuit factories and so forth in the 'bad jobs', and the more black people working in a factory the more you could tell how bad the wages and conditions would be.

I soon became very militant and after eight months was voted shop steward. This was rare, not only because I was black, but also because I had been such a short time in the union. The branch had to specially apply to the national executive to have me accepted.

During the next few months a small group of us managed to get

the factory 85 per cent organised. Then I was very quickly 'promoted' — moved to another job, and off the floor.

There was then a strike to get me back — a situation where workers took action in support of a black shop steward. I was reinstated.

So I became highly involved in the British workers movement at the shop-floor level. I liked that so involvement in politics.

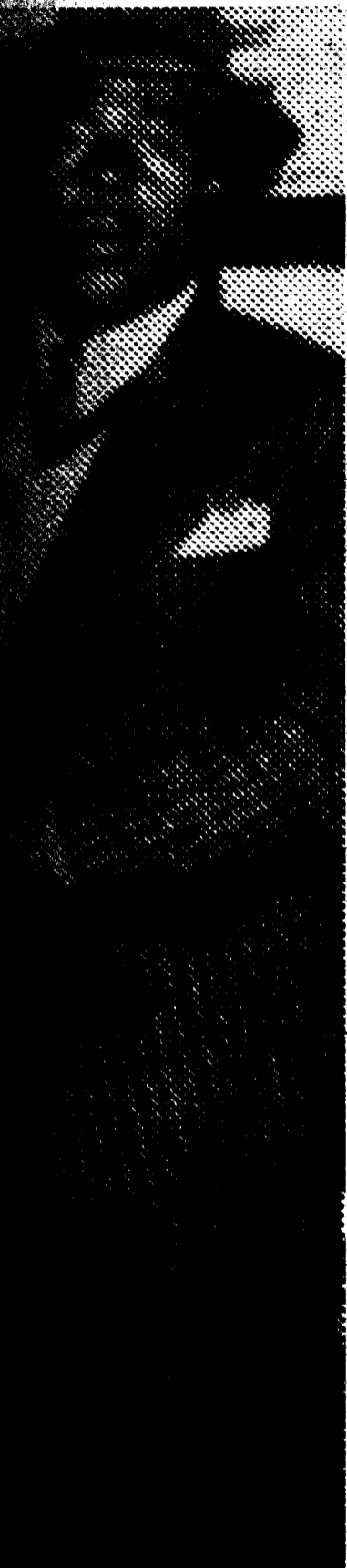
But I knew I couldn't go on indefinitely — there were so many other things I wanted to do. A few years there I was looking for change.

GP: The West Indian immigrants at this time were mainly men. I pose a distinct culture developed around this?

LJ: Yes, the pattern of immigration was similar to that of Asians in the '60s and early '70s. Some came with literally no change of clothes. But there were jobs to be had and money to spend. This was the time that

# ...ome and ...working'

the changing face of racism



we beat the English easy! In every single department of the game. I was at Lords the day we won the final test. When the winning hit came the hundreds of West Indians got up and ran across the ground — sacred, hallowed ground.

We didn't care, but there were cries of 'oh my god!' from the members' enclosures. But we sang our calypsoes — 'These little friends of mine, Kitchener, Ramadin and Valentine...', and cricket was no longer a holy, sacred game.

And more importantly for us, we had a feeling of victory amidst all the defeat in our lives. For a long time we could only emerge as people in things like music and sport. So they became important, they gave us a public presence.

**GP:** You've talked of your involvement in labour politics. What of political development and self-organisation within the black community?

**LJ:** I always wanted to see myself as part of the British labour movement, not just as part of a black movement. Up to the '60s I was very active in labour politics.

In the middle '60s the black power movement started in the States. I saw Stokely Carmichael speaking in London. I didn't agree with him particularly — I saw conditions here as different, and needing a different response.

But one thing the Panthers brought out clearly was that hard racism was here to stay, and it needed to be fought on a variety of levels. Fighting it through the trade union movement was just not working.

Trade unions didn't (or wouldn't) understand what racism was. And the election of the 1964 Labour government turned out to be a tremendous disappointment for black people.

We were told for years that Labour would look after our interests. And one of the first things they did was to bring in racist immigration laws.

Black people began to lose faith very quickly in the British political system. And we are still looking for acknowledgement in white politics. Maybe that's because there is not an obvious 'black leader' to relate to.

**GP:** Do you think black people themselves see this as a gap — the lack of obvious public political leaders?

**LJ:** I think black people are conscious that there is a fertile ground for people to make a name for themselves. But it needn't be on the left, by any means.

The people who would be most likely to relate to a leadership are an amorphous, disenfranchised, disorganised mass — black youth. They are frustrated, and getting more so.

So, yes, there is a vacuum, but I don't know if it will be filled by purely party political leaders. The problem goes much deeper — into culture and international issues.

I now feel of a different generation with a different approach to politics — and therein lies a dilemma. Because I cannot say to young blacks that they should go the way I went when I was young, into political organisation. For it gives them very little help in dealing with their day-to-day problems.

Political development must come from within, it cannot be imposed. Self-help politics which come out of feeling that no one but ourselves can defend our interests has always been with us — there is no real choice in many ways.

Whatever you experience prejudice, you are conscious of it in your everyday life. It is that pervasive, and the response must be all pervasive too.

**GP:** Up until the mid-'60s you had been living in the outer part of North London. What brought you to Islington?



**LJ:** Funnily enough it was because we wanted our son to have a comprehensive education, and Highbury Grove\* had just been opened.

My first impressions of Islington were that black people were very disorientated — there was a feeling of apathy, a kind of resignation. Like, 'this thing is heavy, but there are not enough of us to do anything about it'.

It wasn't like Ladbroke Grove or Brixton. There were pockets of black people in Finsbury and Westbourne Road, but the feeling was of people moving about, none-too-confident of themselves.

In some ways moving to Islington got me started in what I'm doing now. Our son was beginning secondary school, and I became involved in campaigns against the classification of West Indians as 'educationally sub normal'.

This was a big thing for black parents. I felt the urge to do something, not in a paternalist or purely anti-imperialist way, but in the schools, with teachers, social workers, probation officers, and, of course, with young black people.

There was a need to offer to the black youngster in a simple, sensible, objective way something about his history — how he fitted in.

This marked a change for me. Up to this time I suppose I never saw myself as living here — it was always a question of staying another year. This is common to all West Indian immigrants. But of course the roots get deeper each year, and your response to your situation changes.

**GP:** Tell us how the Community Education Project started.

**LJ:** The Project was started in 1974 by myself, my wife Pansy, George Lamming the novelist, and Richard Hart, the historian.

Our main aim was to develop a sense of black history — for both black and white people. We were saying really that we wanted to do something in an intelligent way, and to be independent.

We got no financial help from anyone for about four years, but we bashed away doing sessions and courses on a voluntary basis. I was

\*Rhodes Boyson, junior education minister in Thatcher's government, was the headmaster at this time.

the anchor man, and the others chipped in when time permitted.

The first money came from the Commission for Racial Equality — a small grant to set up the organisation. It created a job as organiser for me, and was a start which we could build on.

Finally Islington Social Services funded us, to give us a base in the borough. Our first year was very successful, and I came across lots of people like youth, housing and social workers who were keen to learn about and discuss the content of our courses.

But then along came the question of having the grant cut 'last March — we were not alone in this of course — but we were genuinely surprised by the attitude of some councillors — ridicule, bigotry. It was as though the black man arrived just last week.

Suddenly I was hearing things that I'd heard 25 years ago: 'What is wrong with them, why should they have special treatment — we don't need to spend money on blacks — the roads need doing' — that sort of thing.

**GP:** I was at that meeting, the Policy Committee where the Labour right seemed to be putting out a rallying call to racism — our jobs, our houses, and now our money...

Yes indeed. It brought home to me the contempt that some of the Labour council have for black people. They think they know all about us and our problems, but in reality they do not want to know — this is the real point.

In Tory Kensington a councillor would not dare to speak like that, but in Labour Islington they are queuing up to say 'To hell with you. We will decide what we think best for you' — which is in fact nothing, for them we have no needs they are willing to recognise. Nothing seems to have changed.

**GP:** Finally, Jeff, are you here to stay?

**LJ:** I've no plans to go back. But at the same time I've never really felt a part of white society because society has never made me feel a part of it. I've no illusions about that.

I visit the West Indies whenever I can. I know I can go back, but my life and my work is here. Whatever I do for good or evil, this is the place I intend to fight my battles, Not part of society but part of the fight.



## AROUND THE WORLD

### South Africa

A WOMAN was shot dead in the eastern Cape city of Grahamstown last Thursday and at least a dozen other people were injured when riot police attacked blacks boycotting a school.

A spokesperson at the nearby Settlers Hospital said a dozen black students were treated for head injuries. The police attacked a thousand-strong demonstration after they had been ordered to 'disperse' under a government decree banning meetings of more than 10 people.

### Israel

EVER since the last Israeli defence minister resigned, the Israeli government's cabinet meetings have been enlivened by the presence of the army chief-of-staff, General Rafael Eytan.

Last week Eytan stalked into one such cabinet discussed and declared: 'The nation is confused and the cabinet is creating an atmosphere of panic.'

This caused a bit of a panic in the cabinet itself and the minister of housing, David Levy, accused Eytan and 'the military' of 'an assault on the foundations of democracy'.

Eytan then went on to outline his 'plan' for Israel's economic crisis. This included making any students who did not do national service pay for their education.

This was aimed at Arab students in Israel, and even members of the government felt obliged to criticise such discrimination.

Eytan replied to the protests by thundering: 'You had better restrain the civilian economy before starting to criticise the defence sector.'

### Chile

CHILE'S military junta, headed by General Pinochet, was last week given a draft constitution which had been under preparation for the past three years by two state commissions appointed by the junta.

It envisages that Pinochet should be allowed to remain in power for a 'transitional period' of five years after which a presidential election could be called.

The constitution recommends the prohibition of 'doctrines of a totalitarian character or based on class struggle'.

But it seems likely that these recommendations are too liberal for Pinochet. Reports from Chile suggest that the junta will not approve the proposals.

### Soviet Union

THE Soviet Union is going into the disaster movie business. Currently packing them into the Moscow cinemas is Mosfilm's production *Aircrew*, directed by Alexander Mitta.

The film features an earthquake, eruptions of volcanoes, a firey plane crash, and a flight engineer crawling outside the aircraft to make repairs in mid-flight.

But half the movie is devoted to the lives and loves of the crew of the TU-14 airliner. Captain Andrei Timchenko worries about failing a medical examination; co-pilot Valentin Nenarokov's struggles for the custody of his son; steward Tamara has problems with her love life.

One reviewer writing in a Moscow daily paper praises the special effects of the film but warns that such movies might lose sight of 'man himself whose sufferings and thoughts are the subject and goal of any cinematography'. Not to mention women's sufferings and thoughts.

### Egypt

TEN months ago the US supplied Egypt 35 F-4 Phantom jet fighters worth \$600m. Now the military aid has run into trouble. On an average day only nine of the aircraft are fit to use, and after ten hours flying a week even these break down.

Egypt blames the quality of the aircraft supplied — they were all second-hand — while the US blames the inexperience of the Egyptian airforce.

Not that these failings leave Egypt defenceless. At the same time as the Phantoms were sent so were 11 mobile Hawk anti-aircraft missile batteries, 800 armoured personnel carriers and a dozen patrol boats.

## Intercontinental Press/ Inprecor

ERNEST Mandel has a major article, 'The impact of the world capitalist recession on Eastern Europe' in the latest issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.

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By Geoff Bell

'It is,' said the Speaker of the House of Commons, 'a matter for the whole House'.

The members of the Commons didn't appear to share that view when, last Wednesday, the British Parliament debated the North of Ireland, and the Tory Government's white paper on the same. Less than 60 MPs turned up. In that, and in many other ways, the event was another exercise in British irresponsibility.

Those who did make an appearance were the familiar faces on the Irish scene: Secretary of State Humphrey Atkins, Labour spokesperson Brynmor John, Ian Paisley, Gerry Fitt, James Molyneaux, the leader of the Official Unionists, and a few others.

Conspicuous by their absence were Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and the rest of the fearless leaders of the Labour Left. The most enthralling offering from the Labour benches came from Peter Shore. He didn't say anything but it was fascinating to watch him alternate between falling asleep and then waking up and picking his nose.

The other star of the show was Ted Heath, although he didn't utter a word either. He sat on the front row like a deposed monarch with his belly sticking out. That and his marvellous tan made him look wise and noble.

His wisdom was praised enthusiastically by Gerry Fitt another fallen leader who resigned

# The joke's on the Irish

from the Social Democratic and Labour Party because he thought the party was too critical of the talks convened by Atkins which produced the Tory proposals. Said Fitt of Heath: 'He showed great courage in trying to bring us together in the Sunningdale agreement'.

Such rubbish is exactly the sort of Uncle Paddy arse-licking the British parliament likes to receive, but then Fitt spoiled the effect by droning on for 44 minutes, which more or less killed off any potential interest the debate had had.

Before Fitt came Ian Paisley, speaking with a confidence born out of the knowledge that 'option two' of the Tory proposals, the one obviously favoured by the Government, gave him 90 per cent of what he wanted. He congratulated Atkins on 'a very strong statement on the maintenance of the Union'. He went on to make it clear that the first, power-sharing option in the white paper 'is not on'. Vowed Paisley, 'I will not discuss it'.

James Molyneaux also dismissed that alternative. 'A rehash of failed experiments... a monstrosity... crazy' were some of the descriptions he used. The rest of his speech was a thinly veiled attack on Paisley for being too soft on



the Government. 'Ulster leaders have been cynically used,' said Molyneaux, looking in Paisley's direction.

As for the big guns it was at times difficult to distinguish between Atkins and his supporter from the Labour Party, Brynmor John. Atkins talked about cross-border cooperation with the comment, 'tourism is an obvious example.'

Echoed John, 'there should be cross border cooperation in the tourist field'.

Atkins told 'the people of Northern Ireland... not to miss this opportunity'; John called on 'the leaders of Ulster' to 'shed their intransigence'. Atkins said any debate on Ireland 'must take place in the real world'; John assured him 'this debate is not taking place in a university seminar but in a real world'.

Atkins insisted 'It is not easy to see an acceptable solution lying outside the framework devised by the Government'; John spoke of his 'hopes for the Government's proposals'. And so they went on, Tweedledum, Tweedledee.

The best laugh came from Enoch Powell. This was in the middle of Atkin's description of his proposal for the new Assembly to have committees made up equally of those who supported the executive and those who did not. These committees, explained Atkins, would then elect their chairperson.

Powell interrupted by pointing out the difficulties in electing such a chairperson 'if the two sides in the committee were equally divided and both had their own candidates'. A flustered Atkins replied, 'Eh... that's something we must talk about'.

Powell roared with laughter, Atkins went red in the face and exclaimed, 'The honourable member should not laugh'. But there seemed nothing better to do.

# Armagh - where hygiene is a privilege

By Valerie Coultas

ROSE McAllister, a 49-year-old mother of four from the Ardoyne, has just finished serving a two-year sentence in Armagh jail, the only women's prison in the North of Ireland. She has been touring Britain telling people of the appalling conditions the women prisoners are suffering in Armagh.

Rose was sentenced to prison in a notorious Diplock court—one that has no jury, only a judge who passes sentence—for possession of an incendiary device.

Her application to have her four-month-old son inside the jail with her was turned down by the Northern Ireland Office on the grounds that it 'was not in the baby's interest' to be with its mother. Her 19-year-old son had to look after the baby and her other two children; her husband, Terence McAllister, is imprisoned in Long Kesh.

## Assault

When Rose's children visited her in Armagh they were subjected to searches and forced to wait for anything up to three hours. The treatment that Rose and her family received is not unique. The 31 other women prisoners in Armagh have suffered in a similar fashion.

Rose described at a press conference in the House of Commons last Thursday chaired by Ernie Roberts the assault on the women that took place on the 7 February:

'All the screws came in—37 men and the same number of women dressed in full riot gear—to do a "general raid" on the orders of the governor, Mr Scott. We'd just had a "general raid" at Christmas so we were surprised at having another so soon.

## Political

'They said that they wanted to get hold of the black gear (what we wear on uniform parade) but they could've got these any time. The men cut off our access to the hot plate room where we could cook meals, got hold of three girls when they refused to go into an "association" cell, and proceeded to beat them up. All hell then let loose and only calmed down when we were forced to agree to be locked in the association cell.

'We had no food from 7.30 in the morning. We thought things would go back to normal. But we were mistaken.

'When we were let out for half



ROSE McALLISTAIR

an hour the next day I asked if I could use the toilet. I was told that the toilets and the washing room had been locked on the governor's orders. "Go in your cell," said one of the female screws.

'The next day it was the same. We had no other choice but to go to toilet in our cells. No-one from the outside was allowed into the prison to see us. At first we threw the waste out of the "spits" to try and keep our cells clean but then the wardens blocked them up.

'Then we were moved to A wing. We were allowed no possessions at all. I put my hand on the buzzer as soon as I arrived in the cell to ask to go to the toilet. It was three hours later than someone came. Again I was denied access to a toilet.

Since 7 February the 31 women

in Armagh have been locked up for 23 hours day, only being allowed out to eat their meals and beaten up if they do not eat them quickly enough. Cleanliness is seen by the prison authorities as a privilege that can be withdrawn if prisoners don't conform.

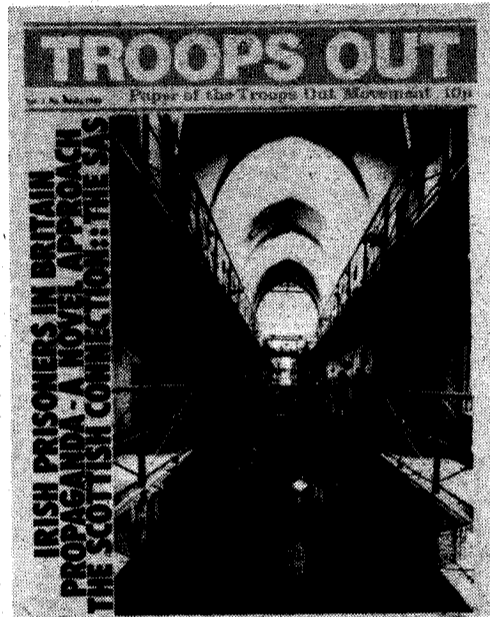
The women decided to continue the 'no wash' protest forced upon them by the authorities to draw attention to their treatment. They have not washed for five months.

They are demanding free association, the right to refuse prison work, better medical and pre- and post-natal facilities, the right to receive parcels. As supporters of the Republican cause the women in Armagh do not see themselves as criminals: 'We are not tried in a criminal court, we

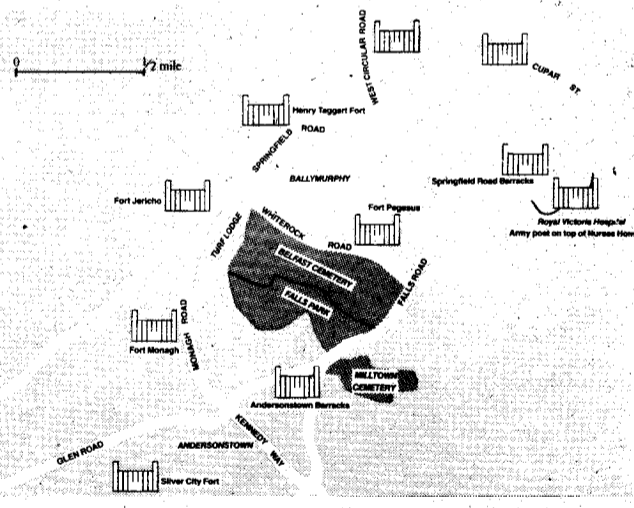
are tried in the special Diplock courts. We should be given the status of political prisoners, not criminals,' says Rose.

A reporter from the Times three times asked Rose about membership of Sinn Fein. Three times Rose said she was not a member, although she had been in 1971.

She, like the rest of the women in Armagh, is not the 'hardened terrorist' the British press would like to make them. They are ordinary women — mothers, wives, young women — who have ulcers and rashes from the dirt and the effects of a bad diet. They refuse to give up the struggle for a free Ireland. That is not what you will see printed in the pages of the 'objective' Times.



The latest issue of *Troops Out*, paper of the Troops Out Movement, has articles on Irish prisoners in Britain, British propaganda, the Scottish Connection, and the SAS. Price 10p, it can be obtained from most of the left book shops or from TOM, Box TO, 2a St Paul's Road, London N1.



## News from the Troops Out Movement



**THE Troops Out Movement is organising a mass delegation to Belfast on the weekend of 9/10 August.**

One aim is to picket British Army forts in West Belfast in protest at the continuing British presence in Ireland. The mass picket will mark the 11th anniversary of British troops being sent on to the streets of the North of Ireland on 14 August 1969.

The forts are concentrated in Catholic areas of the North of Ireland.

The official British Army magazine *Soldier* described one in West Belfast as: 'The counterpart of a Wild West stockade, the "wriggly tin"

fortress is surrounded by the "indian country" of the notorious Ballymurphy estate with its fervent Republican sympathies.'

Such a description is a tacit admission that the British Army, rather than 'defending' the population of the area it occupies, or 'keeping the two sides apart', is nothing less than an army of occupation.

The TOM delegation will leave London on Friday night by train. It will depart from Euston station at 8.55 pm.

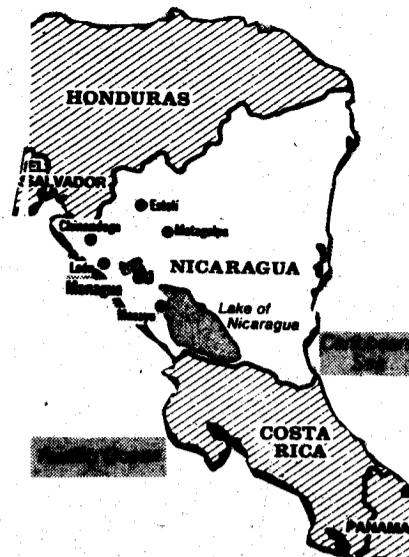
Further details can be obtained by writing to TOM at 2a St Pauls Road, London N1, or phoning the TOM office on 01-267 2004.



# NICARAGUA

## One year of revolution

JOHN BALL celebrates the first anniversary of the revolution in Nicaragua by charting what has happened in the past 12 tumultuous months.



**July 1979:** Dictator Somoza flees in the face of advancing liberation forces. Francisco Urcuyo, a US stooge, replaces him for 43 hours. A final military offensive drives him from office, and on 19 July the victorious FSLN sweeps into the capital and sets up a new government.

All Somocist property — 20 per cent of industry and 40 per cent of land — is nationalised. The mines, transport, banks, and insurance quickly go the same way. The FSLN declares: 'We have inherited a country in ashes.'

The FSLN decides to rebuild the shattered economy with the weapons that brought down Somoza.

On 27 July the FSLN paper *Barricada* declares: 'All working people ... should meet immediately to form Sandinista workers' defence committees. All the tasks of defending the revolution and national reconstruction are passing to our combative working class.'

**August:** Street committees, unions, women's organisations, and a youth movement are formed or extended. A strong centralised revolutionary army — the EPS — is built from the guerilla forces and volunteers. Side-by-side with people's militias, the aim is to defend the revolution from the threat of foreign intervention.

The 'Bill of Rights' is published, guaranteeing the right to organise, to strike, to work, to social security, to health, to education. Equal rights for women in the family, maternity rights, nursery facilities and the right to guaranteed employment after pregnancy are specified.

**September:** Factory struggles begin. The FSLN warns: 'It is dangerous not to heed a workers' assembly,' and insists that 'Sandinism is of the common people. They did not make revolution to return to the old conditions.'

The US bides its time. It wants to use a combination of carrots and sticks to force the Sandinistas to rebuild in imperialism's interests. The US controls markets, funds, and holds the threat of a blockade and even military intervention over the heads of the two and a half million people of Nicaragua.

Money to rebuild the shattered economy comes in a trickle. By October a grand total of \$150m dollars in loans, including a meagre \$22m from the International Monetary Fund. The IMF lent Somoza \$66m in 1979 alone. He spent it killing his people.

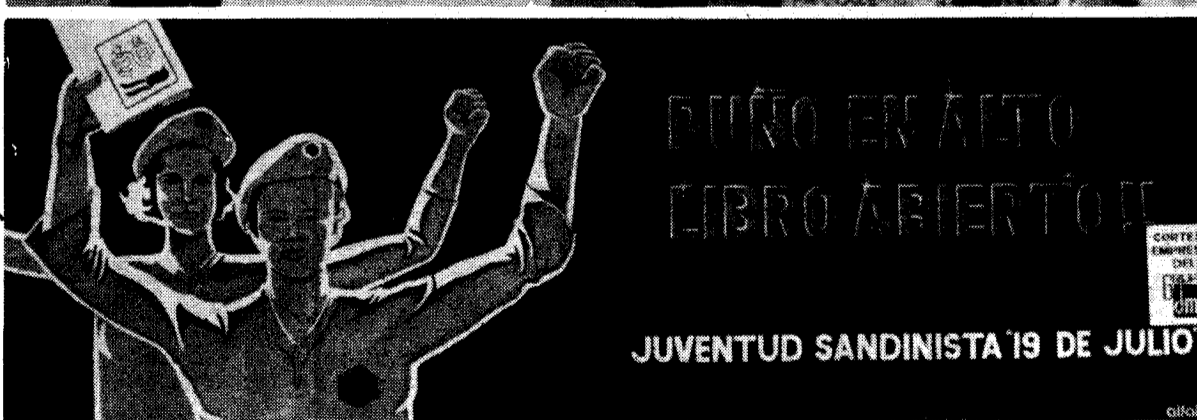
The bosses make preparations. A new party, the PSDS, is formed with a membership of 5,000 business people. Their slogan is 'Sandinism yes, communism no'.

The capitalists want to use their presence in the government to turn back the revolution, but their natural power base — the army and police — is destroyed. Their only hope is to split the FSLN.

In spite of letting the bosses into government, in spite of giving private ownership a role in national reconstruction, the Sandinistas continue to organise and back the workers.

One leader says later: 'We thought the masses would support the guerillas...the guerillas ended up supporting the masses.'

**October:** The literacy campaign is announced. It aims to win and organise the people to the goals of the revolution. 'Revolution' is the first word taught. The youth teach the



adults. The campaign is to allow Indian and black English speaking minorities to learn in their own language. Also taught is how to set up street and workers' committees, health care and hygiene, how to take part in politics.

The US stages a military coup in El Salvador, to pre-empt popular resistance there.

**November:** The revised Council of State is announced and its first meeting is scheduled for May. Workers' Committees, Defence Committees, and all trade unions are among those guaranteed places. The FSLN explains: 'The Council of state will not be a parliamentary organ but the expression of the power of the organised people.'

World solidarity grows. In Britain

the Nicaragua Co-ordinating Committee is formed and plans a national conference. The Labour Party agrees to be a co-sponsor.

**December:** The economic plan is announced. It sets aside 62 per cent of expenditure for health, education, and housing, compared with 17 per cent under Somoza. This is an underdeveloped country, the expansion is planned at a time when rich countries like Britain are destroying their social services.

The plan also aims to eliminate the 32 per cent unemployment rate. Six new hospitals, 200 primary schools, and 2,500 housing units are planned. But where will the capital come from? When 20 per cent of industry and 40 per cent of agriculture are in state hands. The FSLN hopes to use the

power that made the insurrection to ensure that the bosses will not sabotage the plan.

An implicit trade-off-comply with the plan and we will not seize your property — is offered. A risky gamble with the capitalists still in government. But the content of the plan offers no comfort at all to the rich.

At the end of the month there are sweeping changes in the cabinet. FSLN members replace bourgeois ministers, changes which reflect the growing strength of the people's organisation.

The CST union now organises 100,000 out of 240,000 wage-earners. The youth organisation has thousands of members. The Defence Committees are centralised nationally and by district.

**January:** Difficult decisions need to be made over wages and trade union policy. The FSLN wants to increase the value of wages but also to limit wage rises. To keep down food prices rigid controls are imposed, subsidies are introduced, workers' committees are set up to detect and punish speculators.

They also aim to set up direct food sales in the neighbourhoods and workplaces. There are cuts of 50 per cent in mortgages and 60 per cent in rents.

This, argue the Sandinistas, will increase the value of real wages. They go to the workplaces and explain why wage demands should not be pressed — but grant them if the workers insist.

Is all this a 'social contract'? Certainly not. A leading Sandinista explains: 'When we talk of austerity we have to understand who is to get less and who is to get more. Clearly we are telling the bourgeoisie to consume fewer luxury goods... we can't tell the peasant who has nothing to stop consuming.'

'We can't tell the unemployed workers to be austere... We can't talk about that kind of austerity.'

**February:** Landowners refuse to comply with the economic plan. Factory owners 'decapitalise': move out equipment, keep their profits in foreign banks, refuse to buy raw materials, run down production.

The Sandinista newspaper declares 'workers control is more important than legal measures'.

Workers' occupations begin and they are endorsed by the FSLN. The government nationalises land occupied by the peasants. A drive to rebuild the militias is launched.

**March:** It becomes clear that the US Congress has frozen indefinitely a promised \$75m loan. The FSLN leaders visit Moscow and conclude a series of diplomatic and trade agreements.

**April:** There are resignations from the government and those who quit call for 'respect for private property in production'. This attempt to split the FSLN meets with little success.

The compositions of the new Council of State is announced. The mass organisations choose their delegates through provincial, regional, and national assemblies. Many defence committees begin replacing appointed local government officials.

**May:** An estimated 200,000 turn out for the May Day rally, showing massive support for the FSLN. The most popular slogan is 'In the council of state, the organised people'.

The new Council of State opens.

**June:** Capitalists and their organisations suffer a number of setbacks. After an attack on a Sandinista police station in which one police officer was killed, dozens of counter-revolutionaries are detained.

Large quantities of arms and money are found in the possession of those arrested, who are members of the Council for Private Enterprise and the Cattleman's Association.

The right call off an anti-FSLN demonstration because of lack of support.

Amnesty International expresses its 'admiration' for the abolition of the death penalty in Nicaragua.

TODAY most of the revolutionary movements of twentieth-century Europe are forgotten. Their leaders are uncommemorated, the streets along which flowed the revolutionary crowds have disappeared, and the history books recording them are seldom read.

Everyone knows that in the 1930s Hitler re-armed Germany and annexed Austria and parts of Poland and Czechoslovakia. So opened the Second World War. But few people know that the first of Hitler's many victims were German socialists, sent in their thousands to camps that later held the Jews. And few will know why he put them there.

One November morning in 1918, tens of thousands of workers, many of them armed, streamed into the centre of Berlin, persuaded the soldiers on the bridges to lower their rifles and opened the arsenals and jails. By nightfall the insurgents had overthrown the Kaiser and his government and had lifted the socialists into power.

## Insurrection

This was the beginning of Germany's socialist revolution. The new government was instructed to end the war, socialise all German industry, and run the country through the system of workers' and soldiers' councils which sprang up during the insurrection. Germany was to be a Socialist Republic.

Or so everyone thought. The right-wing socialists betrayed the revolution, turning on their followers the bayonets and armoured cars of monarchist troops known as *Freikorps*. In the civil war of 1919, 20,000 workers gave their lives for the German Socialist Republic.

## Haunted

Although it was unsuccessful, the revolution haunted Hitler always. The hungry workers and war-weary soldiers had joined the revolution of 1918 to end a war and expropriate those responsible for it. In the 1930s Hitler was planning a new war: he foresaw another 1918! Here was one of the main reasons for destroying the communists and the socialists.

Hitler erased the memory of the revolution from the minds of the German people. The books recording it were burnt on great public bonfires. The revolutionists took their recollections to the graves the SS ordered them to dig. Now the workers' councils of 1918 are known only to a handful of historians, many of whom praise them for the wrong reasons. The civil war of 1919 has vanished, even from the histories.

In 1917 or 1918 revolutionary uprisings also took place in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Finland, Italy, and of course Russia. Their purpose was everywhere the same: to end the war and the social order that brought it forth. The First World War ended only when revolution knocked the baton from the officer's hand. The German November was one of these; and if it had not been betrayed it would have saved the world from Hitler and the Second World War.

## Resistance

British people generally believe that in 1944 and 1945 Britain and America liberated Europe from Nazi occupation. This is a half-truth. The leading cities of Europe were freed by armed uprisings of Communist-led workers.

In 1944, for example, the French resistance, with three-quarters of a million fighters in the field, liberated Marseilles, Nantes and Paris by means of a popular insurrection. In April 1945 the Italian resistance rose in the cities and towns of northern Italy, sweeping away both the Nazi occupiers and the fascists of Mussolini. The war against fascism on the Italian peninsula took the lives of more partisans than Allied soldiers.

With no direct help from Allied forces, the resistance expelled the

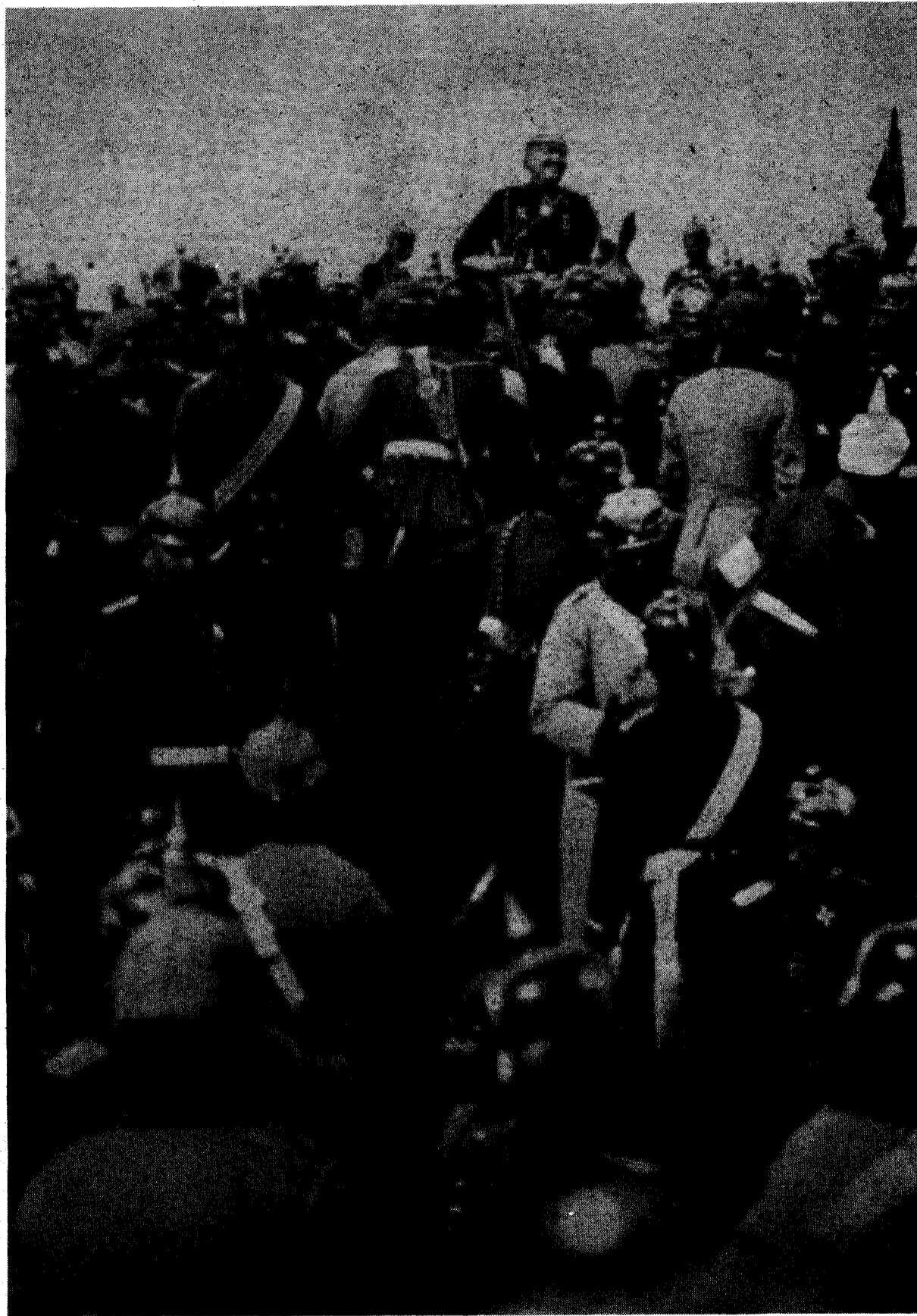
# The forgotten revolutions

EURO-COMMUNISTS and social-democrats argue that the workers' movement of Western Europe has no use for the methods employed by Russian workers in 1917. In the West the red cock of revolution, to borrow a

phrase from Trotsky, does not crow.

This we do not believe. In the first of a series of occasional articles, DAVE BAILEY discusses the history of revolution in 20th-century Europe.

# German November



The German workers showed their hatred for the Kaiser and his government at the end of the First World War and tried to erase it from the memory of the when they overthrew him and his general staff and lifted German people.

Nazis from Greece and Yugoslavia by armed uprising in October 1944. The Yugoslavs refused to allow the Allied armies on their soil. British troops went to Greece in 1944, after the Germans had gone, to attack the Communist partisans, the men and women whom Churchill had claimed heroes the day before.

Europe still commemorates the resistance, but regards it as a struggle for national liberation and little more. Yet, when the resisters polished their captured rifles or blew up factories and bridges, most of them dreamed of freeing their country not only from the Nazis but also from those who had failed to avert the catastrophe of 1939. Most of

Europe's capitalists collaborated with the Nazi conqueror or fled to London and New York (a privilege not available to the people). Socialist Russia withstood Hitler's onslaught almost alone. The prestige of Communism had never been higher.

Upon liberation, the Yugoslav Communists took power. Those of Italy, France and Greece might have followed the Yugoslav example. But they chose instead to join coalition governments with the old capitalist politicians, thereby throwing away an opportunity to reconstruct Europe along socialist lines. To the peoples of Europe the resistance brought freedom from the Nazis. With wise leadership it might also have saved

them from the Cold War and the fear of World War Three.

## Slump

The implacable general and the war profiteer are of course not the only agents of revolution. In 1929 the stock-owner hurled Europe into poverty and convulsion. Angry workers brought down capitalist governments by force of arms. Hungry bellies would not wait for elections, the outcome of which is always uncertain. Besides, the fascists were cocking their pistols.

In the early 1930s all the democracies of continental Europe

suffered either a revolutionary situation (Germany, France) or a revolutionary uprising (Austria, Portugal, Spain). Most people today know nothing about them. The civil war in Spain is remembered, like the resistance, as a struggle chiefly against fascism. Its socialist objectives are ignored.

## Easy Way

For the peoples of Europe the years between 1914 and 1945 were filled with hellish catastrophes to which they responded with revolution. Social democrats and Euro-communists have helped to conceal the rich revolutionary history of the European working class. But to forget the past is to imperil the future.

For the past thirty-five years most of us Europeans have had peace, prosperity and democracy. These are inestimable advantages for socialists. The workers' parties can enter government by way of the ballot box. They can, if they chose, legislate socialism with four or five strokes of the pen. With industry intact, with no famine, and with no foreign army to appease, socialism could be off to a strong start.

No doubt, if the workers' parties in power seemed eager to take things that far, the ruling classes would reply with economic disruption and threats of military coup. But a legitimate government with popular support always has a powerful moral and material advantage over rebels. By mobilising the people how easily the opposition could be crushed!

## Hard Way

Alas, the leaders of the big workers' parties of Europe do not want to travel this road. Avoiding a struggle today, they prefer to let capitalism run its course. This only means that wars, conquests, slumps and other cataclysms befall us tomorrow.

Then of course the revolution has to be made the hard way. The frightened and desperate workers will try to force their parties into power by insurrection, a hazardous enterprise which often fails. If insurrection succeeds and the parties take power, as in Germany, they will inherit a broken and starving country where the difficulties of building socialism are incomparably greater than in prosperous times and the temptation to sell out the revolution in return for foreign aid overwhelming.

We in Europe are exceptionally lucky. We know neither famines, nor conquests, nor major wars. We do not wish to make their acquaintance. But working class leaders are so conservative that history, we fear, will bring her wagon by the old and bloodier route.

Nobody can be sure which of its several horrors capitalism has in store for us. Some new 1929-style slump? Some fresh war of conquest in the Third World? Or perhaps, sometime before the end of the century, a war between East and West? We do not know. Many people are convinced that recent events have brought closer the conflagration between East and West.

Today the orchestra of reformism plays its symphony *forte*. The strings of Euro-communism and social-democracy soften the hearts of all. But what tune would these musicians play if that most terrible disaster of all should threaten: a third world war?

Oh terrible then will be their lamentations! In a pre-war emergency, to wait for the next general election would obviously be a useless policy. The workers' parties would have to promptly overthrow the government and seize power, to contact the Russians for a non-aggression pact, to pull the military out of NATO, and so on.

'But this means revolution', the workers' leaders will cry. 'It means civil war! We never expected that! Quick, where are the history books!'

Too late. The hour of decision will be at hand. The revolution will have to be made. And under the most unfavourable circumstances.

And the consequences of failure? Those are hard to imagine.

# SEXUAL POLITICS

By Judith Arkwright

**WOMEN in Britain are not getting equal pay with men. In fact, due to rising unemployment and the concentration of women in low paid industries, women are falling back even further behind men at work today.**

These were the alarming facts revealed in the annual report of the Equal Pay Commission, published last week, five years after the implementation of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts.

Female earnings now stand at 73 per cent of men's — a 2.1 per cent drop. Unemployment among women has gone up by five per cent in the last year. Betty Lockwood, chairman (sic) of the EOC claims that she is still 'optimistic', but that is still cold comfort for thousands of women facing unemployment, low wages, and rising prices. Women want to know *why* the acts are now working and how we can defend and extend our rights.

The report admits that the many failings of the legislation are being exacerbated by the policies of the Tory government. The Equal Pay Act for example is unique in Europe in stipulating that in order to claim equal pay a *direct* comparison has to be made with a man in the same job. So you get the absurd situation of one woman who was refused equal pay with the man whose job she had just filled on the grounds that as the man no longer held the job there was no one for the woman's pay to be compared with!

## Segregation

The report underlines the problem of job segregation for women. It explains that the Equal Pay Act will never give women equal pay because it refuses to tackle this problem. Women workers are overwhelmingly concentrated in low paid industries. Pay settlements have been low in these sectors compared with the male dominated in-

# Equal pay scandal

dustries that have traditionally had greater bargaining power. This means women are losing out in the pay battle.

Trade unions have a responsibility to tackle this problem. A minimum wage alongside the demand for equal pay for work of equal value would be a big step forward for women. But most vital of all, job segregation must be broken down between women and men at work if the women are to take their rightful place as a permanent and equal part of the workforce in Britain.

## Hopes

Needless to say this is not the conclusion of the EOC report. It admits that the Equal Pay Act has 'outlived its usefulness' and suggests that women should now pin their hopes on the Sex Discrimination Act because job segregation is the main issue.

Even the report points out that the latter has done little to change the present situation. It takes little account of indirect discrimination: women are often excluded from better paid jobs because of arbitrary factors like height requirements which employers can stipulate at will, or even by protective legislation which often stops women getting the higher paid jobs.

Most important of all the Sex Discrimination Act makes no provision for *positive* discrimination in the *hiring* of women, although it does suggest that this should happen in the training of women. This means that women are not encouraged to get into the better paid industries. The act does not give legal recognition to the fact that most women start from an unequal position

in the job market. It sees its purpose as simply taking up cases of individual discrimination — and even here the onus of proof lies with the woman concerned.

Positive discrimination on the other hand — that is quotas for the hiring of women in male-dominated industries and in the higher grades — makes it possible for women to fight collectively and win collective agreements for positive action. The TUC women's committee now has policy on this but *action* is needed to defend a woman right to work.

On the EOC's own admission the number of cases have declined sharply as people have realised that the new legislation is not working. But even this toothless body is not much for the Tories. One Conservative MP, Tony Marlow, has demanded its abolition on the grounds that it's full of self indulgent busy bodies!

## Fear

The report expresses the fear that, in a time of austerity, women's rights tend to be regarded as a luxury — even by some trade unionists. It becomes more vital than ever that women become organised — in women's rights committees, in shop stewards committees, on trade councils and Labour Party wards — to ensure that we make it absolutely clear to every trade unionist that women's rights are not a luxury. At work equal pay and job opportunity is fundamental to our independence and freedom as human beings. That's why it's crucial to defend and extend these rights if a united front is to be built within the trade unions against the Tory attacks.



Helen Saunders — the arbitrary reason for kicking her off a training course was that her 'breasts would cause problems when using a bib and brace'.

By Leonora Lloyd

**WOMEN generally have the worst jobs going and those who work part-time are at the bottom of the heap.**

They include the silent, unseen army who clean out offices and other workplaces after the rest of us have gone home. They work in jobs which have a peak of activity, such as shops and canteens.

Opportunities for training and promotion are almost nil. According to how many hours they work — from under 15 to 30 a week — part-time workers have different legal rights, but they are always worse off than full-timers.

For these women — and part-time workers are overwhelmingly women — the work they do is crucial for the family income. Many families will fall into poverty as women's part-time work becomes harder to obtain.

## Cope

Part-time work is a response to the multiple demands made on women with young families: extra shopping, laundry, and housework as well as childcare, which men still expect women to cope with.

Britain has both the worst child-care facilities and the highest figures for part-time work in industrialised Europe.

Part-time workers fall into three main groups: the disabled or chronically sick who are unable to work full-time, but are desperate to work for social as well as economic reasons; single parents, who lose part of their social security if they take a job and need to work over 24 hours a week in order to claim family income supplement; and finally married women.

Ninety per cent of women part-timers aged 16 to 59 are married, two-thirds with dependent children.

Employers, employment law, and trade unions combine to make life difficult for part-timers. Unemployment hits women especially hard, and women part-timers are the most vulnerable.

Work-sharing in the way the employers introduce it — that is, cutting hours and pay — may throw many people into the legal category of part-time work. It is urgent to campaign now for the rights of part-timers as part of the battle against unemployment and the Tory attacks on trade union rights.

## Pamphlets

Two pamphlets help to provide ammunition in this fight. *Part-time Workers Need Full-time Rights* by Ann Sedley, for the NCCL, aims to

# Women workers at the bottom of the employment heap



provide information to part-time workers about their rights and how to fight for more through the unions.

It is no coincidence that most part-timers are women, employed in industries that are either under-unionised or where men dominate the trade union structures. The pamphlet concludes with an excellent list of recommendations for part-time workers: the key one concerns union recruitment and participation.

*Part-time Pittance* by Jennifer Hurstfield, published by the Low Pay Unit, concentrates on the economics of part-time work. The author explains that it is the lack of protection for the worker and the lower rates of pay which makes part-time employment attractive to the bosses.

As a report from the International Labour Conference states, Britain's official view is that 'Care must be taken not to make part-time workers so economically unattractive to employers as to impair their prospects of employment.'

Far from being unattractive to employers, research has shown that part-timers work harder than full-timers, and they have far fewer legal safeguards. Their jobs are vital in certain industries — 80 per cent of part-time workers are found in the service sector.

## Unions

Unions have traditionally regarded them as a threat to 'legitimate' workers: as they are paid proportionately less than full-

time workers, there is a basis for this fear. The answer, of course, is to ensure that part-time work is adequately paid and protected.

A maze of legislation covers employment and it is hard for a part-timer to know her rights; still less to fight to change them for the better.

Trade union activity is difficult enough for women workers. Those who work part-time because of domestic commitments find it even harder to become involved in union work. The hostile attitudes of the unions create a further barrier.

Full-time workers in their struggles over the coming months have to involve and fight alongside part-time workers. The aim is to preserve and extend *all* employment opportunities: not just those over 30 hours a week.

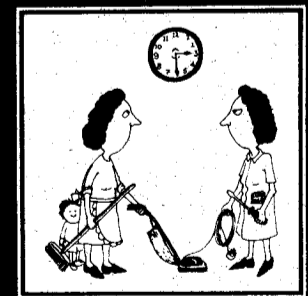
**LOW PAY review**

EDITOR: CHRIS POND  
ASSISTANT EDITOR: JILL SULLIVAN  
JUNE 1980. PRICE 50p.

**Part-Time Pittance**

**PART-TIME WORKERS need FULL-TIME RIGHTS**

Ann Sedley



NCCL Rights for Women Unit

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# A newspaper for women

**EVERY day the popular press uses women's bodies to attract new readers. It's high time that women had a newspaper of their own that took women seriously.**

*Women in Action*, a journal launched by the Last conference of the Working Women's Charter Campaign, and *Women Fightback*, a paper launched by a new campaign. Women's Fightback, aimed at stimulating action to defend women's against the Tory attacks are calling a joint meeting to discuss pooling their resources to produce a newspaper that can do just that.

An open meeting is taking place on the afternoon of Saturday 26 July at City University to discuss this new venture. If you're a woman active in the labour movement or the women's movement and you think this sounds like a good idea come along and say what you think such a newspaper could do for you.

# Socialist Challenge

## TORY PLAN FOR THE UNEMPLOYED SLAVE LABOUR!

JIM Prior's revelation of Tory plans for the unemployed give an insight into the way in which they intend to use unemployment as a weapon.

Prior proposed in a speech last week that the unemployed should do 'voluntary' work in return for the dole. His remarks caused a massive storm, but while he was busy covering his tracks Earl Gowrie, Minister of State for Employment, added fuel to the fire by suggesting that unemployed people who refused to participate in 'voluntary' work should have their dole cut!

### Benefit

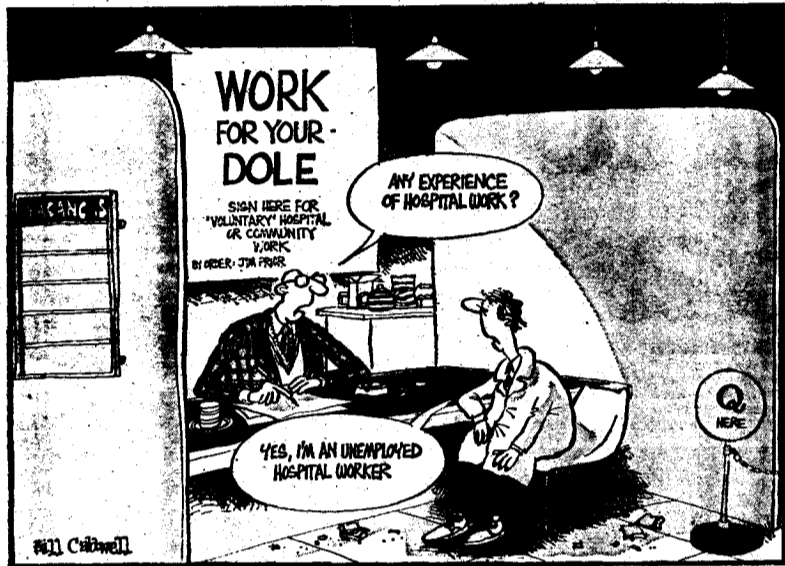
'It's perfectly reasonable to say that if you draw benefit and there are schemes whereby you can make a contribution, then you shouldn't unreasonably refuse to do so,' he said

The statements of Prior and Gowrie are hardly an accident; they are obviously the product of discussions in the Tory leadership. This Tory government is a government of deliberate unemployment.

### Wages

Keith Joseph's speech two weeks ago suggesting that unemployed workers could find jobs by accepting lower wages shows the object of this policy — to weaken the fighting power and economic strength of the working class. Now they want to force workers to participate in compulsory labour in exchange for the dole.

Their plans to use the unemployed as cheap labour in hospitals and other government services would have the



effect of weakening the trade union organisation and living standards of public sector workers.

Prior's proposals are a sign of the times. The government obviously expects severe long-term unemployment. But they want to discipline the unemployed. As the effects of the new technology combine with the crisis, they realise that millions of unemployed, many of them youth, will be an explosive and a volatile social force. So the Tory 'think tank' wants to keep the unemployed occupied, as well as making money from them.

### Insight

Prior and Gowrie unwittingly give a graphic insight into the irrationality of capitalism. 1,650,000 people are unemployed — but not because there is no work for them to do — quite the

opposite. They are unemployed because the capitalist system can't employ them and make a profit out of them.

If the capitalists can't make a profit, then factories close and millions are thrown out of work. Productive capacity goes to waste and lives are ruined. Nothing better demonstrates the need for socialist measures — based on need and not on profit — including a programme of useful public works.

### Talent

Obviously it is wasteful that the unemployed are idle, that their immense collective talent and ability is unused. Obviously they should be given productive work — but at trade union rates, with the normal job security. And to do so means an economy that breaks with the logic of profit.



James Prior

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

### ACTION STARTS ON JOBS

THE SHOCKWAVES of unemployment are bringing a response from the labour movement. Calls have been made for protest action at the TUC Congress and the Tory Party conference, and the Labour Party is considering proposals for a national rally against the jobs holocaust.

CALL NUMBER ONE comes from the Mobilising Committee against Unemployment for a fight by the TUC. The Committee is calling for a lobby of the TUC Congress on 1 September; they will join the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions who are calling for total resistance by the TUC to the implementation of Prior's Employment Act.

Worksharing without loss of pay will be the most prominent of the demands which the lobbyists will ask the TUC to promote as a policy to beat the employers.

CALL NUMBER TWO comes from the LCDTU and the Defend Our Unions Committee. Both are calling for a mass turn out on Friday 10 October on the last day of the Tory Party conference in Brighton. They will be protesting against the mass unemployment policies of the Tories. Joining them will be members of the 17 day-long Right to Work March from South Wales.

CALL NUMBER THREE will be considered by Labour Party leaders this month. A proposal will come forward for a mass rally against unemployment in Liverpool — one of the cities hardest hit by unemployment.

\* LOBBY THE TUC. 'Share the work without loss of pay!' Monday 1 September, noon, Conference Centre, Brighton.



Demonstrators protest against Thatcher's hypocrisy after she had opened the Attlee Memorial Foundation Adventure Playground last week.

Andrew Wlard (Report)

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